



# Planning Statement

## Farmhouse Triangle Extension, Hunts Grove

Ref: CP004

Date: January 2022

Rev: -

Client: Colethrop Farm Limited

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Project ref: CP004

Document ref: Farmhouse Triangle Extension

## Document Control

Project Name:	Hunts Grove
Project Reference:	CP004
Report Title:	Farmhouse Triangle Extension
Doc Reference:	CP004_planning supporting statement220110_rpt

	Name	Position	Signature	Date
Prepared by:		Director		Jan2022
Approved by:		Director		Jan2022

For and on behalf of Copperfield L&P Ltd

Revision	Date	Notes	Prepared	Approved

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## 1. Application Summary

### Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Copperfield on behalf of Colethrop Farm Limited, herein referred to as “the Applicant”. This Statement supports a full planning application for the development of 76 dwellings with community facilities, commercial space, allotments and bio-diversity improvements.
- 1.2 The purpose of this application is to complete this part of the Hunts Grove community and to create a focus of the local community and community uses. It represents purposeful minor departure from the aged Hunts Grove masterplan and responds to a number of important local matter such as:
- Y Climate change
  - Y Net biodiversity enhancement
  - Y Design quality
  - Y Health and wellbeing
  - Y Supporting the local community economy
  - Y Housing affordability
  - Y Community Infrastructure
- 1.3 The site is within Hunts Grove and is an identified strategic location in the Stroud District Local Plan. Indeed, further growth is identified in the emerging Local Plan. In this sense it is a highly sustainable location, and the proposals will further enhance this for existing residents.
- 1.4 This planning statement explains compliance with development plan policy and the NPPF2021. It presents a clear planning balance in favour of the proposals which benefit from the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

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- 1.5 For the reasons set out below and in the planning application, the grant of planning permission would on balance, support modest growth of a mixed and balanced set of proposals on this allocated site.

### Planning Benefits

- 1.6 This full planning application provides an opportunity to deliver many benefits to Hunts Grove and the wider community including some benefits for Haresfield and its hinterland:
- Y A mix of family and smaller homes for those entering the housing market.
  - Y 30% affordable homes (tenure to be agreed).
  - Y 2% self-build dwellings.
  - Y The re-use of Haresfield Farm building as a commercial community hub enterprise rather than demolition as currently approved.
  - Y Small scale local retail and commercial space for local businesses.
  - Y The provision of two allotment sites with closer walking and cycle access and improved facilities including raised beds and groundsman's store plus a net increase in provision.
  - Y 57% net bio-diversity gain through the provision of a new wildlife area in an appropriate location (compared with a required for 10%).
  - Y A detailed design that actively responds to the Build Better Commission values and re-provides the lost gateway to Hunts Grove.
- 1.7 Many of the benefits above are afforded significant or great weight in the decision-making process especially when considering planning applications against national planning policy.
- 1.8 The overall benefits of proposed develop in this acknowledge sustainable location will help support diversity and community well-being at Hunts Grove. These are discussed further later in this statement.

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## Consultation

- 1.9 The Applicant has consulted Hunts Grove Residents Association, Hunts Grove Parish Council and Harefield Parish Council over an 18 month period. Informal consultation has also taken place with Stroud District Council. Proposals have also been discussed with the developer Crest Nicholson.
- 1.10 The Statement of Community Engagement provides further details of the process and outcomes, which include:
- Y Increasing the level of community-based facilities (Hunts Grove Hub and small commercial/ retail provision designed for the local community).
  - Y Retaining a significant proportion of allotments at Farmhouse Triangle.
  - Y Relocating proposed new allotments adjacent to the footbridge crossing to make them better accessible by walking than other potential sites.
  - Y Improving the overall quality of allotment provision.
  - Y Responding to the Build Better, Build Beautiful Commission.
  - Y Confirming that the new allotment site is not a future development site and would be bound by a S106 Agreement.
  - Y Supporting sustainable construction and air-source heated dwellings.

## Summary

- 1.11 The principle of sustainable residential development at Hunts Grove is long established by the adopted Stroud Local Plan (2015) as well as the Regulation 20 submission version of the Local Plan Review which allocates strategic housing growth in this location.

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- 1.12 The proposals accord with both the strategic housing allocation and development management policies of the adopted Stroud District Local Plan, whilst addressing a need for affordable housing and responding to the growing need for custom /self-build properties.
- 1.13 The proposals also address economic, social, and environmental objectives in alignment with the achievement of sustainable development (as set out in the NPPF2021).
- 1.14 In conclusion, when applying paragraph 11 of the NPPF to the decision-making process, the Council can rely on the presumption in favour of sustainable development and specifically paragraph 11(c):
- “Approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay...”
- 1.15 The basis of compliance with the relevant development plan polies is set out later in this statement. As will be demonstrated, there are no material considerations of weight that would justify anything other than the grant of planning permission for this highly sustainable development.



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## 2. Introduction

### Description of Development

2.1 The scope of the proposal is summarised by the description of development as follows:

“Full planning permission for residential development (Use Class C3), community hub (Use Class E), local retail and commercial space (Use Class E), allotments, bio-diversity habitat and associated infrastructure and landscape works.”

2.2 The purpose of the planning application is twofold, to finish off the Farmhouse Triangle which already benefits from planning permission and to create a community focused gateway into Hunts Grove that improves the mixture of uses for local people at Hunts Grove, Haresfield and the wider hinterland.

2.3 In addition to the community hub and retail and commercial space, the proposals comprise an additional 76 residential dwellings, 30% of which are proposed as affordable homes. Minor amendments to a further 9 consented dwellings are also proposed where this application joins with Reserved Matters approval S.20/0087/REM.

2.4 The four elements of the proposals are described in more detail below for completeness:

### Housing and Affordable Housing

2.5 This application should be put into a wider Hunts Grove context for the purposes of understanding how much overall additional housing is being delivered.

Hunts Grove Outline Planning Permission S.15/1498/VAR	1750 dwellings (a)
Reserved Matter approvals against the outline planning permission	1720 dwelling (b)
Unused balance of dwelling (1,750-1,720) (a-b=c)	30 dwellings less (c)

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Farmhouse Triangle	76 new dwellings (d)
Total Hunts Grove site including the Farmhouse Triangle Extension (b+d=e)	1,796 dwellings (e)
Total additional dwellings over Outline Planning Permission ((b+d)-a=f)	+46 dwellings (f)

- 2.6 In the absence of an ability to submit further Reserved Matters under Outline Planning Permission S.15/1498/VAR, then a 46 net additional dwellings would be delivered through this planning application and of this 23 homes are proposed as affordable dwellings.

### Community Hub

- 2.7 Contrary to the Outline Planning Permission S.15/1498/VAR which approved the demolition of Colethorp Farmhouse, this building is proposed to be retained and used as a commercial enterprise to support the new local community. It is therefore proposed to be converted into the 'Hunts Grove Hub' which would provide a mixture of flexible daily work and meeting spaces. The final details of how the building is operated would follow further post decision engagement with the community.
- 2.8 The need for this facility stems from discussions with Hunts Grove Parish Council and requests they receive from start-up businesses and residents now working from home.
- 2.9 Outline Planning Permission S.15/1498/VAR did not allow for this type of conversion and use to be applied for via Reserved Matters, so it is necessary to seek permission through this full planning application to complete this part of the Farmhouse Triangle vision.

### Retail and Commercial Space

- 2.10 When the main local centre was relocated from the Farmhouse Triangle part of Hunts Grove towards the A38, this left a gap in providing a gateway location where the community building and sports pitches are still located. As with the Community Hub, Hunts Grove Parish Council has noticed the growing need for small scale commercial and retail space for start-up and

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local businesses that is not being addressed by the A38 local centre because it is currently designed for larger-scale companies.

- 2.11 As with the Community Hub, Outline Planning Permission S.15/1498/VAR did not allow for additional retail or commercial space and likewise it is therefore being sought separately through this Full Planning application.

### Allotments and Bio-diversity Infrastructure

- 2.12 The proposals to complete the build form of Farmhouse Triangle and to create a functional mixed-use area partly impacts on an area that was designated for allotments as part of the Hunts Grove Masterplan in 2015.
- 2.13 This full planning application therefore seeks to deliver 53% of the allotments on their current Farmhouse Triangle site and 63% at a new allotment site, providing 116% total provision when compared with the requirements set out in Outline Planning Permission S.15/1498/VAR.
- 2.14 For a 2% increase in total housing at Hunts Grove, there is a 16% increase in total allotment provision.
- 2.15 Moreover, the quality of allotment provision is also improved, including the following additionality:
- Y 16 raised beds at Farmhouse Triangle.
  - Y A groundsman's store at Farmhouse Triangle.
- 2.16 This is in addition to the specification set out in Outline Planning Permission S.15/1498/VAR and represents a net additional benefit for the wider community.
- 2.17 Alongside the enhanced allotment provision, these proposals provide a new managed ecological area around the second (new) allotment site to the south of the M5 footbridge. This managed area is designed to provide alternative newt habitat as well as achieve the necessary net bio-diversity gain that is now required. It achieves nearly six times the statutory net biodiversity gain for the site (57%).

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### Design Quality and Carbon Reduction

- 2.18 The proposals are of a bespoke design to Hunts Grove and are a mixture of traditional built form and carefully designed public spaces designed for pedestrian priority. The Design and Access Statement explain the rationale for the approach to the urban grain and built form of this gateway location and how it creates a sense of place in accordance with the Build Better, Build Beautiful Commission document 'Living with Beauty 2020' and the Government's response to this in 2021.
- 2.19 Recognising that Stroud District Council has declared a climate emergency, the proposals respond in several ways, always balancing this with the need to create legible and workable neighbourhoods. The following measures are employed as part of the planning application:
- Y Fabric first approach to reducing the need for energy generation in accordance with the 2021 building regulations and the application of the Future Homes Standard in 2023.
  - Y Air Source Heat Pumps for heat generation in dwellings.
  - Y Use of terraced dwellings (balanced with a mix of other dwelling types) for thermal efficiency.
  - Y Solar gain orientation (where possible in the context of a legible neighbourhood)
  - Y Good access to travel by means other than the private car, including the provision of cycle storage.
  - Y EV charging points in private parking spaces.
- 2.20 In summary the proposals represent a change from the 2015 Hunts Grove Masterplan, but they learn from the development process on the site so far and respond to new agendas and priorities.

### Site Location

- 2.21 The site consists of two separate land parcels:
- Y Land at Farmhouse Triangle (for the provision of mixed-use development and allotments). This is accessed off the main Hunts Grove distributor road

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- Y Land south west of the M5 footbridge (for the provision of allotments and ecology area). This is accessed either by the Footbridge from Hunts Grove or Pool Lane by vehicle.
- 2.22 Land at Farmhouse Triangle site is located to the east of Haresfield Land within the Hunts Grove new community. As an allocated site in the adopted and emerging Local Plan, it benefits from convenient access to schools (on site), employment (Gloucester City and Gloucester Gateway/Javelin Park) and amenities in the wider area. It is recognised as a sustainable location for mixed use development.
- 2.23 To the north of the site is the consented Farmhouse Triangle residential area whose architecture and form matches that proposed in this planning application and is controlled by the Applicant. Beyond this is additional residential development and the Hunts Grove main distributor road. To the east of the site is public open space which it is proposed to connect into. To the south is allotments and an ecology area. Part of the allotment site (which is not yet provided), is proposed to be relocated.
- 2.24 Within the site is Colethrop Farm and farm buildings, two mature trees and a small farm pond. Whilst some outbuildings are proposed for demolition (as previously consented), the main farmhouse is proposed to be retained.
- 2.25 The mature trees are to be retained within the urban landscape as part of a small square. The pond is proposed for removal, and this would be replaced (and enhanced) by a new ecological area to the immediate south of the M5 Motorway.
- 2.26 Land south west of the M5 footbridge is accessible by foot via a well used metalled Public Right of Way (PRoW) from Hunts Grove. It is bound by an embankment to the east, motorway to the north, woodland copse to the west and Pool Lane to the south. The Shorn Brook also runs from Hunts Grove into the site. Whilst there are a limited number of trees on the northern/ western boundary, no works other than ecological planting are proposed in this location or nearby. The site is generally flat.

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### Site Considerations/ designations

- 2.27 There are no restrictive designations associated with either the Farmhouse Triangle or Land South West of the M5 Footbridge.

### Planning History

- 2.28 Land South West of the M5 Footbridge where the allotments and the ecological area are proposed has no planning history. Its current use is an agricultural field. Given the use of land for allotments is classified as agricultural this planning application is not seeking any change of use in this location. Planning permission is however sought for the engineering operation for the provision of relevant infrastructure such as limited hardstanding for parking. The metalled footbridge is an existing Public Right of Way (PrOW) and provides direct access between the site and the Hunts Grove residential area. It is currently very well used by local residents as part of a recreation route to the wider countryside.
- 2.29 Land at Farmhouse Triangle has a more comprehensive planning history and those elements that are relevant are set out below.
- 2.30 The site is subject to a number of Outline Planning Permissions (granted via Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act) the most relevant of which for these purposes is S.15/1498/VAR which granted planning permission for 1,750 dwellings, a local centre and infrastructure (urban and green). The permission was subject to a set of parameter plans, including a masterplan and a S106 Agreement to deliver infrastructure. The permission identified this parcel of land for a mixture of residential development, landscaping and allotments. The S106 agreement defined the scope of the allotments as:
- Y 1.2ha of serviced land for allotments and community composting on land shown or such other area agreed in writing with the Council.
  - Y Financial contribution towards the costs of allotment works.
  - Y Specification for the allotments.

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- 2.31 Regarding allotments, this submission seeks written agreement for an amendment to the location of any allotment provision.
- 2.32 The time period set by Outline Planning Permission S.15/1498/VAR for the submission of Reserved Matters expired on 19 January 2020. At that point Reserved Matters had been submitted for 1720 dwellings, some 30 short of the total dwelling provision within the terms of the Outline Planning Permission.
- 2.33 Of the Reserved Matters that have been granted under S.15/1498/VAR, two (duplicate) approvals are relevant. These are S.20/0087/REM and S.20/0088/REM. Both were granted planning permission on 13 October 2020 subject to conditions. The enable the delivery of 128 dwellings at the Farmhouse Triangle.
- 2.34 Reserved Matters S.20/0087/REM and S.20/0088/REM were limited in their scope by Outline Planning Permission S.15/1498/VAR and as such contained gaps where other non-residential uses were intended. The details of these uses were set out in the Reserved Matter submissions but not applied for. This full planning application seeks to complete the design approach for Farmhouse Triangle including both non-residential uses and additional housing to create a meaningful and bespoke gateway neighbourhood. The detailed rationale for this is set out in the Design and Access Statement. Recognising that the proposals will impact circa 47% of the proposed allotment delivery at Farmhouse Triangle, it is proposed that this is replaced (with additionality already explained above) on land South West of the M5 Footbridge. The S106 for S.15/1498/VAR (and subsequent variations) enables this to take place by agreement with Stroud District Council.
- 2.35 In summary whilst the proposals represent a minor change in approach for this part of the Hunts Grove new community, they deliver a good range of benefits set out in the introduction to this statement and would not result in any loss of proposed facilities. There is no material conflict with the development principles for Hunts Grove either.

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### Pre Application Engagement/ Community Consultation

- 2.36 When preparing this planning application, the Applicant and their team consulted both the Local Planning Authority on an informal basis and community stakeholders including Hunts Grove Parish Council (and Hunts Grove Residents Association at the start) and Haresfield Parish Council. The Statement of Community Engagement provides a summary of this process and details the meetings, written exchanges, and subsequent changes to the proposals to reflect some of the comments received.
- 2.37 The most significant change to the proposals was to retain 53% of the allotments at Farmhouse Triangle and relocate the proposed new site to Land South West of the M5 Footbridge so that it was readily accessible by walking (and closer than the Farmhouse Triangle Allotments) for residents in the north-eastern part of Hunts Grove.

### Structure of this Statement

- 2.38 The remainder of this statement provides a review of the proposals against the Development Plan in Section 3, considers other material considerations such as the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in Section 4 and sets out the planning balance in Section 5.



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## 3. Relevant Planning Policy

### Introduction

- 3.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that planning decisions should be made in accordance with an up to date development plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 3.2 The relevant Statutory Development Plan for the application Site consists of:
- Y Stroud District Local Plan 2015
- 3.3 There is no Neighbourhood Development Plan for this part of Stroud District.
- 3.4 The Stroud District Local Plan is more than 5 years' old and also pre-dates the NPPF2019 and NPPF2021. It is also subject to a review process that is at the Examination stage. Whilst many of the policies in the plan are consistent with the NPPF2021 and therefore up to date, those subject to proposed changes by the Council are unlikely to be considered so. Nevertheless, the proposals within this planning application are consistent with both the adopted Local Plan (whether some elements are out of date or not) and the emerging Local Plan Review which is a material consideration but of limited weight at this stage.

### Making Places: The Development Strategy

- 3.5 Sections 2 and 3 of the adopted Local Plan are concerned with making place. Whilst the Strategic Objectives are referenced throughout the Plan, and with regards to Hunts Grove, Policies CP2, CP4, CP5 and CP6 are relevant, and the alignment of the planning application is discussed below.

### Policy CP2- Strategic Growth and Development Locations

- 3.6 Policy CP2 identifies the Hunts Grove Extension as a strategic growth area. The extent of the area is better defined in Policy SA4 and includes the existing Hunts Grove area plus the Hunts

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Grove Extension referred to in Policy CP2. The Plan therefore actively encourages sustainable residential development in the location of this planning application.

### Policy CP4- Place Making

3.7 Policy CP4 sets out three criteria to guide place making. This planning applications response to those criteria is comprehensive and can be summarised as follows:

- Y Proposals are fully integrated with the approved Farm House Triangle scheme to create a distinct and community focused neighbourhood.
- Y Improving the range of families and land uses to create a mixed-use community that supports existing residents and growing local businesses.
- Y Creates a sense of place that re-introduces the original gateway principles for this part of Hunts Grove.
- Y Is distinctive in character and completes the Farmhouse Triangle walkable neighbourhood, whilst retaining buildings previously consented for demolition and improving net-biodiversity by 57% when compared with a requirement for 10% gain.
- Y The creation of pedestrian focused streets and spaces with a mixture of land uses to support vitality and activity.
- Y Whilst designed to accommodate the car (car parking), the streets are primarily designed to support pedestrian movement (walkable neighbourhood) with appropriate public and private amenity spaces and refuse storage (see waste management plan and architect drawings).

### Policy CP5- Environmental Development Principles

3.8 Policy CP5 sets out guiding principles for environmental design within strategic sites. Whilst the proposals in this planning application only relate to part of the Hunts Grove strategic site, they have been applied nevertheless as follows:

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- Y The density, character and amenity match that of the approved Farmhouse Triangle site.
- Y It seeks to make the best use of this allocated site whilst delivering a very significant net bio-diversity gain.
- Y The site (housing/commercial/retail and allotments) is designed to be more conveniently accessible by walking and cycling when compared with the private car. For example, by splitting the allotments into two enhanced sites makes them both more accessible to the whole of Hunts Grove by walking and provides choice.
- Y The proposals retain the main elements of the now somewhat dated Hunts Grove masterplan. The proposals however create a layer of additionality in the form of the benefits set out at the introduction of this statement which support the delivery of appropriate access, parking, landscaping, and additional community facilities.
- Y Given the changing nature of the Building Regulations and Future Homes Standard, including the use of air source heat pumps, the proposals are able to demonstrate sustainable construction and running.

### CP6- Infrastructure and developer contributions

- 3.9 Policy CP6 sets out the need to deliver necessary infrastructure through development and contributions.
- 3.10 The main Hunts Grove allocation is currently providing a significant amount of infrastructure, including a new primary school, transport infrastructure, community and sports facilities which in alignment with the delivery of 1,750 dwellings. With the grant of planning permission for this application that total would rise to 1,796 (46 additional dwellings).
- 3.11 Whilst the Applicant is proposing to provide the full affordable housing requirement across all 76 dwellings, other proportionate contributions based on the net additional 46 dwellings are proposed to avoid the double counting of committed infrastructure provision.

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### Making Places: The Development Strategy

- 3.12 Section 3 of the Local Plan sets out the development plan strategy for Stroud District. Policy SA4 allocates land at Hunts Grove and recognises that there is a need for an addition 750 dwellings to the south of Haresfeld Lane in addition to the already consented 1,750. This application has no impact on the delivery of that part of the allocation.

### Policy SA4- Hunts Grove Allocation

- 3.13 Policy SA4 allocates land at Hunts Grove for 1,750 dwellings and supporting infrastructure plus a further 750 dwellings on land to the south (known as Hunts Grove Extension). The majority of the policy relates to the extension land, however the guiding principles on page 70 of the Plan confirm:

“Hunts Grove will continue to be a focus for the District’s Strategic growth, providing a further 750 dwellings through an extension to the development, bringing the total up to 2,500 homes over the plan period (up to 2031) and becoming effectively a “Local Service Centre” in our settlement hierarchy.”

- 3.14 An additional 46 homes in this sustainable focus for strategic growth is consistent with the overriding principle of Policy SA4.
- 3.15 The adopted policy goes on to list other principles that should be addressed through the development of this area. In this regard it can be concluded that:

- Y The proposals support local employment by increasing the range of land uses at Hunts Grove, especially for local businesses.
- Y Creates a higher quality edge to this gateway part of Hunts Grove.
- Y Protects the AONB by supporting efficient housing delivery at a strategic growth point whilst ensuring development remains to the north of the M5 motorway.

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- Y Actively encourages residents to benefit from existing and planned non-motorised connections to amenities (such as allotments) by making walking and cycling more convenient and attractive and providing choice.
- Y Avoids the risk of increased flooding elsewhere given if forms part of the managed Hunts Grove development.
- Y Completes the high-quality Farmhouse Triangle design concept previously approved by Stroud District Council and creates multi-use urban spaces to support its role as a focus for the local community.
- Y Improves health and wellbeing by encouraging walking and cycling to amenities and access to the wider countryside (to the south of the M5).

- 3.16 In summary the proposals accord with the over-arching principles for Hunts Grove by efficiently providing housing and small-scale employment and commercial opportunities for local residents that is not yet secured elsewhere at Hunts Grove. The proposals are therefore consistent with the place making principles for the Gloucester Fringe. The level of additional housing (46 dwellings) above the original allocation is consistent with the objectives of the Plan.

### Homes and Communities

- 3.17 Section 4 of the adopted Local Plan sets out a series of policies to guide housing provision. With regard to this planning application the following conclusions can be drawn.

### Strategic Objective SO1: Accessible Communities

- 3.18 The proposals within this planning application address the primary objective of providing affordable, decent housing for local needs as well as supporting recreational and leisure opportunities.

### Policy CP7: Lifetime Communities

- 3.19 The proposals incorporate homes that are designed to meet the Future Homes Standard and specifically requirements of new Building Regulations. A range of dwelling types and sizes are

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also provided to cater for different family and affordability needs. The commercial community hub and local retail space provides residents with a wider range of locally accessible facilities and services and to support social health and wellbeing without need to resort to travel or compromising the A38 local centre which caters for a different scale of retail and employment.

- 3.20 The enhanced allotment provision included facilities like raised beds at the Farmhouse Triangle to encourage their use by a wider range of the population including those with mobility needs.

#### Policy CP8: New Housing Development

- 3.21 The range of dwelling types provided as part of this planning application takes account of wider recent provision at Hunts Grove and establish a mixed neighbourhood, including a range of types and sizes of dwellings. The layout supports a slightly higher density to indicate this gateway location and has a clear character and identity. The layout also supports a focus on walking and cycling through the creation of a walkable mixed-use neighbourhood. Parking provision, layout, landscaping, and the provision of community facilities all align with needs of this location within Hunts Grove. Through layout design, a fabric first approach to energy consumption reduction and the use of technologies like air-source heat pumps and electric vehicle charging points the proposals support a lower carbon future and align with responding to the climate emergency. In addition, the net bio-diversity gain of 57% represents a significant response to the ecological emergency as well. All of this is underpinned by support for 2% self-build and as such the proposals comply with Policy CP8.

#### Policy CP9: Affordable Housing

- 3.22 This planning application provides for 30% affordable housing on site. The details of which are set out in the affordable housing and planning obligation statement. Given the significant need for affordable housing delivery within Stroud District (446 dwelling per annum) this, in accordance with the NPPF2021, represents a significant benefit of the proposals.

#### Policy HC3: Strategic Self Build Housing provision

- 3.23 In accordance with Policy HC3, the proposals make provision for 2% self/custom-build dwellings. Given the specific design character of the site and the way it is proposed to be

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integrated into the existing Farmhouse Triangle approval, full planning permission is sought for all dwelling. 2% (two dwellings) will be offered as self-build either for construction as proposed in this application or to be subject to a future planning applications.

### Economy and Infrastructure

- 3.24 Section 5 of the Plan sets out the policy framework for the economy and infrastructure. With regard to this planning application the following conclusions can be drawn.

### Policy CP12 Town Centres and Retailing

- 3.25 Whilst this planning application is seeking permission for a mixture of uses including retail and a commercial community hub, it is for less than 2,500sqm of gross floorspace. Nevertheless, Hunts Grove is an area defined in Policy CP12 where local centres are proposed. It is noted that there remains an undetermined Reserved Matter submission for a local centre at the A38. This planning application is of a small enough scale so as not to conflict with the A38 provision because each area serves a different need.

### Policy EL9: Floorspace thresholds for impact assessments

- 3.26 The proposed flexible commercial/ retail floorspace at Farmhouse Triangle amounts to circa 130sqm. It therefore falls below the threshold of 500sqm set out in Policy EL9 and an impact assessment has not been provided.

### Our Environment and Surroundings

- 3.27 Section 6 of the adopted Local Plan provides a series of core policies relating to the environment, some of which are relevant to this planning application as follows.

### Policy CP14: High Quality Sustainable Development

- 3.28 The Design and Access Statement sets out how the proposed development conserves and enhances the built and natural environment. The detailed design is unique to this part of Hunts Grove but amplifies local character and the creation of a legible neighbourhood. The proposals also respond to the climate emergency by aligning with the Future Homes Standard and the

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2021 Building Regulations which seek around a 30% energy usage improvement when compared with previous Regulations. The planning application also demonstrates that there is no increased risk of flooding and that there is drainage and sewage capacity within the local area. The proposals also seek the re-use of the farmhouse which represents previously developed land. The Design and Access Statement (and elsewhere in this Planning Statement) also explains how the proposals are readily accessible by foot and cycle which is encouraged over motorised travel modes. The proposals also represent a net increase in allotment provision and a 57% increase in net biodiversity gain. No aspects of the proposals would prejudice the delivery of other parts of the wider Hunts Grove allocation.

#### Policy CP15: A Quality Living and Working Countryside

- 3.29 Whilst Policy CP15 is not applicable to the land north of the M5 (at Farmhouse Triangle), the proposed allotments to the south are within the countryside. The allotments and natural greenspace do not require planning permission as they falls within the planning definition of agriculture. As such there is no conflict with Policy CP15.

#### Policy ES1: Sustainable Construction and Design

- 3.30 A Waste Management Statement has been provided as part of this planning application to explain how this aspect of the policy is achieved. As explained in response to other policies the proposals seek to use renewable technology including air source heat pumps and a fabric first approach to minimising energy generation to accord with Policy ES1.

#### Policy ES3: Maintaining Quality of Life within our Environmental Limits

- 3.31 The proposals sit within the relevant environmental limits and specifically in this case, care has been taken to ensure that the proposals achieve acceptable noise levels as set out in the Noise Assessment. Matters like highway safety are also maintained. Indeed, there is an opportunity to support existing Hunts Grove residents by providing an informal woodland path off Pool Lane to reduce those using the road as part of a current informal circular recreational route. This could be achieved through a suitably worded Grampian condition.



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### Policy ES6 Providing for Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- 3.32 As set out in the ecological assessment and landscape proposals, this planning application achieves a 57% net biodiversity gain overall and as such more than responds to Policy ES6. As part of development, it is noted that Great Crested Newts and Bats exist on site, but measures have been put in place to support both as follows.

- Y New Bat Barn and dark corridors which is relocated to also provide a groundsman's store at the Farmhouse Triangle allotments.
- Y New enhanced newt habitat to the south of the M5 linked to the Shorn Brook which is a common waterbody to both Hunts Grove and the proposed new site.

### Policy ES8 Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands

- 3.33 As part of the net biodiversity gain works, a significant amount of hedgerow and tree planting is proposed. By way of demonstrating this, the implementation of the proposals would result in a 379% gain in hedgerows when compared with the baseline.

### Policy ES12: Better Design of Places

- 3.34 The proposals at Farmhouse Triangle represent true mixed use living, providing local community and business opportunities for residents of Hunts Grove and nearby Haresfield alike. The design quality and ethos are set out in detail within the Design and Access Statement and it is explained how the proposals extend a concept that has already been approved by Stroud District Council.

### Policy ES13: Protection of Existing Open Space

- 3.35 The proposals represent a change to the proposed location of some allotment provision at Hunts Grove and for robustness policy ES13 has been applied. This planning application however, represents a net benefit in the delivery of allotments for the following reasons:

- Y 53% of the proposed allotments would be situated in their current location at Farmhouse Triangle but with enhanced facilities including:

Groundsman's Store

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Raised planting beds for accessibility (as illustrated on the landscape drawings)

- Y 63% of the proposed allotments would be situated directly off the existing metalled PRoW to the south of the M5, which is closer in walking and cycle distance to the northern and eastern parts of Hunts Grove than those at Farmhouse Triangle.
- Y There would be a 16% increase in allotments when compared to a 2% increase in housing.
- Y The allotments to the south of the M5 would benefit from being surrounded by a managed nature area.

3.36 These changes do not impact a distinctive form, character or setting of Hunts Grove. The proposals also positively create new focal spaces within the Farmhouse Triangle neighbourhood.

#### Polices ES14,15 and 16 (Green Space, Play Space and Public Art)

3.37 The proposals form part of the Hunts Grove new community and as such extensive public open space, play space and sport provision will all be within walking distance of the Farmhouse Triangle Extension. Where necessary, contributions can be made to support any enhancement of these facilities.

#### Conclusion

3.38 Having reviewed the proposals against the policies of the adopted Local Plan it is shown that there is alignment with those which are relevant to the determination of this planning application. This is relevant to the consideration of the Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development set out in paragraph 11 of the NPPF2021 as discussed below given that it represents a material consideration.

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## 4. Other Material Considerations

- 4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework, Hunts Grove Outline Planning Permission and the emerging Stroud Local Plan Review are material considerations relevant to this planning application. However, each has a different level of weight that can be attached to it. Significant weight is attached to the NPPF, moderate weight is attached to the Hunts Grove Outline Planning Permission, but only limited weight can be attached to the emerging Local Plan at this stage of its preparation. This section summarises the relevance of the above.

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021

- 4.2 There are many aspects of the NPPF2021 that are relevant to the determination of planning applications but given that the adopted Local Plan was prepared in accordance with the previous version of the NPPF, where there is commonality with it the policy analysis it is not re-examined here.
- 4.3 The NPPF2021 supports the delivery of sustainable development and presents the Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development at paragraph 11. It explains that for decision taking:

“c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay”

- 4.4 Whilst the adopted Stroud District Local Plan is now more than 5 years’ old and is arguably nearing the end of its shelf-life and is soon to be replaced by the Local Plan review, many of its policies remain consistent with the NPPF2021. There is relatively little conflict between the policies referred to above in respect of this planning application and the NPPF, therefore it is concluded that the Presumption should apply and there is no need to consider paragraph 11 d) of the NPPF2021.
- 4.5 It is also relevant to note in favour of granting planning permission that housing and affordable housing delivery in sustainable locations like Hunts Grove should be given significant or

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substantial weight in any decision-making process in accordance with Section 5 of the NPPF2021; this is irrespective of whether there is a land supply shortage or not.

- 4.6 Likewise, paragraph 81 of Section 6 of the NPPF makes it clear that planning decisions should create the right conditions to support businesses and economic growth, and this should also be given significant weight in the decision-making process. As a mixed use set of proposals that seek to support local business growth, significant weight should be attached to this in the decision-making process.
- 4.7 Section 8 of the NPPF2021 seeks to promote healthy and safe communities, part of which is the delivery of recreational and community services. Delivering a community hub and enhanced allotment provision ensures an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic and community facilities and services. Again, weight should be given to this in the decision-making process.
- 4.8 Section 12 of the NPPF2021 is concerned with achieving well-designed places. The Design and Access Statement for this planning application demonstrates how this has been achieved and how it:
- Y Adds to the quality of the area for the long-term
  - Y Is visually attractive and good quality architecture
  - Y Is sympathetic to local character and materials
  - Y Creates a strong sense of place
  - Y Achieves a good mix of land uses and spaces
  - Y Promotes health and wellbeing

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- 4.9 Section 15 of the NPPF2021 relates to the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment. Paragraph 180 establishes that when determining planning applications, any harm should be avoided, mitigated, or compensated for. The attached ecological assessment, net biodiversity gain calculation and landscape plans demonstrate how a net gain can be achieved and how, as with the rest of Hunts Grove, Great Crested Newts and Bats can be successfully accommodated by the proposals.

#### NPPF 2021 Conclusion

- 4.10 In summary, the NPPF encourages the best use of land in sustainable locations like Hunts Grove and especially where this complies with the Development Plan and delivers additional weighty benefits such as affordable housing, custom build housing and mixed uses to support the wider Hunts Grove and Haresfield community.

#### Stroud District Local Plan Review

- 4.11 This document is a review of the 2015 adopted Local Plan and is about to be examined by the Secretary of State for soundness. Many of the policies contained within the adopted Local Plan are repeated in the emerging Local Plan, however they are nonetheless subject to scrutiny. Whilst this planning application is compliant with those new policies, for development management purposes only limited weight can be attached to the document until the completion of the examination process and publication of the Inspector's report.
- 4.12 It is however relevant to note the direction of travel of the emerging Local Plan and its maintenance therein of Hunts Grove as a sustainable growth location. Note is also made of the following strategic policies:

#### DCP1: Delivering Carbon Neutral by 2030

- 4.13 This policy looks at 'minimising the need to travel' which is something we have considered in the design of the allotments which discourage the use of the private car by prioritising walking, cycling and public transport.

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### CP2: Strategic growth and development locations

- 4.14 Hunts Grove has been reallocated in the Local Plan review to deliver 750 houses in addition to the consented 1,750. It reaffirms this as a location for housing growth.

### CP7: Inclusive communities

- 4.15 This policy states ‘to ensure that new housing development contributes to the provision of sustainable and inclusive communities (including the provision of community facilities).’ The overarching aim of this development is to complete the final phase of Hunts Grove, by doing this it will create a final sense of community. In this phase, there is a community centre as well as commercial facilities in the heart of the development.

### CP14 High quality sustainable development

- 4.16 There is reference in this policy to the provision for allotments on major development sites, where there is an identified need for them. Hunts Grove will deliver more than the required provision of allotments in two sites across the new community, both of which are accessible by walking and cycling as a priority with significantly less emphasis on encouraging car journeys.

### Emerging Local Plan Conclusion

- 4.17 Whilst only limited weight can, in general be attached to a plan that has yet to be examined, there is alignment between its strategic policies and the proposed development that would encourage the Council to support the scheme.

### Residential Design Guide 2000

- 4.18 The residential design guide is a Supplementary Planning Document which is now 22 years’ old. During this time considerable change has taken place at a national level, including the Building Better Building Beautiful Commission and progress towards a National Design Guide. These are referenced in the Design and Access Statement and the proposals clearly demonstrate an alignment with both to help create a successful place and strong community. In this context, some weight can be attached to the 2000 Residential Design Guide, but greater consideration should be given to more recent national documents that better align with the NPPF2021.

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### Hunts Grove Outline Planning Permission (including variations)

- 4.19 The Hunts Grove Outline Planning Permission (as varied over time) identifies the Application Site for a mixture of housing development, planting and 1.2ha of allotment provision in Masterplan (ref 13143/3139H).
- 4.20 Beyond the Application Site is public open space and mitigation land for protected species. This application relates only to the remaining development land, planting land and 47% or circa 0.63ha of allotment land. No public open space/ green space (except referred to above) is proposed to be changed.
- 4.21 Condition 4 of Outline Planning Permission S15/1498/VAR (as subsequently amended) seeks Reserved Matters to be substantial accordance with the approved Masterplan. Masterplan 13143/3139H identifies reserved land for allotments in the general location of this planning application. Substantial accordance with some variation has been achieved through Reserved Matter submissions already but the Farmhouse Triangle planning application stands separately on its own merits and should not be judged against the conditions of the Planning Permission S15/1498/VAR.
- 4.22 Reserved Matter (RM) approval for the allotment land has been granted generally where the Masterplan identifies provision, but is not yet provided. The RM approval also provides for 1.2ha of serviced land in accordance with the S106 obligation which states:
- “Allotments: means an area of 1.2 hectares of serviced land shown marked  
“Allotments and Community Composting Centre” on Plan 2 or such other  
area agreed in writing with the Council” (Copperfield emphasis)
- 4.23 The S106 therefore provides the mechanism for agreeing alternative allotment locations on the basis that 1.2ha of serviced land is still delivered. When read in conjunction with the planning Decision Notice, changes the proposals set out in this planning application for the Farmhouse Triangle Extension could be achieved without recourse to amend that S106.

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### Material Considerations Conclusion

- 4.24 There are several material considerations, each to be given a level of weight according to national policy, appeal decisions, court judgements or general practice. The above analysis demonstrates that as with the Development Plan there is considerable alignment with the NPPF2021, emerging policy and more historic SPDs. In addition to this some of that alignment such as the provision of affordable housing, mixed community uses, enhanced net bio-diversity gain and self-build should be given substantial or significant weight in favour of granting planning permission. Taken as a whole, there are no residual impacts on protected species including Great Crested Newts and Bats, both of which would receive enhanced habitats as a result.



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## 5. Planning Balance and Conclusion

- 5.1 As set out in Section 3, this application is judged against the Development Plan and other material considerations (Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Section 3 explains on a policy-by-policy basis the alignment that is achieved.
- 5.2 Given that the proposals achieve compliance with the adopted Development Plan, the Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development is engaged through paragraph 11(c) of the NPPF2021 which is to:

“Approve development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay”

- 5.3 In accordance with S.38(6) that tilted balance needs to be considered against any other material consideration. This full application provides an opportunity to deliver many benefits to Hunts Grove, Haresfield and the wider community which also represent material considerations:

- Y A mix of family and smaller homes for those entering the housing market.
- Y 30% affordable homes (tenure to be agreed).
- Y 2% self-build dwellings.
- Y The re-use of Haresfield Farm building as a commercial community hub enterprise rather than demolition as currently approved.
- Y Small scale local retail and commercial space for local businesses.
- Y The provision of two allotment sites with closer walking and cycle access and improved facilities including raised beds and groundsman’s store plus a net increase in provision.
- Y 57% net bio-diversity gain through the provision of a new wildlife area in an appropriate location (compared with a required for 10%).
- Y A detailed design that actively responds to the Build Better Commission values and re-provides the lost gateway to Hunts Grove.

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- 5.4 Many of the benefits above are afforded significant or great weight in the decision-making process especially when considering planning applications against national planning policy. All of these material considerations further weigh in favour of granting planning permission.
- 5.5 Two other potential matters also need to be weighed in the balance, these are protected species and partial allotment relocation/ compliance with an existing planning permission.
- 5.6 Regarding protected species, including bats and great crested newts, the Hunts Grove Outline Planning Permission already balances the impacts and mitigation with a decision to grant planning permission in this location, so they are subject to mitigation strategies already. Through this planning application, CFL is seeking to clarify the mitigation strategy for bats with the provision of a bespoke groundsman's store whose roof voids are designed to accommodate bat roots. Likewise, as a result of proposing development at Farmhouse Triangle, it is proposed to relocate newts to a purpose managed location to the south of the M5 away from the immediate housing development. There would, as a result be no adverse impacts on these protected species as set out in the ecology report prepared by BSG. Given that this application demonstrates no adverse residual effects it is considered that this weighs neutrally within the planning balance.
- 5.7 Relocating under half of the allotments to land south of the M5 is not envisaged in the approved 2015 Hunts Grove Masterplan, so it is recognised that there is an initial element of conflict in that regard, but no conflict with the S106 agreement that accompanies that Planning Permission because it allows for such alterations by agreement. However, when coupled with closer walking and cycling access for some residents on an existing, well used PRoW, and an enhanced level of provision any very minor conflict with a 7 year old masterplan is more than outweighed by the allotment benefits alone and more so when the other scheme benefits are included. The fact that the new allotment site location would discourage car trips because they are less convenient is also in our view an additional benefit to the climate change emergency declared by Stroud District Council. For those who are unable to travel by means other than the private car, then 53% of the allotments will continue to be readily accessible in the same location as the masterplan envisaged.

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### Overall Balance

- 5.8 The overall planning balance is one of compliance with the adopted Development Plan for the reasons set out in this planning statement and on this alone the tilted balance of the NPF2021 in favour of sustainable development is engaged.
- 5.9 Having reviewed other material considerations, the vast majority of which are beneficial with two that are at worst neutral, they would not give rise to tilt the balance moving away from granting planning permission.
- 5.10 In view of this, the Applicant concludes that planning permission, subject to conditions and a S106 agreement to deliver the benefits, should be granted.