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## Appeal Decision

Inquiry opened on 18 July 2017

Site visits made on 27 July 2017

**by Richard Clegg BA(Hons) DMS MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government**

**Decision date: 01 December 2017**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/R3650/W/16/3155714**

**Springbok Radcliffe Estate, land at Sachel Court Road and between Dunsfold Road & Loxwood Road, Alfold Crossways, Cranleigh, GU6 8EX**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
  - The appeal is made by The Merchant Seaman's War Memorial Society & Thakeham Homes against the decision of Waverley Borough Council.
  - The application Ref WA/2015/1381, dated 10 June 2015, was refused by notice dated 30 June 2016.
  - The development proposed is described as 'a hybrid application: full planning permission for the erection of 60 independent living apartments and 20 independent living bungalows, including the demolition of existing 20 residential units within the annex to Sachel Court, provision of communal facilities, associated landscaping and amenity space, erection of 125 dwellings, shop (class A1), café (class A3), artificial turf courts and sports pitches, public open space and landscaping, and infrastructure works; outline permission (all matters reserved except means of access) for the erection of up to 275 dwellings including a residential care home (class C2), primary school building, associated landscaping and public open space, access and infrastructure works, services and drainage infrastructure, formation of two vehicular and pedestrian access points into the site, one from Loxwood Road and one from Dunsfold Road, and related highway infrastructure works'.
  - The inquiry sat for seven days: 18-21, 25, 26 & 28 July 2017.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Application for costs

2. At the inquiry an application for costs was made by the Appellants against the Council. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

### Procedural matters

3. The Merchant Seaman's War Memorial Society is also known as Care Ashore, and is referred to by both names in the representations. I shall use the shorter name to refer to the Joint Appellant in this decision.
4. On the application form, the location of the site refers to Sachel Court Mews, Alfold. The main parties agreed with members of the local community that the road which leads to Sachel Court in the south-western part of the site is Sachel Court Road and not Sachel Court Mews. In addition to land at Sachel Court Road, the site also includes an area between Dunsfold Road and Loxwood Road on the west side of the settlement of Alfold Crossways. Alfold itself is a

separate settlement. Accordingly the main parties agreed that the site should be identified as land at Sachel Court Road and between Dunsfold Road & Loxwood Road, Alfold Crossways.

5. The main parties also agreed that the proposed development is more clearly described as follows. *A hybrid proposal seeking: full planning permission for the erection of a care facility with 60 apartments and 20 associated bungalows, demolition of the annex to Sachel Court, erection of 125 dwellings, a shop and café, a sports pitch, public open space, and infrastructure works; and outline planning permission for up to 250 dwellings, a 25 bed residential care facility, a primary school, infrastructure works, and public open space.* In respect of the outline element, approval is sought for access at this stage.
6. In February of this year, a planning application was submitted for a revised scheme with the intention of addressing certain aspects of the reasons for refusal. The Appellants subsequently requested that the appeal be determined on the basis of the revised scheme, and in the planning statement of common ground both main parties state their preference for the plans and supporting documentation from the second application<sup>1</sup>. The changes in the revised scheme are as follows<sup>2</sup>:
  - A housing mix which better reflects the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA).
  - A reduction in the extent of hard-surfaced parking courts.
  - An increase in parking provision to meet local standards.
  - Minor changes to the siting of the areas for sports and play provision.
  - The height of buildings on the east side of the residential development in Area 2<sup>3</sup> (adjacent to existing properties) has largely been reduced from up to 2 storeys to between 1 and 1.5 storeys.
  - Lower densities have been introduced on the eastern part of the residential development in Area 2.
  - Minor changes have been made to the design of footpaths and the planting scheme.
7. The Borough Council notified local residents of the second planning application, and the Appellants also notified the local community, advising that the revised scheme was being put forward within the appeal process. The amendments put forward do not materially alter the nature of the overall scheme, although they would slightly lessen its effects. No objections were made by any party at the inquiry to consideration of the revised plans, and, having regard to the notification undertaken and the nature of the amendments, I am satisfied that no prejudice would be caused by consideration of the revised scheme. I ruled that the inquiry should proceed on the basis of the revised plans, and evidence was presented in that way.

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<sup>1</sup> The plans for both applications are listed in Appendix A to Document G1.

<sup>2</sup> The changes are set out in paragraphs 1.13-1.17 of the Appellants' supplementary statement of case (Document A1).

<sup>3</sup> The site is subdivided into three areas (pan ref BMD.14.040.DA.DRP006): Area 1 is the Care Ashore part of the scheme, Area 2 is the housing west of Loxwood Road, and Area 3 is the housing south of Dunsfold Road.

8. An environmental statement accompanied the original planning application, and an addendum was prepared for the revised scheme. The adequacy of the information contained in the environmental statement as updated has not been disputed, and I am satisfied that the requirements of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 have been met. I have taken the updated environmental statement into account in considering the proposal.
9. Two planning obligations were submitted at the inquiry. Document A22 is a unilateral undertaking by the Appellants concerning a travel plan, highways and transport contributions, highways works, bus services and the primary school. Document G13 is an agreement between the Appellants and the Borough Council which concerns affordable housing, contributions to community facilities and environmental works, replacement common land, the provision of play and open space, and provision of the care facility.
10. In August 2017, after the inquiry had closed, the Borough Council noted a series of proposed modifications to the emerging Waverley Borough Local Plan Part 1 (ELP). The Appellants, the Borough Council, other parties who appeared at the inquiry, and Alfold Parish Council were given the opportunity to comment on the implications of the proposed modifications for their respective cases.
11. The main parties prepared a set of core documents (CDs) which are listed separately from this decision (Document G4).

### **Main Issues**

12. Reasons for refusal Nos 6, 7 & 9 to the original application are concerned respectively with fragmentation of the agricultural holding which includes part of the site, housing mix, and the design and layout of housing. The revised application included changes to the scheme to address concerns about the housing mix and the design and layout of the housing (above, para 6), and a statement from the agricultural tenant explained that the development would not result in fragmentation, and that the enterprise would remain profitable<sup>4</sup>. Planning permission for the revised scheme was refused in July this year<sup>5</sup>, but, having regard to the changes and the supporting information, fragmentation of the holding, housing mix, and the design and layout of housing are not the subject of reasons for this decision.
13. Reasons for refusal Nos 8, 10 & 11 to the original application are concerned respectively with affordable housing, infrastructure contributions and works, and the financial sustainability of a bus service. In the planning statement of common ground (Document G1), the main parties agree that these matters can be addressed by legal agreements. Nevertheless there are concerns expressed in representations about the effect of the proposal on infrastructure, in particular the local drainage system.
14. Accordingly, I consider that the main issues in this appeal are:
  - (i) Whether the appeal site is a sustainable location for residential development.

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<sup>4</sup> Statement from J W Elliott & Sons Ltd, dated 28 April 2017.

<sup>5</sup> The decision notice and report on the application are Documents G5a & b.

- (ii) The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.
- (iii) The effect of the proposed development on infrastructure, facilities and services.
- (iv) The effect of other considerations on the overall planning balance.

### **The proposed development**

15. The appeal proposal includes additional accommodation for Care Ashore at Sachel Court Road on the western part of the site (Area 1), and a predominantly residential development on the central and eastern part of the site which abuts the settlement (Areas 2 & 3)<sup>6</sup>. Care Ashore is a registered charity which provides permanent, respite and holiday accommodation for those in need from the Royal Navy, the merchant navy, and other maritime employment. The Charity's main building, Sachel Court, includes communal facilities and some accommodation, with 21 flats in the annex attached to the west side of the original building. Other accommodation is provided in apartments and bungalows adjacent to Sachel Court and at Springbok Cottages, a short distance further to the north on Sachel Court Road. It is proposed to erect a new building, referred to as an independent living hub, which would comprise 60 apartments, communal facilities, and office accommodation<sup>7</sup>. Some communal facilities would remain in Sachel Court, but the annex would be demolished. In addition, 20 more bungalows would be built to the north-east of Springbok Cottages. Full planning permission is sought for the whole of the development proposed by Care Ashore.
16. The residential development would provide up to 375 dwellings on the west side of Alfold Crossways. Full planning permission is sought for 125 dwellings on land off Loxwood Road<sup>8</sup>. The shop/ café, a sports pitch and the spine road also form part of Area 2. Up to a further 250 dwellings would be included in Area 3, for which outline permission is sought. For the most part, these dwellings would be built on land off Dunsfold Road and to the north and north-west of Area 2. This part of the scheme also includes the primary school and the care home.

### **Planning policies**

17. The Development Plan includes the saved policies of the adopted Waverley Borough Local Plan (ALP). In terms of housebuilding, the Local Plan covered the period from 1991 to 2006: Policies H1 and H2 concerning respectively housing provision and the monitoring and phasing of housing development have not been saved. Requirements for affordable housing are set out in Policies H5 and H6. Policy M1 seeks to ensure that development is located where it would reduce the need to travel, and to encourage a higher proportion of travel by non-car modes. Major trip generating developments should be resisted in rural locations where access would be predominantly by private car and accessibility by other modes is poor. Policy D1 explains that development will not be permitted where it would cause material detriment to the

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<sup>6</sup> Areas 1, 2 & 3 are shown on drawing ref BMD.14.040.DA.DR.P006, and the illustrative masterplan is drawing ref BMD.14.040.DA.DR.P005A.

<sup>7</sup> Drawing ref AA5344/2001 B includes existing and proposed site plans for Care Ashore. Floor plans of the hub are on drawings refs AA5344/2100 A, AA5344/2101 A, & AA5344/2102 A.

<sup>8</sup> Drawing ref T043\_P10 shows the site layout for Area 2.

environment due to, amongst other reasons, harm to the visual character and distinctiveness of the locality. Development should be of a high quality which integrates well with the site and complements its surroundings (Policy D4). A series of requirements are specified, including that proposals should be appropriate to the site in terms of scale, height, form and appearance, and that they should at least respect the local distinctiveness of the area. In accordance with Policy D7, development proposals should provide for the retention of important trees and hedgerows.

18. Development will only be permitted where adequate infrastructure, services and facilities are available, or arrangements have been made for their provision (Policy D13). Policy D14 seeks the delivery of environmental and/ or community benefits in appropriate cases. Benefits which may be sought include affordable housing; improvements to public transport; measures for cyclists, walkers and pedestrians; educational facilities; and environmental enhancement schemes. On the proposals map, the site is shown as lying in the countryside outside the Green Belt. Here, Policy C2 provides that the countryside will be protected for its own sake, and that building in the open countryside away from settlements will be strictly controlled. Policy C3 is concerned with the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV). Sachel Court and the surrounding part of the appeal site on the south-west side of Sachel Court Road lie within the AGLV. Strong protection should be given to ensure the conservation and enhancement of the landscape character of the AGLV. Alfold Crossways and Alfold are included in the rural settlements identified in Policy RD1. Within the boundaries of these settlements some limited development may be appropriate, provided, amongst other considerations, that it takes account of the form and setting of the settlement.
19. The Borough Council is preparing a new Local Plan. The pre-submission edition of the ELP was published in 2016, and examination commenced in July of this year. Objections have been made in respect of the housing requirement and housing land supply, amongst other matters. Subsequently, in August 2017, the Borough Council put forward a series of proposed main modifications to the ELP. The main modifications are subject to consultation. Whilst an uplift in the Borough's housing requirement is proposed, the spatial strategy in Policy SP2 and Policy ALH1 which is concerned with meeting the housing requirement carry forward the approach of the examination version of the ELP. Modifications to Policies ST1 and RE3 more closely reflect the NPPF, and there are no major changes to the other policies referred to below (para 20). Prior to the Inspector's report, these policies merit at least moderate weight.
20. Policy SP1 in the emerging Local Plan (ELP) reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in paragraph 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). A spatial strategy for Waverley is contained in Policy SP2. The strategy seeks to focus development at the four main settlements of Farnham, Godalming, Haslemere and Cranleigh. Moderate development will be permitted in larger villages, and limited development in eight third tier villages, including Alfold. Although the policy refers only to Alfold, the planning statement of common ground explains that the reference includes Alfold Crossways<sup>9</sup>. This part of the policy recognises that those villages not within the Green Belt or the Surrey Hills AONB offer more scope for growth: Alfold

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<sup>9</sup> The boundaries of Alfold Parish and the two settlements are shown on the plans at Documents G10a-c.

Crossways is not covered by these designations. In addition Dunsfold Aerodrome is identified as a new settlement. Policy ALH1 specifies that in the period 2013 to 2032 at least 11,210 additional homes will be provided: at least 125 homes are to be provided in the parish of Alfold (excluding windfall development and housing in the proposed new settlement at Dunsfold Aerodrome).

21. New development should be located where opportunities for sustainable transport modes can be maximised, recognising that solutions and measures will vary between urban and rural locations (Policy ST1). This policy also seeks contributions to the improvement and provision of transport schemes, and it encourages the provision of improved footpaths, bridleways and cycleways. Policy ICS1 is concerned with infrastructure and community facilities. Part 1 of the policy requires that infrastructure necessary to support new development be provided on or off-site, or through the payment of financial contributions. In rural areas, affordable housing should be provided at a rate of at least 30% on developments involving a net increase of 11 or more dwellings (Policy AHN1). Policy RE1 refers to countryside beyond the Green Belt, the intrinsic character and beauty of which should be recognised and safeguarded. Policy RE3 requires that new development should at least respect the character of the landscape in which it would be located. The principles for protection of the AONB, which is stated to be a priority and is to include the application of national planning policies and the AONB Management Plan, are to apply in the AGLV, whilst recognising that the protection of the AGLV is commensurate with its status as a local landscape designation. The AGLV is to be retained for its own sake and as a buffer to the AONB, until the boundary of the latter has been reviewed.
22. The Parish of Alfold, which includes Alfold Crossways, has been designated as a neighbourhood plan area. However, at the date of the inquiry, the emerging neighbourhood plan had yet to be published.

## **Reasons**

### ***Sustainability of the location for residential development***

23. Alfold Crossways is a small settlement in the countryside: it is predominantly residential in nature, with about 200 dwellings<sup>10</sup>. The limited facilities and services include a convenience store on the A281 to the east of the settlement, a public house nearby to the north, a recreation ground, and a community hall. In the settlement of Alfold, which is about 0.8km to the south, there is a combined shop and post office<sup>11</sup>. Cranleigh is the closest of the main settlements in Waverley. It offers a good range of facilities and services, and is about 6.4km from Alfold Crossways.
24. Policy M1 of the ALP seeks to resist major trip generating developments in rural locations where access would be predominantly by private car and accessibility by other modes is poor. The Appellants argue that the restrictive aspect of Policy M1 is not consistent with the approach to development in the NPPF, and although the closing submissions on behalf of the Borough Council maintained that the policy is entirely consistent with the NPPF, its planning witness

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<sup>10</sup> Mr Reay's proof of evidence, paragraph 9.14.

<sup>11</sup> Existing facilities and services are identified in paragraph 4.5 of Document G1, and their location is shown on the plan at Appendix 3 to Mr Paddle's proof of evidence.

accepted in cross-examination that it is out-of-date. The NPPF makes it clear that growth is appropriate in rural areas. The fifth core planning principle in paragraph 17 explains that whilst planning should take account of the different roles and character of different areas, there should be support for thriving rural communities in the countryside. Paragraph 34 shares the objective of Policy M1 that developments generating significant movement should be located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes can be maximised. Importantly, however, it refers to the need to take account of other policies in the NPPF, particularly in rural areas. In this regard, paragraph 29 points out that the opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary from urban to rural areas, and Policy ST1 of the ELP reflects this approach.

25. Whilst the NPPF advocates a more positive approach to development in rural areas than the approach espoused in the ALP, it does not indicate that it is not appropriate to guide larger scale developments to larger settlements. Indeed, the main thrust of paragraph 34 is consistent with such an approach, and the distribution of development in that way is fundamental to the spatial strategy set out in Policy SP2 of the ELP (above, para 20). Alfold (including Alfold Crossways) is included in the group of smaller villages (third tier settlements), and whilst there is no ceiling in Policy ALH1 of the ELP on the number of dwellings which may come forward in the Parish, it is clear that the level of development is expected to be commensurate with the position of Alfold in the settlement hierarchy. Although the ELP provides for a certain level of development on greenfield land, about 85% of the new housing specified in Policy ALH1 is expected to come forward at the existing main settlements and the new settlement proposed at Dunsfold Aerodrome.
26. The ELP covers the period 2013-2032. In the four years since the start of that period, 11 dwellings have been completed in Alfold, and sites for a further 87 (of which 77 dwellings have planning permission) have come forward<sup>12</sup>. These proposals account for a large proportion of the 125 dwellings intended for Alfold Parish under Policy ALH1. It seems unlikely that only a few further dwellings would come forward in the Parish during the next 15 years, and the number of 125 dwellings is referred to in the ELP as a minimum figure. Policy ALH1 is the subject of objections, which lessen the weight it carries. However, at up to 375 dwellings, the size of the proposed residential development is not only markedly greater than the minimum number of dwellings envisaged for Alfold Parish, but it is almost double the size of the existing settlement of Alfold Crossways. Even when the 55 dwellings permitted on land at Loxwood Road and other recent commitments are taken into account, the number of dwellings in the appeal proposal is significantly greater than at the settlement. In itself this does not indicate that the appeal site is not in a sustainable location for new housing development, but it does point to the need to carefully consider the availability of facilities and services and the likely nature of trips which would be generated.
27. I have already referred to the limited facilities and services available for residents of Alfold Crossways (above, para 23). The proposed development would augment these through the provision of a primary school, a shop/ café, and an additional sports pitch. The unilateral undertaking requires provision of the primary school, although if an event of default occurs there is provision for

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<sup>12</sup> Details of housing proposals in Alfold since 2013 are given in Document G7a.

payment of early years and primary school contributions towards additional accommodation at Cranleigh C of E Primary School. Similarly the planning agreement contains an obligation for provision of the sports pitch, and the Appellants suggested a condition requiring that the shop/ café be brought into operational use prior to occupation of the 124<sup>th</sup> dwelling. These measures would be necessary to secure the additional facilities proposed. As there are already sports facilities and a nearby convenience store, the primary school would be the most significant addition to the facilities and services available to serve Alfold Crossways. It would serve not only the new development, but also the existing community, and it can therefore be expected to reduce the number of journeys made out of the settlement for primary education. The Appellants have advised that the nearest primary school is at Loxwood, about 3.5km from the appeal site, and that the primary schools at Cranleigh and Rudgwick are within 5km<sup>13</sup>: the transport statement of common ground refers to children being transported to Cranleigh at present (Document G2). Guidance on walking distances has been produced by the Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation (CIHT): for schools 0.5km is given as a desirable distance and 1km as acceptable<sup>14</sup>. Most of the proposed housing scheme and the existing settlement would be within 0.5km of the new school.

28. The Addendum Transport Assessment calculates that 56% of education journeys generated by the development in the morning peak would be associated with primary schools<sup>15</sup>. Using the figures from the Appellants' model that would give 113 primary school trips from a total of 420 person trips in the morning peak, and 226 primary school trips out of a daily total of 3,545 person trips. I note that the model has been prepared on the basis of 400 residential units, whereas the proposal (excluding the Care Ashore element) is for up to 375 dwellings and a 25 bed residential care facility. The number of trips can, therefore, be expected to be somewhat lower than predicted from the Addendum Transport Assessment. In any event, however, the number of trips to the primary school, and which could be made on foot, would be a relatively modest proportion of the total.
29. Information from the 2011 Census records that 12% of working residents live and work in the output area which includes Alfold<sup>16</sup>. Most travel further afield, and journeys by future residents out of Alfold Crossways would also be required for secondary education, shopping (other than local convenience requirements), and other services. The appeal proposal includes a series of measures designed to encourage travel by modes of transport other than the private car. In addition to footway links within the site, the scheme would include extension of the footway along the north-east side of Dunsfold Road, and financial contributions are included in the unilateral undertaking towards surface and drainage improvements to several public footpaths and bridleways. The footways within the site and along Dunsfold Road would encourage pedestrian movement to those facilities in and closer to Alfold Crossways. The public footpaths and bridleways intended for improvement are to the north, west and east of Areas 2 and 3 where the new housing is proposed, away from the existing settlement. Public footpath 415 could provide a link from the Care Ashore development to Alford, but, given that these paths are through fields

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<sup>13</sup> Mr Paddle's proof of evidence, paragraph 4.23.

<sup>14</sup> The CIHT guidelines are set out in Mr Paddle's proof of evidence in table 4.4 on page 39.

<sup>15</sup> CD6.12b, paragraph 7.17.

<sup>16</sup> Mr Paddle's proof of evidence, table 4.4 on page 35.



- and along unmade tracks, I consider that even with improvement they are more likely to be used for recreational purposes than for other trips.
30. A further contribution is to be made towards cycle route infrastructure improvements between the site and the centre of Cranleigh. The CIHT advises that the bicycle is a potential mode of transport for trips of up to 5 miles (8km)<sup>17</sup>, and Cranleigh is 6.3km from the site. There is potential for use to be made of cycling for trips to destinations in Cranleigh.
31. Details of bus services to and from Alfold Crossways are given in the transport statement of common ground and a note agreed by the main parties on bus and rail accessibility (Documents G2 & G6). There is an hourly weekday service between Guildford and Horsham which passes through Alfold Crossways on the A281. The other main service provides a link to Guildford and Cranleigh, with a two hourly frequency during the day, increasing slightly during peak times. This service also operates on Saturday. It is proposed to provide additional bus services in conjunction with the proposed development, as specified in the unilateral undertaking. Up to the occupation of the 124<sup>th</sup> dwelling a demand responsive service would be provided: this is intended to cater for school trips to and from Cranleigh and Godalming, and to follow a route agreed with the Borough Council. From occupation of the 125<sup>th</sup> dwelling a service would be introduced between the site and Cranleigh. This service would run hourly in the early morning and evening from Monday to Saturday and on Sunday: between 0700 and 1900 hours from Monday to Saturday the service would operate every 30 minutes. Subsequently, from occupation of the 300<sup>th</sup> dwelling, an hourly service to Guildford and Godalming would be introduced. The bus services would be funded in perpetuity by the owner (Thakeham Homes) through a development trust.
32. The planning obligation would provide an enhanced level of bus services from Alfold Crossways, which would be available to both future and existing residents. The main parties agree that the level of bus service provision would be similar to that available in Cranleigh (Document G6). It is also agreed that access to rail services is similar, with both Alfold Crossways and Cranleigh being just over 13km from the nearest stations on the Portsmouth-London line (Witley in the case of Alfold Crossways and Milford in the case of Cranleigh). This similarity in terms of the availability of public transport services does not mean that, post-development, Alfold Crossways would be a location of equivalent sustainability credentials to Cranleigh. Cranleigh offers a much greater range of facilities and services in the settlement itself, whereas residents of the appeal site would still need to travel for many purposes.
33. It is agreed between the main parties that, in accordance with paragraph 32 of the NPPF, the development would have taken up the opportunities available to maximise the use of sustainable travel modes. A framework residential travel plan has been prepared<sup>18</sup>. It has the target of reducing single occupancy car trips by 10% within a five year period. To this end a range of measures are put forward including information on non-car travel options, cycle vouchers, cycle storage, extension of the bus service into the site along the spine road, and taster bus tickets. I acknowledge that the package of measures put forward as part of the proposal and supported by the travel plan has the potential to increase the use of alternative modes of transport to the private car.

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<sup>17</sup> Appendix 8 to Mr Paddle's proof of evidence.

<sup>18</sup> Appendix 4 to Mr Paddle's proof of evidence.

34. The Borough Council drew attention to the differences in modal split for the journey to work between super output areas at Alfold, Farnham and Cranleigh. Information from the 2011 census reveals that a much greater proportion of these trips are made on foot in the main settlements of Farnham (20.68%) and Cranleigh (16.31%) than in Alfold (4.53%)<sup>19</sup>. Conversely, at 81.87%, the proportion driving a car or van is significantly higher in Alfold than in Farnham and Cranleigh (61.9% and 68.12% respectively). I note also that the census indicates longer average distances for the journey to work for residents of Alfold (21.3km) than for those of Farnham (17.9km) or Cranleigh (14.6km). These figures present a snapshot in respect of trips for one purpose: nevertheless they indicate the greater opportunity that currently exists to minimise journey length and use alternative transport modes to the private car at the main settlements in Waverley than at a third tier settlement such as Alfold Crossways.
35. I acknowledge that the package of measures put forward in conjunction with the proposed housing development would provide a range of opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes in this countryside location. However, given the number of dwellings proposed, the limited range of facilities and services post-development, and the extent of out-commuting (above, para 29), I anticipate that the development of up to 375 dwellings would generate a considerable number of additional journeys. Bearing in mind the current modal split for the journey to work and the target in the framework travel plan, it is likely that a large proportion of these journeys would be made by non-sustainable modes of transport. Alfold Crossways does not represent a sustainable location for a large new housing development.
36. I turn now to consider the Care Ashore scheme in Area 1. This part of the overall proposal involves the improvement and expansion of an existing operation. Care Ashore already provides its accommodation and support services in the countryside outside Alfold Crossways. Although the charity provides independent accommodation for its beneficiaries, communal facilities are available and a community bus is provided to take residents to Cranleigh and other towns. There are currently 50 units of accommodation provided by Care Ashore<sup>20</sup>. Taking into account the loss of the 21 flats in the annex, the proposal would provide an additional 59 dwellings. I do not regard this scale of expansion as excessive, and, given the nature of the operation, the Springbok Estate is a sustainable location for the further development proposed by Care Ashore.
37. I conclude that the appeal site is a sustainable location for the additional residential development proposed by Care Ashore. However, although measures are put forward to encourage the use of travel by alternative means of transport to the private car, it would not be a sustainable location for a large new housing development. This is a matter to which I give substantial weight. Accordingly this part of the proposal would conflict with Policy M1 of the ALP, (albeit that that policy does not fully reflect the provisions of the NPPF and carries reduced weight), and Policies ST1, SP2 and ALH1 of the ELP.

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<sup>19</sup> Appendix D to Mr Cooper's proof of evidence.

<sup>20</sup> The schedule of accommodation for beneficiaries in Appendix F to the Planning Statement for the 2017 application identifies 38 units of accommodation. At the inquiry, Mr Goacher explained that in addition to accommodation for beneficiaries, Care Ashore also provided 8 privately rented properties and 4 properties are used as staff accommodation.

### ***Character and appearance***

38. The appeal site lies within the Low Weald National Character Area, which is a broad area extending eastwards from Haslemere and running to the north and south of the High Weald beyond Horsham. Of more relevance to this appeal is the Surrey Landscape Character Assessment (CD5.4). The Landscape Character Assessment includes the site within the Dunsfold to Pollingfold Wooded Low Weald landscape character area (LCA) of the Wooded Low Weald landscape type. A key characteristic of this character area is a patchwork of pastoral and arable fields, woodland blocks, hedges and tree belts. It is also relatively low-lying with a flat or gently undulating landform. Other than at Alfold and Alfold Crossways, settlement is limited, and the Landscape Character Assessment refers to this as a rural tranquil landscape due to the limited influence from settlement and road and the presence of woodland blocks. A short distance to the west of Sachel Court is the Tugley to Sidney Wood LCA. This is also low-lying, but there is extensive woodland, and the enclosed nature of the character area limits long-distance views.
39. The appeal site and its surroundings comprise a patchwork of fields and woodland blocks in a low-lying area, which is characteristic of the Dunsfold to Pollingfold Wooded Low Weald LCA. That part of the site to the south-west of Sachel Court Road is part of the AGLV, which extends to the south-west, and is a designation of local importance. It is clear from the representations made that the site is valued by the local community. Such local appreciation, however, does not in itself warrant recognition as a valued landscape for the purposes of paragraph 109 of the NPPF. The Borough Council placed emphasis on the historical form of the landscape and the presence of wildlife. These are factors which may contribute to the value of a landscape, as is acknowledged in box 5.1 of the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment<sup>21</sup>. The Borough Council's landscape witness commented that the mix of woodland, arable and pasture had altered little for centuries, and referred to traces of the boundaries of a former estate, a stream and a stretch of common land. It is clear from comparison of historic maps with the current site plan that there have been several changes to field and woodland boundaries<sup>22</sup>, and that the appeal site does not represent an intact historic landscape. Whilst wildlife specimens have been observed on the site, there is no suggestion that skylarks, for example, are of particular importance on the site in comparison with the adjacent land, and the natural heritage chapter of the Environmental Statement Addendum (which was not disputed in the report on the 2017 application) finds that for the most part the site is of negligible or low value for species. This is not a rare landscape type, and the site only occupies a small part of the Dunsfold to Pollingfold Wooded Low Weald LCA. There is recreational use of footpaths and the site comprises a pleasant stretch of countryside, but in neither circumstance is there anything to indicate a particular importance. The site clearly has value as an area of open countryside, but its characteristics are not so special as to warrant it being considered a valued landscape under the NPPF.
40. There is already built development within the AGLV at Sachel Court, and Springbok Cottages are nearby. The settlements of Alfold Crossways and Alfold are also established features within the Wooded Low Weald in the vicinity of

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<sup>21</sup> Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (third edition), Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment.

<sup>22</sup> Figures 8-13 in the Archaeological Desk Based Assessment of 2017 show boundaries from 1840 -1982, figure 16 shows the present day field boundaries.

the appeal site. Taking these factors into account, together with the local importance of the AGLV, and my view that the site is not a valued landscape, I consider that this part of the LCA is of medium sensitivity.

41. The Borough Council argued that the appeal site comprises a single landscape character zone, whereas the Appellants' landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) identifies a series of local landscape character areas (LLCA)<sup>23</sup>. I agree with the Borough Council that the site is representative of the Dunsfold to Pollingfold Wooded Low Weald LCA. That does not mean that distinctions cannot be identified at a more local level, and I consider that the LLCAs are a useful additional tool for assessment. Notwithstanding their names (Area 1 forms part of the Sachel Court LLCA, and Areas 2 & 3 lie within the arable farmed land LLCA), it is clear from the baseline description in the LVIA that the areas are not based on land use and ownership differences.
42. Area 1 includes the Care Ashore buildings and fields to the north-west and south-east of Springbok Cottages. There is other open land within the Sachel Court LLCA around that building but outside the site. The additional built development here would be well-related to the existing buildings at Sachel Court and Springbok Cottages, with open areas retained to the north-west of the new bungalows and to the north and east of the hub. A characteristic feature of this part of the site is a group of buildings in a parkland setting: whilst the appeal proposal would consolidate built development, the disposition of the new buildings would respect this feature. There would be a permanent change arising from the expansion of the group of buildings, but the harm to the landscape merits only limited weight.
43. The impact in Areas 2 & 3 would be more substantial. These flat arable fields would be replaced by primarily residential development. Where the site abuts blocks of woodland and existing buildings, the irregular line of the boundary would assist in integrating the development with its surroundings. As landscaping around the site matured, it would also contribute in this regard, and the mass of the built form would be broken up by areas of open space. Although within a pleasant open landscape, this part of the appeal site is unremarkable in its nature. I consider that it is of medium sensitivity, and that, having regard to the form of the development, its loss would be an adverse effect carrying moderate weight.
44. The proposal would involve substantial built development within the wooded low weald. However most of this development, on Areas 2 & 3, would take place between blocks of woodland and the existing settlement, and this degree of containment would lessen the impact of the new built form on the Dunsfold to Pollingfold Wooded Low Weald landscape character area. Additional planting around and within the site would also assist in assimilating the development into its surroundings. The housing in Areas 2 & 3 would represent an extension to the existing settlement, and due to its size and the extent of its projection westwards, it would significantly increase the urban influence of Alfold Crossways at this end of the LCA. The Care Ashore development in Area 1 would be less extensive, and it would be closely associated with the existing buildings along Sachel Court Road. To the north of this part of the appeal site is the woodland of Lower Seven Acre Copse and Eleven Acre Copse. This strong physical feature would form a clear edge to the Care Ashore complex

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<sup>23</sup> The local landscape character areas are shown on figure 5.9 in Appendix A to Mr Waddell's proof of evidence.

and it would also separate it from the housing on Areas 2 & 3. Overall, I consider that the development would cause moderate harm to the landscape of the wooded low weald.

45. A small part of the appeal site lies within the AGLV (above, para 18). This part of the site is occupied by Sachel Court and a number of other buildings which also form part of the Care Ashore operation. A parking area would be laid out close to the road: this would be contained between buildings and an orchard and would not adversely impact on the surroundings. Some trees within the orchard would be removed to enable construction of a link between Sachel Court and the hub. These trees are generally identified as being of low quality and value (category C1) in the Appellants' Arboricultural Impact Assessment<sup>24</sup>, and additional planting is proposed at the orchard. In the short term, the removal of some tree cover due to construction of the link would impinge on the setting of Sachel Court. Over time, however, additional planting would become established and I am satisfied that a scheme could come forward which would satisfactorily replace the trees lost and complement the appearance of Sachel Court.
46. Sachel Court itself comprises two distinct elements. The older part of the building is an impressive redbrick structure with two and three storey gables and a cupola rising above ridge level. It is elevated slightly above Sachel Court Road, and is a notable and distinctive feature in the landscape. On the west side of the building, and furthest from the road, an annexe has been added. This is a flat-roofed structure of relatively plain appearance, which fails to complement the proportions, form and detailing of the older part of Sachel Court<sup>25</sup>. It is proposed to demolish the annexe, which would both improve the appearance of Sachel Court and bring about a localised increase in openness. Because of the extent of tree cover around the western end of the building, the annexe is not unduly prominent. Nevertheless its removal would enhance the AGLV.
47. The hub complex would be immediately outside the AGLV. Whilst the central section of the building would be close to Sachel Court Road, the two outer wings would be positioned further back and set at a lower level. The building, however, would be closely related to both Sachel Court and Springbok Cottages, and the consolidation of built development in this location would detract to a limited degree from the character of the AGLV.
48. I have also considered the effect of the development on the form of Alfold Crossways. The settlement is predominantly residential in nature, comprising about 200 dwellings, and it is referred to as a smaller village in Policy ALH1 of the ELP. From the junction with the A281, development extends along that road, Loxwood Road and Dunsfold Road. In recent years additional housing has been built off these roads, and whilst the settlement retains a predominant north-south axis around Dunsfold Road and Loxwood Road, it is not purely linear in form. The form of the village has been modified by recent development. New housing to the east of Loxwood Road and to the north-east of Dunsfold Road has not damaged the character of Alfold Crossways, and I do not consider that consistency with a linear form is an important parameter against which proposals should be assessed. Indeed I note that at the

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<sup>24</sup> The trees in the orchard are shown on Tree Constraints Plan 5 in Appendix 5 to the Arboricultural Impact Assessment (CD 6.3).

<sup>25</sup> Photographs showing Sachel Court are on pages 36, 38 & 39 of Mr Waddell's proof of evidence.

- southern end of the settlement, planning permission has been granted for housing on land west of Sweeter's Copse which would extend back from Loxwood Road.
49. The proposed development on Areas 2 & 3 would extend the village on its western side. Notwithstanding the presence of the playing fields on this side of the settlement, the new development would not be visually isolated as contended in the fourth reason for refusal. It would adjoin existing housing on Dunsfold Road and Loxwood Road, and this juxtaposition would be apparent from positions both within and around the settlement.
50. The size of the development at Alfold Crossways would, however, be substantial. At up to 375 dwellings, there would be almost twice as many as in the settlement at present. Although the development would be phased, it would not represent a gradual expansion of this modest settlement, and within a relatively short period of time the new housing and its associated facilities on Areas 2 & 3 would become the dominant element at Alfold Crossways. I consider that failure to respect the scale of the village would cause harm to its character, and this harm is a matter to which I accord substantial weight.
51. I turn now to consider the visual effects of the development. The Borough Council made some detailed criticisms of the photographic material submitted by the Appellants. There is clear distortion in several of the extended panoramas presented in Appendix C to Mr Waddell's proof of evidence. This is evident, for example, in the panoramas at viewpoints (VPs) 1 and 4-6, where the left and right sections curve away from the viewer. In contrast to the curved panorama from the Appellants' VP4, the photograph from VP4a in the Council's LVIA does not display this distortion. The Appellant's landscape witness explained that his viewpoint photographs were not accurate verified representations, but were intended to provide context. Most of these viewpoints were included in my programme of site visits, and I am aware of the extent of the distortions. Bearing this in mind, the panoramas are nevertheless of assistance in providing context from the viewpoints, and the Council's photographs also provide a useful point of reference.
52. The Care Ashore development would be readily apparent from public footpath 415 (PF415) which runs along Sachel Court Road in front of the position of the hub (Appellants' VP8iii), and from PF415a to the east. The hub would be set back from PF415a, and users of both footpaths would be aware of the existing Care Ashore buildings at Sachel Court and Springbok Cottages. This additional development of the hub opposite Sachel Court and of the bungalows to the north would strengthen the existing built form, although over time this would be softened by new tree planting. On the stretch of Sachel Court Road to the north-west of Springbok Cottages a hedgerow, and further north, tree cover restrict visibility. Whilst there are clear views from the junction of Sachel Court Road with the access drive to the rear of Springbok Cottages (Appellants' VPs 7 & H, LPA VP9a), the presence of the existing buildings and planting in rear gardens would limit views of the new bungalows projecting into the field to the rear. More of the bungalows would be visible from a break in the cover along the road further north which carries the Wey South Path (Appellants' VPs 9ii & A), but this is not an extensive view and the buildings would be set well back from this northern end of field E. I consider that there would be moderate harm to visual amenity from these vantage points.

53. From further away on footpaths crossing the farmland to the south (Appellants' VPs F & 11) there are likely to be only limited views of the southern end of the hub. From this direction, the hub would lie between Sachel Court and the nearby business units, but it would be further back from viewers in these positions, and I consider that there would be a negligible effect on visual amenity. There would also be views of the Care Ashore development from the existing housing, notably from the rear of Springbok Cottages. The proposed development would cause some harm to the outlook for occupiers, but these are private viewpoints, and accordingly I have given minor weight to this harm.
54. The residential development is more extensive, and would be apparent from roads and footpaths around the appeal site. PF415a runs on the western side of Area 3. Although it is intended that the footpath would be incorporated into open space, there would be a major adverse change for users of the path with the loss of an extensive open outlook over fields and its replacement with residential development. Notwithstanding the strengthening of cover on the southern boundary of field F, walkers heading towards this part of the site along the footpath from Sachel Court Road (Appellants' VPI) would also be aware of the presence of the new housing. On Dunsfold Road, there would be a view into the site along the access road and over the hedgerow (Appellants' VPs G & 6). The illustrative masterplan indicates the intention to form drainage ponds close to the frontage, with the care home being the only building close to the road. New housing would also be set back from Loxwood Road, where the site has a narrower frontage at the position of the proposed access (Appellants' VPs B & 4, LPA's VP4a). Having regard to the intended layout of the housing and its relationship to Dunsfold Road and Loxwood Road, I do not consider that the proposed development would be unduly prominent from positions on both roads. There would be some loss of visual amenity, which merits moderate harm.
55. Alfold recreation ground lies to the west of Dunsfold Road and Loxwood Road and adjoins the appeal site. The open fields extending across to the woodland at the western edge of Area 3 provide a pleasant setting for users of the recreation ground. Whilst the presence of built development would be noticeable from various positions (Appellants' VPs C, Ca, 2 & 3, LPA's VPs 2a, 2b & 3a-f), the sense of encroachment would be particularly apparent from the football pitch on the western side of the playing fields where there is an open boundary with field H. Hedgerow and tree planting is proposed, but even when this has become established after about 15 years the new housing would be an imposing element in the surroundings. I note that the layout has been designed to retain an open aspect towards Sachel Court to the south-west. That intention and the positioning of the sports pitch adjacent to the existing playing fields would not, however, avoid the urban enclosure which would result from the construction of housing on Areas 2 & 3. I attach significant weight to this harm.
56. Views towards the appeal site are available from an elevated position on Hascombe Hill, which is about 4km to the north-west and within the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Appellants' VP13). I have read that this is a popular vantage point, and it affords extensive views across the landscape. Accordingly I agree with the Appellants' LVIA that it is of high sensitivity. From this position, Dunsfold Aerodrome, where a new settlement is proposed can be seen. The appeal site is further away. Whilst a line of buildings along the A281 and Loxwood Road can be discerned, this is a minor

component in the view. The proposed development would be contained by blocks of woodland, and from this distant vantage point I do not consider that it would appear as a significant element in the landscape. There would be no more than a slight adverse effect on the view, and I do not consider that this would materially increase the impact of the much larger and closer proposed development at Dunsfold Aerodrome.

57. I have also considered the effect from street lighting and lights at individual properties at night. The Appellants' LVIA acknowledges that the proposed planting would not be sufficient to mitigate the effect from Hascombe Hill. That said, given the distance of the site from the vantage point and its modest share of the overall view, there would be no more than a limited adverse visual effect, irrespective of whether development proceeds at Dunsfold Aerodrome. As the vantage point is reached by footpaths through woodland, it is unlikely to be visited by many people during the hours of darkness, and this reinforces my view that only slight harm would be caused here by light emissions. Around the appeal site lighting would be apparent, but the effect would be localised, and seen in conjunction with light sources at Alfold Crossways and the Care Ashore development. Only limited harm would ensue.
58. There are dwellings on Dunsfold Road and Loxwood Road which adjoin the site boundary, and from where there would be views of the proposed development. I had the opportunity to assess the effect from one of these properties, Bexley on Loxwood Road. Whilst the outlook for these residents would be greatly changed, they are private viewpoints in an edge of settlement location where other housing already forms part of their setting. The proposed development would cause some harm to the outlook for occupiers, but I accord this only minor weight.
59. The proposed development would have predominantly adverse effects on the character and appearance of the area. Insofar as the AGLV is concerned, the impact of development close to the boundary would be offset by the removal of the annexe at Sachel Court, and overall the proposal would have a neutral effect. Consequently I find no conflict with Policy C3 of the Local Plan. Moderate harm would be caused to the character of parts of the site (Areas 2 & 3), and to the wider landscape, and I consider that the addition of a large residential development would cause substantial harm to the character of Alfold Crossways. Insofar as visual amenity is concerned, I accord significant weight to the adverse effect at the recreation ground and on users of FP415a on the west side of Area 3, with lesser harm to views from other nearby footpaths and roads. In consequence the proposal would conflict with part (b) in Policy D1 and part (a) in Policy D4 of the Local Plan. Policy C2 requires that the countryside beyond the Green Belt be protected for its own sake, and consequently it does not reflect national policy on rural development in the NPPF. This policy carries reduced weight, but it remains part of the Development Plan and the proposal would conflict with it.

### ***Infrastructure, facilities and services***

#### *Education*

60. The County Council has advised that most schools in Waverley are at or very close to capacity<sup>26</sup>. There are no primary or secondary schools in Alfold

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<sup>26</sup> Document L7, Appendix E.



Crossways, the nearest being in Loxwood and Cranleigh. There is sufficient capacity in Cranleigh to accommodate the number of children of secondary school age expected to be generated by the development, and no contribution is sought for this sector. However pressure is reported on primary places in Cranleigh. Accordingly the County Council seeks the provision of a primary school, including early years accommodation, or alternatively financial contributions towards early years provision in the Alfold area and primary provision at Cranleigh C of E Primary School.

61. The masterplan includes a site for a primary school in Area 3, and the unilateral undertaking prevents the occupation of more than 250 dwellings or any further development after 2.5 years from construction of the first dwelling above ground level, whichever is earlier, until completion of the primary school. Should an event of default occur, or the Applicant and/ or owner be prevented from constructing the school, the financial contributions sought by the County Council are liable to be paid. The obligations would meet the requirements for education infrastructure arising from the development. Moreover the provision of a school on the site, which is the intended way forward, would avoid the need for primary age children from the existing village to travel elsewhere for their education. I attach significant weight to this benefit of the proposal.

#### *Drainage and flooding*

62. Concerns have been expressed in written representations and by members of the local community at the inquiry about problems of foul drainage in Alfold Crossways. I heard that the system backs up, and a briefing note prepared for the Appellants refers to flooding of properties and wastewater flowing overland down Loxwood Road (Document A13). As part of the development it is proposed to replace the existing Clappers Meadow pumping station off Loxwood Road with a new facility adjacent to Dunsfold Road. The new pumping station would have a greater storage capacity, and would manage the wastewater flows from the existing settlement, the existing Care Ashore properties and the proposed development.
63. At present wastewater flows south from Clappers Meadow to Loxwood wastewater treatment works (WTW), and this part of the network is considered to be susceptible to flooding. It is proposed to divert flows to Cranleigh WTW, but this facility is operating close to its capacity. The Appellants' drainage consultants reported only 7% spare capacity<sup>27</sup>. There are moreover concerns about the discharge from the WTW into Cranleigh Waters. Cranleigh Civic Society, which presented detailed evidence on this subject, took flow measurements of the watercourse in 2016, and reported a low depth of about 5cm upstream of the WTW and an average flow of 13.61l/s. The Civic Society argued that low flows have reduced the ability of the watercourse to dilute the discharge from the WTW, and submitted correspondence from the Environment Agency which explained that phosphate, macrophytes and diatoms were all failing elements in Cranleigh Waters in 2015 (Document O4). The Appellants did not dispute that the quality of the watercourse was a cause for concern.
64. It is acknowledged that works are needed to upgrade Cranleigh WTW, and it is proposed that foul drainage continues to be directed to Loxwood in the first instance. Thames Water, which operates Cranleigh WTW, has requested that a condition be imposed preventing development until a drainage strategy has

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<sup>27</sup> Document A13, paragraph 3.12.

been approved. The evidence before me indicates that, whilst there are existing problems in the foul drainage system, these do not present insuperable obstacles to development of the appeal site. The appeal proposal includes renewal of the foul drainage infrastructure in the village, and Thames Water would be in a stronger position to bring forward works to upgrade Cranleigh WTW following the grant of planning permission. The replacement of the pumping station and the ultimate diversion of flows from Loxwood to Cranleigh should resolve existing drainage problems in Alfold Crossways: this is an important benefit of the scheme, to which I attach significant weight.

65. Concern has been expressed by the local community about surface water flooding. The site lies within flood zone 1<sup>28</sup>, which paragraph 7-065 of PPG identifies as having a low probability of flooding. A number of mitigation measures have been put forward to address flood risk. It is proposed to set development back from the central watercourse, to control the release of water through the provision of attenuation basins at rates below that of the larger flood events, and to ensure that structures at crossing points have sufficient capacity to accommodate flow. Schemes for surface water drainage, including these measures, could be secured by condition, and with this safeguard I am satisfied that the proposed development would not cause problems of flooding.

#### *Water supply*

66. Thames Water has advised that the existing water supply infrastructure has insufficient capacity to meet the additional demand generated by the appeal proposal. A condition is recommended requiring impact studies to determine the extent of additional capacity required.
67. A separate concern about the presence of asbestos cement pipes in the supply network has been raised by Cranleigh Civic Society. It suggests that if the development proceeds there would be a need for more pressure in the system, which would increase the likelihood of asbestos fibres being released. The Civic Society also suspected that there is likely to be blue asbestos in the pipework which is more harmful to health. The Appellants acknowledged the presence of asbestos cement pipes in the supply network. I note that a review for the Drinking Water Inspectorate entitled *Asbestos Cement Drinking Water Pipes and Possible Health Risks (2002)*<sup>29</sup> explained that asbestos cement pipes have been widely used for drinking water distribution globally, and the Review concluded that there appears to be no concern for the health of consumers receiving the water and no programmes to specifically replace pipes for this reason. On the evidence before me, the presence of asbestos cement pipes in the supply network is not a matter which counts against the appeal proposal.

#### *Other facilities and services*

68. The provision of the sports pitch, shop and café would augment the limited range of facilities and services at Alfold Crossways: I have referred to these aspects of the proposal above (para 27). Individual representations have commented that there are no medical facilities in Alfold. Future residents of the proposed housing would need to travel, as existing residents do, to other settlements such as Cranleigh to visit a doctor or dentist. At the inquiry, the Chief Executive of Care Ashore suggested that the hub may provide an

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<sup>28</sup> The Appellants' flood risk assessment, May 2015, para 1.7.

<sup>29</sup> Appendix H in Document A13.

opportunity for visits by a doctor. However there is no certainty that this would be the case, and accordingly it cannot be weighed in the balance as a benefit of the scheme.

69. I conclude that the proposal would result in improvements in primary education and drainage provision, and that there would be no detrimental effect on infrastructure, facilities and services. It would comply with Policy D13 of the ALP and Policy ICS1 of the ELP.

### **Other considerations**

#### *Housing land*

70. There is a dispute between the main parties as to whether there is a five years supply of housing land in Waverley. The starting point is to consider the annual need for dwellings. The Borough Council's position of 507 dwellings per annum (dpa) is based on the interim findings of the Inspector examining the ELP. Using the 2014 based household projections published by the Department for Communities & Local Government, in accordance with paragraph 2a-015 of PPG, gives a figure of 396dpa<sup>30</sup>. This rises to 507dpa when a market signals uplift of 25% (99 dwellings) and an allowance for need from London and for affordable housing (12 dwellings) are taken into account<sup>31</sup>.
71. The Local Plan Inspector also referred to an allowance of 83 dwellings to meet need in Woking where the ability to provide housing land is constrained. At the inquiry the Borough Council took the view that addition of these dwellings would represent a policy-on position, which would be inappropriate in calculating a figure for objectively assessed need. The proposed modifications to the ELP, subsequently set out by the Council, include an amendment to Policy ALH1 to make provision for at least 11,210 additional homes in the period 2013-2032, equivalent to at least 590dpa (the previous figures were at least 9,861 dwellings in the plan period and 519dpa). The report to the Executive on this matter explains that the increase includes an uplift for affordability and to address a requirement to meet need arising in Woking. The ELP is not yet finalised, but has nevertheless reached a relatively advanced stage. Moreover the SHMA 2015 (CD3.1) was prepared for the West Surrey Housing Market Area, which includes Guilford, Waverley and Woking. Paragraph 47 of the NPF refers to the full objectively assessed needs in the housing market area. For these reasons I prefer the figure of 590dpa in the ELP to the figure of 507dpa supported by the Borough Council at the inquiry. In a recent appeal decision concerning residential development at Farnham in Waverley<sup>32</sup>, the Inspector considered that it was not appropriate to take account of any unmet need arising in other local planning authority areas. However circumstances have changed in respect of the ELP, and the extent of the SHMA is also a relevant factor. I have, therefore, reached a different view.
72. The Appellants have advanced housing need figures of 625dpa and 720dpa, the latter including an allowance for need from London and for affordable housing and need arising in Woking<sup>33</sup>. The main differences with the Borough Council's figures are due to demographic adjustments, market signals and employment growth. The question of objectively assessed housing need was debated

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<sup>30</sup> The derivation of this figure is given in the first table on page 3 of Appendix 1 to Document A3.

<sup>31</sup> The calculation of the 507dpa figure is given in para 1.8 of Document A3.

<sup>32</sup> Appeal ref APP/R3650/W/16/3163124, Document A5.

<sup>33</sup> A summary calculation of the Appellants' objectively assessed need is set out in Document A15.

recently at the hearing sessions for the ELP. In reaching his initial view that the appropriate figure is 590dpa, the Inspector took into account evidence from the Waverley Housing Forum, which includes Thakeham Homes, and has considered market signals and employment projections amongst other matters. The evidence before me indicates that objectively housing need has been considered thoroughly as part of the preparation of the ELP, and it would not be appropriate, in the context of this planning appeal, to seek to revisit the matter. I am satisfied that 590dpa is the figure which should be used in establishing the five years housing requirement.

73. I turn now to consider the size of the buffer which should be applied in assessing the five years housing requirement. Having regard to paragraph 47 of the NPPF, where there is a record of a persistent under-delivery of housing the buffer should be 20% rather than 5%. Between 2002/03 and 2008/09, completions exceeded the annual housing requirement<sup>34</sup>. However there have subsequently been eight consecutive years of under delivery, and the cumulative shortfall during the whole of the period from 2002/03 – 2016/17 is 899 dwellings, about 20% of the total requirement of 4,574 dwellings. The annual requirement increased from 250 to 519 in 2013/14: it would take time to adjust to this higher requirement, and the number of completions has been increasing since 2011/12. Nevertheless, since 2013/14 there has been a considerable shortfall of 1,028 dwellings. The records indicate that there has been a persistent under delivery of housing.
74. The Local Plan Inspector has taken a different view. In his note regarding the buffer<sup>35</sup>, he comments that taking a long term view requires consideration of a period which begins before the recession. From around 2008 the recession suppressed completions for a number of years, whereas completions were running ahead of the planned requirement beforehand. The evidence before me, extending over a period commencing several years before 2008, merits the application of a 20% buffer.
75. My assessment of the five years housing requirement in Waverley is set out in the table below<sup>36</sup>.

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<sup>34</sup> Completions from 2002/03 – 2016/17 are recorded in Appendix 1 of CD7.1.

<sup>35</sup> Appendix B to Mr Reay's proof of evidence.

<sup>36</sup> This scenario is included in the first table on page 6 of Document A2.

	Dwellings
Annual requirement	590
Five years need 2017/18-2021/22	2,950
Under-delivery 2013/14-2016/17	1,312 <sup>37</sup>
Sub-total	4,262
20% buffer	852
Five years requirement	5,114
One years requirement	1,023

76. There are several areas of dispute between the Appellants and the Borough Council concerning the supply of housing land. The Council's assessment of supply amounts to 4,635 dwellings<sup>38</sup>. Of this number, 416 dwellings are included in respect of a pool of sites outside settlements and listed in the 2016 Land Availability Assessment (LAA). The 2017 Five Year Housing Supply Statement (HLSS) explains that these sites have been assessed in the LAA as being suitable, achievable and deliverable, and it is considered that there is a realistic proportion of them coming forward within five years. It is clear from Appendix 4 to the LAA that a number of sites are in the Green Belt or the Surrey Hills AONB, and the HLSS acknowledges that they have not been individually assessed in the same way as other categories of site. Fundamentally, individual sites have not been identified, and paragraph 47 of the NPPF requires a supply of specific deliverable sites. LAA sites outside settlements are not appropriately included in the five years' housing land supply.
77. The Appellants also challenge the contribution of 165 dwellings from LAA sites within settlements. These sites have been identified, but they are not the subject of planning permissions or current applications. Whilst it is not a prerequisite for sites to be in the planning system in this way to warrant inclusion in the land supply, paragraph 3-031 of PPG makes it clear that robust evidence should be provided to support deliverability. The Borough Council is right that there should be a reasonable prospect, as opposed to certainty, of housing being developed on sites included in the supply. In several cases there is no specific evidence of recent activity to bring sites forward, and I do not consider that they should be taken into account. However those promoted in the call for sites, where there is no indication of an ongoing existing use, land at Wey Hill in Haslemere which is owned by the Council, and 5-21 Wey Hill where a planning application has been submitted in 2017, should be retained. On this basis a further 73 dwellings should be removed from the supply.
78. A contribution of 273 dwellings is anticipated from the development of the proposed new settlement at Dunsfold Aerodrome. Whilst the planning application has been called in by the Secretary of State, the site is a strategic

<sup>37</sup> The figure for under-delivery differs from that given in the assessment of past performance in paragraph 73 since the higher requirement adopted from the Local Plan Inspector is applied to the ELP period from 2013.

<sup>38</sup> Tables showing the composition of the Borough Council's supply position are on page 1 of Document L7.

allocation in the ELP, and it can reasonably be expected that it will continue to be promoted for significant housing development. The Appellants referred to the extent of initial infrastructure works likely to be required, but the Borough Council has explained that some of these works would not be required until more than 500 units had been provided. I see no reason to discount delivery from Dunsfold Aerodrome.

79. I do not accept the Appellants' proposition that the contribution from small sites with planning permission should be reduced by 179 dwellings to take account of the historic rate of delivery from such sites. Footnote 11 of the NPPF is clear that sites with planning permission should be considered deliverable unless there is clear evidence that schemes will not be implemented within five years. Considering these sites on a pooled basis, as the Appellants have done, does not meet this test. Moreover the information presented on a yearly basis showing the number of dwellings granted planning permission and the number delivered on small sites, does not demonstrate the rate of uptake from small sites, bearing in mind the duration of planning permissions.
80. There are disagreements about delivery from certain other sites, but it is not necessary to reach a view on these given my assessment of the housing land position. I consider that the level of supply should be reduced by 489 in the above categories giving a total of 4,146 dwellings, sufficient for 4.1 years. Even if the whole of the supply put forward by Waverley were accepted as available, there would be a shortfall of 479 dwellings and the amount of housing land would be sufficient for about 4.5 years. There is not a five years supply of housing land. Paragraph 47 of the NPPF refers to the importance of identifying a five years supply of sites to assist in significantly boosting the supply of housing. The contribution of the appeal site towards the provision of a five years supply of housing land carries significant weight in support of the proposal.

#### *Affordable housing*

81. Policies H5 and H6 of the ALP are concerned with the provision of affordable housing. Policy H5 seeks at least 30% affordable housing provision in developments over a minimum size and Policy H6 is concerned with rural exception schemes in the Green Belt and the countryside. Although the appeal site is in the countryside, the proposal involves a large development which would effectively involve extending the settlement. Accordingly Policy H5 is more relevant in this case. In smaller settlements such as Alfold Crossways, provision is expected for developments involving five or more net new dwellings or where the site is at least 0.2ha in size. The development on Areas 2 & 3 comfortably exceeds these thresholds. A similar approach is carried forward in Policy AHN1 of the ELP.
82. Chapter 9 of the ELP explains that Waverley is an expensive place in which to live. There is a significant need for affordable housing: in 2016 there were over 1,500 households in need on the Borough Council's Housing Needs Register. The 2015 SHMA estimates that the net annual affordable housing need is 314 dwellings, but in the three years from 2013/14 – 2015/16 only 131 have been provided, a shortfall of 811 homes. It is the intention that the proposal would provide 30% affordable housing in line with the Development Plan and the ELP. The planning agreement secures this level for phase 1, and specifies that 30% of the number of dwellings in subsequent phases shall also

be affordable unless the Borough Council agrees otherwise. The provision of 112 affordable dwellings would make an important contribution to meeting the need for affordable housing, and it is a matter to which I attach significant weight.

#### *Care Ashore*

83. In 2015 a report by the Institute of Public Care at Oxford Brookes University concluded that there was a need to improve the accommodation provided by Care Ashore<sup>39</sup>. The annexe, the flats and mews do not meet good practice standards. Major investment is required to remedy this situation, and the charity also wishes to enhance its facilities by the construction of the hub and additional bungalows. Care Ashore has advised that the sale of land for the housing development would provide the funding to enable these works to proceed. I acknowledge that providing financial support for the charity to upgrade and enhance its activities would be a benefit of the appeal proposal. It carries moderate weight in my considerations.

#### *Economic considerations*

84. The Appellants argue that there would be economic benefits from the development, through the provision of employment, increased support for local facilities and services, and the new homes bonus. Insofar as the latter is concerned, paragraph 21b-011 of Planning Practice Guidance advises that it would not be appropriate to make a decision based on the potential for the development to make money for a local authority. There is no detailed evidence of local facilities and services being in need of additional support, and although the development would provide some jobs, only a relatively modest number, at Care Ashore, the school, care home, and the shop and café, would be permanent. I give limited weight to the economic considerations put forward in connection with the appeal proposal.

#### *Environmental benefits*

85. Areas of open space within the site and works to upgrade local footpaths would provide a benefit to the local community. The Appellants also suggest that there would be biodiversity benefits. I acknowledge that copses, hedgerows, grassland, swales and ponds would provide a range of habitats. However I regard these works as mitigating the habitat loss and disturbance to wildlife which would be an inevitable consequence of development on this area of open countryside.

#### ***The planning obligations***

86. I have already considered the provisions of the planning obligations concerning the footpath and bridleway contributions (paras 29-30), the provision of bus services (para 31), affordable housing (para 82), and education contributions (para 61). Travel plans, a car club scheme, and travel vouchers are all important to maximise the use of sustainable travel options. Highway works in the vicinity of the site and contributions to traffic regulation orders and traffic mitigation measures are necessary to safeguard highway safety and avoid disruption to movement.

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<sup>39</sup> In Appendix F of the planning statement for the 2017 application.

87. The Borough Council has explained that the leisure centre in Cranleigh would not be able to cope with the growth in population expected in the area. A community facilities contribution of £305,625, which would be used towards a new sports hall is, therefore, appropriate. Recycling facilities would be required for the new dwellings, and the additional population would increase pressure on the existing public spaces in Alfold. A recycling contribution of £11,054 for the provision of recycling bins and food waste caddies, and a separate contribution of £36,100 towards three local environmental improvement schemes address these matters.
88. Formation of the accesses to the residential development would involve crossing common land. The planning agreement includes arrangements for replacing it within the appeal site. It is important that the open space, play space, sports pitch and sustainable drainage system included in the scheme are satisfactorily laid out and maintained thereafter, and specifications and management plans are required for these purposes.
89. Schedule 4 of the planning agreement requires provision of the care facility. This facility is not needed to enable any other part of the development to proceed, and there is no evidence of any other circumstance which necessitates its coming forward. I find that the provision of the care home does not meet the test of necessity, and I am unable to take this obligation into account in determining the appeal. Insofar as the other provisions of the planning obligations are concerned, the statutory tests in Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations are met, and these provisions are material considerations in the appeal decision.

## **Conclusions**

90. The appeal site would not be a sustainable location for major residential development, and accordingly this part of the scheme would conflict with Policy M1 of the ALP. Because of harm to the character and appearance of the area, there would also be conflict with Policies D1(b), D4(a) and C2. I acknowledge that Policies M1 and C2 carry reduced weight, but they remain part of the Development Plan. As I have found a neutral effect in respect of the AGLV, the proposal would not be contrary to Policy C3, and it would comply with Policies D13 and D14 concerning the availability of infrastructure, facilities and services, and the delivery of environmental and community benefits. The proposal involves a major development in the rural area, and the sustainability of the site's location and the effect on the character and appearance of the area are important considerations. I conclude that the proposal would be contrary to the Development Plan considered as a whole.
91. The Development Plan is silent in respect of policies for the supply of housing (above, para 17). Consequently, in accordance with paragraph 14 of the NPPF, planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole, or specific policies in the NPPF indicate that development should be restricted. The latter circumstance does not apply in this case. The proposal would provide a number of important benefits: the contribution to housing land supply at a time when Waverley does not have a five years supply carries significant weight, and I also attach significant weight to the provision of much-needed affordable housing, the intended provision of a local primary school which would serve existing



residents, and the implementation of a scheme which would address foul drainage problems in Alfold Crossways. The scheme would enable Care Ashore to upgrade and enhance its facilities, a matter to which I have given moderate weight, and there is limited weight arising from the provision of jobs and the opportunity for the local community to use the open space and upgraded footpaths included in the proposal.

92. The appeal site would not be a sustainable location for major residential development, and this part of the proposal would be inconsistent with the approach to the distribution of housing development set out in the ELP which has progressed to a relatively advanced stage. This harm carries substantial weight. I have also found that the scale of the housing development on Areas 2 & 3 would cause substantial harm to the character of Alfold Crossways. In addition I attach significant weight to the adverse effect on visual amenity at the recreation ground and on users of FP415a on the west side of Area 3, with lesser harm to views from other nearby footpaths and roads. These adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal which I have identified.
93. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all matters raised including the suggested conditions, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

*Richard Clegg*

INSPECTOR

## **APPEARANCES**<sup>40</sup>

### FOR THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:

Mr R Green of Counsel	Instructed by the Solicitor to the Borough Council.
He called	
Mr R Cooper BA(Hons) MSc	Senior Transport Development Planner, Surrey County Council.
Mrs C Noel BA MSc CMLI MCIEEM	Partner, Landvision.
Mr R Reay MCD MRTPI	Principal Planning Consultant, Luken Beck mdp Ltd.
Mr M B Devlin	Solicitor, Waverley Borough Council.
Mr C French	Principal Planning Officer, Waverley Borough Council.

### FOR THE APPELLANTS:

Mr D Elvin QC & Mr A Mills of Counsel	Instructed by Terence O'Rourke Ltd.
They called	
Mr C Austin-Fell MTP MRTPI	Associate, RPS Planning & Development Ltd.
Mr M J Paddle BSc CEng CWEM MICE FCIHT MCIWEM	Divisional Director, Mouchel Consulting Ltd.
Mr R Waddell BA(Hons) DipLA CMLI	Senior Associate, Bradley Murphy Design Ltd.
Ms J Mulliner BA(Hons) BTP(Dist) MRTPI	Director & National Head of Planning, Terence O'Rourke Ltd.
Mr T R Goacher	Chief Executive & Company Secretary, Care Ashore.
Ms S Thorpe	Thakeham Homes.

### INTERESTED PERSONS:

Miss S Tamboo	Solicitor - Highways & Planning Team, Surrey CC.
Mr M Green	Transport Development Planning Manager West, Surrey CC.
Mr N Smith Councillor K Deanus	School Commissioning Officer, Surrey CC. Member of the Borough Council for Alfold, Cranleigh Rural & Ellens Green.
Mr A Clarke	Vice-Chair, Cranleigh Civic Society.
Mr C R Britton	Deputy Chair, Protect our Waverley.
Mrs K Newnham	Former local resident and local property owner.
Mrs P Paul	Local resident.
Mr G Russell	Local resident.
Mr T Sanders OBE	Former local resident.

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<sup>40</sup> Mr Devlin, Mr French & Ms Thorpe did not give evidence in support of the main parties' cases, but contributed to the discussions on planning obligations and conditions.

## **THE LPA'S DOCUMENTS**

- L1 Mr R Green's closing submissions.
- L2 Bundle of judgements accompanying Document L2.
- L3 Note on suggestions for site visits.
- L4 Mrs Noel's comments on Mr Waddell's viewpoint images.
- L5 Note from Surrey CC – Explanation for Bus Funding Process.
- L6 Waverley housing trajectories.
- L7 Infrastructure justifications.
- L8 Plan of photograph viewpoints.
- L9 Waverley BC Land Availability Assessment 2016, Appendices 4a & 4b.
- L10 Infrastructure response to 2017 planning application concerning environmental enhancements.
- L11 Plan relating to infrastructure contributions.
- L12 Email from Mr French dated 30 August 2017 concerning possible conditions.
- L13 Letter dated 15 September 2017 from the Borough Council in response to Documents G14 and A23.
- L14 Judgement in St Modwen Developments Ltd v Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government, East Riding of Yorkshire Council, and Save our Ferriby Action Group [2017] EWCA Civ 1643.
- L15 Note on behalf of the Council in response to Document L14.

## **THE APPELLANTS' DOCUMENTS**

- A1 Supplementary statement of case.
- A2 Mr Elvin's and Mr Mills's closing submissions.
- A3 Mr Austin-Fell's rebuttal proof of evidence and appendices.
- A4 Statement of common ground for the inquiry into the planning application for a new settlement at Dunsfold Park.
- A5 Appeal decision ref APP/R3650/W/16/3163124 concerning up to 46 dwellings at Lower Bourne, Farnham.
- A6 Bundle of letters and note concerning possible housing sites in Waverley.
- A7 Exchange of emails dated June 2017 between the Appellants' agent and the Borough Council concerning correspondence from developers in respect of the Housing Land Supply Statement.
- A8 Letter dated 13 April 2017 from Ms Mulliner to the Council concerning a possible costs application.
- A9 Supplementary evidence by J Adams on behalf of the Borough Council to the Dunsfold Park inquiry.
- A10 Note on suggestions for site visits.
- A11 2015 application – key drawings booklet.
- A12 Mr Waddell's response to Document L4.
- A13 Land at Springbok Estate - Briefing note on water management and supply by Cannon Consulting Engineers – 24 July 2017.
- A14 Exchange of emails dated January & February 2016 between EFM and the County Council concerning an education obligation.
- A15 Note on the calculation of objectively assessed need for housing.
- A16 Email dated 26 July 2017 from Mr Paddle to Thakeham Homes concerning the programme of site visits.

- A17 Table – Estimated employment resulting from the proposed development.
- A18 Copy of Document G8 with highlighting to show which comments were not included in the report on the 2017 application.
- A19 Plan of proposed access arrangements to the rear of 19 Springbok Cottages.
- A20 List of suggested highways and drainage conditions.
- A21 Costs application.
- A22 Planning obligation relating to the appeal proposal.
- A23 Appeal decision ref AP/R3650/W/16/3165974 concerning up to 29 dwellings at Hedgehog Lane, Haslemere.
- A24 Letter dated 15 September 2017 from Ms Mulliner in response to Document G14.
- A25 Note on behalf of the Appellants in response to Document L14.

#### **OTHER PARTIES' DOCUMENTS**

- O1 Bundle of representations to planning application Ref WA/2017/0360 for the revised scheme on the appeal site.
- O2 Mrs Paul's statement.
- O3 Judgement in Bund fur Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland eV v Bundesrepublik Deutschland and Freie Hansestadt Bremen. Submitted by Mr Clarke.
- O4 Email dated 25 February 2106 from the Environment Agency to Mr Clarke concerning Cranleigh Waters. Submitted by Mr Clarke.
- O5 Councillor Deanus's statement.
- O6 Mr Britton's statement.
- O7 Mr Russell's statement.
- O8 Bundle of photographs of activities at Care Ashore. Submitted by Mr Russell.
- O9 Letter dated 20 July 2017 from Miss Tamboo to the Inspector concerning the proposed unilateral undertaking.
- O10 Email dated 21 July 2017 from Miss Tamboo to The Planning Inspectorate concerning the proposed unilateral undertaking.
- O11 Highways & transport CIL compliance statement. Submitted by the County Council.
- O12 Highways & transport heads of terms. Submitted by the County Council.
- O13 Letter dated 13 September 2017 from Alfold Parish Council in response to Document G14.
- O14 Email dated 15 September 2017 from Councillor Deanus in response to Document G14.

#### **GENERAL DOCUMENTS**

- G1 Planning statement of common ground
- G2 Transport traffic and highways statement of common ground.
- G3 Landscape statement of common ground.
- G4 List of core documents.
- G5a-b Decision and report on the 2017 application for development on the appeal site.
- G6 Note by Mr Cooper and Mr Paddle on bus and rail accessibility.
- G7a-b Schedule and plan of housing proposals in Alfold since 2013.

- G8 Mrs Noel's comments on the report on the 2017 application for development on the appeal site.
- G9a-b Plans for programme of site visits.
- G10a-c Plans of Alfold parish and settlement boundaries.
- G11 Extract from Farnham Neighbourhood Plan.
- G12 List of suggested conditions submitted by the Appellants and the Borough Council.
- G13 Planning agreement relating to the appeal proposal.
- G14 Minutes of the Executive meeting of 22 August 2017, report and annexes concerning proposed modifications to the ELP.