



# STEERING GROUP AFFORDABLE HOUSING SITE SELECTION REPORT

APPENDIX P

Recommendations for adoption by Albury Parish Council

February 2026

The Albury Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) has assessed the evidence base to support a selection of sites for affordable housing to be included in the Albury Parish Neighbourhood Plan. This includes:

- The Albury Parish Housing Needs Survey 2024 (APPENDIX J)
- The AECOM Site Assessment Report 2024 (APPENDIX B)
- Neighbourhood Plan Parish Consultation 2024 (APPENDIX M)
- The AECOM SEA Report 2026 (APPENDIX L)

Six sites (A-F) as shown in MAP A were considered. The conclusion of the Steering Group is shown below and forms their recommendation to Albury Parish Council for adoption:

## **THE EVIDENCE BASE**

### **1. Albury Parish Housing Needs Survey 2024**

The 2024 Housing Needs Survey identified the following affordable housing need:

- 8 Affordable rent dwellings
- 4 Shared ownership dwellings
- 5 Open market homes dwellings

All to be one, two and three bed smaller properties.

### **2. AECOM SEA Report 2026**

The criteria used by AECOM for assessing the 6 sites included impact on Air Quality, Biodiversity and geodiversity, Climate Change (including flood risk), Community Wellbeing, Historic Environment, Land, soil and water resources, Landscape and Transportation.

As all 6 sites are in close proximity and the differences in overall performance by site was marginal though only one, Site A Malcolm's Field was deemed to have a positive impact and that is for Community Wellbeing. All sites had the potential for a negative impact on the Historic Environment and Landscape, and this would need to be addressed in planning applications. With exception of Site E any negative impacts could be overcome by careful planning applications.

Site E Albury House was dismissed as unsuitable due to its proximity to Grade II Listed Albury House with development detrimental to a historic

building. This supported the same recommendation in the AECOM Site Report 2024.

### **3. Neighbourhood Plan Parish Consultation 2024 and AECOM Site Report 2024 by site**

#### **SITE A MALCOLM'S FIELD**

##### *Neighbourhood Plan Parish Consultation 2024*

Site A Malcolm's Field was joint first choice for development as chosen by parishioners with 60% of respondents favouring its inclusion. Specifically, it was deemed close to village amenities, suitable for a diverse mix of housing and was a logical extension of the existing village development pattern. Respondents particularly welcomed additional parking for residents of Weston Fields, new paths across the site making a short cut to village amenities, preserving the view of the parish church from the Street, and a new village green. Some favoured a pedestrian crossing on the Street; others did not but many favoured some form of traffic calming. Albury Estate, the landowner, had indicated that provision towards this might be provided as part of the development.

Concerns focussed on poor and dangerous access as drawn on a bend at the narrowest part of the Street (shown on MAP A). Housing being too dense with too many homes on the site. Regret was expressed by some for the loss of the open field in the heart of the village. Additional traffic due to the density of new homes on the site and impact on Church Lane was frequently noted.

##### *AECOM Site Options and Assessment Report 2024*

The site was deemed suitable for affordable housing development with policy H3 supportive of small-scale affordable housing development on rural exception sites in the Green Belt. The site is close to the centre of Albury near bus stops and local services.

Development would need to be sensitively designed to reduce the impact on the setting of Heritage Assets and on the character of the Conservation Area, with potential for the garages at the north of the site to be redeveloped for residential use.

Access onto the Street or Church Lane both pose problems and would need to be discussed with the highway authority.

## **SITE B LAND BEHIND ROSE COTTAGE**

### *Neighbourhood Plan Parish Consultation 2024*

This site was fifth choice with only 32% of respondents supporting its development. Positive comments including privacy for existing neighbours and close to amenities were substantially outweighed by the negative comments that included: increase in traffic to Church Lane, lack of parking, poor access, too dense, incursion into Green Belt

### *AECOM Site Options and Assessment Report 2024*

The site is suitable for potential affordable housing with Local Plan policy H3 supportive of small scale affordable housing development on rural exception sites. The site is adjacent to the settlement boundary and built area of Albury village and relatively close to local services and bus stops. Care would need to be taken not to damage the Conservation Area or historic setting of the church but as the site is reasonably well enclosed this could be addressed sensitively at planning application stage.

However, vehicular and pedestrian access are restricted and the access along Church Lane is narrow with no footpath. The shared access to the adjacent properties could not be widened to accommodate two-way traffic. There is no safe pedestrian access to Albury Street unless developed in conjunction with Site A Malcolm's Field.

## **SITE C BIRMINGHAM FARM**

### *Neighbourhood Plan Parish Consultation 2024*

The site was fourth choice and 49% of respondents supported it for new affordable homes.

Positive comments included "best option" with good access, close to existing amenities and a natural extension of the village with little impact on existing neighbours. There is plenty of space and natural screening would be retained.

Negative comments included increased traffic in Church Lane which is very narrow, as is Blackheath Lane and the need for adequate on-site parking.

## *AECOM Site Options and Assessment Report 2024*

The site is suitable for potential affordable housing with Local Policy Plan H3 supportive of small scale affordable housing development on rural exception sites. The site is located adjacent to the built-up area of Albury village and relatively close to amenities and bus stops.

The site is within the Conservation Area and would need to be developed sensitively so as not to impact it or the church which is Grade II Listed. The report states that the Rectory is also Listed though this is incorrect. The Old Rectory on the Street is listed but the new Rectory adjacent to the site is not.

The site is in a sensitive location between the settlement and countryside and is clearly visible from Newlands Corner. However, this is unlikely to result in significant alteration of the settlement when seen from the viewpoint as it sits at a similar elevation to surrounding homes and would appear as a natural extension to the village.

Vehicular and pedestrian access are restricted as access along Blackheath Lane is narrow and though it could be created through Birmingham Farm there would still be no pedestrian access. Though the landowner has indicated this could be provided through the churchyard there would still need to be onward access to the Street via site A as there are no pavements in Church Lane.

### **SITE D LAND BEHIND ALBURY MILL**

#### *Neighbourhood Plan Parish Consultation 2024*

This site was third choice with 54% of respondents supportive of development for new affordable homes.

Positive comments included easy access to village amenities via new footpath north of the Tillingbourne River. Easy access onto the Street, not near other properties.

Negative comments included loss of amenity to existing residents, risk of flooding, more pressure on parking at village hall, environmental impact and not supportive of development on north side of Tillingbourne River.

### *AECOM Site Options and Assessment Report 2024*

The site was deemed suitable for affordable housing development under policy H3 of the Local Plan as a rural exception site, is adjacent to the settlement boundary and built up area of Albury village and relatively close to amenities and bus stops.

There is potential for the development to affect the setting of the Conservation area and Listed buildings in the Street though this could be addressed by sensitive design. Development on the north side of the Tillingbourne river is an uncharacteristic extension of the settlement however there is sufficient screening to limit potential visual impact. There is a publicly accessible green space (picnic area) west of the site, and this would be adversely affected. Any development would need to be set back 10m from the bank of the river which would impact the developable area of the site.

The site is accessed by an existing bridge with no footway which would need to be built and there is potential for increased traffic movements through the village hall car park which could result in traffic management issues if events are taking place.

### **SITE E LAND ADJACENT TO ALBURY HOUSE**

#### *Neighbourhood Plan Parish Consultation 2024*

The site was the least popular choice with 31% of respondents supporting development. It is the only site of the 6 put forward that is in the Settlement Boundary. There was some support for it to be developed sympathetically rather than left derelict or used for additional village parking. It has easy access to the Street for cars and pedestrians and is close to amenities.

Negative comments included: plans are too dense and would damage the character of the village, and previous planning applications have already been turned down at Appeal. There is too little parking, it is too close to Listed buildings, and the loss of trees is unacceptable.

#### *AECOM Site Options and Assessment Report 2024*

The site was considered unsuitable for development for affordable homes. There would be an adverse impact on trees as 50% of the site is covered by

mature trees which though not covered by TPO's are protected by their location in the Conservation Area. The site is also screened with mature hedgerows. The site has been the subject of several previous planning applications which have been refused due to the impact on the setting of Albury House (Grade II Listed) and the openness of the former garden and character of the Conservation Area. Development of the site would have an adverse effect on the heritage assets and its openness and is therefore unsuitable.

## **SITE F LAND BEHIND VILLAGE HALL**

### *Neighbourhood Plan Parish Consultation 2024*

This site was joint first choice for development for new affordable homes. Favourable comments included: proximity to amenities (the landowner proposed a new footpath to the north of the Tillingbourne River as there is no pavement on the Street), support for development north of the river, current access onto the Street via the village car park already exists and is good. Would alleviate the parking problem at the village hall by providing extra on-site parking.

Negative comments include a loss of amenity to nearby residents, poor access through the village hall car park, negative impact on the riverside picnic area that is adjacent, impact on parking at village hall, risk of flooding and the new footpath being unsafe.

### *AECOM Site Options and Assessment Report 2024*

The site is suitable as development for affordable housing under Local Plan policy H3 rural exception sites. The site is adjacent to the settlement boundary and relatively close to existing amenities and bus stops.

Development would need to be sensitively designed to prevent damage to the Conservation Area and nearby Listed Buildings. There is little development on the north side of the Tillingbourne river and development would need to be sensitively designed. There may be negative impacts on the adjacent Green Space (picnic area) if the site is developed.

The new path proposed on the north side of the Tillingbourne river would be a positive contribution to amenities and access as would additional car parking spaces.

Any development would be required to be set back by 10m from the river bank which would limit the area for development. A new bridge would be required for vehicular and pedestrian access and there is potential for traffic management problems as cars would need to traverse the village hall car park which could be busy when events are in progress.

## **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP DECISION**

The Steering Group (SG) was mindful of the evidence base as set out above and discussed these with both Guildford Borough Council (GBC), Surrey Community Action and the landowners. The SG was keen to ensure that any proposals were in accordance with national and GBC local planning policy are likely to be acceptable to parishioners and are deliverable. There remained an intention to deliver only the 17 homes as set out in the Housing Needs Survey 2024, and not the 61 options which formed part of the Parish Consultation in 2024 as shown on MAP A. This is due to the sensitivity of the Green Belt, Surrey Hills National Landscape, Albury Conservation Area, Heritage Assets and because 61 new homes would substantially change the character and size of the existing Albury village.

Advice received from GBC planning was to select only the site/sites needed to deliver the affordable housing need as identified in the Housing Needs Survey 2024 for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan. It would not be possible to include sites without defined development proposals due to the sensitivity of Green Belt policy. The remaining sites could be brought forward as Rural Exception sites under Local Plan policy H3 at a later date if future Housing Needs Surveys identified a need for more affordable homes and the information included in the evidence base would still be valid.

Surrey Community Action suggested limiting the size of sites to under 1 hectare and under 10 units each in order to make sure the sites are “small” rural exception sites.

Discussions were also held with Albury Estate and Latchmere Properties the landowners of sites A-F. Both indicated that building costs have considerably increased recently which led the SG to the conclusion that it is more cost effective to develop fewer sites as additional cost would increase the number of open market homes needed to fund affordable units.

Albury Estate has a proven model for providing affordable homes in the parish and has built several in Albury village to date. The SG is confident that their existing model for delivery can be extended to provide new affordable homes on any of their sites namely A, B, C and F. Latchmere Properties have not provided a formal proposal showing how they would deliver affordable homes, though this has been formally requested. Latchmere properties own site E, at Albury House and site D Land Behind Albury Mill.

Having further reviewed the 6 sites and the evidence base as set out above, the SG concluded:

### **Site A Malcolm's Field**

The SG believes this site should be included in the Neighbourhood Plan as a site for development to deliver a mix of affordable and market rate homes. The amount of housing should be at a substantially reduced density to the layout included in the 2024 Parish Consultation as shown in MAP A. Access onto Church Lane or the Street must be addressed by any planning application and should seek to minimise impact at point of access and additional traffic movements. Although it is shown in MAP Q as access via the Street, this will be subject to agreement with Surrey Highways. Only part of Malcolm's Field should be developed (less than 1 hectare) with the remainder of the field used as a village green or left as an open field. It is essential that the view from the Street up to the parish church in Church Lane is retained as a key view. Extra parking should be provided in addition to that required by the new homes which can be used as "community parking." There is an expectation that this development would trigger a contribution toward traffic management in the Street, either a road crossing or speed restriction or both. Any development must accord with policies as set out in national and local planning policy and the Neighbourhood Plan and in particular be sensitive to protect the Conservation Area, Heritage Assets and design style which is unique to Albury village.

There is support for the proposal in Map Q showing:

- i. 6 one/two bed affordable homes
- ii. 2 one/two bed open market homes

### **Site B Land behind Rose Cottage**

The SG does not recommend including this site in the Neighbourhood Plan as it has very limited access which could not be overcome easily. It would also put additional traffic pressure onto Church Lane at a narrow point. Vehicular access would not allow space for pedestrians to access the site or village amenities this would have to be provided via new paths through the parish church, a heritage asset, and require development of site A Malcolm's Field. These issues could not be overcome by a different layout.

### **Site C Birmingham Farm**

The SG believes this site should be included in the Neighbourhood Plan as a site for development to deliver a mix of affordable and market rate homes. The site is close to village amenities and bus stops and pedestrian access via footpaths to the Street can be achieved via new pathways through the parish church graveyard linking to newly created paths in Site A Malcolm's Field which is safer than using Church Lane that has no pavements. Vehicular access to the site can be achieved via the existing access to Birmingham Farm. Although this is on to a narrow part of Blackheath Lane and via Church Lane, this is a limited stretch of road and avoids the majority of Church Lane. Although the site can be seen at distance from Newlands Corner the SG believes its development, if done sensitively, can be achieved to give the appearance of a natural extension of the village development area as it is bordered by existing development on three sides and has ample space for screening. The site is amply large enough to provide for adequate parking. Any development must accord with policies as set out in national and local planning policy and the Neighbourhood Plan and in particular be sensitive to protect the Conservation Area, Heritage Assets and design style which is unique to Albury village. The proposal as set out in MAP Q is for the following which is in line with the 2024 Housing Needs Survey.

- i. 4 one/two bed properties, 2 three bedroom affordable homes
- ii. 3 one/two bed open market homes:

### **Site D Land behind Albury Mill**

The SG is not supportive of including this site in the Neighbourhood Plan. The site has restrictions: any development would need to be set back 10m from the river bank which restricts the amount of space for development. The site would require a new bridge to be built for two-way vehicular and pedestrian access and would require additional cost for infrastructure and utilities which do not currently exist at the site. The extra cost of installing these may require additional open market homes to be built to offset the cost.

There is currently no development on the north side of the Tillingbourne River, and this would not be a natural extension of the village settlement area. There could be a negative impact on the peaceful nature of the adjacent riverside picnic area from traffic movement and noise.

A new bridge over the Tillingbourne river to the site would only provide vehicular and pedestrian access to the village hall car park and not to the main highway. There are no pavements from the site to village amenities or bus stops and access to these could only be provided by the development of site F. Vehicles exiting the site into the village car park may be compromised by congestion when the village hall is busy, and additional parking from the site may impact the village hall car park which is already heavily oversubscribed. This may impact the viability of the village hall.

### **Site E Albury House**

This site will not be included in the Neighbourhood Plan as it has been ruled not suitable in both the AECOM Site Assessment Report 2024 and AECOM SEA 2026. This is because of the detrimental impact on heritage assets and the Conservation Area as set out above.

### **Site F Land behind the village hall**

This site will not be included in the Neighbourhood Plan. Though popular as a choice with the community the SG is mindful that it must select sites that can easily accommodate the volume of properties needed without choosing sites that are costly to develop. This is to allow development to go ahead without delay. Site F, like site D would require a bridge to be built for two-way traffic to enter the site and for pedestrian access. There are currently no infrastructure or utilities on the north bank of the Tillingbourne

River, and this would add additional cost to development which may increase the number of market rate homes required to be built to make development viable. Again, like site F, there is currently no development north of the river and this is not a natural extension to the settlement. The SG has reservations regarding the impact that development may have on the quiet enjoyment of the riverside picnic area which is the only recreational access parishioners have to the riverside. Vehicular access to the site would be via the village car park which is often congested when events are in progress.

## **Conclusion**

The recommendation of the Albury Parish Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to Albury Parish Council is to include site A Malcolm's Field and Site C Birmingham Farm for development for affordable homes for the reasons as set out above.

A revised layout has been submitted in MAP Q. This shows both Site A Malcolm's Field and Site C Birmingham Farm Site C at less than 1 hectare each. The view of the parish Church is retained from the Street across Malcom's Field which will remain a field in order to keep the site under 1 hectare. Additional parking has been added to Site A to support village amenities and residents with footpaths across the site providing safer access from Weston Fields, Church Lane and Site C Birmingham Farm to the village shops, pub, village hall and bus stops.

MAP Q shows sites A and C and also other sites that have been considered. Site E is shaded red as it was dismissed in both the AECOM Site Report and SEA as unsuitable for development. Sites B, D and F are shaded yellow which indicates that though deemed suitable for development in the AECOM Sites Report they have not been selected for development as part of the Neighbourhood Plan for the reasons set out above. Only sites A and C have been selected for affordable housing in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Albury Parish Council adopted the decision of the Steering Group as set out above on March 2, 2026.