



PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Date: Tuesday, 26 July 2022

Time: 6.30pm

Location: Council Chamber

Contact: Ramin Shams (01438) 242308

committees@stevenage.gov.uk

Members: Councillors: M Downing (Chair), A Brown (Vice-Chair), J Ashley-Wren, M McKay, S Barr, T Callaghan, M Creasey, C Howells, G Lawrence CC, Mrs J Lloyd, A Mitchell CC, C Parris, G Snell and A Wells.

AGENDA

PART I

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2. 22/00369/FPM - BARNWELL LOWER SCHOOL, COLLENSWOOD ROAD, STEVENAGE

To consider an application seeking planning permission for the erection of a new secondary school and new Stevenage Education Support Centre (SESC) building, together with associated works and refurbishments including the provision of games areas, informal play areas, a substation, landscaping and car parking, following the demolition of the vacant former Collenswood and Barnwell School buildings.

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3. URGENT PART I BUSINESS

To consider any Part I Business accepted by the Chair as urgent.

4. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

To consider the following motions that:

1. Under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in Paragraphs 1 - 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as amended by Local Government (Access to information) (Variation) Order 2006.

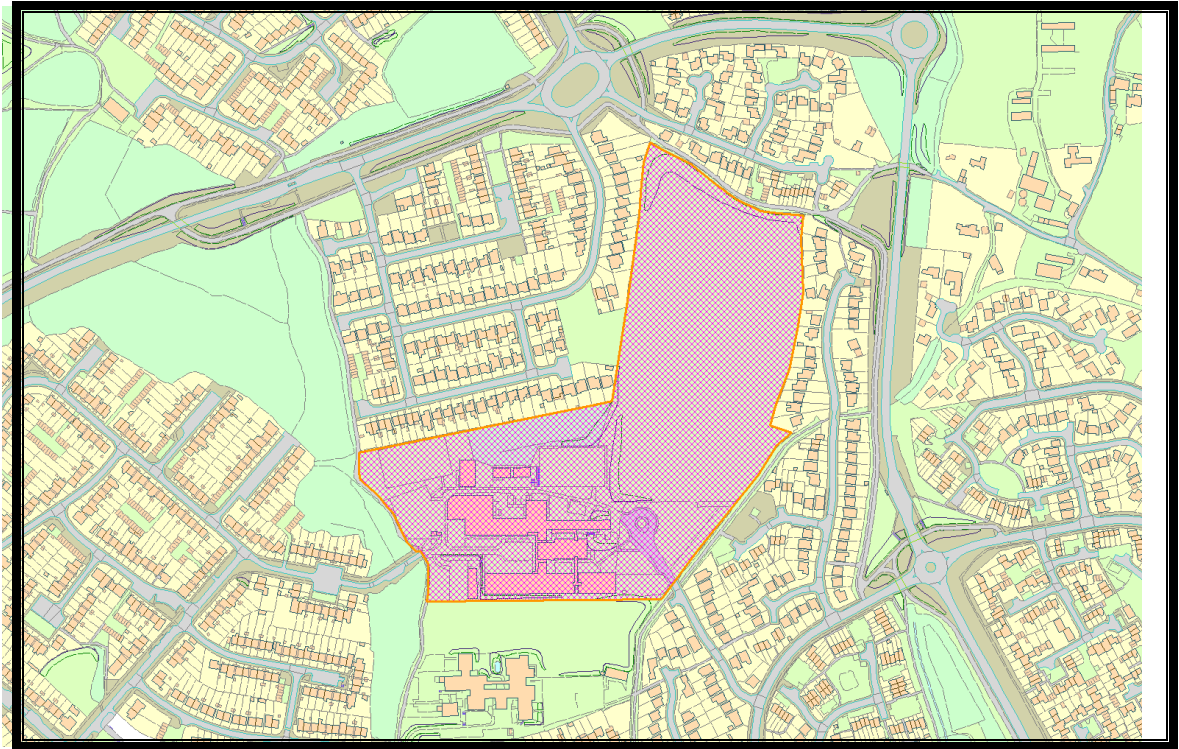
2. That Members consider the reasons for the following reports (if any) being in Part II and determine whether or not maintaining the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

5. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

To consider any Part II Business accepted by the Chair as urgent.

Meeting: Planning and Development Committee
Agenda Item:
Date: 26 July 2022
Author: Thomas Frankland-Wells
Lead Officer: Zayd Al-Jawad
Contact Officer: Thomas Frankland-Wells

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Application No: | 22/00369/FPM |
| Location: | Barnwell Lower School, Collenswood Road, Stevenage, Herts, SG2 9HQ |
| Proposal: | The erection of a new secondary school and new Stevenage Education Support Centre (SESC) building, together with associated works and refurbishments including the provision of games areas, informal play areas, a substation, landscaping and car parking, following the demolition of the vacant former Collenswood and Barnwell School buildings. |
| Drawing Nos.: | FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0001 Rev P04; FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0002 Rev P04; FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0003 Rev P04; FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0004 Rev P04; FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0005 Rev P04; FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0006 Rev P04; FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0007 Rev P04; FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0008 Rev P04; FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0009 Rev P04; FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0014 Rev P04; FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0015 Rev P04; FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0016 Rev P04; FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0017 Rev P04; FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0018 Rev P04; FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0019 Rev P04; FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0020 Rev P01; FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0023 Rev P04; FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0027 Rev P04; FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0029 Rev P04; FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0030 Rev P04; FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0032 Rev P04; FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0033 Rev P04; FS0945-JWA-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0002 Rev P03; FS0945-JWA-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0003 Rev P03; FS0945-JWA-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0004 Rev P02; FS0945-JWA-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0005 Rev P02; FS0945-JWA-ZZ-LG-DR-A-1001 Rev P02; FS0945-JWA-ZZ-00-DR-A-1002 Rev P02; FS0945-JWA-ZZ-01-DR-A-1003 Rev P01; FS0945-JWA-ZZ-02-DR-A-1004 Rev P01; FS0945-JWA-ZZ-R1-DR-A-1005 Rev P01; FS0944-JWA-ZZ-LG-DR-A-1050 Rev P01; FS0945-JWA-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-3001 Rev P01; FS0945-JWA-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-3002 Rev P01; FS0945-JWA-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-3003 Rev P02; FS0945-JWA-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-4001 Rev P01; 714-ALA-XX--ZZ-DR-L-0006 Rev P01; 714-ALA-XX--ZZ-DR-L-0007 Rev P01; FS1024-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0001 Rev P04; FS1024-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0002 Rev P04; FS1024-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0003 Rev P04; FS1024-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0004 Rev P04; FS1024-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0005 Rev P04; FS1024-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0008 Rev P04; FS1024-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0009 Rev P04; FS1024-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0010 Rev P04; FS1024-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0011 Rev P02; FS1024-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0012 Rev P04; FS1024-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0016 Rev P04; FS1024-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0020 Rev P04; FS1024-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0021 Rev P01; FS1024-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0022 Rev P01; FS1024-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0023 Rev P03; FS1024-JWA-AA-00-DR-A-1001 Rev P02; FS1024-JWA-AA-01-DR-A-1002 Rev P02; FS1024-JWA-AA-ZZ-DR-A-3001 Rev P02; FS1024-JWA-AA-ZZ-DR-A-3002 Rev P02; FS1024-JWA-AA-ZZ-DR-A-4001 Rev P01. |
| Applicant: | Bowmer & Kirkland (on behalf of the Department for Education) |
| Date Valid: | 21 April 2022 |
| Recommendation: | GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION |



The above plan is for illustrative purposes only.

1 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 1.1 The application site is an irregularly shaped plot of land, extending to approximately 8.15 hectares and located between Six Hills Way and Ashtree Primary School. It was originally the site of Collenswood School, which opened in 1962, before later becoming the site of Barnwell School's East Campus from 2006 onwards. After the Barnwell East Campus closed in 2014, Stevenage Education Support Centre ("SESC") began operating from a portion of the western part of the site, with the remainder left vacant. This arrangement continues to the present day.
- 1.2 The buildings on the site appear typical for a school constructed in the middle of the 20th century. Extending to up to four storeys in height, they are laid out in an "H" configuration in the south-western part of the site. The north-western part remains largely undeveloped, having been used as playing fields.
- 1.3 There are two entrances to the site, one in the east and one in the west, both of which provide vehicular and pedestrian access. The western access, via Collenswood Road, was historically the only entrance and has since been used as the main entrance, now serving SESC. The western entrance, via Redwing Close, was a later addition and its use was more limited, generally being reserved for pedestrians and vehicular drop-off, as well as service and emergency vehicles.
- 1.4 The majority of the site is bounded by mature trees, with gaps emerging along the boundary with Ashtree Primary School and where the rear gardens of neighbouring houses back directly on to the school playing fields. The land on the site falls gently towards the east and the north.
- 1.5 The site is allocated for a secondary school in the Local Plan under Policy HC9 and also falls within Non-Residential Parking Accessibility Zone 4 but is otherwise not subject to any local plan designations. In terms of environmental constraints, it is located wholly within Flood Zone 1 (lowest risk) and Source Protection Zone 2 (outer protection zone). It should also be noted that the larger groups of trees on the site make up areas of Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland, which is Habitat of Principal Importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England.
- 1.6 Land use in the surrounding area is predominantly residential, comprising two storey dwellings laid out as terraces, pairs or as detached properties. The notable exception to this pattern is Ashtree Primary School, which lies immediately to the south of the site. It should also be noted that the woodland to the west of the site is designated both as Principal Open Space and as a Wildlife Site.

2 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.1 97/2/0371 – Extension to provide new music and drama facility, replacement/additional car parking provision, new pedestrian/vehicular access from Redwing Close with on-site vehicle turning facility – Planning permission granted on 6 January 1998.
- 2.2 00/00500/REG3 – Retention of four double mobile classroom units – No objection on 21 December 2000.
- 2.3 01/00673/REG3 – New four classroom block – No objection on 14 January 2002.
- 2.4 09/00106/FP – Erection of temporary building containing 3 classrooms – Planning permission granted on 21 May 2009.
- 2.5 22/00360/SCR – EIA screening opinion – Screening opinion closed on 12 May 2022.

3 THE CURRENT APPLICATION

- 3.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the redevelopment of the site to provide upgraded facilities for SESC and a new secondary school (the Michaela Community School).
- 3.2 The Michaela Community School would occupy the eastern portion of the site and would accommodate 900 secondary pupils, 360 sixth form pupils (1260 pupils total), as well as approximately 80 staff. The works to provide the school would involve:
- clearing the existing site, including removal of all of the existing buildings;
 - constructing a new school building with a gross internal area of 9,810m² set over four storeys;
 - constructing of a new multi-use games area (“MUGA”) with four courts;
 - upgrading the existing playing fields;
 - providing new hard and soft landscaping, including tree planting and boundary fencing;
 - providing new play spaces, cycle parking, car parking, pick up and drop off areas, and refuse stores; and,
 - siting a new substation in the south-eastern corner of the site.
- 3.3 It should also be noted that the sports facilities at the Michaela Community School would be open for public use outside of teaching hours.
- 3.4 SESC would continue to occupy the western portion of the site and would accommodate 36 pupils at key stages three and four. The works to upgrade the facilities would involve:
- clearing the existing site, including the demolition of all but one of the existing buildings;
 - constructing a new single storey building, with a gross internal of 914m²;
 - providing new hard and soft landscaping, including tree planting and boundary fencing; and,
 - providing new play spaces, cycle parking, car parking, pick up and drop off areas, and refuse stores.
- 3.5 The application comes before the Planning and Development Committee because it is an application for major development.

4 PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS

- 4.1 The application has been publicised by neighbour letters, the posting of site notices, and an advertisement in the local newspaper.
- 4.2 13 letters of objection were received. The material issues raised are summarised as follows:
- The MUGA fencing will be clearly visible from neighbouring properties
 - Balls are likely to travel into neighbouring gardens, causing nuisance
 - Noise disturbance, particularly from sports pitches, car parking, and pupils travelling to and from the site
 - Light pollution from sports pitch floodlighting
 - Loss of privacy
 - Loss of habitat and biodiversity, particularly adjacent to Marlborough Road
 - The footprint of the existing facilities should be utilised as much as possible in order to minimise the impact on the environment and neighbouring residents
 - The amount of car parking proposed is excessive
 - Redwing Close was not historically used as an access to the site
 - Redwing Close is already suffering parking and highway safety issues, with insufficient space for two cars to safely pass each other

- Redwing Close was not built to accommodate the heavy construction traffic that would be necessary for the development
- The proposed development would result in a significant uplift in the number of pupils when compared with the historic use of the site, which would result in a corresponding increase in disturbance to neighbouring residents, as well as littering and anti-social behaviour
- The demolition and construction work would cause significant disturbance to neighbouring residents
- The proposed community use of the sports facilities would extend disruption into the evenings and weekends
- The development will result in significant congestion on Magpie Crescent
- Overspill car parking on Magpie Crescent is not feasible
- The additional traffic generated by the development will cause a deterioration in air quality
- The pre-application engagement by the developer was inadequate

4.3 6 letters of support were also received. The material issues raised are summarised as follows:

- The development will provide necessary school places, accommodating children living in recent housing developments
- The development will provide parents with more choice
- The values and ethos of the school will benefit pupils and the wider community

4.4 5 letters were received which expressed neither support nor opposition to the application. The issues raised in these letters are summarised as follows:

- A new school is needed but the impact on habitats and biodiversity is a concern
- The proposed development should be at least carbon neutral and ideally, carbon negative, incorporating air source heat pumps and solar panels
- Concern regarding construction traffic routes and potential parking restrictions

4.5 Finally, a number of very specific comments and recommendations were made by Cycling UK regarding the entrances to the site, the cycleways adjoining the entrances to the site, and parking.

4.6 Full copies of all representations are available on the Council's website.

5 CONSULTATIONS

5.1 The following section contains summaries of consultation responses. Full copies of the responses are available on the Council's website.

5.2 SBC Arboriculture and Conservation Manager

5.2.1 Having studied the plans and visited the site, I have no objection from an arboriculture viewpoint.

5.2.2 My only slight concern would be the encroachment of the existing mature trees from Collenswood onto the new development. If this is likely to be an issue, I would suggest that the applicant employ their own arboricultural contractor to carry out any necessary cut back work.

5.3 SBC Environmental Health Officer

5.3.1 I have reviewed the submitted noise assessment reports dated 15 June 2022.

- 5.3.2 Whilst the proposed plan details are not known at this stage, cumulative plant noise emission limits are proposed. I suggest a condition based on Section 2.2 of the reports.
- 5.3.3 With regard to the MUGAs, the reports find that noise mitigation measures are required. A 3m high acoustic barrier is proposed, as is a noise management plan. I recommend conditions such that the MUGAs are not used after 21:30hrs, that the acoustic barriers are installed prior to first use, and that noise management plans are submitted based on Section 3.6.3 of the noise assessment reports.
- 5.3.4 Construction has the potential to cause nuisance in terms of dust, noise etc.
- 5.3.5 The lighting details submitted in the Design and Access Statement are satisfactory and may be approved.
- 5.3.6 I have no objections to the proposed development.
- 5.4 HCC Minerals and Waste
- 5.4.1 Waste Policy 12 requires all relevant construction project to be supported by a site waste management plan ("SWMP"). This aims to reduce the amount of waste produced on site and should contain information including types of waste removed from the site and where that waste is being taken to.
- 5.4.2 The project will involve a large amount of demolition. All buildings on the site are set to be demolished except for the self-contained SESC teaching block.
- 5.4.3 A SWMP has been submitted and is considered to be acceptable.
- 5.5 HCC Highways
- 5.5.1 HCC as highway authority reviewed the application submission and raised several areas that required addressing before being reviewed again. A revised transport assessment was submitted in light of these comments. HCC have yet to provide full comments on this but has indicated that they will not object to the application, subject to conditions. Their full comments will be provided to the committee as an update.
- 5.6 SBC Planning Policy
- 5.6.1 The proposed development would reuse a vacant school site for the provision of a community school which would accommodate a significant portion of the demand for school places arising from housing growth. The applicant proposed high quality sustainable building design, a robust biodiversity strategy and a sports hall for community use. However, the applicant should strongly consider reducing parking provision to preserve HPI woodland and disincentivise staff car use, and accordingly provide additional cycle parking to accommodate staff and students. Additionally, consideration should be given to means of prohibiting parent parking on Redwing Close and adjacent streets.
- 5.7 North Herts Council
- 5.7.1 North Hertfordshire Council raises no objections to the proposed development and has no wish to make any further comments.
- 5.8 HCC Growth and Infrastructure
- 5.8.1 I write in respect of planning obligations sought by HCC towards early years, primary and secondary education, and library and youth services. These obligations should only be sought for major residential developments. Therefore, we will not be seeking financial contributions.

5.9 Thames Water

- 5.9.1 With regard to surface water drainage, Thames Water would advise that if the developer follows the sequential approach to the disposal of surface water, we will have no objection.
- 5.9.2 With regard to surface water and foul water network infrastructure capacity, we have no objections based on the information provided.
- 5.9.3 With regard to water supply, this comes within the area covered by the Affinity Water Company. The applicant is advised that their development boundary falls within a Source Protection Zone for groundwater abstraction.

5.10 Crime Prevention Design Service

- 5.10.1 The site has previously been a hot spot for anti-social behaviour. This was due to the route through the school linking Collenswood Road and Redwing Close. As a result, the school regularly suffered from criminal damage in the form of broken windows. I am pleased therefore, to see that the architects have used the Police preferred minimum security standard that is Secured by Design ("SBD") as a design guide.
- 5.10.2 However, it would have been better if they had contacted Hertfordshire Constabulary with a view to seeking SBD accreditation. I request that an informative recommending this is added to any grant of permission.
- 5.10.3 My only other comment is that palisade fencing should not be used since it is aggressive in appearance and can easily be damaged. It would be better to consider using a weld mesh style fence that is third party certified to LPS 1175 Issue 8 B3 or equivalent.

5.11 East Herts District Council

- 5.11.1 I can confirm that East Herts Planning do not have any comments to make.

5.12 Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust

- 5.12.1 The application is acceptable from an ecological perspective. It is recommended that a Landscape and Ecology Management Plan is secured by condition to ensure that the outputs of the biodiversity net gain metric are delivered.

5.13 Affinity Water

- 5.13.1 You should be aware that the proposed development site is located with a Source Protection Zone, corresponding to our pumping station. This is a public water supply, comprising a number of abstraction boreholes.
- 5.13.2 The construction works and operation of the proposed development site should be done in accordance with the relevant British Standards and best practices, thereby significantly reducing the groundwater pollution risk. It should be noted that the construction works may exacerbate any existing pollution. If any pollution is found at the site, then the appropriate monitoring and remediation works will need to be undertaken.
- 5.13.3 Any works involving excavations below the chalk groundwater table (for example piling or the implementation of a geothermal open/closed loop system) should be avoided. If these are necessary, a ground investigation should first be carried out to identify appropriate techniques to avoid displacing any shallow contamination to a greater depth, which could impact the chalk aquifer.

5.13.4 Being within a water stressed area, we expect that the development includes water efficient fixtures and fittings. Measures such as rainwater harvesting and grey water recycling help the environment by reducing pressure for abstractions. They also minimise potable water use by reducing the amount of potable water used for washing, cleaning, and watering gardens. This in turn reduces the carbon emissions associated with treating water to a standard suitable for drinking and will help in our efforts to get emissions down in the Borough.

5.14 Sport England

5.14.1 Unless the development meets one or more of five specific exceptions as set out in Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and Guidance, Sport England will oppose the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of or would prejudice the use of: all or any part of a playing field; land which has been used as a playing field and remains undeveloped; or land allocated for use as a playing field.

5.14.2 The development would encroach onto the former school's natural turf playing field and would result in a loss of around 0.54 hectares. However, the majority of this area would consist of the proposed MUGA, which would offer a number of benefits. The development would also facilitate getting the playing field back into school and community use after several years of no formal sports use and works would be undertaken to reinstate the site so that it is suitable for such use including drainage and levelling works. As shown by the provided playing pitch layouts, a range of winter and summer playing pitches could be accommodated on the remaining playing field, which would meet the needs of the new school and offer football pitches that would be suitable for meeting community needs. Furthermore, there is no current formal community use of the school's playing field that would be affected by the proposal. The proposals on the SESC site would represent an enhancement as one of the redundant MUGAs would be refurbished to allow use of it by the SESC for a range of formal sports, while the remaining area would be converted to informal natural turf play space.

5.14.3 In conclusion, the benefits to sport offered by the development would be considered to clearly outweigh the detriment caused by the impact on the playing field. Given the above assessment, Sport England does not wish to raise an objection to this application because it is considered to meet Exception 5 of Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and Guidance. This position is subject to a number of conditions being attached to the decision notice should the local planning authority be minded to approve the application.

5.15 Wood Group UK (Flood Risk and Drainage Consultant)

5.15.1 The full consultation response has not yet been received and will be published as an update in advance of the Committee meeting.

6 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

6.1 Background to the Development Plan

6.1.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. For Stevenage, the statutory development plan comprises the following documents:

- The Stevenage Borough Council Local Plan 2011-2031 (adopted 2019)
- The Hertfordshire Waste Core Strategy & Development Management Policies Development Plan Document 2011-2026 (adopted 2012)
- The Hertfordshire Waste Site Allocations Development Plan Document 2011-2026 (adopted 2014)
- The Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan Review 2002-2016 (adopted 2007)

6.2 National Planning Policy Framework

6.2.1 A revised National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”) was published in July 2021. This largely reordered the earlier 2012 version of the NPPF, albeit with some revisions to policy substance. The Council are content that the policies in the Local Plan are in conformity with the revised NPPF and that the Local Plan should be considered up-to-date for the purposes of determining planning applications. The NPPF provides that proposals which accord with an up-to-date development plan should be approved without delay (Paragraph 11) and that where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan, permission should not usually be granted (Paragraph 12). This indicates the weight which should be given to an up-to-date development plan, reflecting the requirements of section 38(6) of the 2004 Act.

6.2.2 The Council will nevertheless be commencing preliminary work into a review of its Local Plan, which was adopted in May 2019. This is to further ensure that the policies within the Local Plan are up-to-date, as well as to ensure the Plan is performing well against its objectives.

6.3 Planning Practice Guidance

6.3.1 The Planning Practice Guidance (“PPG”), with which Members are fully familiar, is an online resource containing guidance supplementing the NPPF. The PPG is a material consideration which should be taken into account in determining planning applications.

6.4 National Design Guide

6.4.1 The National Design Guide 2021 is Government guidance on the characteristics of well-designed places and demonstrates what good design means in practice. It has the same status as the PPG and should similarly be taken into account when determining planning applications.

6.5 Stevenage Borough Local Plan

6.5.1 The Local Plan policies most relevant to determining the application are as follows:

- SP1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- SP2 Sustainable Development in Stevenage
- SP5 Infrastructure
- SP6 Sustainable Transport
- SP8 Good Design
- SP9 Healthy Communities
- SP11 Climate Change, Flooding and Pollution
- SP12 Green Infrastructure and the Natural Environment
- IT4 Transport Assessments and Travel Plans
- IT5 Parking and Access
- IT6 Sustainable Transport
- GD1 High Quality Design
- HC9 Former Barnwell East Secondary School
- FP1 Climate Change
- FP2 Flood Risk in Flood Zone 1
- FP5 Contaminated Land
- FP7 Pollution
- FP8 Pollution Sensitive Uses
- NH1 Principal Open Spaces
- NH2 Wildlife Sites
- NH4 Green Links
- NH5 Trees and Woodland

6.6 Supplementary Planning Documents

6.6.1 The following supplementary planning documents are relevant to determining the application:

Developer Contributions SPD 2021
Parking Provision and Sustainable Transport SPD 2020
The impact of Development on Biodiversity SPD 2020
Design Guide SPD 2009

6.7 Community Infrastructure Levy

6.7.1 Stevenage Borough Council adopted a Community Infrastructure Levy ("CIL") Charging Schedule in 2020. This allows the Council to collect a levy to fund infrastructure projects based on the type, location, and floor space of a development. The proposal would be liable for CIL but would be zero-rated since it falls into the "all other development" category.

7 APPRAISAL

7.1 The main issues in the assessment of the application are as follows:

- The principle of the development
- Character and appearance
- Impact on the environment and neighbouring occupiers
- Parking
- Highway safety
- Ecology, Arboriculture and Biodiversity
- Flood risk and drainage
- Climate change and sustainability
- Fire safety
- Crime prevention
- Developer obligations and CIL

7.2 Principle of Development

7.2.1 *Provision of Education*

7.2.1.1 Hertfordshire County Council, as Local Education Authority, are responsible for the planning of secondary school places for Stevenage. The Borough is currently served by six secondary schools, which together provide a total of 1,366 places at Year 7.

7.2.1.2 In the years leading up to the adoption of the Local Plan, building schemes at The Nobel School and Marriotts School saw both schools rebuilt or significantly refurbished and expanded. Barnwell School, which serves the south of the Borough, also received investment from HCC to expand its buildings. Its occupation of the application site ceased at the end of the 2013/2014 academic year, and it now operates over its main site and the neighbouring former Heathcote School site.

7.2.1.3 The Local Plan states that additional demand for secondary school places will be accommodated via the expansion of existing secondary schools and the reoccupation of the former Barnwell East Campus, which is the application site. Accordingly, the site is reserved to meet secondary school needs by Policy HC9 of the Local Plan and its development for anything other than education is explicitly restricted unless it can be demonstrated that such a need does not exist.

7.2.1.4 Projected demand for secondary school places in Hertfordshire is presented in the HCC's Secondary Schools Forecast, which was most recently updated for Summer 2022. This shows that there is likely to be very little spare capacity over the next few academic years, with only

a 3.4% surplus of spaces in the 2022/2023 academic year and a shortfall of -0.4% in the following year.

- 7.2.1.5 The projected situation does improve towards the end of the forecast, reaching a peak surplus of 10.7% by 2028/2029. However, this reflects a fall in expected pupil numbers rather than an expected increase in the number of available places. In other words, there is currently limited capacity to accommodate further growth in demand for school places within the Borough.
- 7.2.1.6 The need for school places is also reflected in national planning policy. Paragraph 95 of the NPPF emphasises the importance of ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities are required to take a proactive, positive, and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education.
- 7.2.1.7 The proposed development would create 1,260 additional secondary school places within the new Michaela Community School on the eastern part of the site. This is clearly in accordance with Policy HC9, which reserves the site to meet secondary school needs. It would also align with national planning policy insofar as it would widen the choice of school places which, according to the above figures, is very limited in the Borough.
- 7.2.1.8 The development would also provide upgraded facilities for SESC. SESC is not a secondary school but is nonetheless an educational institution, providing support for young people at key stages three and four who are permanently excluded or at risk of permanent exclusion from schools in Stevenage or elsewhere in North Hertfordshire, with the aim of returning them to permanent full time education. Their presence on the site is current, well established, and in accordance with the existing lawful use of the site for the provision of education.
- 7.2.1.9 Whilst Policy HC9 reserves the site to meet secondary school needs, development for other educational purposes is not restricted. SESC clearly fulfils an educational purpose and the proposal to provide upgraded facilities for SESC on the site is therefore in accordance with the policy. In any event, it would be wholly unreasonable to resist the proposal on the basis that an existing, well established, and lawful use would remain on the site, let alone one that provides such clear benefits to the public.

7.2.2 *Provision of Sports Facilities*

- 7.2.2.1 The Stevenage Borough Sports Facility Assessment and Strategy 2014-2031, part of the evidence base for the Local Plan, identifies a requirement for at least two additional four court sports halls within the plan period. The Local Plan itself recommends that one of these is provided at the secondary school on the site, with long term community access encouraged to ensure that it remains available to the public.
- 7.2.2.2 Accordingly, Policy HC9 of the Local Plan requires the school on the site to provide a sports hall, made available to the public through a community use agreement or similar arrangement. The hall must be at least four courts in size.
- 7.2.2.3 The Sports Facility Assessment and Strategy also identifies that the playing fields at the site offer an opportunity to provide a high-quality football facility. However, it is recognised that this opportunity is reduced if the site is brought back into secondary school use, since the playing fields will need to be brought back into curriculum use.
- 7.2.2.4 The proposal for the Michaela Community School would involve the provision of a new four court sports hall. According to Sport England, this would be significantly superior in quality to the existing gyms at the site and would provide a modern, fit for purpose sports hall that could be used for a wide range of sports and physical activities. The new sports hall would be accompanied by a new set of changing rooms to support both the indoor and outdoor facilities at the site.

- 7.2.2.5 The school would also provide a MUGA, which again would be superior in quality to the existing games court areas that they would replace. The MUGA would potentially be suitable for tennis, basketball, and hockey, providing four courts that would be fenced. England Netball has confirmed that the dimensions of the courts would be suitable for netball to take place.
- 7.2.2.6 The playing field on the site would be reinstated to use as part of the proposals. Three junior football pitches would be marked out on the playing field in the winter months, which would help meet community youth football pitch needs. The Hertfordshire FA has advised that there is demand for further community football pitches in Stevenage and the development could help meet this need. The quality of the pitches would be significantly improved through installing a primary drainage scheme within the footprint of the pitches, together with earthworks to improve their gradients.
- 7.2.2.7 The applicant has confirmed that all of the above facilities would be made available for public use outside of school hours and is willing to secure this through a community use agreement. The proposed development would therefore not only provide the sports hall required by Policy HC9 of the Local Plan but would also provide a range of other modern facilities to help meet community sports needs, as well as providing greatly enhanced facilities for use by the new school. Sport England have been consulted on the application and have confirmed that they the proposed sports facilities are acceptable.
- 7.2.3 *Loss of Sports Facilities*
- 7.2.3.1 The proposed development would encroach onto the existing, natural turf playing field at the site, resulting in the loss of approximately 0.54 hectares. However, there is currently no formal school or community use of the field and the majority of the area that would be lost would be replaced by the proposed MUGA, which would offer the benefits set out above.
- 7.2.3.2 Furthermore, the proposal would involve bringing the playing field back into school and community use after several years of no formal sports use and works would be carried out to improve the quality of the pitches provided on the field. The submitted pitch layout drawings show that a range of winter and summer playing pitches could be accommodated on the remaining playing field, which would meet the needs of the new school and offer football pitches that would be suitable for meeting community needs. Sport England have been consulted on the application and have confirmed that the proposed loss of sports facilities is acceptable.
- 7.2.4 *Conclusions on Principle of Development*
- 7.2.4.1 In summary, the proposed development would create 1,260 additional secondary school places in modern facilities, providing the means to accommodate future growth in demand for school places, as well as offering greater choice for residents of the Borough. It would also provide enhanced facilities for an existing institution which provides valuable educational support for young people who are permanently excluded or at risk of exclusion from full time education.
- 7.2.4.2 Although the development would result in the loss of approximately 0.54 hectares of the existing playing field at the site, this would not impact any existing school or community use. The replacement facilities provided by the development, which would be made available to the public through a community use agreement, would be greatly superior in quality to those currently on the site, providing a significant overall benefit to sports facility provision in the Borough.
- 7.2.4.3 Having regard to the above, the proposal is considered to be in full accordance with Policy HC9 of the Local Plan, which reserves the site to meet secondary school needs, with provision for a community sports hall. Sport England have also confirmed that they consider the principle

of the development to be acceptable. Accordingly, the development is considered to be acceptable in principle.

7.3 Character and Appearance

7.3.1 Policy SP8 of the Local Plan requires new development to achieve the highest standards of design and sustainability. Policy GD1 generally requires all forms of development to meet a high standard of design, which includes form of built development, elevational treatment and materials, along with how the development would integrate with surrounding urban fabric, its relationship between buildings, landscape design and relevant aspects of sustainable design.

7.3.2 The National Design Guide 2019, which was published by the Government, is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. It states that buildings are an important component of places and proposals for built development are a focus of the development management system. However, good design involves careful attention to other important components of places. These include:

- the context for places and buildings;
- hard and soft landscape;
- technical infrastructure – transport, utilities, services such as drainage; and
- social infrastructure – social, commercial, leisure uses and activities.

7.3.3 A well-designed place is unlikely to be achieved by focusing only on the appearance, materials and detailing of buildings. It comes about through making the right choices at all levels, including:

- the layout;
- the form and scale of buildings;
- their appearance;
- landscape;
- materials; and
- their detailing.

7.3.4 The Guide goes on to state that all developments are made up of these components put together in a particular way. As such, the choices made in the design process contribute towards achieving the ten characteristics and shape the character of a place. For reference, these ten characteristics are as follows:

- Context – enhances the surroundings;
- Identity – attractive and distinctive;
- Built form – a coherent pattern of built form;
- Movement – accessible and easy to move around;
- Nature – enhanced and optimised;
- Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive;
- Uses – mixed and integrated;
- Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable;
- Resources – efficient and resilient;
- Lifespan – made to last.

7.3.5 The Council's Design Guide SPD (2009) sets out that a high-quality environment is essential for providing a good quality of life. A well-designed and managed space not only provides a visually attractive environment but can also help to ensure that a place is easy to move around and within, is safe and secure, and is useful for all members of the community.

7.3.6 *Existing Site*

- 7.3.6.1 In its current condition, the site is dominated by the former school. This is largely made up of a series of connected buildings and wings, ranging from one to four storeys in height, laid out in a sprawling “H” configuration across the majority of the southern portion of the site. It has a typical appearance for a school building of its era and is now generally in poor condition.
- 7.3.6.2 Immediately surrounding the main school buildings are a series of smaller ancillary buildings, including the sole building on the site which is proposed for retention. This is a single storey teaching block, constructed of yellow brick and topped by a shallow, tiled gable roof. As with the other buildings on the site, it is not of any particular architectural merit, but it is however in a relatively good state of repair.
- 7.3.6.3 Between the buildings and immediately surrounding them is a large amount of hardstanding, particularly towards the west of the site, which contains the existing car park and games court. The north-eastern part of the site is largely given over to the grassed playing field.
- 7.3.6.4 Bounding the site are a significant number of mature trees, which form larger groups around the entrance from Redwing Close, along the boundary with the houses on Marlborough Road, and in the west of the site towards Great Collens Wood. These largely screen the school buildings in views from surrounding areas, with large gaps only emerging along the boundary between the site and Ashtree Primary School, and where the back gardens of houses on Cromwell Road and Jackdaw Close back directly onto the school playing field.
- 7.3.7 *Surrounding Context*
- 7.3.7.1 The surrounding area has a typical suburban character, with low density housing set amidst areas of open space and woodland. The houses are typically two storey and of brick and tile construction, topped by tiled pitched roofs. They are laid out in a variety of formats, with most to the north and east of the site being detached, while to the south, short terraces and pairs of semi-detached properties become more common. To the west, the houses are almost all laid out as terraces, in some cases more than ten properties in length.
- 7.3.7.2 In terms of landscape, the site is separated from the housing estates focused around Shephall Way and Gresley Way by contiguous areas of green space. The larger of these is a contiguous band of woodland and open spaces running from Fairlands Valley Park, along the western boundary of the site, and on as far south as Bandle Rise. The other is entirely wooded and runs from Jackdaw Close to Aston End Brook. A smaller group of trees separates the site from Marlborough Road, while the southern side of the site is comparatively more open.
- 7.3.8 *Michaela Community School*
- 7.3.8.1 The new Michaela Community School building would be by far the largest and most visually impactful element of the proposed development. This would comprise two linear wings, both extending to four storeys in height, arranged in a “T” configuration and linked by a short, glazed walkway. It would be sited slightly north-east of the existing school building but would be orientated in the same direction, with the larger of the two wings running east to west and the smaller wing projecting out to the south.
- 7.3.8.2 In terms of overall height, the proposed building would be slightly taller than the existing. The existing building reaches a maximum height of approximately 13.5m above ground level, whereas the proposed building would rise to a height of a little over 15.5m. While this increase is not insignificant, the positioning of the building, its overall scale, and the screening afforded by surrounding trees is such that the increased height in itself is unlikely to be readily appreciable from beyond the site’s boundaries. In any event, the building would not appear unduly tall for its form and purpose, nor would it appear misproportioned given its significant width.

- 7.3.8.3 A more significant difference between the existing school and the proposal would be in the massing. Whereas the existing school varies quite significantly in its proportions as it extends across the site, the proposed school would be much more uniform, maintaining a consistent roof height across its entire footprint, save for the main hall / drama studio and sports hall on its western side, which would be set slightly lower. The effect of this is that the proposed school would have a much greater physical presence on the site than the existing.
- 7.3.8.4 However, this would be softened somewhat by the proposed materials, in particular their colour and pattern. The larger of the two wings would be mostly clad with cement fibre panels in a neutral, light grey colour. These would be in a narrow format, giving the wing a slightly more vertical emphasis rather than exaggerating its considerable width.
- 7.3.8.5 The grey panels would be occasionally punctuated by gold and light green panels, again in a narrow format, which would link together windows and help to break up the mass of the wing. Brick slips, which have a more robust appearance, would only be used at very low level.
- 7.3.8.6 The main hall / drama studio and sports hall would again be clad with cement fibre panels but this time in a golden matt finish throughout, providing a marked contrast with the colour of the larger main wing and further helping to break up the massing of the school as a whole. The panels would be in large format at lower level but narrower further up, adding an important degree of visual interest to a part of the building that would be largely devoid of glazing. As with the large main wing, brick slips would be consigned to the base of the structure, providing some consistency between the two parts of the building, and ensuring that the design as a whole is coherent.
- 7.3.8.7 The smaller of the two main wings would depart from the above design more significantly by being predominantly clad in brick slips. Although this is a far more robust material and would emphasise the physical presence of the building, it would nonetheless provide a contrast with the other parts of the school and break up its mass as a whole. The use of slightly more imposing materials would also be in keeping with the function of this part of the school, since it would contain some of the most important shared spaces, such as the dining halls, learning resource centre, and sixth form suite.
- 7.3.8.8 The tone of the brick slips would be lighter at lower ground floor level and this same lighter tone would be used to link windows together, providing a degree of visual interest. Light grey cement fibre panels would occasionally be used for the same purpose, helping to tie the design in with the larger of the two main wings.
- 7.3.9 *SESC*
- 7.3.9.1 In comparison to the Michaela School, the proposed new building for SESC would have a much less significant visual impact. It would have a much smaller footprint and would be limited to a single storey, reaching a maximum height of approximately 9m around the central main hall area, with the majority of the building being approximately 6.5m in height.
- 7.3.9.2 This variation in heights would help to break up the long, linear form of the building and would emphasise the main shared space in the building. Finished entirely in brick slips and topped by a tiled, pitched roof, it would tie in well with the existing SESC building which is proposed for retention.
- 7.3.9.3 The brick slips would predominantly be in a neutral, brown colour, with dotted interventions throughout. A lighter brown brick would be used to link windows together, with a glazed yellow brick being used much more sparingly to mark the entrances to the building. Soldier courses applied over the lintels would add further interest to the elevations.
- 7.3.10 *Landscaping*

- 7.3.10.1 The proposed landscaping would involve the laying of a significant amount of new hardstanding, in particular to provide the new car parks at either ends of the site, the hard informal play spaces surrounding each of the new buildings, and the new multi-use games area ("MUGA") for the Michaela School.
- 7.3.10.2 While a significant amount of new hardstanding would be laid, a significant amount of existing hardstanding would also be returned to grass, particularly in areas where the existing footprint of the school will not be built over and in the areas between separating the Michaela School from SESC. Overall, the proportion of the site that would be developed, whether by buildings or hardstanding, would remain very similar to the existing if not for the proposal to replace a portion of the existing playing field with a MUGA, which on its own accounts for nearly 3,000m² of new hardstanding.
- 7.3.10.3 A significant number of trees would also be felled to facilitate the development, including 21 individual specimens and 15 groups. Most of these trees fall within category C (low quality with limited life expectancy) and are of modest visual amenity value but there are some notable exceptions, including the partial loss two groups of category A (trees of high quality) trees and one group of category B (trees of moderate quality) trees to accommodate the new car park for the Michaela School.
- 7.3.10.4 However, the vast majority of the trees on the site would be retained. Those along the northern boundary of the site, adjacent to Marlborough Road, would be retained except for one group of category C trees which make up a very small proportion of the trees in this area overall. The trees along the far northern boundary of the site, adjacent to Barham Road, and either side of the playing field would be retained in full, as would the trees along the boundary with Ashtree Primary School. Despite the loss of trees to accommodate the Michaela School car park, sufficient trees would be retained along the site boundary to provide screening from Redwing Close and Jackdaw Close.
- 7.3.10.5 In terms of replacement planting, 54 new trees would be planted at the site, which would be between 4m and 6m in height at the time of planting. Along with this, new hedges would be planted on either side of the fence dividing Michaela School and SESC, while groups of shrubs would be planted throughout the site, including around the base of the proposed new buildings.
- 7.3.10.6 As noted above, a new fence would be erected to mark the boundary between Michaela School and SESC. This would be weldmesh fencing, measuring 3m in height. Similar fencing would be erected around both of the new MUGAs, as well as around the soft informal play area at SESC. 1.8m high fencing would be used within the site to separate secure areas from publicly accessible areas.
- 7.3.10.7 The Council's Arboriculture and Conservation Manager was consulted on the application and has not raised any objections to the landscaping proposals.
- 7.3.11 *Conclusions on Character and Appearance*
- 7.3.11.1 In summary, the existing site is generally in a poor condition and none of the buildings within the site are of any particular architectural merit. Therefore, the demolition of all but one of those buildings would not be detrimental to the character or appearance of the area, and the proposed development represents an opportunity to significantly improve the visual quality of the site.
- 7.3.11.2 The proposed Michaela Community School building would have a significant visual impact, being both taller and bulkier than the existing school buildings, with a more uniform massing and overall having a very different appearance. However, the impact would be significantly lessened beyond the site's boundaries owing to the screening afforded by surrounding trees. In any event, the design is considered to be high quality, making effective use of materials to draw attention away from the bulk of the new building and add interest to its elevations.

- 7.3.11.3 The impact of the new SESC building would be comparatively more muted, since it would have a much smaller footprint and be limited to a single storey. It would however be of a similarly high quality, featuring materials that would be sympathetic to the existing building, used in a way that would provide a good degree of interest in the elevations and break up its mass.
- 7.3.11.4 The proposed landscaping would see significant changes in the distribution of hardstanding and trees across the site but the overall amount of green space and tree cover would remain similar to the existing, albeit a large area of the grassed playing field would be lost to make way for a MUGA. Importantly, the vast majority of trees along the boundaries of the site would be retained, providing ample screening of the site in views from surrounding areas. The Council's Arboriculture and Conservation Manager has raised no objection to these proposals. Moreover, the proposed development would have significant long-term benefits to trees, as detailed in the submitted ecological impact assessment.
- 7.3.11.5 Having regard to the above, it is considered that the proposed development would have a positive impact on the character and appearance of the area by replacing the ageing and vacant former school buildings with bright, modern educational facilities set amidst adequate landscaping. In these respects, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policies SP8 and GD1 of the Local Plan which, among other things, require developments to be high quality and make a positive contribution to their surroundings.

7.4 Impact on the Environment and Neighbouring Occupiers

- 7.4.1 Policy FP5 of the Local Plan requires development proposals to consider contamination and be supported by an appropriate preliminary risk assessment (PRA), demonstrating that any necessary remediation and subsequent development poses no risk to the population, environment or groundwater bodies.
- 7.4.2 Policy FP7 requires all development proposals to minimise, and where possible, reduce air, water, light, and noise pollution. Planning permission will be granted when it can be demonstrated that the development will not have unacceptable impacts on general amenity and the tranquillity of the wider area.
- 7.4.3 Policy GD1 also requires that developments do not have an adverse impact on neighbouring uses or the surrounding area.
- 7.4.4 *Contamination*
 - 7.4.4.1 The application is supported by Geo-Environmental Assessments authored by Delta-Simons and covering both the Michaela School and SESC parts of the site. These reports detail the intrusive ground investigation work carried out at the site in January 2022 and the conclusions reached in respect of the risks of contamination on the site.
 - 7.4.4.2 The ground investigation work comprised the drilling of 16 boreholes across the site, eleven to a depth of 5m below and ground level and five to a depth of 20m below ground level. Samples of soil and groundwater were taken from the boreholes and in-situ testing was carried out at regular intervals. The samples were then sent for laboratory analysis.
 - 7.4.4.3 The site generally comprises made ground underlain by the clays of the Lowestoft Formation and the clays and silts of the Lewes Nodular and Seaford Chalk Formations. Groundwater was encountered at between 2.4m and 12.8m below ground level during drilling and at between 0.7m and 4.82m upon return monitoring.
 - 7.4.4.4 Elevated localised asbestos, arsenic and lead contamination was identified within the shallow made ground in the south-west of the site associated with the existing car park. Arsenic was also identified towards the centre of the site and detectable concentrations of heavy metals,

polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and petroleum hydrocarbons were identified within made ground across the site.

- 7.4.4.5 The main exposure pathway for these contaminants is ingestion and direct contact. As a result, the main risk is to future site users and the contaminant linkage can be broken by the installation of a clean cover system. Furthermore, the two areas where asbestos, arsenic and lead were identified are both under the proposed building footprint, further limiting the risk of an exposure pathway. The risk to human health from these contaminants is therefore considered to be low to medium and no remediation is necessary in areas where only natural clay and chalk is present. In soft landscaped areas, a topsoil layer of at least 150mm should be provided.
- 7.4.4.6 Detectable concentrations of five heavy metals were identified in groundwater samples and soil leachate samples from across the site. The most significant receptors for these contaminants are the aquifers underlying the site and the associated public water supply abstraction. Given that the site is underlain by cohesive deposits which limit vertical and lateral migration of contaminants, the risk to controlled waters is considered to be low to medium.
- 7.4.4.7 Based on the above findings, the reports recommend that supplementary environmental investigation is carried out following demolition. Upon completion of this work, a remediation strategy should be prepared to mitigate any unacceptable risks to human health. The Environmental Health Officer has not raised any objection to this approach and it is therefore recommended that the supplementary investigation and remediation strategy be secured by the imposition of conditions.
- 7.4.4.8 A detailed asbestos removal and remediation plan has also been submitted but this falls within the remit of the Health and Safety Executive and an informative is recommended to remind the applicant of this. The risks arising from demolition and construction are considered separately below.
- 7.4.5 *Air Pollution*
- 7.4.5.1 The air pollution risks arising from the proposed development principally stem from the emissions produced by vehicular traffic. These emissions would undoubtedly increase as a result of the development but this is an unavoidable consequence of bringing the site back into full use as a school, which is the lawful and historic use of the site.
- 7.4.5.2 It should be noted that the distribution of emissions will differ from the historic situation, since the main entrance to the Michaela School will be via Redwing Close rather than Collenswood Road as was the case with the former Collenswood School and Barnwell East Campus. However, the overall impact on air quality would be similar and the effects would be localised.
- 7.4.5.3 The site is not within an Air Quality Management Area, nor is it within close proximity to one. Therefore, the applicant was not required to carry out an air quality assessment. An Environmental Health Officer was nevertheless consulted on the application and they raised no concerns in respect of air pollution caused by vehicular emissions. The impacts of demolition and construction on air quality are considered separately below.
- 7.4.6 *Noise Pollution*
- 7.4.6.1 Aside from demolition and construction impacts, which are considered separately below, the main contributors to noise pollution would be: vehicular traffic, including deliveries; the comings and goings of pupils, staff and visitors to the site by other means; the use of the school facilities, including community use and in particular the MUGAs; and plant installed at the site.
- 7.4.6.2 The application is supported by two noise assessments, one for the Michaela School and one for SESC. These reports consider the impact of plant and use of the MUGAs on nearby

residential properties. They are informed by noise surveys carried out at various positions around the site to determine a representative background noise level.

- 7.4.6.3 Detailed specification of the plant has not yet been carried out. However, the noise assessments recommend cumulative plant noise emission limits as measured at the nearest noise sensitive properties. These noise limits are considered to be acceptable and it is recommended that they be secured by the imposition of conditions.
- 7.4.6.4 The assessments of the MUGAs showed that without mitigation, maximum permissible noise limits would be exceeded by up to 9dB. The only practical solution to this would be to install acoustic screening along the site boundaries in two locations: on the boundary shared with 58 to 66 Marlborough Road; and on the boundary shared with 88A to 88C Marlborough Road. The screening would take the form of a 3m high close boarded timber fence.
- 7.4.6.5 To further limit noise disturbance from the outdoor sports areas, it is suggested that the MUGAs are not used after 9:30pm. It is also suggested that noise management plans be drawn up to cover the following items:
- A restriction on the use of whistles during community use
 - Methods of connecting fence panels to effectively isolate and reduce impact sounds, including separating fence panels on the sides of the MUGAs to limit vibration transmission following ball impact
 - Maintenance regimes to ensure that fence panels do not become loose and rattle excessively following ball impact
 - Installation of padding to goal boards and fencing during hockey games to limit the noise of ball impact
 - A restriction on fixed items of sports equipment (e.g. basketball hoops) being attached to fencing
 - Measures to inform users that swearing and anti-social behaviour is unacceptable and may result in their dismissal from the site
 - A facility for neighbouring residents to report excessive noise and anti-social behaviour directly to the site operator
- 7.4.6.6 In light of the comments made by the Environmental Health Officer, it is considered that the above measures would be appropriate and would adequately mitigate the noise arising from use of the MUGAs. Accordingly, it is recommended that they be secured by condition.
- 7.4.6.7 Turning to vehicular traffic and the comings and goings of pupils and staff, the noise arising from these sources has not been quantified, nor would it be possible to accurately do so. However, it is self-evident that this will have significant impacts on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, particularly those on Redwing Close, even if the worst of those impacts are limited to two relatively brief periods of the day i.e. drop-off and pick-up times.
- 7.4.6.8 Once at capacity, 1260 pupils and 80 staff will enter and leave the Michaela School each day and the submitted transport assessment anticipates that this would result in 582 two-way vehicle trips each morning and a further 582 each afternoon. The majority of these would be parents dropping off or picking up children from the roads surrounding the site, since vehicular drop-off and pick-up would not be permitted within the school grounds. Parents would be instructed not to use Redwing Close for drop-off and pick-up but officers have considerable doubts as to whether this would be effective and assess the application on the basis that Redwing Close would in fact be used for this purpose.
- 7.4.6.9 The figure above would also include trips by staff, who would enter the site and park until departing later in the day. Sixth from students would also be permitted to park on site.
- 7.4.6.10 On top of this would be the traffic generated by the community use of the sports facilities on the site. This is expected to be much lower than the traffic generated by the school use but the

details will not be fully known until the community use agreement for the facilities has been completed and it is nonetheless a further source of noise.

- 7.4.6.11 Servicing and deliveries would also generate noise, although it would be possible to mitigate the resulting disruption by limiting the hours when delivery and service vehicles are permitted to enter the site. Accordingly, it is recommended that a service and delivery plan be secured by condition for the Michaela School.
- 7.4.6.12 Vehicular drop-off and pick-up, service, and delivery traffic associated with SESC would remain largely as existing, since neither pupil nor staff numbers would be increased. However, it is anticipated that pedestrian traffic would increase along Collenswood Road as pupils come and go from the Michaela site.
- 7.4.6.13 As mentioned above, it is not possible to accurately quantify the noise generated by this traffic. However, it is clear that it would be significant and would result in disturbance, particularly at drop-off and pick-up times and particularly for the residents of Redwing Close.
- 7.4.6.14 Although there is already an access to the site from Redwing Close, it was historically only used for limited purposes and not as the main entrance to Collenswood School or Barnwell East Campus. As a result, it is currently a relatively peaceful residential access road and the proposed development, in bringing the site back into use as a school with Redwing Close as the main vehicular and pedestrian entrance, would have a material adverse impact on the living conditions of its residents by way of noise disturbance.

7.4.7 *Light Pollution*

- 7.4.7.1 The external lighting strategies for the Michaela School and SESC are set out in their respective design and access statements. The overall strategy is to provide external lighting to the main pedestrian access routes, car parks, main building entrances, bin stores, and cycle parking areas. This would be designed in accordance with relevant Institution of Lighting Professionals Standards relating to the reduction of obtrusive light and British Standards relating to the lighting of workplaces.
- 7.4.7.2 Four illuminance levels would be targeted, with the brightest lighting being applied to the bin stores at 40 lux maintained average and then the building perimeters at 20 lux maintained average. The car parks and pedestrian routes would be comparatively dimmer, at 10 lux and 5 lux maintained average respectively.
- 7.4.7.3 The external lighting proposals have been reviewed by an Environmental Health Officer, who has confirmed that they are acceptable. It is recommended that a condition be imposed to ensure that no light is allowed to spill beyond the site's boundaries.
- 7.4.7.4 One area that is not covered in any detail in the submission is the lighting of the proposed MUGAs, with the lighting strategies stating that these will be lit according to Sport England guidance. The applicant has not stated which guidance this is, nor has Sport England specified lighting in their consultation response.
- 7.4.7.5 Clearly this is a significant potential source of light pollution, which could cause considerable nuisance to neighbouring occupiers. It would therefore not be appropriate to leave this to chance and it is recommended that full details of MUGA lighting be reserved by conditions.

7.4.8 *Privacy*

- 7.4.8.1 Impacts on privacy tend to arise from the construction of buildings or structures above ground level, providing views that would not otherwise be possible from the natural landscape. In this case, the only proposed building that would have more than a single storey would be the new Michaela School.

- 7.4.8.2 The Michaela School side of the site is bounded by mature trees both to the north and south-east. While some of those to the south-east would be felled, sufficient numbers would remain to provide an effective screen. The south of the site is comparatively more open but here the site adjoins Ashtree Primary School and a degree of overlooking between two schools is not considered to be problematic.
- 7.4.8.3 Even if the tree cover at the site cannot be relied upon to provide a screen in perpetuity, the Michaela School building would be sited well within the site's boundaries, with a distance of 50m separating it from the boundary of the nearest residential property at the closest point. This distance is considered to be sufficient to ensure that no harmful overlooking would occur.
- 7.4.8.4 Turning to SESC, the proposed new building would be entirely single storey, would again be substantially screened by vegetation, and would be sited approximately 40m from the boundary of the nearest neighbouring property. Consequently it would not give rise to any harmful overlooking.
- 7.4.8.5 Finally, it is recognised that the potential for loss of privacy arising from use of the outdoor spaces has caused concern amongst residents. Whilst it is true that use of the outdoor spaces will increase as a result of the development, this is primarily the result of bringing the site back into use as a school, which is its lawful use, rather than the introduction of a novel use or altered relationship between the site and its neighbours.
- 7.4.8.6 The one exception to this is the new MUGA at the Michaela School, which is an entirely new feature. However, the views from this, as well as from the MUGA at SESC, would effectively be from ground level and considering the surrounding vegetation, as well as the 3m high acoustic screening that would be installed, it is considered that the views would not result in any harmful loss of privacy.
- 7.4.9 *Natural Light*
- 7.4.9.1 As noted above, both of the proposed school buildings would be sited well within the site's boundaries. In addition, neither would be unduly tall. Consequently it is considered that they would not result in any materially harmful overshadowing or loss of daylight to neighbouring occupiers.
- 7.4.9.2 It is also necessary to consider the impact of the proposed acoustic fences, since these would be close boarded, 3m in height, and sited in close proximity to the boundaries of neighbouring properties. In the case of 58 to 66 Marlborough Road, they would result in some overshadowing of rear gardens towards the middle of the day, although this would generally be limited to the months of the year when the sun is lower in the sky. In the case of 88A and 88B Marlborough Road, nearby trees already cast a significant shadow and it is considered that the proposed fencing would not have a materially harmful impact.
- 7.4.9.3 In the case of 88C Marlborough Road, the situation is different because this property shares a boundary with the site on both its southern and eastern sides and both would be subject to the acoustic fencing. On the southern side, existing trees already cast a significant shadow during the middle part of the day but on the eastern side, the boundary is open. The proposed fencing will therefore cast a shadow over the garden of 88C Marlborough Road during the morning hours and it is considered that this would be materially harmful.
- 7.4.10 *Overbearing Appearance*
- 7.4.10.1 Very similar conclusions are reached in terms of overbearing appearance with respect to 88C Marlborough Road. It is considered that the erection of a 3m high close boarded fence along the entirety of the eastern boundary of this property would appear overbearing and would be harmful to the occupiers of this property.

7.4.11 *Parking Pressure*

- 7.4.11.1 As already mentioned, parents would not be permitted to drop-off or pick-up by car within the Michaela School grounds and this traffic would therefore be accommodated within the surrounding highway network. On-street car parking is currently unrestricted on these roads, with the exception of the numerous dropped kerbs on Redwing Close and the other residential access roads in the vicinity.
- 7.4.11.2 It is evident that residents of Redwing Close make use of the available on-street car parking and the proposed development would increase competition for these spaces. At times, particularly drop-off and pick-up times, this is likely to cause considerable inconvenience to local residents trying to find a car parking space. This harm is a material consideration.

7.4.12 *Demolition and Construction Impacts*

- 7.4.12.1 The disruptive effect of demolition and constructions work is a material consideration. If the application is approved, work is scheduled to start with site clearance on 5 December of this year and would finish with external works in late July 2024. The works would attract a significant amount of vehicular traffic, they would often be noisy, and they could result in significant emissions of dust.
- 7.4.12.2 Some disruption is inevitable, insofar as vehicle movements and noisy work will be necessary to complete the development. However, the impacts can be mitigated, for example by employing dust suppression techniques, limiting the hours when deliveries can be made, and limiting the hours when work can be carried out.
- 7.4.12.3 To this end, it is recommended that a construction management plan be secured by condition. Subject to this condition, it is considered that the impacts of demolition and construction could be mitigated to an acceptable degree.

7.4.13 *Conclusions on Environment and Neighbouring Occupiers*

- 7.4.13.1 In summary, contamination is present on the site and further investigation would be necessary following demolition to determine appropriate remediation. However, on the basis of the investigations carried out so far, and subject to the recommended conditions, the risk to human health is considered to be acceptable.
- 7.4.13.2 Further work is also required to mitigate the impacts of demolition and construction work on neighbouring occupiers. Some disruption and impacts on the environment are inevitable but subject to the recommended conditions, it is considered that the impact of this would be acceptable.
- 7.4.13.3 The lighting strategies for the two parts of the site are considered to be acceptable, subject to conditions to prevent spillage beyond the site's boundaries. Lighting of the proposed MUGAs requires further consideration but subject to conditions, it is considered that a suitable design can be produced so as not to result in undue nuisance to neighbouring occupiers.
- 7.4.13.4 The development would attract a significant amount of vehicular traffic both onto the site and surrounding roads. Although the distribution of emissions from these vehicles would differ from the historic situation, the overall impact would be similar and the effects localised. The impact on air quality is therefore considered to be acceptable.
- 7.4.13.5 It is recognised that loss of privacy is a significant concern amongst neighbouring residents and it is acknowledged that bringing the site back into full use would have some impact. However, it must be recognised that this is the existing lawful use of the site and that the views into neighbouring properties would effectively be from ground level. In other words, the views

would be very similar to those already possible from the site and the proposed development would therefore not result in material harm. Accordingly, the impact on privacy is considered to be acceptable.

- 7.4.13.6 In terms of overbearing appearance and loss of natural light, the proposed development would, for the most part, have a negligible impact. The one exception to this is the impact of the proposed acoustic fencing, which would be close boarded, 3m in height, and erected on or very close to the site boundary in two specific locations. Although it would not be so impactful as to make living conditions unacceptable, it would nonetheless cause harm to the occupiers of 88C Marlborough Road by way of overbearing appearance and overshadowing. This carries weight against the proposal.
- 7.4.13.7 The most significant adverse impacts associated with the development would result from noise and competition for on-street car parking spaces, particularly for residents of Redwing Close. Notwithstanding any proposed mitigation measures, such as instructing parents not to use Redwing Close for drop-off and pick-up, hosting the main entrance to a school of up to 1,260 pupils and 80 staff brings with it unavoidable impacts on living conditions.
- 7.4.13.8 It is a mitigating factor that there is already an entrance to the site from Redwing Close, albeit this was not historically used as the main entrance to either Collenswood School or Barnwell East Campus. It is also relevant that the worst of the disruption would be limited to two relatively short periods of the day.
- 7.4.13.9 Nonetheless, it is considered that the proposed development would have adverse impacts on the living conditions of the residents of Redwing Close by way of noise and inconvenience in finding on-street parking spaces. This also carries weight against the proposal.

7.5 Parking

- 7.5.1 Policy IT5 of the Local Plan requires development proposals to comply with the parking standards set out in the Stevenage Borough Council Parking Provision and Sustainable Transport SPD 2020. The car parking standard for schools is that all of the following should be provided:
- 1 space per full time member of staff
 - 1 space per 100 pupils
 - 1 space per 8 pupils aged 17+
 - 1 space per 20 pupils aged under 17
- 7.5.2 However, the site is located within Non-Residential Parking Accessibility Zone 4, which means the number of car parking spaces can be reduced by up to 25% depending on the nature of the development, local traffic conditions, the relevance of rail services, and the existing public parking supply. A provision higher than the maximum standard will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated in a transport assessment that this is justified.
- 7.5.3 5% of the total number of car parking spaces should be suitable for use by disabled motorists and reserved for this purpose. Likewise, around 5% of the total number of publicly accessible vehicle parking spaces should be reserved for motorcycles.
- 7.5.4 20% of car parking spaces should have access to an active electric vehicle charging point ("EVCP"), with the remainder being designed to fulfil a passive charging point standard (i.e. the underlying infrastructure is installed but a charging point is not provided). The blend of access to charging points provided within new developments (i.e. public, restricted access, open access, shared) should be determined having regard to a travel plan.

- 7.5.5 A flexible approach to the requirement for speed of charging will be taken due to the pace of change of this technology. Ultra-fast charging points will become expected at short term, non-residential parking spaces as technology improves to make the use of electric vehicles more efficient.
- 7.5.6 In terms of cycle parking, the standard for schools is that all of the following should be provided:
- 1 long-stay space per 8 staff
 - 1 long-stay space per 8 pupils
 - 1 short-stay space per 100 pupils
- 7.5.7 *Michaela Community School*
- 7.5.7.1 The Michaela Community School would accommodate approximately 80 full time staff and up to 1260 pupils, including 360 sixth form pupils who, for the purposes of this assessment, will all assumed to be aged 17 or over. Applying the above standards to this element of the proposals yields a requirement to provide 137 and 183 car parking spaces, 168 long-stay cycle parking spaces, and 13 short-stay cycle parking spaces.
- 7.5.7.2 The proposed Michaela School would in fact provide 159 car parking spaces, 120 long-stay cycle parking spaces, and 10 short-stay cycle parking spaces. Therefore, whilst the amount of car parking would be well within the recommended range, the level of proposed cycle parking would fall 25% to 30% short of the required amount.
- 7.5.7.3 Of the 159 proposed car parking spaces, 8 should be reserved for disabled motorists. Approximately 8 motorcycle parking spaces should also be provided, as well as 32 active EVCPs.
- 7.5.7.4 Michaela School would actually provide 8 disabled car parking spaces, sited immediately adjacent to the main school entrance. However, only 5 motorcycle parking spaces would be provided and only 23 active EVCPs would be provided.
- 7.5.8 *SESC*
- 7.5.8.1 SESC would accommodate approximately 20 full time staff and 36 pupils, all of whom would be under the age of 17. Applying the standards to this element of the proposals yields a requirement for between 17 and 23 car parking spaces, 7 long-stay cycle parking spaces, and 1 short-stay cycle parking space.
- 7.5.8.2 SESC would in fact provide 53 car parking spaces, 60 long-stay cycle parking spaces, and 10 short-stay cycle parking spaces. It would therefore exceed the applicable standards.
- 7.5.8.3 Of the 53 proposed car parking spaces, 3 should be reserved for disabled motorists. 3 motorcycle spaces should also be provided, as well as 11 active EVCPs.
- 7.5.8.4 SESC would provide 3 disabled spaces, which would be separate from the main car park, in much closer proximity to the entrance to the main school building. However, only 10 active EVCPs would be provided and no motorcycle parking spaces would be provided whatsoever.
- 7.5.8.5 *Overall Conclusions on Parking*
- 7.5.8.6 For the Michaela School, overall car parking provision would be well within the recommended range and is considered to be appropriate. Likewise the proposed number of disabled parking spaces is in accordance with the SPD.

- 7.5.8.7 Motorcycle parking would be slightly below the suggested amount. However, it is considered that a shortfall of three spaces is unlikely to have any significant adverse impacts.
- 7.5.8.8 The proposed number of active EVCPs is also below the required amount. It is however recognised that the duration of visits to the site will vary quite widely. Therefore, if some rapid chargers are proposed, the overall number may be acceptable. It is recommended that these details, together with provision of passive EVCPs, be secured by condition.
- 7.5.8.9 In terms of cycle parking, the number of spaces provided would be well below SPD requirements. However, the proposed number is supported by the modal splits set out in the submitted transport assessment and the targets of the proposed travel plan. It is therefore considered acceptable, subject to conditions to ensure that cycle parking provision increases should this be identified as necessary during the travel plan monitoring process.
- 7.5.8.10 For SESC, car parking would exceed the maximum standard applicable to schools. However, it is not a typical school and it is anticipated that trips by private vehicles would be higher than is usually the case. Accordingly, it is considered that exceptional circumstances exist which warrant provision above the usual maximum level.
- 7.5.8.11 No motorcycle parking would be provided. However, as with the Michaela School, it is considered unlikely that a shortfall of three spaces would have a material adverse impact. Similarly, the number of proposed active EVCPs is below the required amount but this may be acceptable subject to the mix of rapid chargers. A condition is recommended accordingly.
- 7.5.8.12 Disabled parking provision would be in accordance with the SPD and cycle parking would be significantly above the required amount. The proposals for SESC are therefore acceptable in both of these respects.

7.6 Highway Safety

- 7.6.1 Policy IT4 of the Local Plan 2019 states that planning permission will be granted where development will not have an adverse impact on highway safety.
- 7.6.2 The application is supported by a transport assessment, which considers the impact of the proposals on the surrounding road network. This principally considers the impact of the new Michaela School, since SESC is already operating from the site and no increase in pupil or staff numbers is proposed.
- 7.6.3 HCC Highways initially commented on the application highlighting a number of issues with the submitted transport statement. A revised transport statement was subsequently submitted and while HCC have not fully commented on this, they have indicated that they will not be raising any objection to the application. Their full comments will be provided to the committee as an update.
- 7.6.4 On the basis that HCC will not be objecting to the proposals, it is considered that the proposed development will not have any unacceptable impacts on highway safety or any severe residual cumulative impacts on the highway network.

7.7 Ecology, Arboriculture and Biodiversity

- 7.7.1 Policy NH2 of the Local Plan designates wildlife sites across the Borough. It states that planning permission will be granted where proposals would not result in substantive loss or deterioration of wildlife sites and will reasonably contribute towards their maintenance or enhancement.

- 7.7.2 Policy NH4 designates green links in the Borough and requires development proposals to avoid material adverse impacts on their wildlife value. Developments should also reasonably contribute towards their maintenance, improvement or extension.
- 7.7.3 Policy NH5 of the Local Plan states that development proposals will be expected to protect and retain individual trees within development sites and should include new planting where appropriate.
- 7.7.4 The NPPF and accompanying PPG require the Council to achieve measurable net gains in biodiversity at development sites across the Borough. To achieve a biodiversity net gain, a development must deliver a minimum of 10% net gain post development, when compared with the pre-development baseline. The Council's recently adopted Biodiversity SPD (2021) requires all major and minor applications other than the following exemptions currently suggested by the Government to demonstrate a net gain in biodiversity.
- 7.7.5 *Designated Sites*
- 7.7.5.1 The application is supported by an Ecological Impact Assessment ("EclA") authored by Surrey Wildlife Trust Ecology Services. The EclA identifies that the site falls within the Impact Risk Zone for Benington High Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest, which is a statutory designated site. Eleven local wildlife sites also lie within 2km of the application site, of which Great Collens Wood, which lies directly to the west of the application site, is the most likely to be affected the development.
- 7.7.5.2 The EclA concludes that the proposed development would not have any significant impact on any of the above sites. Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust have been consulted on the application and have raised no objection in this regard.
- 7.7.6 *Habitats*
- 7.7.6.1 The EclA identifies that without mitigation, the proposed development would have significant negative impacts on a number of important habitats across the site, including lowland mixed deciduous woodland, modified grassland, and bramble scrub. However, with mitigation, the residual impacts of the operation of the site are all considered to either be not significant or positive. The pond on the site would be retained and so would not be significantly impacted.
- 7.7.6.2 The proposed mitigation measures include planting of native species within woodland, enhancement of grassland using native seed mix, protection of native hedgerow, replacement of non-native hedgerows with native hedgerows, and planting of native tree species. It is recommended that these measures be secured by condition.
- 7.7.6.3 There would still be some negative impacts as a result of construction, in particular the felling of trees which are classified as lowland mixed deciduous woodland. However, this impact is necessary in order to accommodate the proposed car park for Michaela School. Following implementation of the mitigation measures proposed above, the long-term impact on this habitat is considered to be positive.
- 7.7.7 *Species*
- 7.7.7.1 A number of important species were identified on the site, including invertebrate species, reptiles, amphibians, common species of bird, badgers, bats and hedgehogs. Without mitigation, the proposed development would have significant negative impacts on a number of these species.
- 7.7.7.2 However, with mitigation, the long-term impact of the operation of the site is assessed to be positive in all cases except for badgers, where the impact would be neutral. The proposed mitigation measures include implementing best practice construction methods, taking a

cautious approach to vegetation clearance (which would only take place between September and February), placement of insect houses and bird boxes, and incorporation of “hedgehog highways” – i.e. small holes at the base of fences – into the fencing plans. It is recommended that these measures be secured by condition.

7.7.8 *Arboriculture*

7.7.8.1 As noted many times throughout this report, the proposed development would involve the felling of a significant number of trees. Whilst most of these would be Category C, some would be of higher value, including a number of Category A trees making up areas of lowland mixed deciduous woodland. These would need to be felled to make way for the proposed car park at the Michaela School.

7.7.8.2 The development would however involve the retention of the majority of the trees on site and a significant amount of replacement planting is proposed. The Council’s Arboriculture and Conservation Manager has been consulted on the proposals and raises no objection to the proposed development on arboricultural grounds. It is therefore recommended that the proposed tree protection measures and replacement planting be secured by condition.

7.7.9 *Biodiversity Net Gain*

7.7.9.1 The proposed development is supported by a biodiversity net gain strategy and supplementary analysis. These documents set out the means by which the development would achieve measurable gains in biodiversity, which is primarily through new tree planting and allowing the regeneration of modified grassland areas into lowland mixed deciduous woodland.

7.7.9.2 These measures would result in an 11% gain in biodiversity on the site. Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust have been consulted on the application and have confirmed that subject to the submission of a satisfactory landscape and ecological management plan (“LEMP”), the trading rules are satisfied and the proposals are acceptable. It is therefore recommended that a LEMP be secured by condition.

7.8 Flood Risk and Drainage

7.8.1 Policy FP2 of the Local Plan requires applications for major development in Flood Zone 1 to be accompanied by an appropriate flood risk assessment. Given that the site has an area of more than one hectare, a flood risk assessment is required in this case and one has been submitted.

7.8.2 The flood risk assessment must demonstrate, as a minimum:

- An estimate of how much surface water runoff the development will generate;
- Details of existing methods for managing surface water runoff, e.g. drainage to a sewer; and
- Plans for managing surface water and for making sure there is no increase in the volume of surface water and rate of surface water runoff.

7.8.3 Policy FP2 also requires that the use of SuDS is maximised on site so as not to increase flood risk and to reduce flood risk wherever possible.

7.8.4 The proposed drainage system is a primarily tanked and pipe system, with detention basin adjacent to the Michaela School playing field and a swale adjacent to the proposed MUGA, eventually discharging to a surface water sewer at the far northern boundary of the site. Permeable paving would be provided to the proposed car parking spaces, although not to the manoeuvring areas between them.

7.8.5 At the time of writing, the Council's Drainage Consultant has not provided any formal comments on this application. Therefore, if the comments are not received by the time the application is to be determined at Planning and Development Committee, it is recommended that delegated powers are given to the Assistant Director of Planning and Regulatory and the Chairman of the Planning Committee that in the event the Council's Drainage Consultant do provide comments on the strategy with a suggested list of conditions, then these conditions would be imposed accordingly before any planning permission is issued by the Council. However, if the Council's Drainage Consultant raises a substantive objection to the application and this cannot be resolved, then it is recommended that the application is referred back to the Planning and Development Committee for its decision.

7.9 Climate Change and Sustainability

7.9.1 Policy FP1 of the Local Plan states that planning permission will be granted for developments that can incorporate measures to address adaptation to climate change. New development, including building extensions, refurbishments and conversions will be encouraged to include measures such as:

- Ways to ensure development is resilient to likely future variations in temperature;
- Reducing water consumption to no more than 110 litres per person per day including external water use;
- Improving energy performance of buildings;
- Reducing energy consumption through efficiency measures; and
- Using or producing renewable or low carbon energy from a local source.

7.9.2 The application is not supported by an energy strategy and no detailed measures have been put forward in terms of adaptation to climate change. It is therefore recommended that a condition be imposed on any grant of permission to secure details of sustainability measures for the scheme.

7.9.3 Subject to the above condition, the proposal is considered to accord with Policy FP1 of the Local Plan 2019.

7.10 Fire Safety

7.10.1 Fire safety is a material consideration. However, the application does not trigger any requirement for a fire safety statement because the proposed buildings are less than 18m tall and would have fewer than seven storeys.

7.10.2 The Herts Fire and Rescue Water Officer was not consulted on the application. However, this was not necessary because the applicant had already identified that new hydrants would be required, stating that these would be provided via Redwing Close.

7.10.3 It is recommended that conditions be imposed to secure suitable hydrants as described. Subject to these conditions, it is considered that the proposed development would have an acceptable impact on highway safety.

7.11 Crime Prevention

7.11.1 Policy GD1 of the Local Plan requires developments to create safe environments that design out crime. Hertfordshire Constabulary's Crime Prevention Design Officer was consulted on the application and the fact that SBD had been used as a design guide was welcomed.

7.11.2 Comments were also made around the particular type of fencing to be used. The applicant has confirmed that this will be weld mesh fencing as recommended by the Officer.

7.11.3 Since the initial comments were made, the applicant has held a follow-up meeting with the Crime Prevention Design Officer and further comments are expected, which will be reported to the Committee as an update in advance of the meeting.

7.12 Developer Obligations and CIL

7.12.1 *CIL*

7.12.1.1 Stevenage Borough Council adopted a Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule on 1 April 2020. This allows the Council to collect a levy to fund infrastructure projects based on the type, location and floor space of a development, in line with the rates shown in the table below.

| Development Type | CIL Rate (£ per square metre) | |
|-----------------------|--|-------------------------|
| | Zone 1: Stevenage Central, Stevenage West Urban Extension and North of Stevenage Extension | Zone 2: Everywhere else |
| Residential | | |
| Market housing | £40/m ² | £100/m ² |
| Sheltered housing | £100/m ² | |
| Extra care housing | £40/m ² | |
| Retail development | £60/m ² | |
| All other development | £0/m ² | |

7.12.1.2 The proposed development would be liable for CIL but would be zero-rated since it falls within the “all other development” category.

7.12.2 *County Obligations*

7.12.2.1 HCC Growth and Infrastructure were consulted on the application and have confirmed that no contributions would be necessary towards education, library, or youth services.

7.12.2.2 The development would however be required to adhere to a travel plan. Travel plans have been submitted and the applicant has agreed to enter into a legal agreement to cover the cost of monitoring these. However, HCC have yet to confirm the required amount. This will be provided to the committee as an update.

7.12.2.3 HCC Highways have confirmed that no other bespoke highways contributions are required.

7.12.3 *Employment and apprenticeships*

7.12.3.1 In accordance with the Developer Contributions SPD 2021, the developer would be required to contribute to local employment in the following ways:

- attempt to employ Stevenage residents in 5% to 10% of on-site construction jobs
- attempt to employ one Stevenage resident or student as an apprentice for every ten on-site construction jobs (up to a maximum of ten apprenticeships)
- report whether or not they met these requirements
- pay a one-off sum of £4,000 per job shortfall
- pay of one-off sum of £1,250 per apprentice shortfall

7.12.3.2 The applicant has agreed to these measures and is willing to enter into a legal agreement to secure them.

7.13 Human Rights and Equalities

- 7.13.1 Consideration has been given to Articles 1 and 8 of the First Protocol of the European Convention on Human Rights. It is not considered that the decision would result in a violation of any person's rights under the Convention.
- 7.13.2 When considering proposals placed before Members it is important that they are fully aware of and have themselves rigorously considered the equalities implications of the decision that they are taking. Rigorous consideration will ensure that proper appreciation of any potential impact of that decision on the Council's obligations under the Public Sector Equalities Duty. As a minimum this requires decision makers to read and carefully consider the content of any Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) produced by officers.
- 7.13.3 The Equalities Act 2010 requires the Council when exercising its functions to have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and (c) foster good relations between persons who share protected characteristics under the Equality Act and persons who do not share it. The protected characteristics under the Equality Act are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief; sex and sexual orientation.
- 7.13.4 The proposed development would provide adequate disabled parking and step-free access to all of the proposed buildings. Aside from this, it is considered that the proposed development would not impact persons with any of the protected characteristics listed under the Equalities Act.

8 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The policies considered to be most relevant for determining this application are listed above in Section 6.5.1 and mentioned throughout this report. These are all considered to be consistent with the most recent revision of the NPPF and are therefore considered to be up-to-date. Accordingly, Paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF is not engaged and the application falls to be determined against a straightforward planning balance.
- 8.2 The proposed development would see the site brought back into use as a secondary school, accommodating 1,260 pupils at full capacity. Policy HC9 of the Local Plan reserves the application site to meet secondary school needs and the proposal is in accordance with this policy. The benefits of providing additional secondary school places, including providing more choice in school places for residents of the Borough, are considerable and having regard to Paragraph 95 of the NPPF, they carry great weight in favour of the proposal.
- 8.3 The development would also see the provision of new and enhanced facilities for SESC, which is a specialist educational institution concerned with providing support to pupils excluded or at risk of exclusion from full time education. Whilst not a secondary school, the development of the site for other educational purposes is not restricted by Policy HC9 of the Local Plan and this element of the proposals is therefore considered to be in accordance with the policy. The public benefits of the service are clear and the proposed development would enhance it as well as providing for its long-term future. This carries significant weight in favour of the proposal.
- 8.4 The design of the proposed development is considered to be high quality and respectful of its surroundings and in these respects, it is considered to be in accordance with Policies SP8 and GD1 of the Local Plan. In replacing the existing development on the site, which is in poor condition, with bright and modern facilities, the proposed development would have a positive impact on the character and appearance of the area. This carries significant weight in favour of the proposal.

- 8.5 The proposed development would also have significant positive impacts on habitats and species in the long-term, as well as delivering an increase in biodiversity above the 10% required by planning policy. These benefits also carry significant weight in favour of the proposal.
- 8.6 However, the proposed development would also have some significant adverse impacts of the living conditions of neighbouring residents. It would attract a significant amount of traffic to the site, resulting in noise disturbance, impacts on air quality, and inconvenience for local residents in finding on-street car parking spaces. In these respects, the proposal is contrary to Policies GD1 and FP7 of the Local Plan.
- 8.7 These impacts would be felt particularly acutely by the residents of Redwing Close, which would host the new main entrance to the Michaela Community School. It is recognised that there is an existing access to the site on this road but it was historically only used in limited circumstances. Accordingly, these harms carry significant weight against the proposal.
- 8.8 The proposed acoustic screening, which would serve to mitigate noise from the proposed MUGAs, would also result in adverse impacts, albeit these would be more localised. It is considered that it would appear overbearing to the occupants of 88C Marlborough Road and would result in overshadowing of the garden at this property. These harms represent another area of conflict with Policy GD1 of the Local Plan and having regard to their extent, they carry moderate weight against the proposal.
- 8.9 In all other respects, and subject to conditions, the impact of the proposed development on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers is considered to be acceptable. Similarly, subject to conditions, the development is considered to have an acceptable impact on parking, highway safety, trees, wildlife sites, climate change, fire safety, and crime prevention. Consequently, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with policies SP6, SP9, SP11, SP12, IT4, IT5, IT6, FP1, FP5, FP8, NH2, NH4 and NH5 of the Local Plan. These are neutral matters.
- 8.10 Having regard to all of the above, the benefits of granting permission are considered to significantly outweigh the adverse impacts. Accordingly, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with the development plan when read as a whole. It is therefore recommended that planning permission be granted.

9 RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 That planning permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions and the transfer of the signed S106 legal agreement which has secured and/or provides:
- Travel Plan Monitoring
 - Employment and Apprenticeship Opportunities
- 9.2 With delegated powers be given to the Assistant Director of Planning and Regulation in consultation with the Chair of Planning Committee to negotiate and secure the obligation detailed above (including triggers where appropriate) as part of the Section 106 Agreement in order to mitigate the developments impact on infrastructure as well as secure the planning benefits which this scheme seeks to deliver. In addition, the imposition of suitable safeguarding conditions, with authority given to the Assistant Director of Planning and Regulation in consultation with the Chair of Planning Committee, to amend or add to the suggested draft conditions set out in this report, prior to the decision notice being issued, where such amendments or additions would be legally sound and most effectively deliver the development that the Planning Committee has resolved to approve.

Conditions

Conditions Relating to All Phases

General Conditions

1. The development to which this permission relates shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority:

FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0001 Rev P04
FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0002 Rev P04
FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0003 Rev P04
FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0004 Rev P04
FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0005 Rev P04
FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0006 Rev P04
FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0007 Rev P04
FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0008 Rev P04
FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0009 Rev P04
FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0014 Rev P04
FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0015 Rev P04
FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0016 Rev P04
FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0017 Rev P04
FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0018 Rev P04
FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0019 Rev P04
FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0020 Rev P01
FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0023 Rev P04
FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0027 Rev P04
FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0029 Rev P04
FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0030 Rev P04
FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0032 Rev P04
FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0033 Rev P04
FS0945-JWA-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0002 Rev P03
FS0945-JWA-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0003 Rev P03
FS0945-JWA-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0004 Rev P02
FS0945-JWA-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0005 Rev P02
FS0945-JWA-ZZ-LG-DR-A-1001 Rev P02
FS0945-JWA-ZZ-00-DR-A-1002 Rev P02
FS0945-JWA-ZZ-01-DR-A-1003 Rev P01
FS0945-JWA-ZZ-02-DR-A-1004 Rev P01
FS0945-JWA-ZZ-R1-DR-A-1005 Rev P01
FS0944-JWA-ZZ-LG-DR-A-1050 Rev P01
FS0945-JWA-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-3001 Rev P01
FS0945-JWA-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-3002 Rev P01
FS0945-JWA-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-3003 Rev P02
FS0945-JWA-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-4001 Rev P01
714-ALA-XX--ZZ-DR-L-0006 Rev P01
714-ALA-XX--ZZ-DR-L-0007 Rev P01
FS1024-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0001 Rev P04
FS1024-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0002 Rev P04
FS1024-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0003 Rev P04
FS1024-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0004 Rev P04
FS1024-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0005 Rev P04
FS1024-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0008 Rev P04
FS1024-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0009 Rev P04
FS1024-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0010 Rev P04
FS1024-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0011 Rev P02
FS1024-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0012 Rev P04

FS1024-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0016 Rev P04
FS1024-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0020 Rev P04
FS1024-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0021 Rev P01
FS1024-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0022 Rev P01
FS1024-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0023 Rev P03
FS1024-JWA-AA-00-DR-A-1001 Rev P02
FS1024-JWA-AA-01-DR-A-1002 Rev P02
FS1024-JWA-AA-ZZ-DR-A-3001 Rev P02
FS1024-JWA-AA-ZZ-DR-A-3002 Rev P02
FS1024-JWA-AA-ZZ-DR-A-4001 Rev P01

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

2. The development to which this permission relates shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

REASON: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

3. The materials used in the external surfaces of the development to which this permission relates shall be those listed on the application form, approved plans and accompanying documents unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

REASON: To ensure a satisfactory appearance upon completion of the development.

4. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, no demolition, construction or maintenance activities audible at the site boundary shall be carried out except between the hours of 08:00 to 18:00 Monday to Friday and 08:00 to 13:00 on Saturdays. For the avoidance of doubt, no such work shall be carried out on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

REASON: In the interests of the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.

5. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, no deliveries or collections relating to demolition or construction activity shall be carried out except between the hours of 08:00 to 18:00 Monday to Friday and 08:00 to 13:00 on Saturdays. For the avoidance of doubt, no such deliveries or collections shall be carried out on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

REASON: In the interests of the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.

6. Any external lighting installed at the site shall be angled so as to avoid any spillage beyond the site boundaries unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interests of the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers and highway safety.

7. In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified, it must be reported in writing immediately to the local planning authority. An investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken and where remediation is necessary, a remediation scheme must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme, a verification report must be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

REASON: To prevent unacceptable risks to human health as a result of contamination

8. The development to which this permission relates shall be carried out in accordance with the mitigation measures as specified in Table 11 and Table 12 of “Ecological Impact Assessment and Biodiversity Net Gain Report” authored by Surrey Wildlife Trust Ecology Services and dated 1 April 2022 unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To prevent unacceptable harm to habitats and species.

9. The development to which this permission relates shall be carried out in accordance with the methods specified in Section 5 of “Arboricultural Method Statement” authored by Middlemarch and dated April 2022, together with the accompanying Tree Protection Plans reference C156848-03-01 Revision 00, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interests of the health and longevity of trees worthy of retention.

10. The development to which this permission relates shall be carried out in accordance with “Site Waste Management Plan” authored by Bowmer and Kirkland Group and dated 29 June 2022 unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure the proper disposal of site waste.

Prior to Commencement

11. No development shall take place (including site clearance or demolition) until a construction management plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved construction management plan. The construction management plan shall include details of the following:

- a) Construction vehicle numbers, type, routing;
- b) Access arrangements to site;
- c) Traffic and pedestrian management requirements;
- d) Construction and storage compounds (including areas designated for car parking, loading / unloading and turning areas);
- e) Siting and details of wheel washing facilities;
- f) Cleaning of site entrances, site tracks and the adjacent public highway;
- g) Timing of construction activities (including delivery times and removal of waste) and to avoid school pick up/drop off times;
- h) Provision of sufficient on-site parking prior to commencement of construction activities;
- i) Post construction restoration/reinstatement of the working areas and temporary access to the public highway;
- j) Where works cannot be contained wholly within the site, a plan should be submitted showing the site layout on the highway including extent of hoarding, pedestrian routes and remaining road width for vehicle movements;
- k) Measures to deal with environmental impacts such as vehicle emissions, dust, noise, vibration, light, and odour.

REASON: In the interests of the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers and highway safety.

12. No development shall take place (including site clearance or demolition) until a surface water drainage scheme for the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The drainage strategy should demonstrate the surface water run-off generated up to and including 1 in 100 year + climate change critical storm will not exceed the run-off from the undeveloped site following the corresponding rainfall event. The approved surface water drainage scheme shall subsequently be implemented prior to beneficial occupation of the development.

REASON: To ensure that the development does not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

13. No development shall take place (excluding site clearance and demolition) until a landscape and ecological management plan ("LEMP") has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The content of the LEMP shall ensure the delivery of the agreed number of habitat and hedgerow units as a minimum (46.38 habitat units, 6.60 hedgerow units) to achieve a net gain in biodiversity and include the following:

- a) Description and evaluation of features to be managed;
- b) Aims and objectives of management;
- c) Appropriate management options for achieving target condition for all habitats, as described in the approved metric;
- d) Prescriptions for management actions, only definitive measures are acceptable;
- e) Preparation of an annual work schedule for a minimum of 30 years with measures clearly marked on plans;
- f) Details of the body or organisation responsible for implementation of the plan;
- g) Ongoing monitoring plan and remedial measures to ensure habitat condition targets are met;
- h) Details of species selected to achieve target habitat conditions as identified in approved metric, definitively stated and marked on plans.

The LEMP shall also include details of the legal and funding mechanism(s) by which the long-term implementation of the plan will be secured by the developer with the management body or bodies responsible for its delivery.

The LEMP shall also set out (where the results from monitoring show that conservation aims and objectives of the LEMP are not being met) how contingencies and/or remedial action will be identified, agreed and implemented so that the development still delivers the fully functioning biodiversity objectives of the originally approved scheme.

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved LEMP.

REASON: To ensure that the development achieves at least a 10% net gain in biodiversity.

Conditions Relating to Phase 1 – Michaela Community School

General Conditions

14. Cumulative plant noise emissions from Phase 1 of the development to which this permission relates shall not exceed the levels detailed in Table 2.2 of "Noise Assessment" reference 21688R02aPKJB at the nearest residential receptor unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interests of the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.

15. The multi-use games area on Phase 1 of the development to which this permission relates shall not be used after 21:30 hours on any day unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interests of the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.

During Construction

16. No development shall take place above slab level on Phase 1 of the development to which this permission relates until the post-demolition supplementary environmental investigation and remediation strategy, as detailed in Section 9.4 of “Geo-Environmental Assessment” reference 21-2426.01_REP_Michaela-Community-School_Stevenage_GEA_220321, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved remediation strategy.

REASON: To prevent unacceptable risks to human health as a result of contamination.

17. Prior to commencement of the enhancement works to the playing field on Phase 1 of the development to which this permission relates, a contractor’s specification for the works prepared in accordance with “A Feasibility Study for the construction of natural turf winter sport pitches at Michaela School and Stevenage SESC” authored by TGMS Sports Surface Consultants and dated 17 March 2022, which includes an implementation programme, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Sport England. The playing field enhancement works shall then be implemented in accordance with the approved specification and implementation programme.

REASON: To ensure that the playing field is fit for purpose and of sufficient benefit to the development of sport.

18. Prior to commencement of works to construct the multi-use games area on Phase 1 of the development to which this permission relates, a contractor’s specification for the associated acoustic screening prepared in accordance with “Noise Assessment” reference 21688R02aPKJB shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved acoustic fencing shall be installed prior to first use of the multi-use games area and permanently retained as such thereafter unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

REASON: In the interests of the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.

19. Prior to commencement of works to construct the multi-use games area on Phase 1 of the development to which this permission relates, a scheme for pitch lighting shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No pitch lighting whatsoever shall be installed other than in accordance with the approved pitch lighting scheme.

REASON: In the interests of the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.

20. Prior to the commencement of works to provide the car parking within Phase 1 of the development to which this permission relates, a scheme for the provision of electric vehicle charging, including spaces designed to achieve a passive standard, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented prior to the beneficial occupation of Phase 1 of the development and permanently retained as such thereafter unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

REASON: In the interests of reducing vehicle emissions and noise pollution.

Prior to Occupation or Use

21. Prior to the beneficial occupation of Phase 1 of the development to which this permission relates, a verification report, demonstrating that the remediation criteria agreed under Condition 16 of this permission have been achieved, shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To prevent unacceptable risks to human health as a result of contamination.

22. Prior to the beneficial occupation of Phase 1 of the development to which this permission relates, all car parking, service and manoeuvring areas shall be implemented in full as shown on the approved plans. Those areas shall be permanently kept free from obstruction and maintained for their intended purpose thereafter unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interests of the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers and highway safety.

23. Prior to beneficial occupation of Phase 1 of the development to which this permission relates, a delivery and service plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved delivery and service plan shall then be adhered to for the lifetime of the development unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interests of the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers and highway safety.

24. Prior to beneficial occupation of Phase 1 of the development to which this permission relates, the cycle parking shall be implemented in full as shown on the approved plans. It shall be permanently kept free from obstruction and maintained for its intended purpose thereafter unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure that sustainable modes of transport are adequately promoted.

25. Prior to beneficial occupation of Phase 1 of the development to which this permission relates, an updated travel plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plan shall include a mechanism to increase the amount of cycle parking provided at the site in future should this be identified as necessary to meet the objectives of the plan during monitoring. It shall also include a timetable for implementation. The approved plan shall then be implemented in accordance with the approved timetable and adhered to for the lifetime of the development unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure that sustainable modes of transport are adequately promoted.

26. Prior to beneficial occupation of Phase 1 of the development to which this permission relates, details of refuse stores, including drawings of the elevations of any enclosures and the number, type, size and siting of bins, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The refuse stores shall then be provided in accordance with the approved details prior to beneficial occupation of Phase 1 and permanently retained as such thereafter unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure the proper storage and disposal of waste.

27. Prior to first use of the multi-use games area on Phase 1 of the development to which this permission relates, a noise management plan prepared in accordance with Paragraph 3.6.3 of "Noise Assessment" reference 21688R02aPKJB shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved noise management plan shall be adhered to for the lifetime of the development unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interests of the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.

28. All planting and other soft landscaping as shown on drawing numbers FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0003 Rev P04 through FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0008 Rev P04 and FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0023 Rev P04 shall be carried out no later than the first planting and seeding seasons following beneficial occupation of Phase 1 of the development to which this permission relates unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure a satisfactory appearance on completion of the development.

29. Prior to beneficial occupation of Phase 1 of the development to which this permission relates, a scheme for low and zero carbon technologies, detailing the savings in regulated carbon dioxide emissions to be achieved by Phase 1 versus Part L of the Building Regulations, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented in full prior to beneficial occupation of Phase 1 and permanently retained as such thereafter unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure that the development is adaptable to climate change and to ensure a satisfactory appearance on completion of the development.

30. Prior to beneficial occupation of Phase 1 of the development to which this permission relates, a scheme for the provision of fire hydrants shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented in full prior to beneficial occupation of Phase 1 and permanently retained as such thereafter unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

REASON: To ensure adequate water infrastructure is provided to enable the fire service to discharge its statutory duties.

31. Prior to beneficial occupation of Phase 1 of the development to which this permission relates, a community use agreement prepared in consultation with Sport England shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, and a copy of the completed approved agreement shall be provided to the Local Planning Authority. The agreement shall apply to the sports hall, multi-use games area, natural turf playing field and the supporting ancillary facilities within Phase 1 as a minimum and include details of pricing policy, hours of use, access by non-educational establishment users, management responsibilities and a mechanism for review, and anything else which the local planning authority in consultation with Sport England considers necessary in order to secure the effective community use of the facilities. The development shall not be used at any time other than in compliance with the approved agreement.

REASON: To secure well managed and safe community access to the sports facilities, ensuring sufficient benefit to the development of sport.

Post-Completion

32. No tree within Phase 1 of the development to which this permission relates and shown as retained on "Tree Retention and Removal Plan" reference FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0021 Rev P01 shall be felled, uprooted, destroyed, topped or lopped within five years of the substantial completion of Phase 1 unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interests of the health and longevity of trees worthy of retention.

33. Any trees or other plants comprised in the landscaping works for Phase 1 of the development to which this permission relates (as shown on drawing numbers FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0003 Rev P04 through FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0008 Rev P04 and FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0023 Rev P04), which within a period of five years from the substantial completion of Phase 1 die, are removed, become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure a satisfactory appearance on completion of the development.

Conditions Relating to Phase 2 – SESC

General

34. Cumulative plant noise emissions from Phase 2 of the development to which this permission relates shall not exceed the levels detailed in Table 2.2 of “Noise Assessment” reference 21689R02aPKJB at the nearest residential receptor unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interests of the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.

35. The multi-use games area on Phase 2 of the development to which this permission relates shall not be used after 21:30 hours on any day unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interests of the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.

During Construction

36. No development shall take place above slab level on Phase 2 of the development to which this permission relates until the post-demolition supplementary environmental investigation and remediation strategy, as detailed in Section 9.4 of the “Geo-Environmental Assessment” reference 21-2426.01_REP_SESC_Sevenage_GEA_220321, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved remediation strategy.

REASON: To prevent unacceptable risks to human health as a result of contamination.

37. Prior to commencement of works to construct the multi-use games area on Phase 2 of the development to which this permission relates, a contractor’s specification for the associated acoustic screening prepared in accordance with “Noise Assessment” reference 21689R02aPKJB shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved acoustic fencing shall be installed prior to first use of the multi-use games area and permanently retained as such thereafter unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

REASON: In the interests of the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.

38. Prior to commencement of works to construct the multi-use games area on Phase 2 of the development to which this permission relates, a scheme for pitch lighting shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No pitch lighting whatsoever shall be installed other than in accordance with the approved pitch lighting scheme.

REASON: In the interests of the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.

39. Prior to the commencement of works to provide the car parking within Phase 2 of the development to which this permission relates, a scheme for the provision of electric vehicle charging, including spaces designed to achieve a passive standard, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented prior to the beneficial occupation of Phase 2 of the development and permanently retained as such thereafter unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interests of reducing vehicle emissions and noise pollution.

Prior to Occupation or Use

40. Prior to the beneficial occupation of Phase 2 of the development to which this permission relates, a verification report, demonstrating that the remediation criteria agreed under Condition 36 of this permission have been achieved, shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To prevent unacceptable risks to human health as a result of contamination.

41. Prior to the beneficial occupation of Phase 2 of the development to which this permission relates, all car parking, service and manoeuvring areas shall be implemented in full as shown on the approved plans. Those areas shall be permanently kept free from obstruction and maintained for their intended purpose thereafter unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interests of the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers and highway safety.

42. Prior to beneficial occupation of Phase 2 of the development to which this permission relates, the cycle parking shall be implemented in full as shown on the approved plans. It shall be permanently kept free from obstruction and maintained for its intended purpose thereafter unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure that sustainable modes of transport are adequately promoted.

43. Prior to beneficial occupation of Phase 2 of the development to which this permission relates, an updated travel plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plan shall include a timetable for implementation. The approved plan shall then be implemented in accordance with the approved timetable and adhered to for the lifetime of the development unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure that sustainable modes of transport are adequately promoted.

44. Prior to beneficial occupation of Phase 2 of the development to which this permission relates, a refuse vehicle strategy, demonstrating how refuse vehicles will enter, service and leave Phase 2, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The refuse vehicle strategy shall then be adhered to for the lifetime of the development unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interests of the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers and highway safety.

45. Prior to beneficial occupation of Phase 2 of the development to which this permission relates, details of refuse stores, including drawings of the elevations of any enclosures and the number, type, size and siting of bins, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The refuse stores shall then be provided in accordance with the approved details prior to beneficial occupation of Phase 2 and permanently retained as such thereafter unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure the proper storage and disposal of waste.

46. Prior to first use of the multi-use games area on Phase 2 of the development to which this permission relates, a noise management plan prepared in accordance with Paragraph 3.6.3 of "Noise Assessment" reference 21689R02aPKJB shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved noise management plan shall be adhered to for the lifetime of the development unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interests of the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.

47. All planting and other soft landscaping as shown on drawing numbers FS1024-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0003 Rev P04, FS1024-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0004 Rev P04 and FS1024-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0016 Rev P04 shall be carried out no later than the first planting and seeding seasons following beneficial occupation of Phase 2 of the development to which this permission relates unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure a satisfactory appearance on completion of the development.

48. Prior to beneficial occupation of Phase 2 of the development to which this permission relates, a scheme for low and zero carbon technologies, detailing the savings in regulated carbon dioxide emissions to be achieved by Phase 2 versus Part L of the Building Regulations, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented in full prior to beneficial occupation of Phase 2 and permanently retained as such thereafter unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure that the development is adaptable to climate change and to ensure a satisfactory appearance on completion of the development.

49. Prior to beneficial occupation of Phase 2 of the development to which this permission relates, a scheme for the provision of fire hydrants shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented in full prior to beneficial occupation of Phase 2 and permanently retained as such thereafter unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure adequate water infrastructure is provided to enable the fire service to discharge its statutory duties.

Post-Completion

50. No tree within Phase 2 of the development to which this permission relates and shown as retained on "Tree Retention and Removal Plan" reference FS0945-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0020 Rev P04 shall be felled, uprooted, destroyed, topped or lopped within five years of the substantial completion of Phase 2 unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interests of the health and longevity of trees worthy of retention.

51. Any trees or other plants comprised in the landscaping works for Phase 2 of the development to which this permission relates (as shown on drawing numbers FS1024-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0003 Rev P04, FS1024-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0004 Rev P04 and FS1024-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0016 Rev P04), which within a period of five years from the substantial completion of Phase 2 die, are removed, become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure a satisfactory appearance on completion of the development.

Informatives

1. The applicant is advised that the storage of materials associated with the construction of this development should be provided within the site on land which is not public highway, and the use of such areas must not interfere with the public highway. If this is not possible, authorisation should be sought from the Highway Authority before construction works commence. Further information is available via the County Council website at:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/business-licences/business-licences.aspx>

or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

2. It is an offence under section 137 of the Highways Act 1980 for any person, without lawful authority or excuse, in any way to wilfully obstruct the free passage along a highway or public right of way. If this development is likely to result in the public highway or public right of way network becoming routinely blocked (fully or partly) the applicant must contact the Highway Authority to obtain their permission and requirements before construction works commence. Further information is available via the County Council website at:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/business-licences/business-licences.aspx>

or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

3. It is an offence under section 148 of the Highways Act 1980 to deposit compost, dung or other material for dressing land, or any rubbish on a made up carriageway, or any or other debris on a highway to the interruption of any highway user. Section 149 of the same Act gives the Highway Authority powers to remove such material at the expense of the party responsible.

Therefore, best practical means shall be taken at all times to ensure that all vehicles leaving the site during construction of the development and use thereafter are in a condition such as not to emit dust or deposit mud, slurry or other debris on the highway. Further information is available by telephoning 0300 1234047.

4. The proposed development should achieve Secured by Design (SBD) accreditation in order for it to comply with current Building Regulations. The Police Crime Prevention Design Advisor can be contracted by telephone on 01707 355227

5. Building Regulations

To obtain advice regarding current Building Regulations please contact Hertfordshire Building Control Ltd. by emailing us at building.control@hertfordshirebc.co.uk or phoning us on 01438 879990.

To make a building regulations application please apply through our website portal at <https://www.hertfordshirebc.co.uk/contact-us/> payment can be made online or by phoning the above number after the application has been uploaded. Please phone Hertfordshire Building Control for fees guidance on 01438 879990.

Hertfordshire Building Control can also be contacted by post at Hertfordshire Building Control Ltd, 4th Floor, Campus West, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, AL8 6BX.

Once a building regulations application has been deposited with relevant drawings and fee building work may commence. You will be advised in their acknowledgement letter of the work stages we need to inspect but in most instances these are usually:

- Excavation for foundations
- Damp proof course
- Concrete oversite
- Insulation
- Drains (when laid or tested)
- Floor and Roof construction
- Work relating to fire safety
- Work affecting access and facilities for disabled people
- Completion

Please phone Hertfordshire Building Control on 01438 879990 before 10.00am to ensure a same day inspection (Mon - Fri).

6. Community Infrastructure Levy

Stevenage Borough Council adopted a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule at Full Council on 27 January 2020 and started implementing CIL on 01 April 2020.

This application may be liable for CIL payments and you are advised to contact the CIL Team for clarification with regard to this. If your development is CIL liable, even if you are granted an exemption from the levy, please be advised that it is a requirement under Regulation 67 of The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) that CIL Form 6 (Commencement Notice) must be completed, returned and acknowledged by Stevenage Borough Council before building works start. Failure to do so will mean you risk losing the right to payment by instalments and a surcharge will be imposed. NB, please note that a Commencement Notice is not required for residential extensions if relief has been granted.

Stevenage's adopted CIL Charging Schedule and further details of CIL can be found on the Council's webpages at www.stevenage.gov.uk/CIL or by contacting the Council's CIL Team at CIL@Stevenage.gov.uk.

7. The applicant is reminded that asbestos removal and remediation falls under the authority of the Health and Safety Executive. Any asbestos containing materials should be handled and disposed of appropriately. Where necessary, this should include the use of licensed contractors and waste disposal sites licensed to receive asbestos.

Pro-active Statement

Planning permission has been granted for this proposal. The Council acted pro-actively through positive engagement with the applicant at the pre-application stage and during the determination process which lead to improvements to the scheme. The Council has therefore acted pro-actively in line with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 38) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

1. The application file, forms, plans and supporting documents having the reference number relating to this item.
2. The Stevenage Local Plan 2011-2031.
4. Stevenage Borough Council Supplementary Planning Documents – Parking Provision and Sustainable Transport SPD (2020); Developer Contributions SPD (2021); The impact of Development on Biodiversity SPD (2020); Design Guide SPD (2009).
5. Hertfordshire County Council Local Transport Plan LTP4 2018-2031
6. Central Government advice contained in the National Planning Policy Framework July 2021 and the National Planning Practice Guidance.
7. Responses to consultations with statutory undertakers and other interested parties referred to in this report.