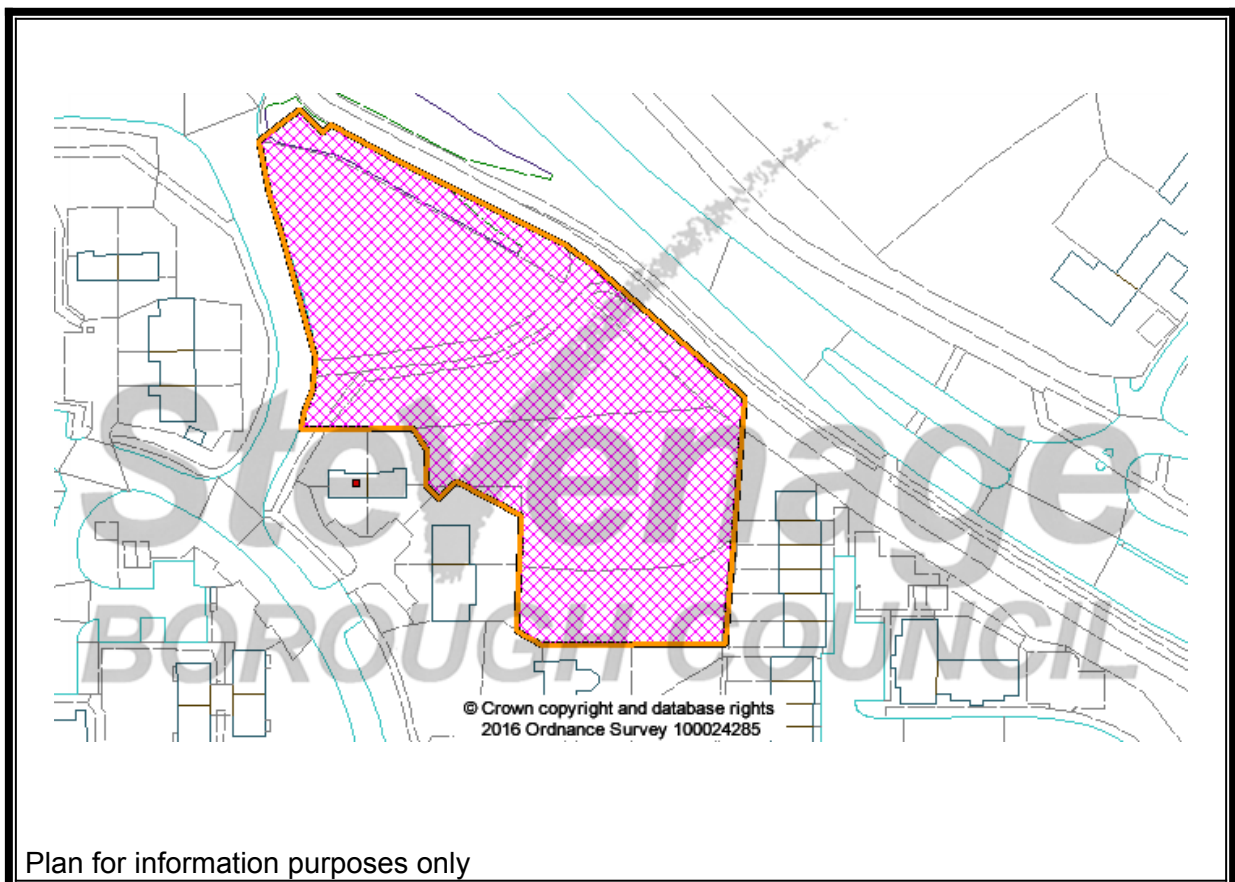


Meeting:	Planning and Development Committee	Agenda Item:
Date:	4 December 2018	
Author:	James Chettleburgh	01438 242266
Lead Officer:	Chris Berry	01438 242257
Contact Officer:	James Chettleburgh	01438 242266

Application No:	18/00400/FP
Location:	Land located between Blenheim Way, the A602 and Hertford Road, Stevenage.
Proposal:	Proposed development of a new community centre, cycle path running through the site, associated parking and landscaping.
Drawing Nos.:	16059.03.SU1.01A;16059.03.SU01.02A;16059.03.wd2.01G;16059.03.wd2.10D; 16059.03.wd2.101 B; 16059.03.wd2.102 B.
Applicant:	Stevenage Borough Council
Date Valid:	11 October 2018
Recommendation:	GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION.



1. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 1.1 The application site is located on a plot of land which lies adjacent to the junction of Blenheim Way and Hertford Road. The site is designated as “Principal Open Space” and consists of a number of mature trees and amenity grassland along with access to the cycleway. To the east and north/east of the site lies the A602 cycleway and main trafficked highway along with associated underpass. Immediately to the north of the site is the new traffic light controlled junction which serves Hertford Road and the A602. To the west of the site lies Blenheim Way which is a trafficked highway and to the south is a residential development of two-storey semi-detached houses which fronts onto Blenheim Way.
- 1.2 Turning to the surrounding area, to the east of the application site beyond the A602 is Stevenage Golf Course. To the south, beyond the area of principal open space is Pembridge Gardens which comprises a mixture of town houses terraced properties and residential blocks of flats. In regards to development along Blenheim Way, this comprises a mixture of semi-detached and terraced two-storey properties along with two and three storey residential blocks of flats. These properties and the blocks of flats are generally uniform in design constructed from red brick with concrete tiled roofs. In terms of their fenestration detailing, the properties and flat blocks comprise of uPVC windows and doors which are symmetrical, vertically aligned and evenly spaced. Turning to the flat blocks, they generally comprise of external balconies with metal balustrades, double mono-pitched roof and timber cladding on their flank elevations at the upper levels.

2. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.1 There is no relevant planning history to this site.

3. THE CURRENT APPLICATION

- 3.1 The originally submitted application sought permission for the erection of a community centre and a residential block of apartments with twelve units. The proposal also comprised a shared vehicle and pedestrian access with a cycleway through route. The scheme has now been amended with the residential block of apartments being omitted.
- 3.2 The amended application before the Council now seeks permission for the erection of a community centre, cycle path running through the site with associated parking and landscaping. The proposed community centre would measure approximately 11.17m in length, span 32.5m in width with an eaves height of 2.87m with an overall height of 6.76m. The community centre would comprise of a meeting room, 2 no. halls, a coffee bar, kitchen, toilets, offices, plant room and associated storage areas. In terms of construction, the community centre would generally be clad in interlocking diamond shaped zinc, including the gable-end roof, with the principal façade finished in facing brick. The eastern elevation of the community centre consists of curtain wall glazing at full height which is recessed with a zinc roof overhang. The roof of the building would also consist of photo-voltaic (PV) panels positioned on the southern roof slope.
- 3.3 Towards the front of the building is a single-storey brick built structure which would be utilised as a bin store. The roof of the bin store, which forms part of the canopy attached to the main building, would be a flat finished Sedum (Green roof) with the flat roof parapet wall capping's to be finished in preformed steel. The fenestration detail of the centre would comprise of aluminium timber composite windows and doors which would be finished in dark grey. To the east of the building would be a garden enclosed by a 1.5m high retaining wall with PPC (Polyester Powder Coated) metal railings. Bordering the car parking areas and hardsurfaced areas to the front of the site, this would comprise of 450mm high knee high rail fence.

- 3.4 Running through the application site is a cycleway with associated pedestrian footpath. There would also be an area of surface parking which also consists of 3 disabled spaces. The proposal also seeks the provision of additional soft landscaping around the proposed car parking area and main building itself.
- 3.5 This application comes before the planning committee for consideration as the applicant and land owner is Stevenage Borough Council.

4. PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS

4.1 As a minor planning application, the proposal has been publicised by way of letters to neighbouring premises and site notices have been erected. In addition, neighbouring residents were also consulted on amended plans associated with the site. At the time of drafting this report three objections have been raised from number 7 Stirling Close and numbers 25 and 102 Blenheim Way. A summary of the objections raised are as follows:-

- There have already been a number of trees removed on this site;
- There has already been upheaval for nesting birds from the A602 works;
- The community centre would be best placed located within the existing neighbourhood centre;
- There would be insufficient off-street parking and will result in vehicles parking on the highway;
- The proposal is likely to prejudice highway safety;
- The flatted part of the development would be located too close to the highway;
- The proposed development would affect pedestrian safety travelling through the site;
- The siting of the proposed development is inappropriate and out of character in this location;
- The residential travel plan is flawed and contains a number of errors and inconsistencies around dwelling numbers/retail floorspace, inaccurate traffic data and calculations, parking;
- The development would create an unacceptable level of additional traffic;
- The development would generate an unacceptable level of noise and disturbance to residents;
- The development would have a detrimental impact on property values;
- The development would result in an increase in crime and anti-social behaviour;
- The village characteristics of the area would be diminished by the development;
- Will the Council offer compensation to local residents affected by the development;
- The development will generate unacceptable pollution during construction phase of development;
- The infrastructure in place is not sufficient to accommodate the development;
- There cannot be a reliance on public transport;
- Where will electric vehicle charging points be located?;
- There is no public transport access to Knebworth Station and the parking provision at this station is inadequate, this demonstrates the development will be unsustainable;
- The proposed development will increase congestion on a number of roads in the area, including those in Knebworth;
- Cycling is not an option to the main station in Stevenage due to poor weather, the cycle ways in Stevenage are dangerous and poorly maintained
- The proposed housing development would not be affordable;
- The Council needs to provide more information on the Social housing it is looking to provide;
- There has been a lack of communication and transparency over the development from the Council;

- There needs to be a more open consultation with local residents with an opportunity to fully review the plans before they are presented for approval as it is likely people's views would not be heard;
- The development must not be monolithic;
- The development must not be excessive in height;
- The development must fit the "Spirit of Bragbury End";
- The development must have responsible modernity;
- The development must take into account the best facades where appropriate and replicate authentic facades;
- The development would have a negative impact on local wildlife;
- What are the Council's plans in replacing trees lost?;
- What security controls will be put in place, will there be CCTV linked to the Police?.

4.2 Please note that the aforementioned is not a verbatim of the comments and representations which have been received. However, a full version of the comments and representations which have been received are available to be viewed on the Council's website.

5. CONSULTATIONS

5.1 Hertfordshire County Council as Highways Authority

5.1.1 The County Council as the Highways Authority consider the development to be in accordance with National and Local Policies. Therefore, the Highways Authority is that there are no objections to the development proposal subject to the imposition of conditions. In addition, it is recommended a financial contribution is also sought for improvements to local bus stops as well as the pedestrian crossing and the widening of footpath access.

5.2 Hertfordshire County Council Development Services

5.2.1 Planning obligations will be sought for the provision of fire hydrants in order to minimise the impact of the development on Hertfordshire County Council Services.

5.3 Hertfordshire Constabulary as the Crime Prevention Design Service

5.3.1 The Police Crime Prevention Design Service are in support of the application. However, they suggest the provision of CCTV coverage at the centre which can be linked to the wider town wide scheme and monitored 24/7. In addition, the Police Crime Prevention Design Service are supportive of the Secure by Design approach adopted.

5.3.2 In regards to the amended scheme, the previous comments submitted still stand.

5.4 Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust

5.4.1 The development would not result in significant impact and providing the recommendations in the ecological report are implemented, the proposal would result in a net gain.

5.5 Council's Parks and Amenities Section

5.5.1 No objection is raised to the loss of the open space as the proposal is on an identified preferred location over other formerly proposed site. The site currently has limited amenity value due to its shape and location. However, it does provide some form of pleasing amenity when travelling along the A602.

5.5.2 It is recommended that suitable and sympathetic landscaping should be provided in order to reduce the impact on visual amenity. The proposed landscaping to be planted along the

A602 cycle track will need to be carefully considered, this is due to the topography/gradient and how this will be maintained. However, the planting must mitigate the loss of visual amenity from the A602.

- 5.5.3 All soft and hard landscaping elements need to be designed to be attractive as well as being mindful of the Council's resources. All planting shall be hardy to typical winters, drought tolerant and show consideration for year round interest. In addition, all planting should be undertaken in winter months.

5.6 Council's Arboricultural Manager

- 5.6.1 Following an analysis of the application, the proposals set out in the arboricultural report are acceptable. However, the only concern would be that where trees are due to be removed, the nearby ones would need to be pruned at the same time to compensate for the loss of support.

5.7 Council's Environmental Health Section

- 5.7.1 Following an assessment of the proposal, it is recommended that conditions should be imposed with respect to contamination, hours of construction and to ensure operations on the site do not cause issues with respect to noise, dust, smoke and lighting.

5.8 Thames Water

- 5.8.1 The proposed development is located 15m from a strategic sewer, therefore, Thames Water are seeking to agree a piling methodology and therefore, this should be secured via a condition. In addition, due to the position of the sewer, the impact will need to be minimised so that the development does not reduce capacity, limit repair or maintenance activities or inhibit the services provided by Thames Water.

- 5.8.2 In addition to the above, it is expected the developer demonstrates how they will minimise groundwater discharges into the public sewer. The groundwater discharges from the construction site dewatering, deep excavations, basement infiltration, borehole installation, testing and site remediation, any discharge will need a permit as without a permit is deemed illegal and may result in prosecution. Therefore, if the Council is minded to grant permission, Thames Water recommends an informative attached to the permission with respect to a requirement to secure a Groundwater Risk Management Permit.

- 5.8.3 In relation to surface water drainage, it is advised that if the developer follows the sequential approach to the disposal of surface water there would be no objection. However, where the developer is seeking to discharge to a public sewer, prior approval from Thames Water will be required. In regards to water supply, this is under the jurisdiction of Affinity Water.

5.9 Other consultees

- 5.9.1 The original application which was received by the Council was classed as a major as it include a residential development of twelve flats. Given this, the Council in line with Government Regulations, was required to consult Hertfordshire County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) as they are a statutory consultee.

- 5.9.2 However, as the flatted part of the scheme has now been omitted from the proposal, the application is no longer classed as a major application. Given this, the Council does not have a statutory requirement to consult the LLFA. Consequently, their comments no longer stand in this instance and therefore, the suggested conditions in regards to the drainage

strategy are no longer relevant as they would not be classed as reasonable in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (2018).

- 5.9.3 Further to the above, the comments submitted by Hertfordshire County Council's Growth and Infrastructure Unit do not have to be considered in this instance. This is because the financial contributions sought for Library and Youth Services related to the flatted part of the original scheme. As this part of the proposal has now been omitted, there is no requirement to seek financial contributions in this instance.

6. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

6.1 Background to the Development Plan

- 6.1.1 In the determination of planning applications development must be in accordance with the statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. For Stevenage the statutory development plan comprises:

- Hertfordshire Waste Development Framework 2012 and Hertfordshire Waste Site Allocations Development Plan Document (adopted 2012 and 2014);
- Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan 2002 – 2016 (adopted 2007); and
- The Stevenage District Plan Second Review 2004.

The Council has now reached an advanced stage in the preparation of a new Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031. The Plan has been used as a material consideration in the determination of all planning applications registered on or after Wednesday 6 January 2016. The Plan has now been through the Examination process and the Inspector's Report was received in October 2017. This recommended approval of the Plan, subject to modifications proposed. The Plan is currently subject to a holding direction placed upon it by the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), which prevents its adoption whilst MHCLG are considering whether or not to call it in.

- 6.1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework sets out that decision-takers may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to their stage of preparation, the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies, and their degree of consistency with policies in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 6.1.3 In considering the policy implications of any development proposal, the Local Planning Authority will assess each case on its individual merits, however, bearing in mind the positive Inspector's Report, significant weight will be afforded to policies within the emerging Local Plan.

6.2 Central Government Advice

- 6.2.1 A revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in July 2018. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. Annex 1 of the NPPF provides guidance on how existing local plan policies which have been prepared prior to the publication of the NPPF should be treated. Paragraph 213 of the NPPF applies which states that due weight should be afforded to the relevant policies in the adopted local plan according to their degree of consistency with it.
- 6.2.2 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF is itself a material consideration. Given that the advice that the weight to be given to relevant policies in the local plan will depend on their degree of consistency with the NPPF, it will be necessary in the determination of this application to assess the consistency of the relevant local plan policies with the NPPF. The NPPF applies a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

6.2.3 In addition to the NPPF, advice in Planning Practice Guidance must also be taken into account. It states that, where the development plan is absent, silent or the relevant policies are out of date, paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires the application to be determined in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development unless otherwise specified.

6.3 Adopted Local Plan

Policy TW1: Sustainable Development;
Policy TW2: Structural Open Space;
Policy TW8: Environmental Safeguards;
Policy TW9: Quality in Design;
Policy TW10: Crime Prevention;
Policy TW11: Planning Requirements;
Policy T6: Design Standard;
Policy T12: Bus Provision;
Policy T13: Cycleways;
Policy T14: Pedestrians;
Policy EN13: Trees in new development;
Policy EN27: Noise Pollution;
Policy EN36: Water Conservation;
Policy EN38: Energy Conservation and Supply;
Policy L21: Footpath, Cycleway and Bridleway Network.

6.4 Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031 Publication Draft (Emerging Local Plan)

Policy SP1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development;
Policy SP2: Sustainable Development in Stevenage;
Policy SP4: A Vital Town Centre;
Policy SP5: Infrastructure;
Policy SP6: Sustainable Transport;
Policy SP8: Good Design;
Policy SP9: Healthy Communities;
Policy SP11: Climate Change, Flooding and Pollution;
Policy SP12: Green infrastructure and the natural environment;
Policy IT3: Infrastructure;
Policy IT4: Transport Assessments and Travel Plans;
Policy IT5: Parking and Access;
Policy GD1: High Quality Design;
Policy FP1: Climate Change;
Policy HC5: New health, social and community facilities;
Policy FP7: Pollution;
Policy NH1: Principal Open Spaces;
Policy NH5: Trees and woodland;
Policy NH6: General protection for open space.

6.5 Supplementary Planning Documents

Parking Provision Supplementary Planning Document January 2012.
Stevenage Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document January 2009.

7. APPRAISAL

7.1 The main issues for consideration in the determination of this application are its acceptability in land use policy terms, the impact on the character and appearance of the area; the impact

on both existing neighbouring amenities and future residential amenity; the effect of the proposals on the highway network; the adequacy of parking provision and flood risk.

7.2 Land Use Policy Considerations

7.2.1 The application site is not currently designated in the Stevenage District Plan Second Review 1991 - 2011 (adopted 2004). Therefore, it would be classed as an area of informal open space. In this regard, Policy TW2: Structural Open Space needs to be considered. This policy states that development proposals which have an unacceptable adverse impact on the structural open spaces of the town will not be permitted. Therefore, when assessing the impact of a development proposal, the following criteria would be used:-

a. the size, form, function and character of the structural open space affected by the development proposal; and

b. the impact of the development proposal on the structural open space.

7.2.2 Notwithstanding the above, the Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011 – 2031 Publication Draft January 2016 designates the application site under emerging Policy NH1 (NH1/17) as an area of Principal Open Space. Taking this policy into consideration, it states that planning permission would be granted where proposals do not result in the loss of any part of a principal open space, it does not have an adverse impact on the principal open space within or adjacent to, the application site, and reasonably provide or contribute towards the maintenance or improvement of the principal open space.

7.2.3 In addition to the above, the policy states that planning permission will be granted for small scale leisure and recreation developments within a Principal Open Space where they support its continued use and maintenance. New or replacement facilities that meet the general definitions of Principal Open Spaces will be afforded the same protections as the sites identified in the aforementioned policy.

7.2.4 Taking into consideration the aforementioned Policies, the proposed development would result in the reduction of an area of structural open space as well as part an established principal open space. Consequently, the development would be contrary to the aforementioned policies. However, whilst the site does form part of this principal open space, the development ensures that a large proportion of the principal open space is retained. This is because firstly, the development has been designed in a way that involves the least amount of land to be taken up by built form and hardsurfacing. Given this, the proposed development would cover an area of approximately 2,035 sq.m or 20% of the principal open space. Therefore, a large area of principal open space would be retained as part of the development proposal. As such, the proposed development does not detrimentally impact upon the overall structural integrity of the principal open space and it would not physically break the flow of the space. This is because it would still run through between Broadhall Way (A602) down to Bragbury End.

7.2.5 Further to the above, the applicant has confirmed in line with the Policy NH1, the development will also provide a leisure offer which will be of a benefit to the local community. In addition, the proposed development also seeks to provide an upgraded two way cycle track which would be of a benefit as well. Moreover, the applicant will be providing a new communal garden which would be run by the local community in order to compensate for loss of the existing communal garden due to the proposed development of Kenilworth Close neighbourhood centre.

7.2.6 Turning to the principal open spaces ecological and wildlife value, it has been established within the Preliminary Ecological Report and Phase 1 Habitat Survey submitted as part of this application that the application site is classed as having low ecological value with no protected species being identified. This is due to the presence of low value amenity grass

which is punctuated by semi/mature trees. Furthermore, it was also identified in the Ecological Report that there are no protected species. In addition, the site is not designated as a wildlife site or is a nationally significant of importance such as a SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) or AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). Further to this, as set out in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment, apart from the Oak Tree on the site which is to be retained, a number of trees on this site are of limited amenity value. Therefore, it can be concluded that the site is of limited wildlife and amenity value.

- 7.2.7 In addition to the above, one of the justifications for the siting of the community centre on this site is due to the proposed redevelopment of the Kenilworth Neighbourhood Centre (Application references:- 18/00398/FPM and 18/00399/FPM). In this regard, the proposed redevelopment project for Kenilworth Close requires the demolition of the existing community centre in order to help to facilitate the delivery of new homes and shops. Consequently, the community centre needs to be sited on land which is close to the existing neighbourhood centre and is easily accessible by members of the local community. Therefore, the applicant also undertook a sequential test of nearby sites as well as liaising with the Community Association as well as the Council's Communities and Neighbourhood Centre. The site was identified as the most suitable location for the replacement community centre due to the locality and accessibility to the wider public. In addition, it was the closest suitable location to the neighbourhood centre which is to be provided as part of the wider redevelopment of Kenilworth Close neighbourhood centre.
- 7.2.8 Further, the applicant has agreed to provide suitable high quality landscaping which would be secured via a condition as well as provide biodiversity improvements such as the provision of bat and bird boxes. It is recommended that these improvements are secured via the imposition of a condition if planning permission were to be granted.
- 7.2.9 Taking into consideration the above, whilst the development does result in the loss of an area of Principal Open Space, the overall benefits of the development would outweigh the harm in this instance. In addition, it will provide a facility for small recreation and leisure activities to take place and it would also help to support the wider community generally.

7.3 Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

- 7.3.1 The surrounding area is characterised by a mixture of terraced properties and residential blocks of flats. In regards to the semi-detached properties which are located due south of the application site, they are centred on a shared surface parking area which is punctuated by small areas of open space with semi-mature trees. To the west of the site beyond Blenheim Way lies Stirling Close, this comprises a mixture of terraced properties which centre on a shared surface car park along with a number of residential blocks of flats.
- 7.3.2 The proposed community centre, as set out in paragraph 3.2 of this report, would have a footprint of approximately 365m² and would measure approximately 11.17m in length, span 32.5m in width with an eaves height of 2.87m with an overall height of 6.76m. The roof of the building would comprise of a traditional gable-end. To compare the height and scale of the building, it would not be dissimilar in height to the existing residential properties along for example Blenheim Way and Stirling Close and would have a similar footprint to a pair of semi-detached properties. Therefore, in terms of scale and built form, the proposal would not be out of character in this instance.
- 7.3.3 In terms of visual appearance, the community centre would be clad in interlocking diamond shaped zinc, including the gable-end roof, with the principal façade finished in facing brick. The eastern elevation of the community centre would consist of curtain wall glazing at full height which is recessed with a zinc roof overhang. This part of the building opens out onto the enclosed garden area.

- 7.3.4 To the front of the building is a single-storey brick built structure which would be utilised as a bin store. The roof of the bin store, which forms part of the canopy attached to the main building, would be flat finished in Sedum (Green roof) with the flat roof parapet wall capping's to be finished in preformed steel. The fenestration detail of the centre would comprise of aluminium timber composite windows and doors which would be finished in dark grey. The windows themselves are of varying designs and would be recessed into the building in order to add variety and interest into the overall facades.
- 7.3.5 Taking into consideration of the above, the contrast in the use of materials along with a mixed window design combined with the fact that the building would be well articulated with projecting and recessed features, help to not only provide visual interest but also give a high quality appearance. Further to the above, as the development is located on a prominent and conspicuous site, being located on the junctions of the A602/Blenheim Way/Hertford Road, it is noted that the site has a gateway status, therefore, the scheme has been developed to ensure a high quality community building is located on the most prominent position on the application site. The building, due to its unique, contemporary modern design would also create a landmark feature in this part of the townscape as you travel along the A602 towards Stevenage Town Centre.
- 7.3.6 Turning to the overall setting of the community centre, the proposal also seeks to retain a number of existing trees combined with the provision of an enclosed garden and additional soft landscaping, which would help to enhance the overall amenity value of this part of the Principal Open Space. In addition, the use of low level retaining walls with open metal fencing and use of a mixture of block paving also enhance the overall design concept of the development as well as help to frame the car parking areas, shrub/landscaping beds and the garden areas as well.
- 7.3.7 Given the aforementioned assessment, the proposed development would not have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the street scene. This is because the proposal seeks to deliver a development which is well designed and of high quality as well as create a landmark form of development on this key gateway site.

7.4 Impact upon Neighbouring Amenity

- 7.4.1 With regards to the impact on neighbouring amenity, the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the amenities of nearby residential properties. The nearest residential property which is number 6 Stirling Close, is located 25m from the proposed development located across Blenheim Way. Taking this into consideration combined with the fact that the building is only single-storey, it would not harm the outlook or appear overbearing to the owner/occupiers of the aforementioned property.
- 7.4.2 In regards to noise, the proposed development is set against the backdrop of the A602 which is a busy trafficked highway. Given this, there is already a large amount of background noise which is currently generated by vehicular traffic. Turning to the development, the internal layout of the building has ensured that the halls have been located towards the rear of the building away from the nearest residential premises. Taking this into consideration, the Council's Environmental Health Section has not raised any concerns with respect to potential noise which would be generated by activities conducted within the community centre.
- 7.4.3 Notwithstanding the above, in order to protect the amenities of nearby residents during the construction phase of the development, a condition would be imposed to any permission granted to restrict the hours of construction in relation to noisy activities. With respect to external lighting, the applicant has not submitted any details of lighting which would be installed on the development or around the application site. However, to ensure that any external lighting does not affect the amenities of nearby residential properties or prejudices highway safety, it is recommended a condition be imposed to any permission granted in

order to deal with external lighting. This condition will require the applicant to submit details of any external lighting scheme if such lighting is to be installed.

7.5 Impact on the Highway Network

- 7.5.1 The application site is bound by Hertford Road and Blenheim Way and does not currently comprise of vehicular access. However, there is an existing cycle track and public footpath which run through the centre of the site. Hertford Road and Blenheim Way are undesignated local access roads with a speed restriction of 30mph. The proposed access into the site would have a bell mouth of 13m with an overall internal car park road width would be 6m. With this in mind, the access road and internal road serving the car park would be of a sufficient width to allow for two way traffic.
- 7.5.2 Turning to vehicle-to-vehicle inter visibility as taken from the individual access points, these have been designed in accordance with the Department for Transport (DfT) Manual for Streets and Herefordshire County Council (HCC), Road in Hertfordshire Design Guide. In terms of pedestrian visibility, the proposed raised pedestrian crossing which crosses the new access road, this would have adequate visibility splays in line with Manual for Streets as well as HCC Roads Design Guidance.
- 7.5.3 In regards to vehicle manoeuvrability, the applicant has provided as part of this application submission swept path analysis as part of their Transport Assessment. The plans depicting the swept path analysis display that tracking is accommodated within the site the average motor car. In terms of accessibility for emergency vehicles, the proposed is within the statutory building regulation distance to all parts of the building from the principal and internal road. Given this, HCC as the Highways Authority have not raised any concerns about vehicle manoeuvrability within the development site.
- 7.5.4 In assessing traffic generation, the applicant's transport consultant has produced a transport assessment which incorporates details of proposed traffic generation for weekdays. The assessment also comprises of a future year assessment model in order to inform the potential future impact of the development on the surrounding highway network. The model utilised to predict the amount of traffic which would be generated was via TRICS (Trip Rate Information Computer System) with a base model of a community centre in a similar location. The selected peak periods of assessment are the typical commuter peak periods of 08:00-09:00 and 17:00-18:00 on a weekday. The peak hours have been based upon the observed peak hours on the local highway network.
- 7.5.5 The Transport Assessment sets out that in the AM Peak there would be 2 arrivals and 1 departure (3 vehicle movements) and the PM Peak 1 arrival and 1 departure (2 vehicle movement). In addition to this, on the request of HCC as Highways Authority additional information was sought regarding potential vehicle movements the development would create on the weekend. However, the Transport Consultant advised that for community centre developments the TRICS database does not provide comparable survey data for weekends. However, the Transport Consultant sets out that even if the Community Centre were to generate 7-8 times the weekday numbers, this would not have an adverse impact on highway safety.
- 7.5.6 In order to assess future traffic growth on these junctions based on the survey data from 2018 up to a future year of 2023 (5 years is an agreed industry standard), the Transport Consultant has utilised the National Transport Model (NTM) which factors local conditions using TEMPRO (Trip End Model Presentation Programme). This model demonstrates that the queue length on the junction and surrounding roads would be well dispersed due to the various access points into the development. In addition, the modelling has demonstrated that the new A602/Hertford junction would operate with adequate spare capacity during both peak periods.

- 7.5.7 In regards to the traffic modelling generated within the Transport Assessment, HCC Highways considers the data produced is a fair representation of the potential amount of traffic which would be generated by the development). Following a review of this, it is considered the development would generate a nominal increase in vehicle trip movements to and front the development site, but, this would not be to prejudicial highway safety. In addition, the applicant has provided accident data which demonstrates that there have been no serious accidents within the vicinity of the development. Furthermore, the Highways Authority consider that the likely distribution and assignment of traffic across the surrounding roads, the impacts of the proposal would be dispersed throughout the various junctions.
- 7.5.8 With respect to the existing cycleway, this will be reprovided as part of the proposed development. The new shared cycleway will run parallel to the existing cycleway which is to be stopped up with the new cycleway being 5m in width as it will be shared by pedestrians. As such, Hertfordshire County Council as Highways Authority considers the replacement cycleway to be acceptable as it would accord with their Design Guidance. In terms of accessibility for pedestrians, the proposed development would provide safe means for pedestrians access into the developed, including for those with reduce mobility or in wheelchairs. The Highways Authority also considers these pedestrian access points and the crossing is also in accordance with their guidance.
- 7.5.9 In regards to construction on the highway to create the new access points as well as the shared footpath/cycle track which would run through the centre of the site, HCC as Highways Authority recommend the applicant enters into a Section 278 Agreement under the Highways Act. This is in order to ensure the works to be undertaken on the highway meet current standards. In addition, HCC recommends that planning permission were to be granted, conditions should be imposed in respect to the following:-
- Cycle parking;
 - Details of hardsurfacing;
 - Car park management plan;
 - Construction management plan;
 - Visibility splays for pedestrians on the raised pedestrian crossing;
 - Widening of the existing footway to the bus stop;
 - Works to connect the new shared pedestrian cycleway;
 - Stopping up order; and
 - Drainage,
- 7.5.10 In regards to the aforementioned, the only conditions which cannot be secured relate to works such as widening of the footpath and connections of the shared cycle track. This is because the scope of these works fall outside the development sites boundary. Notwithstanding this, these works would still require a Section 278 Agreement with Hertfordshire County Council as the Highways Authority in any instance. Therefore, imposing such conditions are not considered reasonable as they would be controlled by other legislation which fall outside of planning. In regards to the car parking management condition, this does not meet the tests for conditions set out in the NPPF (2018). This is because this condition is not enforceable from a planning perspective. However, as Stevenage Borough Council would be land owner, it would be able to manage the car park as land owner in this instance.
- 7.5.11 Separate to the above, the Highways Authority has sought a financial contribution to cover the costs of some of the highway improvement works. In addition, they have sought contributions towards improvements of bus stops on the road. However, it is considered such a request is not reasonable or relates in scale and kind to the development. Therefore, it would fail to meet the key tests set out under Section 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy 2010 as well as the NPPF (2018). Furthermore, the costs of undertaking works on the highway would be dealt through the undertaking of a Section 278 Agreement. Moreover, in

regards to bus stop improvements, a financial contribution under The Bragbury Centre (18/00398/FPM) already seeks a financial contribution towards the improvement of local bus stops in this instance.

- 7.5.12 Notwithstanding, subject to suitable conditions being imposed if permission were to be granted, the development proposal would not prejudice the safety and operation of the highway network as advised by HCC as the Highways Authority.

7.6 Parking provision

- 7.6.1 The Parking Provision Supplementary Planning Document (2012) sets out the maximum level of parking requirements for Use Class D1 (Community Centres) developments. The car parking standards which are required for such developments is 1 space per 9m² of gross floor area plus 1 space per full-time staff member or equivalent. Therefore, the proposed development would require 41 parking spaces. However, as the site is located in non-residential accessibility zone 4 (identified in the SPD), where car parking provision can be reduced to between 75% and 100% of the base car parking standard. This means there would be a requirement of between 31 to 41 spaces.

- 7.6.2 The proposed development seeks to provide 31 parking spaces which is in accordance with the Council's Car Parking Standards SPD (2012). Turning to disabled parking, The Parking Provision SPD states that for developments with up to 200 spaces, there should be individual bays for each disabled employee plus 2 bays or 5% of total capacity, whichever is the greater. Taking this into consideration, whilst it is not known whether or not there would be disabled employees working at the community centre, the proposed development does comprise of 2 disabled parking bays in line with the Council's Car Parking Standards.

- 7.6.3 Given the aforementioned, there would be sufficient car parking to serve the proposed development. With regards to cycle parking, the minimum standard for this development is 1 short term space per 200m² of gross floor area plus 1 long term space per 10 staff on duty. Taking these standards into consideration, whilst it is not known how many people would be employed at the community centre, as a minimum there should be 2 cycle spaces. The proposed development seeks to provide 8 cycle spaces to the front of the development which exceeds the Council's requirements. Given this, the development does encourage a modal shift from the car especially due to the fact the site would also connect to an existing cycleway which runs along the A602.

- 7.6.4 Taking into consideration of the above, to ensure that the cycle parking is provided as part of the development, a condition would be imposed to any permission issued to require the cycle parking to be made available prior to the first use of the development.

7.7 Trees and Soft Landscaping (Finalise Section)

- 7.7.1 The site where the community centre including associated parking area is located is on land which comprises a number of mature trees. Given this, in order to facilitate the construction of the proposed development it would result in the removal of 13 no. category B (Trees of moderate quality) trees and 1 no. category C (trees of low quality). The trees to be removed comprise a mixture of Lime, Norway Maple, Cherry and Corsican Pine.

- 7.7.2 In addition to the above, the proposed development would encroach on the root protection area of six trees. The works to be undertaken within the root protection areas would comprise of minor excavations associated with the development. In addition, some parts of the proposed parking bays would also fall within the root protection areas. Given this, the applicants Arboricultural Impact Assessment advises that the excavation works would have to be undertaken sby a suitably qualified arboriculturalist. In relation to the parking bays, this would be undertaken via reduced dig methodology and constructed upon a cellular

confinement system. In addition, the Assessment recommends that the parking bays are installed under an arboricultural watching brief.

7.7.3 Turning to the proposed patio areas, again as these would fall within root protection areas and the assessment recommends that a reduced dig methodology should also be adopted in order to reduce root disturbance. In addition to the works within the root protection areas and the removal of a number of trees, there would also be a requirement to prune back/undertake crown reduction to 5 no. trees. This is in order to allow sufficient room for scaffolding during construction and to provide clearance for the proposed parking bays.

7.7.4 In regards to trees which are to be retained, the Arboricultural Impact Assessment sets out that during the construction phase of development, tree protection barriers will need to be installed prior to the commencement of any development. In addition, it is recommended that these barriers remain in place during the construction phase of the development.

7.7.5 In relation to mitigation, the Arboricultural Impact Assessment recommends a number of trees be planted in order to compensate for the trees lost. Following consultation with the Council's Arboricultural and Conservation Manager, he considers the trees specified to be removed, associated tree works and suggested protection measures for the retained trees are acceptable. However, this will be on the basis that acceptable replacement tree planting is provided as part of the development. Therefore, if permission were to be granted, a condition could be imposed requiring details of landscaping to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for agreement.

7.8 Impact on the Environment

7.8.1 The development site is currently defined as a "greenfield" site and as such the potential for the presence of contaminants is low. However, as the site is located within close proximity to urban development and a trafficked highway which has recently undergone major improvement works, there is the potential for contaminants which could have an effect on human health. Given this, the Council's Environmental Health Section has recommended a condition be imposed if permission were to be granted. This condition requires a watching brief be undertaken and in the event any contaminants are found that a relevant remediation strategy be submitted to the Council for its approval. With this condition in place, it ensure that not only the health of persons using the site are protected, it also ensures that the wider environment such as surface groundwater is not affected by any potential contaminants if they are found.

7.9 Impact on Ecology

7.9.1 The application site, whilst not a designated wildlife or SSSI (Sites of Special Scientific Interest), being an area of Principal Open Space, it comprises of amenity grassland with a number of mature trees. The wider environment is generally urban in nature punctuated by small areas of informal open space. The applicant has undertaken a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the site (including Bat Scoping Survey) to assess the potential for the site and for protected species. The survey comprised a desk top study of records which included Natural England Magic Website, Herts Environmental Records Centre and Ordnance Survey Maps. A filed survey was also undertaken which involved a walkover of the site.

7.9.2 The survey identified that there are no protected species such as birds, flora, invertebrates, mammals and reptiles within the application site. In terms of impact, as the proposed development is located a considerable distance from any designated sites, it is considered that the proposed development site as a whole has a low ecological value.

7.9.3 In regards to birds, these are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and in relation to bats, these are a protected species under both UK and EU law. Taking birds and bats into consideration, the Ecological Report identified that there are suitable features within the site which may provide for birds and bats. The report states that:-

- There are scattered trees to the north of the site, and along the southern boundary which provide suitable nesting habitat for breeding birds during the breeding season.
- The trees are also considered suitable for localised foraging and commuting bats, albeit limited.

7.9.4 Taking into consideration the above, the Ecological Report recommends that any retained trees or hedgerows should be protected during the works in accordance with British Standards BS 5837:2012 “trees in relation to design, demolition and construction”. In addition, consideration needs to be made for sensitive lighting design to ensure there is no impact on foraging bats. In regards to clearance of vegetation, it is recommended that this undertaken out of the bird nesting season and if it is undertaken during this time, a suitably qualified ornithologist/ecologist should be appointed to determine if nesting birds are using the site before works commence. This is to ensure that nesting birds are not affected in this instance.

7.9.5 Turning to biodiversity improvements and mitigation measures, it is set out in the Ecological report that any planting scheme should ideally be native species which is considered beneficial for wildlife. In addition, there should be the provision of bat boxes and bird boxes which should be incorporated into the scheme.

7.9.6 Given the above, and subject to the recommendations set out in the Ecological Report, it is considered that the proposed development would not have a detrimental impact on protected species, both flora and fauna. This is supported by Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust subject to the development being carried out as specified in the Ecological Report. Therefore, it is recommended that conditions be imposed to any permission issued to ensure the recommendations set out in the Ecological Report are adhered to.

7.10 Other Matters

Sustainable construction and climate change

7.10.1 Policy EN36 of the District Plan states that development proposals will be encouraged to reduce water consumption and run-off by using suitable water conservation and storage measures such as the use of rainwater, water efficient devices and by recycling water. Policy EN38 of the same document states that development proposals will be expected to demonstrate that methods of maximising energy efficiency and supplying of energy in the development need to be considered. Policy FP1 of the Emerging Local Plan (2016) stipulates that planning permission will be granted for development that can incorporate measures to address adaptation to climate change. New developments will be encouraged to include measures such as:

- Ways to ensure development is resilient to likely 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;
- Using or producing renewable or low carbon energy from a local source; and
- Contributing towards reducing flood risk through the use of SuDS or other appropriate measures.

- 7.10.2 The applicant has provided as part of their Design and Access Statement details on sustainable construction and adaptation to climate change. The details provided demonstrate that the development will utilise highly efficient building fabric, low energy lighting, enhanced insulation and air tightness, water efficient appliances and systems as well as the provision of a green roof. Additionally, the introduction of rain water harvesting and a sustainable drainage system in accordance with the aforementioned policies.

Impact on property values

- 7.10.3 Concerns have been raised about the impact that the development would have on property values. However, despite the concerns raised, it has long been established through planning case law that in the assessment of planning applications, it is the conventional tests of impact on planning policies and amenity harm to neighbouring uses or the character of an area as a whole that is the deciding issue and not any possible consequential effects on nearby property values.

Consultation process

- 7.10.4 A number of concerns have been raised by local residents that the Council has not undertaken a thorough or comprehensive consultation process with local residents about this planning application. However, the Council has complied with the regulations which are set out in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

- 7.10.5 In line with the aforementioned Order, residential properties located in close proximity to the application site have been notified via a letter and a number of site notices have also been erected outside the application site. Furthermore, this planning application has been published on the weekly planning list and all of the relevant plans and documentation associated with this application have been uploaded onto the Council's website. In addition, all residents notified on the original application were also consulted on the amended scheme and new site notices were also erected in this instance.

- 7.10.6 Turning to the consultation process undertaken by the applicant, there is no statutory requirement for the applicant to undertake consultations with local residents before submitting a planning application. However, the applicant has confirmed that an extensive consultation process was undertaken with local residents on this application before a formal submission was made to the Council as the Local Planning Authority.

Anti-social behaviour and crime

- 7.10.7 A number of concerns have been raised that the development could result in anti-social behaviour and crime. However, following consultation with the Police Crime Prevention Design Officer, they have not raised any concerns with the proposed development providing it meets "Secured by Design" which the applicant has confirmed the development would meet. In respect to the provision of CCTV, whilst the Police Crime Prevention Design Officer has recommended a CCTV system should be provided, the Council's CCTV section has not made any formal request for such a system.

- 7.10.8 Notwithstanding the above, in order to alleviate any potential concerns with respect to crime and anti-social behaviour, if the Council is minded to grant permission, a condition could be imposed requiring the applicant to provide details of a CCTV system prior to the first occupation of the development.

8. CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 In principle, the proposed introduction of the Community Centre would, despite resulting in a loss of principal open space, would outweigh the loss of this area of principal open space.

The proposed development has been designed to a high quality and would create a landmark feature on a prominent corner. Therefore, it would not have a detrimental impact on the amenities of the wider street scene. Furthermore, the proposed development would not have a detrimental impact on the on the amenities of neighbouring properties.

- 8.2 Additional to the aforementioned, the proposed development would not have a detrimental impact on the safety and operation of the public highway and there would be sufficient off-street parking in line with the Council's Standards. In addition, the proposal would have no impact on protected species and would be acceptable from an ecological perspective. Finally, issues relating to construction management, materials and landscaping can be dealt with through the use of conditions.
- 8.3 Given the above, the proposed development accords with the Policies contained within the adopted Local Plan (2004), the Council's Emerging Local Plan (2016), the Council's Supplementary Planning Documents, the NPPF (2018) and NPPG (2014).

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 That planning permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:-

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

16059.03.SU1.01A;16059.03.SU01.02A;16059.03.wd2.01G;16059.03.wd2.10D;
16059.03.wd2.101 B; 16059.03.wd2.102 B.

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

- 2 The development hereby permitted 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 No development, above slab level, shall commence until a schedule and sample of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

REASON:- To ensure the finished appearance of the development enhances the visual amenities of the area.

- 4 Notwithstanding the details specified in the application submission, no public realm landscaping works shall commence until a scheme of soft and hard landscaping and details of the treatment of all hard surfaces has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include details of all new planting to take place including species, size and method of planting. The approved landscaping scheme shall be implemented within the first available planting season following the first occupation of the buildings or the completion of the development whichever is the sooner.

REASON:- To ensure a satisfactory appearance for the development.

- 5 Any trees or plants comprised within the scheme of landscaping, which within a period of five years from the completion of the development die, are removed or 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 for the development.

- 6 No demolition or construction work relating to this permission shall be carried out on any Sunday, Public or Bank Holiday nor at any other time, except between the hours of 0730 and 1800 on Mondays to Fridays and between the hours of 0830 and 1300 on Saturdays, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These times apply to work which is audible at the site boundary.
REASON: - To safeguard the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring properties.
- 7 No external lighting shall be installed on site unless details of such lighting, including the intensity of illumination and predicted light contours, have first been submitted to, and approved in writing the Local Planning Authority prior to first occupation of the development. Any external lighting shall accord with the details so approved.
REASON:- In order to protect the amenities and operations of neighbouring properties and to ensure any external lighting does not prejudice highway safety. In addition, to ensure the development does not have a detrimental impact on foraging bats.
- 8 A watching brief must be kept during initial site preparation works to identify any potentially contaminated materials likely to be present. In the event contamination is found during site clearance and/or construction phase of the development, undertake an appropriate investigation and provide a remediation strategy which is to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This investigation and assessment must be undertaken by a competent person, and shall assess any contamination on the site, whether or not it originates on the site. Moreover, it must include:
(i) a survey of the extent, scale and nature of contamination;
(ii) an assessment of the potential risks to:
• human health,
• property (existing or proposed) including buildings, crops, livestock, pets,
• woodland and service lines and pipes,
• adjoining land,
• groundwaters and surface waters,
• ecological systems.
REASON:- To prevent harm to human health and pollution of the water environment in accordance with Government policy set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 9 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 prepared in accordance with the requirements of condition 8, which is subject to the approval of the Local Planning Authority. Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme a verification report must be prepared, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority in accordance with condition.
REASON:- To prevent harm to human health and pollution of the water environment in accordance with Government policy set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 10 A detailed remediation scheme to bring the site to a condition suitable for the intended use by removing unacceptable risks to human health, buildings and other property and the natural and historic environment must be prepared, and is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. The scheme must include all works to be undertaken, proposed remediation objectives and remediation criteria, timetable of works and site management procedures. The scheme must ensure that the site will not qualify as contaminated land under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 in relation to the intended use of the land after remediation.
REASON:- To prevent harm to human health and pollution of the water environment in accordance with Government policy set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 11 The approved remediation scheme must be carried out in accordance with its terms prior to the commencement of development other than that required to carry out remediation,

unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Local Planning Authority must be given two weeks written notification of commencement of the remediation scheme works. Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme, a verification report that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out must be produced and is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

REASON:- To prevent harm to human health and pollution of the water environment in accordance with Government policy set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 12 No development, above slab level, shall take until full details of the cycle parking facilities for visitors and staff has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The cycle parking areas shall thereafter be installed in accordance with the approved details.

REASON:- To ensure that there is sufficient cycle parking provision in accordance with the Council's adopted standards is maintained for all dwellings and the development as a whole on site in perpetuity.

- 13 Prior to the first use of the development hereby permitted the approved refuse/recycle stores shall be constructed in accordance with the details submitted with this planning application and shall be permanently retained in that form.

REASON:- To ensure that there is sufficient refuse and recycle provision in accordance with the Council's adopted standards is maintained for all dwellings and the development as a whole on site in perpetuity.

- 14 No piling shall take place until a piling method statement (detailing the depth and type of piling to be undertaken and the methodology by which such piling will be carried out, including measures to prevent and minimise the potential for damage to subsurface sewerage infrastructure and the programme for the works) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Any piling must be undertaken in accordance with the terms of the approved piling method statement.

REASON:- The proposed works will be in close proximity to underground sewerage utility infrastructure. Piling has the potential to impact on local underground sewerage utility infrastructure.

- 15 No removal of trees, scrubs or hedges shall be carried out on site between 1st March and 31st August inclusive in any year, unless searched before by a suitably qualified ornithologist.

REASON:- Nesting birds are protected from disturbance under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (As amended).

- 16 No development, including site clearance, shall commence until the trees as specified on drawing number 9580 TPP 01 Rev B (Arboricultural Impact Assessment, prepared by Aspect Arboriculture, Report reference 9580_AIA.001 Rev A dated October 2018) to be retained on the site have been protected by fencing in accordance with the vertical tree protection fencing detailed in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment. In addition, all works which are to be undertaken within the Root Protection Areas of trees which are to be retained as specified on drawing number 9580 TPP 01 Rev B shall be undertaken in accordance with the details specified in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment.

REASON:- To ensure that the retained trees are not damaged or otherwise adversely affected during site operations.

- 17 Within the areas to be fenced off in accordance with condition 16, there shall be no alteration to the ground levels and they shall be kept clear of vehicles, materials, surplus soils, temporary buildings and machinery.

REASON:- To ensure that the retained trees are not damaged or otherwise adversely affected during site operations.

- 18 No development shall take place, above slab level, until details of a CCTV system has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved CCTV system shall be installed in accordance with the approved details prior to the first occupation of the development and retained thereafter.
REASON:- In order to control any potential crime and anti-social behaviour.
- 19 No development shall take place, above slab level, until a scheme for the provision of bird boxes have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted, the boxes shall be installed in accordance with the approved scheme and retained thereafter.
REASON:- To increase roosting opportunities for birds and to compensate for lost opportunities for nesting birds.
- 20 No development shall take place, above slab level, until a scheme for the provision of bat boxes have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted, the boxes shall be installed in accordance with the approved scheme and retained thereafter.
REASON:- To increase roosting opportunities for bats.
- 21 Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted, the parking areas as shown on drawing number 16059.03.wd2.01 G shall be surfaced (in either a porous material or provision shall be made for surface water drainage) and marked out accordingly and shall not thereafter be used for any purpose other than the parking of vehicles for the development hereby approved.
REASON:- To ensure adequate parking provision at all times so that the development does not prejudice the free flow of traffic or the conditions of general safety along the adjacent highway, or the amenities and convenience of existing local residents.
- 22 Prior to the commencement of development, a Construction Management Plan/Method Statement shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the construction of the development shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved statement. The Construction Management Plan/Method Statement shall address the following matters:-
- (i) Details of construction phasing programme (including any pre-construction demolition or enabling works);
 - (ii) Hours or operations including times of deliveries and removal of waste;
 - (iii) The site set-up and general arrangements for storing plant including cranes, materials, machinery and equipment, temporary offices and other facilities, construction vehicle parking and loading/unloading and vehicle turning areas;
 - (iv) Access and protection arrangements around the site for pedestrians, cyclists and other road users;
 - (v) Details of the provisions for temporary car parking during construction;
 - (vi) The location of construction traffic routes to and from the site, details of their signing, monitoring and enforcement measures;
 - (vii) Screening and hoarding;
 - (viii) End of day tidying procedures;
 - (ix) Construction and storage compounds (including areas designated for car parking);

- (x) Siting and details of wheel washing facilities;
- (xi) Cleaning of site entrances, site tracks and the adjacent public highway; and
- (xii) Disposal of surplus materials.

REASON:- To minimise the impact of construction vehicles and to maintain the amenity of the local area.

- 23 The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the proposed access have been constructed as identified on drawing number 16059.03.wd2.01 G and the existing cycle track has been closed and the existing footway has been reinstated to the current specification of Hertfordshire County Council and to the Local Planning Authority's satisfaction.

REASON:- In order to protect highway safety and the amenity of other users of the public highway.

- 24 Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted, the proposed shared cycle track and pedestrian footway as detailed on drawing number 16059.03.wd2.01 G shall be constructed out in accordance with the approved in line with current specifications and to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority. The shared cycle track and pedestrian footway shall thereafter be maintained and retained accordingly.

REASON:- To ensure that an adequate cycle track and footway for pedestrians is provided following the stopping up and removal of the existing cycle track and associated footpath.

- 25 Before the vehicle access is first brought into use, vehicle-to-vehicle visibility splays of 2.4 metres by 43 metres in both directions shall be provided and permanently maintained, within which, there shall be no obstruction to visibility between 600mm to 2m above the carriage level. These measurements shall be taken from the intersection of the centre line of the permitted access with the edge of the carriageway of the highway respectively into the application site and from the intersection point along the edge of the carriageway.

REASON:- To provide adequate visibility for drivers entering and leaving the site.

- 26 Prior to the first use of the development hereby permitted, the raised pedestrian crossing, 1.5m by 1.5m pedestrian visibility splay shall be provided and permanently maintained to each side. These visibility splays shall be measured from the point where the edges of the pedestrian crossing crosses the highway boundary, 1.5m into the site and 1.5m along the highway boundary, forming a triangular visibility, within which, there shall be no obstructions to visibility between 600mm to 2m above the carriage level.

REASON:- To provide adequate visibility for drivers entering and leaving the site and to protect pedestrians utilising the raised crossing.

- 27 No development shall take place, above slab level, until details of Electric Vehicle Charging Points have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council as the Local Planning Authority. The approved Electric Vehicle Charge Points shall be installed in accordance with the approved details and thereafter permanently retained.

REASON:- In order to provide facilities to charge electric vehicles and to help reduce the impact of vehicle emissions on the local environment.

Pro-active Statement

Planning permission has been granted for this proposal. The Council acted pro-actively through early engagement with the applicant at the pre-application stage which led to improvements to the scheme. The Council has therefore acted pro-actively in line with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 186 and 187) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment No. 2) Order 2015.

INFORMATIVE

Thames Water

A Groundwater Risk Management Permit from Thames Water will be required for discharging groundwater into a public sewer. Any discharge made without a permit is deemed illegal and may result in prosecution under the provisions of the Water Industry Act 1991. Thames Water expect the developer to demonstrate what measures he will undertake to minimise groundwater discharges into the public sewer. Permit enquiries should be directed to Thames Water's Risk Management Team by telephoning 02035779483 or by emailing wwriskmanagement@thameswater.co.uk. Application forms should be completed on line via www.thameswater.co.uk/wastewaterquality."

In the car parking areas, it is recommended that a petrol/oil interceptor be fitted to ensure that local watercourses are not polluted from potential oil polluted discharges.

Hertfordshire County Council as Highways Authority

Works to be undertaken on the adjoining highway shall be constructed to the satisfaction of the Highway Authority and in accordance with Hertfordshire County Council publication Roads in Hertfordshire Highway Design Guide. Before proceeding with the proposed development, the applicant shall contact on 0300 1234 047 to obtain the requirements for a section 278 agreement for the associated road works as part of the development. This should be carried out prior to any development work is carried out.

REASON:

To ensure that work undertaken on the highway is constructed to the current Highway Authority's specification, to an appropriate standard and by a contractor who is authorised to work in the Public Highway.

Prior to commencement of the development the applicant shall contact Network Management North at NM.North@hertfordshire.gov.uk or call on 0300 1234 047 to obtain the requirements to arrange a site visit to agree a condition survey of the approach of the highway leading to the development likely to be used for delivery vehicles to the development. Under the provisions of Section 59 of the Highways Act 1980 the developer may be liable for any damage caused to the public highway as a result of traffic associated with the development. Herts County Council may require an Officer presence during movements of larger loads.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

1. The application file, forms, plans and supporting documents having the reference number relating to this item.
2. Stevenage District Plan Second Review 1991-2011.
3. Stevenage Borough Council Supplementary Planning Documents – Parking Provision adopted January 2012.
4. Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031 Publication Draft.
5. Responses to consultations with statutory undertakers and other interested parties referred to in this report.
6. Central Government advice contained in the National Planning Policy Framework July 2018 and Planning Policy Guidance March 2014.