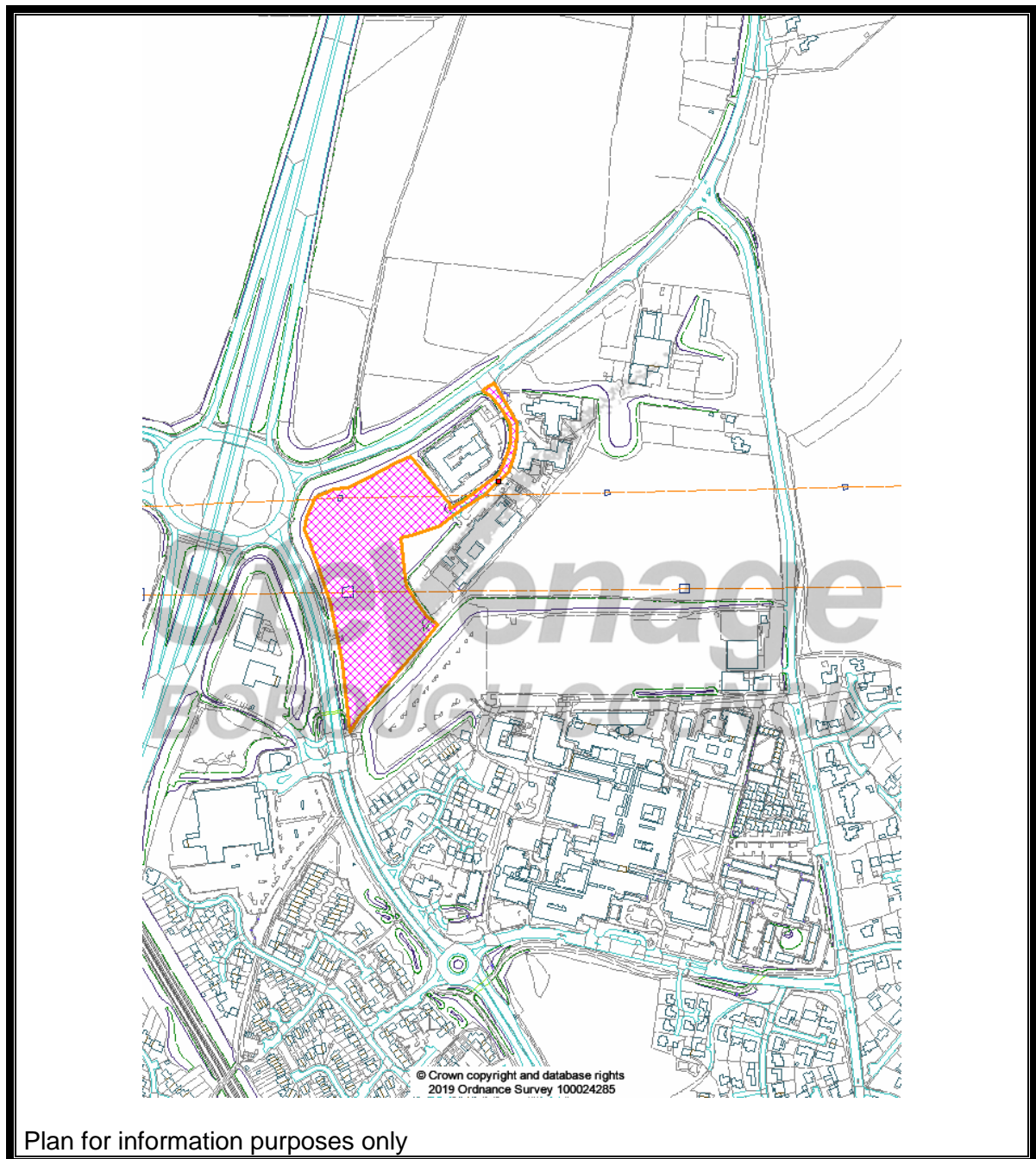


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|-------------------------|---|---------------------|
| <b>Meeting:</b>         | <b>Planning and Development Committee</b> | <b>Agenda Item:</b> |
| <b>Date:</b>            | <b>14 July 2022</b>                       |                     |
| <b>Author:</b>          | <b>Ailsa Davis</b>                        | 07702 874529        |
| <b>Lead Officer:</b>    | <b>Zayd Al-Jawad</b>                      | 01438 242257        |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b> | <b>Ailsa Davis</b>                        | 07702 874529        |

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Application No: | 22/00098/FPM   |
| Location:       | Land at East of A602 and South of Graveley Road, Stevenage   |
| Proposal:       | Erection of a 54 bed building for C2A planning use with access, car parking, landscaping and associated works  |
| Drawing Nos.:   | EN54-RYD-00-ZZ-DR-A-0100-S2-P4; EN54-RYD-00-ZZ-DR-A-0101; EN54-RYD-00-ZZ-DR-A-1001; EN54-RYD-00-ZZ-DR-A-1120; EN54-RYD-00-ZZ-DR-A-3601; EN54-RYD-00-ZZ-DR-A-3602; EN54-RYD-00-ZZ-DR-A-3603; EN54-RYD-00-ZZ-DR-A-3604; EN54-RYD-00-ZZ-DR-A-3605; EN54-RYD-MB-01-DR-A-3002-S2-P10; EN54-RYD-MB-LG-DR-A-3000-S2-P10; EN54-RYD-MB-RF-DR-A-3040; EN54-RYD-MB-UG-DR-A-3001-S2-P12; EN54-RYD-SW-01-DR-L-2110-S2-P12; EN54-RYD-00-01-DR-L-2113; EN54-RYD-00-LG-DR-L-2111; EN54-RYD-00-UG-DR-L-2112; EN54-CAP-XX-XX-DR-E-6301 P05 |
| Applicant:      | Kier Construction Ltd - Eastern  |
| Date Valid:     | 7 February 2022  |
| Recommendation: | GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION  |





## 1. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 1.1 The application site comprises approximately 3.3ha of land situated on the northern edge of Stevenage. Bounding the site immediately to the west is the A602 and Junction 8 of the A1(M). To the east of the site is Cygnet Health Care facility and Pinelodge Care Home. Beyond this is Victoria Court and Elizabeth Court; an older person's mental health service and a car storage facility. South of the site is the Lister Hospital staff car park, and beyond this the Lister Hospital.
- 1.2 There is an existing non-adopted access road to the site from Graveley Road which already provides access to the Cygnet Health Care facility, Victoria Court, Elizabeth Court and the Pinelodge Care Home. There is a second access off Hitchin Road, which provides farm access, and access for maintenance of the electricity pylons on site.
- 1.3 The site slopes upwards from south to north, with the lower gradient in the south. There are two separate power lines running across the site in an east west direction, and development

has therefore been designed to allow for a 10m buffer zone from each. The site is mainly within Flood Zone 1 meaning that there is a very low probability of fluvial flooding, although a small part of the southern section of the site falls within Flood Zones 2 and 3. The site is not within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty nor is it within a Conservation Area, Site of Special Scientific Interest, Air Quality Management Area, Special Landscape Area, Local Green Space or any other national/local environmental or ecological designations.

## **2. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- 2.1 The application site was included as part of a wider area for the application for a nursing home which has since been superseded by a later application on a reduced site area to the east of the site – ref. 04/00606/FP 90 bed nursing home/independent hospital with associated access road, car parking and landscaping on land adjacent to Elizabeth Court granted planning permission 24 August 2005. There is no other planning history connected with the application site.

## **3. THE CURRENT APPLICATION**

- 3.1 This application seeks planning permission for a proposed development comprising the erection of a 54-bed building for C2A planning use class, with access, car parking, landscaping and associated works on land off Graveley Road, Stevenage.
- 3.2 The application proposal has been developed by Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (HPFT), whose aspiration is to build a high quality and award winning medium secure mental health unit to serve east Hertfordshire. Since 2007, HPFT have been providing health and social care for over 400,000 people with mental ill health, physical ill health and learning disabilities across Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Norfolk and North Essex. The Trust's vision is 'Delivering Great Care, Achieving Great Outcomes – Together', as described in HPFT's Good to Great Strategy (2016-2021). It's aimed at delivering the right services of the right quality, to the right service users, in the right location.
- 3.3 HPFT deliver a range of nationally commissioned specialist services including Tier 4 services<sup>1</sup> for children and young people, perinatal services and medium and low secure learning disabilities services. The Trust provides services which make a positive difference to the lives of service users and their carers, underpinned by choice, independence and equality. To promote greater integration between mental and physical health and social care, HPFT's key partners include local authorities and commissioners, regulators, the University of Hertfordshire and Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust (HCT).
- 3.4 HPFT are one of just five mental health trusts to achieve an overall rating of 'Outstanding' from the Care Quality Commission (CQC), and recently received the 'Mental Health Trust of the Year' award from the Health Service Journal (HSJ). The existing mental health provision at the Lister and St Albans sites does not meet the 'Outstanding' standards the Trust want for all services users and as standalone units with poor environments, are not conducive to providing a high-quality experience. Service users share bathrooms/showers, have limited access to outside space, and a limited choice and access to activities. The choices to meet with family on and off ward are also restricted. Staff sickness rates are twice the Trust average. The poor environment impacts upon service user recovery and on staff wellbeing and performance.

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<sup>1</sup> Specialist services that provide assessment and treatment for children and young people with emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties.

- 3.5 The proposed facility would incorporate developments on technology, service integration, energy efficiency and staff and patient wellbeing, providing first class care addressing the long-recognised deficiency in care provision across east Hertfordshire and align with the NHS Long Term Plan ambitions for community based mental health. The project is endorsed by service users, carers, health and care partners, commissioners and the Hertfordshire Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.6 This application comes before the Planning and Development Committee because it is a Major.

## **4. PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS**

- 4.1 This planning application has been publicised by way of two site notices and neighbouring properties have been notified about the application via a letter. The application was also published in the local press as it is a major application. No representations were received.

## **5. CONSULTATIONS**

### **5.1 Hertfordshire County Council Highways**

#### Comments received 24 February 2022

- 5.1.1 Notice is given under article 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 that the Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority does not wish to restrict the grant of permission, subject to a condition relating to construction management and a sustainable travel planning obligation for £102,384 to be spent on improvements to footways and cycleways leading to the development.
- 5.1.2 Following this, further justification was requested from the Highway Authority in relation to the proposed sustainable travel financial contribution. The planning consultant representing the applicant prepared a written rebuttal dated 15 March 2022 setting out that the sustainable transport contribution sought by HCC for the proposed development is not in compliance with the statutory tests in regulation 122 and the policy test in the NPPF, namely:
- 5.1.3 The planning obligation being sought is not:
- necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
  - directly related to the development; and
  - fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
- 5.1.4 In summary, the applicant's position is as follows. The Hertfordshire County Council Guide to Developer Infrastructure Contributions (2021) states that the Guide 'is not a statutory planning document unless adopted as such. It is a Guide with reference documents.' It continues that 'Hertfordshire local planning authorities have the responsibility of weighing up the importance of this Guide and the identified planning obligations against competing requirements/issues when considering planning applications'. The HCC response to the application indicates that the s106 contribution would be used towards required works that should include improvements to footways and cycleways leading to the development. There are no specific works identified in the locality in HCC's response. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (part of the Stevenage Local Plan) has already taken into account the allocation of the application site for health associated uses as part of the Local Plan process, assessed the

infrastructure requirements needed and identified the way in which CIL would contribute to these.

- 5.1.5 The development proposes significant improvements on-site to enable linkages to existing public footpaths and cycleways. This includes two new pedestrian / cycle links to Hitchin Road (A602); one to the most southern point of the site, and one linking to the existing (agricultural) access point off Hitchin Road. In addition to this, as part of the development there would be a continuation of the footway on the privately owned access road off Graveley Road adjacent to the Cygnet Hospital. The footpath and cycleway provision would therefore bring about significant improvements to users of the site, as well as users in the locality. For example, the footpaths leading to Hitchin Road would provide a direct route to the bus stops on Hitchin Road for staff from the proposed development, as well as potentially providing a route for staff from the adjacent Cygnet Hospital, Pinelodge Care Home, Victoria Court and Elizabeth Court. HCC have not taken into account the significant sustainable transport (cycling and walking) improvements for users of the site and the wider area that would be delivered as a result of the proposed development.
- 5.1.6 The Transport Assessment and Travel Plan submitted with the planning application show that the development would fully comply with NPPF paragraph 108 in that safe and suitable access to the site would be achieved for all users and NPPF paragraph 110 since the development would give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements and also facilitate access to high quality public transport.
- 5.1.7 Following discussions with the Highway Authority, they have accepted the applicant's position on this matter and are no longer pursuing the sustainable travel contribution.

#### Comments received 17 March 2022

- 5.1.8 The Area Manager for the Highway Authority provided the following additional comments:
- The existing access onto the A602 is proposed to be changed to a pedestrian/cycle access only. Need to include a condition which closes off this access to vehicles and raises the footway kerb;
  - The Travel Plan should be conditioned;
  - Queries pedestrian route design on approach to the new development along the main internal road;
  - Approach routes for pedestrians need some thought. There's no pedestrian dropped kerbs and tactile paving for example over the Victoria Court access on approach to the site;
  - Queries over internal traffic light system;
  - Cycle parking provision should be increased;
  - Car parking provision excessive;
  - Pedestrian/Cycle link to informal crossing on Graveley Road.
- 5.1.9 The planning consultant representing the applicant provided a response dated 22 June 2022 with the following comments:
- The applicant is willing to accept a planning condition that closes off the access onto the A602 with a gate and appropriate signage;
  - It is accepted that the Travel Plan will be conditioned;
  - Updated landscape masterplan submitted (Drawing EN54-RYD-SW-01-DR-L-2110-S2-P11) showing the realignment of the zebra crossing which is now perpendicular to the road. The Drawing shows that a segregated footpath has been designed as part of the scheme;
  - Confirmation that all crossing points would have drop kerbs / tactile paving;

- Most pedestrians would approach from the newly created south/west access point, and it is considered unlikely that many pedestrians would approach using the access road off Graveley Road;
- The traffic route between the northern and southern car parking areas is constrained. The design response to this has been to provide a traffic signal system along part of the eastern side of the building. This solution is considered the best practical means of ensuring safe vehicle movement within this constrained location, while ensuring that safe and proper pedestrian access is also accommodated;
- The number of cycle spaces increased to 32 spaces, which the applicant accepts may need to be conditioned;
- Justification provided for exceeding car parking standards;
- The steep gradient and change in levels prohibit a pedestrian/cycle access onto Graveley Road.

## **5.2 National Highways**

5.2.1 National Highways has no objection to the planning application.

## **5.3 Herts Fire and Rescue Water Officer**

5.3.1 This will require a condition for the provision and installation of fire hydrants, at no cost to the County, or Fire and Rescue service. This is to ensure there is an adequate water supply available for use in the event of emergency.

## **5.4 Crime Prevention Design Service**

5.4.1 Thank you for inviting me to comment on the proposal for a 54-bed building for C2A use. I am aware of this project and have been involved in discussions with the project team since the pre-application stage. I am pleased that they are seeking accreditation to the Police preferred minimum security standard that is Secured by Design (SBD). I will be continually involved as this development progresses.

5.4.2 I am pleased to see the inclusion of Section 136 facilities as there is currently a lack of units available and this can cause a drain on Police resources. The only slight error I noted was with the Site characteristics on page 9 of the design & Access Statement. The error is the bottom right-hand photo is labelled Area 5b City Centre in fact it should be Area 2 Lister Hospital as this is the Urgent Care Centre at the Lister Hospital site. Given the involvement of the local Crime Prevention Design Advisor in this project the Police Crime Prevention Design Service fully support this application.

## **5.5 Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust**

5.5.1 The ecological report is acceptable. Two conditions are required to secure the measures set out in the ecological report to achieve a biodiversity net gain.

## **5.6 SBC Planning Policy**

5.6.1 The proposed development would be welcomed as it would provide high-quality mental health facilities to serve the community. The application demonstrates a commitment to energy efficiency and sustainable transport as well as high-quality design and landscaping, but the applicant could pursue more ambitious transport targets and improve the sustainability of the building materials.

## **5.7 Anglian Water**

- 5.7.1 The foul drainage from this development is in the catchment of Graveley Water Recycling Centre which currently does not have capacity to treat the flows the development site. Anglian Water are obligated to accept the foul flows from the development with the benefit of planning consent and would therefore take the necessary steps to ensure that there is sufficient treatment capacity should the Planning Authority grant planning permission.
- 5.7.2 The sewerage system at present has available capacity for used water.
- 5.7.3 From the details submitted to support the planning application the proposed method of surface water management does not relate to Anglian Water operated assets. As such, we are unable to provide comments on the suitability of the surface water management. The Local Planning Authority should seek the advice of the Lead Local Flood Authority or the Internal Drainage Board.

## **5.8 Historic Environment Advisor (Archaeology), Hertfordshire LEADS**

- 5.8.1 The proposed development has been accompanied with an archaeological Desk Based Assessment (RPS, 2021), which identified a moderate potential for heritage assets of archaeological interest to be present on site. The site itself lies adjacent to the line of Roman road (HER 4635), which extended from Baldock to Rush Green. On the south edge of the site Roman Samian ware (HER 12567) was discovered as a spot find.
- 5.8.2 I therefore consider that the proposed development should be regarded as likely to have a potential impact on heritage assets of archaeological interest and I recommend that an appropriately worded condition on any planning consent would be sufficient to provide for the level of investigation that this proposal warrants:

*No development shall take place within the proposed development site until the applicant, or their agents, or their successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which has been submitted to the planning authority and approved in writing. This condition will only be considered to be discharged when the planning authority has received and approved an archaeological report of all the required archaeological works, and if appropriate, a commitment to publication has been made.*

## **5.9 SBC Arboriculture and Conservation Manager**

- 5.9.1 I have looked into this application, inspected the site and can confirm that, in principle, I have no objection, from an arboriculture view point. I do have a few concerns though. Firstly, I haven't been able to see any document which shows how far the South Western corner of the building is likely to intrude within the RPA of the nearby mature Oak tree. Secondly, I have not been able to see any details of the proposed landscape and how the applicant is going to achieve the 30% canopy coverage at maturity.
- 5.9.2 The applicant's agent has advised it is assumed that an arboriculture impact assessment, tree protection plan and method statement would be conditioned as part of any planning permission granted. This would provide information on the RPA of all trees, including the mature Oak tree. The landscape masterplan ref. EN54-RYD-SW-01-DR-L-2110-S2-P11 shows the eventual canopy spread for the trees as proposed. The species currently proposed are *Betula utilis* var. *Jacquemontii* – Multistem, *Prunus accolade* and *Pinus sylvestris* 'Waterii' – Multistem to the main entrance. *Amelanchier lamarckii* – Multistem to the S.136 entrance and *Acer campestre* – *Elsrijk* to the car park. The above information shows the way in which 30% canopy coverage will be achieved at maturity.

## 5.10 SBC Environmental Health

5.10.1 I have no objections to the proposed development. My concerns relate to noise, specifically traffic noise from A1M, A602 and dual carriageway and adverse effects on future residents. No noise assessment has been submitted. I therefore recommend the Condition below:

*Prior to the commencement of the development the developer shall carry out a noise assessment in accordance with relevant guidance and standards and a scheme for sound insulation and noise control measures shall be submitted for the Council's written approval. Once implemented, the scheme of measures shall be maintained in accordance with the approved details.*

**Reason:** to protect the amenities of future residents and in accordance with Policy FP7.

## 5.11 Lead Local Flood Authority

5.11.1 Due to resourcing issues at Hertfordshire County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), the LLFA is temporarily unable to comment on planning applications. The Council has appointed an independent drainage consultant to assess the Surface Water Drainage Strategy in line with Guidance issued by the LLFA. The consultant reviewed the information provided with respect to flood risk and drainage and prepared two technical notes advising the Planning Authority on how the proposed drainage strategy for the site could be improved. The advice can be summarised as follows:

- The existing culverted Ash Brook should be day lighted through the site;
- New outfalls and headwalls would be required up and downstream
  - Upstream outfall for the remaining culvert (in the east)
  - Downstream headwall for the remaining culvert under Hitchin Road (in the west);
- New downstream embankment required (the new headwall would be placed through this). This would turn the proposed floodplain compensation area into a flood storage area, thus realising the betterment. A 'flood storage area' would be created by adding a bund in the western corner of the site, maximising the benefit of the excavated area. Water would then drain into the day lighted Ash Brook through a new culvert headwall located close to the Hitchin Road (in the new embankment) and onto the Corey's Water Meadow flood storage area adjacent to Sainsburys.

5.11.2 Detailed design for the above would be secured via planning conditions.

## 5.12 Cadent Gas

5.12.1 No objection, subject to an informative regarding access and building over Cadent Gas assets.

# 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 provides that the decision on the planning application should be in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. For Stevenage the statutory development plan comprises:

- The Stevenage Borough Council Local Plan 2011-2031
- Hertfordshire Waste Development Framework 2012 and Hertfordshire Waste Site Allocations Development Plan Document (adopted 2012 and 2014); and
- Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan 2002 – 2016 (adopted 2007).



## **6.2 Central Government Advice**

- 6.2.1 A revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in July 2021. This largely reordered the policy substance of the earlier 2012 version of the NPPF albeit with some revisions to policy. 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 purpose of determining planning applications. The NPPF provides that proposals which accord with an up to date development plan should be approved without delay (para.11) and that where a planning application conflicts with an up to date development plan, permission should not usually be granted (para.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.

## **6.3 Planning Practice Guidance**

The PPG contains guidance supplementing the NPPF and with which Members are fully familiar. The PPG is a material consideration to be taken into account together with the National Design Guide (2019) which has the same status as the PPG.

## **6.4 Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031 (Adopted 2019)**

Policy SP1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development;  
Policy SP2: Sustainable development in Stevenage;  
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 HC3: The Health Campus  
Policy IT4: Transport assessments and travel plans;  
Policy IT5: Parking and access;  
Policy IT7: New and improved links for pedestrians and cyclists;  
Policy GD1: High quality design;  
Policy FP1: Climate change;  
Policy FP2: Flood risk in Flood Zone 1;  
Policy FP3: Flood Risk in Zones 2 and 3;  
Policy FP5: Contaminated land;  
Policy FP7: Pollution;  
Policy FP8: Pollution sensitive uses  
Policy NH5: Trees and woodland

## **6.5 Supplementary Planning Documents**

Parking Provision and Sustainable Travel SPD (2020)  
Stevenage Design Guide SPD (2009)  
The Impact of Development on Biodiversity SPD (2021)

## **6.6 Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule**

- 6.6.1 Stevenage Borough Council adopted a Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule in 2020. This allows the Council to collect a levy to fund infrastructure projects based on the type, location and floorspace of a development. This proposal would be CIL liable at £0/m<sup>2</sup>.

## **7. APPRAISAL**

- 7.1.1 The main issues for consideration in the determination of this application are its acceptability in land use policy terms, its design and impact on the appearance of the area, ecology and trees, flood risk and drainage, climate change mitigation, residential/neighbouring amenities, archaeology and means of access/parking.
- 7.1.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that all planning applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

### **7.2 Land Use Policy Considerations**

- 7.2.1 The application site is part of the Lister Hospital Health Campus, which is designated within the adopted 2019 Local Plan under Policy HC3 which states planning permission will be granted for appropriate Class D1 (now Use Class E under the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020) or C2 healthcare uses. The policy also states other use classes will be permitted where they provide ancillary facilities which support the site's principal function.
- 7.2.2 The proposed acute care mental health unit falls within planning use class C2 residential institution (healthcare) and is therefore an acceptable use in accordance with Policy HC3. On that basis, the principle of the proposed development is considered acceptable in land use policy terms, subject to satisfying design, transport and environmental policies.

### **7.3 Impact on the appearance of the area**

- 7.3.1 Paragraph 126 of the NPPF states that “The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve”. It goes on to state that “good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities”.
- 7.3.2 Paragraph 130 of the NPPF sets out a number of requirements for new development, including that development:
- will function well and add to the overall quality of an area;
  - is visually attractive as a result of good architecture; layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
  - is sympathetic to local character and history;
  - establishes or maintains a strong sense of place;
  - optimises the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development;
  - creates places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.
- 7.3.3 Paragraph 131 of the NPPF places great importance on the role of trees in helping to shape quality, well designed places “Trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change”.
- 7.3.4 Policy SP8 of the adopted Local Plan (2019) requires new development to achieve the highest standards of design and sustainability which can deliver substantial improvements to the image and quality of the town’s built fabric. Policy GD1 of the Local Plan 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 the urban fabric, its relationship between buildings, landscape design and relevant aspects of sustainable design.

- 7.3.5 The Council's Design Guide SPD (2009) generally reflects the aforementioned policies requiring development to respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, massing, height and design. As such, it encourages good design as it can enhance the appearance of places.
- 7.3.6 The National Design Guide (2019) which was published by National Government is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. It sets out 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.
- 7.3.7 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.
- 7.3.8 The Guide further iterates 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.
- 7.3.9 Paragraph 40 of the National Design Guide states that well-designed places are:
- Based on a sound understanding of the features of the site and the surrounding context, using baseline studies as a starting point for design;
  - Integrated into their surroundings so they relate well to them;
  - Influenced by and influence their context positively; and
  - Responsive to local history, culture and heritage.
- 7.3.10 The application proposal has been assessed against the key policy criteria on good design, as well as how the scheme meets the four key objectives in the National Design Guide on what is considered as a well-designed place. The overall design ethos is to create a building that respects the topography of the site, maximises the benefits of natural light and adopts a light colour palette of external finish to reduce the perception of bulk. The building would be designed with differing levels and varying mono pitch roof heights to create architectural

interest and to break up the bulk and fit into the slope of the site, reducing its visual impact on the wider area.

7.3.11 In terms of appearance, the proposed external finish is of high architectural quality. A material palette has been submitted with the application, which comprises masonry elements which are fair in complexion. These are contrasted by a definitive grey zinc roof and the reflective quality of tinted elevational aluminium panels. The cladding of the courtyard and the window frames would be of timber effect to strive for a warmer, more calming atmosphere. The eastern facade presents a clearly identifiable main entrance to the lobby. The canopy that extends down to the ground separates the public from the staff entrance. It also wraps around the corner to visually connect with the cafe terrace as well as to provide shelter. The vertical aluminium slats on the first floor stand out from the rest of the material palette, further emphasising the entrance. The transparency of the curtain walling allows for more natural light into the office area while creating a perfect balance with the opaque brickwork. This combined with the varying mono-pitch and flat roof profiles would create a high quality and visually impressive entrance to the site.

7.3.12 With regards to layout, the size of the proposed building has been dictated by the accommodation requirements of the Department of Health Guidance HBN 03:01 Adult Acute Mental Health Units. The building would be sited between the two pylons, allowing for the required 10m buffer to avoid the power lines. The building footprint would be roughly square shape comprising four quadrants sited around internal courtyard gardens. Two car parks are proposed, one in the NE corner of the site adjacent to the vehicular entrance off Graveley Road and the other at the southern, lower end of the site. The main building entrance would be on the eastern elevation facing away from the A1(M) and A602. The height and massing of the building would reflect the topography of the site, with the highest part of the building in the northern part of the site.

7.3.13 With regards to landscaping design, the approach has been to meet the needs of the various users of the healthcare facility and provide a relaxing and welcoming experience for all service users, visitors and staff. Courtyard gardens would provide access to fresh air and natural sunlight and attractive views out from communal areas, bedrooms, treatment rooms, and staff rooms. Safety of users is paramount and as such trees or objects that could create ligature risk must be avoided. Consideration has been given to the plant species to avoid poisonous plants, or those that could grow to provide potential weapons (eg barbed roses or bamboo canes).

7.3.14 An increasing body of research indicates that some of the UK's current health challenges can be influenced by our physical environments. Visual and physical connection with the natural environment is shown to improve mood, sleep patterns, concentration, memory, and lower stress levels, mental fatigue and blood pressure. Building on these findings, the following design principles have been adopted:

- Providing rooms that have views of nature
- Gardens to have a domestic scale and feel
- Create places for private conversation and social interaction
- Provide a choice of seating options: type, height and location
- Use focal elements to create a distraction or talking point
- Use warm to touch natural materials to help relax users
- Scented plants located near seating areas or doorways
- Seasonal change and variation through plant choice
- Gardens to encourage activity through creation of wandering routes of discovery, growing beds, and flexible open space for fitness and sport

7.3.15 Taking the aforementioned into consideration, it is considered that the proposed building would be of high architectural quality, successfully using the topography of the site to reduce the appearance of bulk and visual impact on the wider area. The landscaping design

approach has been carefully considered to benefit the users of the building and to create an attractive setting. The proposed development is therefore considered acceptable in terms of its design and appearance in accordance with the policies on design in the adopted Local Plan (2019), the Design Guide SPD (2009), the NPPF (2021) and PPG.

## **7.4 Parking and Access**

- 7.4.1 Section 9 of the NPPF seeks to promote sustainable travel. Policy IT4 and IT5 of the Local Plan encourage development proposals to accord with the Council's Parking Standards and for applications, where relevant, to be accompanied by Transport Assessments and Travel Plans promoting sustainable travel and reducing the need to travel by car. A Transport Assessment and Travel Plan accompany the application, which consider the highway impact of the proposal, including the impact of other committed developments in the area, parking need and examining the proposed designs and any mitigation measures needed to reduce the traffic impact. Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority has also been consulted as a statutory consultee.

### *Access*

- 7.4.2 The proposed development would be accessed from the existing road leading from the B197 Graveley Road entering the site from the eastern side. The site access road which forms a cul-de-sac serving the Pinelodge Care Home, Victoria Court Older People's Mental Health Unit, the Cygnet Hospital and the application site is a private road. It has been confirmed that the NHS Trust will be acquiring ownership of the private road as part of the land purchase for this development.
- 7.4.3 Opportunities available to enhance pedestrian and cycle access to the site have been maximised. A pedestrian / cycle route from the south-west has been included which links the site to the A602 Hitchin Road, which would improve access from bus routes and from the Lister Hospital to the south. In addition, footpaths are provided at several different levels in the north-eastern part of the site due to the topography, to ensure that access between parking areas and the buildings remains as level as possible in the interests of pedestrian safety.
- 7.4.4 The Highway Authority has asked for a condition to be imposed should planning permission be granted to close off the existing gated access from the layby on the A602 to vehicles and raise the footway kerb to ensure it could only be used for pedestrians and cyclists to access the site. The applicant has no objections to keeping the access closed off with a gate and sign advising it is for emergency vehicles only, however has requested the kerb is left as existing to retain the access as a secondary emergency vehicular access and maintenance access for the pylons. This would be for occasional use where direct and quick access to the unit is required for ambulances or police or for use by the National Grid. It is considered the proposed arrangements would prevent motorists from accidentally driving up the access, not least because this is the same arrangement as existing.
- 7.4.5 The Highway Authority also queried the pedestrian route design on approach to the application site along the main internal road. A shared surface arrangement is not appropriate for this scale of development, so there needs to be segregated footways alongside the internal carriageway. Footways are not marked on the proposed plans and the zebra crossing is at an awkward angle. The crossing should be perpendicular to the carriageway, not at an angle. An updated landscape masterplan has been submitted (ref. EN54-RYD-SW-01-DR-L-2110-S2-P12) showing the realignment of the zebra crossing which is now perpendicular to the road.

The drawing shows that a segregated footpath has been designed as part of the scheme and the applicant has confirmed that all crossing points would have drop kerbs / tactile paving.

- 7.4.6 Given that the NHS Trust will be acquiring ownership of the private road as part of the land purchase for this development, it would be possible to improve the approach route for pedestrians more generally in line with Highway Authority comments. Whilst the comments of the applicant are noted that this route is unlikely to be used by pedestrians accessing the site, it is considered improvements could be made and therefore a planning condition is recommended requiring the applicant to provide dropped kerbs and tactile paving over the Victoria Court access on approach to the site.

#### *Trip Generation*

- 7.4.7 In terms of trip generation, the NHS Trust has confirmed that the development requires 158 staff (doctors, nurses, therapists, psychologists, pharmacists, support workers, management, secretarial, estates and ancillary staff). It has been clarified that these do not all represent new jobs, as some staff would be moved from existing facilities to work at the new site. Furthermore, the Visiting Professionals would all be existing staff who (as the name implies) visit and work at a number of facilities operated by the Trust.
- 7.4.8 It is important to note that due to the 24-hour and year-round nature of healthcare provision, not all staff are likely to be on-site at the same time. Whilst administrative staff are likely to follow a conventional 09:00-17:30 work pattern, doctors and nurses may divide their working times into three 8-hour shifts or two 12-hour shifts depending on clinical need and staff availability. Taking into account staff attending the site for training (5 training rooms are also proposed within the building), visitors and servicing it has been calculated that on an average day, a baseline estimate of up to 110 staff are likely to arrive at and depart from the site by car, 15 visitors and 35 visitors receiving training if the training facilities are used to capacity. Staff trips could increase to up to 140 at shift changeover times.
- 7.4.9 The Transport Assessment uses Trip Rate Information Computer System (TRICS) data to demonstrate the proportion of those car movements which would occur during the AM (08.00-09.00) and PM (17.00-18.00) highway network peak periods, in order to understand the highest levels of potential impact resulting from development. The Transport Assessment also takes into consideration the calculated impact of other committed development within the wider area namely, sites HO3 (North Stevenage), HO1/11(Rugby Club) and EC1/4 (employment site on the western side of North Road) within the Stevenage Local Plan. The Transport Assessment concludes that the peak vehicular traffic arising from the proposed development would be within daily fluctuation on the major roads and would not have any significant impact on the local road network. Furthermore, in the context of other planned development in the area, the traffic impact has been shown to be less than has previously been allowed for in junction models, which have contributed to planning for infrastructure provision in this area of northern Stevenage.
- 7.4.10 Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority has considered that the proposal would not significantly increase the traffic generation or vehicle movement to the development and would not have a severe impact on the safety and operation of the adjoining highways. They advise the modelling which has already been carried out has factored into the cumulative impact on the total development in the area and plans have been put in place to improve the local highway network as may be necessary to mitigate the impact of all the committed development schemes. As such, they raise no objection to the proposal. National Highways also have no concerns with respect to Junction 8 / impact on the trunk road i.e. A1(M).

## *Car parking*

- 7.4.11 Policy IT5 of the adopted Local Plan (2019) states that planning permission will be granted where proposals comply with the parking standards set out in the plan. The Council's Parking Provision and Sustainable Transport SPD (2020) requires that healthcare facilities provide a maximum of 1 car space per 0.5 beds, although it also states that special hospitals such as this must be considered individually. The indicative maximum provision therefore would be 108 car spaces, but additional provision may be considered in line with clinical need. A total of 135 car spaces are proposed, including 9 disabled bays. The overall provision is split into a northern car park and a southern car park. On the basis that up to 200 staff may be on-site at peak times (shift changeovers) and that up to 140 may drive, the Transport Statement concludes the proposed car parking provision represents a modest level of parking restraint.
- 7.4.12 The Planning Authority needs to consider whether there are any exceptional circumstances to justify this over provision of car parking, when the overall aim of national and local policy is to reduce the use of the car and encourage sustainable travel. In this regard, it is important to consider the proposed use and purpose of the building and how this impacts on the demand for parking spaces. The Transport Assessment advises that due to the shift working pattern of the clinical staff, there would be a peak in staff numbers on-site at shift changeover times, culminating in a parking demand at these times necessitating additional provision in excess of that required by the Council's Parking Provision SPD.
- 7.4.13 At changeover times an additional 42 staff members would be on-site, giving a total of 200 staff. The numbers travelling by car are likely to be higher for night-time shifts than daytime ones, as public transport is not often available at unsocial hours, while walking and cycling in hours of darkness may be considered less desirable by many staff. In addition to the above shift pattern working arrangements, the NHS Trust has also indicated that the five training rooms which would be provided within the building can accommodate a total of up to 50 people, albeit it is unlikely that these would all be in use every day. If you also include the daily Visiting Professionals (assessors, legal and visiting medical staff) and visitors to the service users, evidence emerges that the specialist healthcare use of the building and the working pattern of the staff are factors, which taken together, represent an exceptional justification for providing car parking in excess of the Council's parking requirements for this healthcare facility.
- 7.4.14 Notwithstanding the above, the application is accompanied by a Travel Plan which seeks to implement measures to reduce travel to and from the site by car. These would include:
- Measures to increase the proportion of active travel
  - Measures to decrease the proportion of car travel
  - Measures to make cycling a more attractive option than car travel
  - Measures to improve bus accessibility (via pedestrian links)
  - Measures to reduce car parking supply
  - Measures to develop and promote car-sharing/car-pooling
- 7.4.15 The Highway Authority has requested that the Travel Plan is conditioned as part of any planning permission to ensure the NHS Trust actively promotes the measures contained within it, to reduce the parking demand on site. A planning condition would therefore be added to this effect should planning permission be granted.
- 7.4.16 It is considered that the exceptional circumstances set out within the Transport Assessment around the use of the building and the shift working pattern do justify an over provision of car parking for this site due to the specialist healthcare use of the building. A planning condition requiring the NHS Trust to adopt the measures contained within the Travel Plan would also help to reduce the demand for car parking over the longer term. For these reasons, it is considered the proposed level of car parking is acceptable.

### *Disabled Parking*

- 7.4.17 The provision of 9 disabled bays complies with the Council's standards, whereby at least 5% of total spaces would be available for disabled motorists, and a further 5% of the total car spaces would be capable of being converted to enlarged spaces for disabled motorists. This means an overall provision within the site of up to 14 disabled bays.

### *EV Parking*

- 7.4.18 The adopted Parking Standards SPD (2020) stipulates that for all new development, car parking should be designed to fulfil a Passive Electrical Vehicle (EV) Charging Point standard. This means the underlying infrastructure is provided for connection to the electricity network but will need to be activated through the installation of a charge point to be used in the future as technologies evolve and uptake increases. In addition, a minimum of 20% of new parking on the site should have access to an active EV charging point.
- 7.4.19 All car parking has been designed to fulfil passive EV charging standards, meaning that ducting and cabling would be installed adjacent to all spaces to allow for future provision of charging points, as well as feeder pillars which are shown within the plans. At least 27 out of the 135 spaces (20%) would be provided with EV charging pillars, including two of the disabled bays. Ten parking spaces would be provided in the southern car park for powered 2-wheeler (motorcycle or moped) use in compliance with the SPD requirement of 5% provision.

### *Cycle parking*

- 7.4.20 The Parking Provision and Sustainable Transport SPD (2020) requires that healthcare facilities provide 1 "long term" cycle parking space per 5 staff, which in this case would mean a provision of 32 cycle parking spaces. The Transport Assessment advises this seems high given the TRICS modal split estimate that only 1 staff member is likely to cycle to and from the site. The standards also require that 1 "short term" cycle parking space should be provided per 20 beds. The facility would provide 54 beds, and so three cycle spaces would meet the policy requirement for visitor use. This equates to 35 cycle spaces in total (32 long-term and 3 short-term).
- 7.4.21 Further to discussions with the applicant, the number of cycle spaces has been increased to 32 spaces. A secure long-term cycle parking store to the north of the building would accommodate up to 20 bicycles and 12 spaces (6 cycle stands) would be located to the east of the main entrance providing short term parking. Given an over provision of car parking has been accepted on this site, it is considered a policy compliant level of cycle parking should be provided as a minimum compared to what has been shown on the plans to encourage staff and visitors to cycle to the site and reduce the need to travel by car. As such, the current provision is still considered unacceptable as it fails to meet the policy requirement of 35 spaces set out within the Parking Provision SPD (2020). A planning condition would be added to any planning permission seeking details of the cycle parking to be provided and agreed with the Planning Authority prior to occupation.

### *Servicing and Deliveries*

- 7.4.22 The NHS Trust has indicated that projected deliveries traffic would comprise two food deliveries per day, one linen delivery, one post van and an average of two maintenance vehicle per day, plus one daily refuse vehicle. The site has been designed to allow these service vehicles access. A dedicated deliveries zone is provided on the northern side of the buildings, which comprises its own secure compound with gated entry and exit.

## **7.5 Flood Risk and Drainage**



7.5.1 A Flood Risk and Drainage Strategy has been submitted with the application. The report confirms the majority of the proposed development would be sited in the higher, northern part of the site which is located within Flood Zone 1 where flood risk from all sources is low. The development of the site as proposed is therefore appropriate as set out by the 'flood risk vulnerability classification' contained within the Planning Practice Guidance. The southern boundary of the site falls within Flood Zones 2 and 3, where the proposed southern car park would encroach into these zones.

#### *Fluvial Flooding*

7.5.2 The area of Flood Zone 2 and 3 is associated with Ash Brook, which is culverted and flows in a south-westerly direction tracking the low lying southern section of the site. Models of the existing and proposed surfaces have been generated to assess the impact of the proposed car park on the existing floodplain storage volumes. The initial assessment confirmed that installation of the car park would result in a net loss of floodplain storage and as a result floodplain compensation works would be required to balance the post development floodplain storage volumes.

#### *Surface Water Flooding*

7.5.3 With regards to surface water flooding, the northern part of the site (where the majority of development would be sited) is considered by the Environment Agency flood warning information service to be at a Very Low Risk of flooding. This is to be expected as a result of the elevated nature of this section of the site. However, the southern part of the site is considered to be at a High Risk. The southern area highlighted as being at risk mirrors the fluvial flood scenario.

7.5.4 The application site is Greenfield in nature and does not benefit from any formal connections to the public surface or foul water sewer networks. Reviews of the Anglian Water Limited (AWL) asset records confirm that a 225mm foul sewer tracks the southern site boundary. The Drainage Strategy for the site has been determined by an assessment under the drainage discharge hierarchy. A Ground Investigation Report (Ref No 5018-GI/V2 FINAL, Dated 28 June 2021) has been prepared by Geosphere Environmental Limited, which concludes that the underlying geology is suitable for disposal of site generated runoff. The discharge hierarchy assessment found that utilising infiltration (geocellular soakaways and permeable paving) would be the most effective method of disposing of site generated surface water runoff.

#### *Foul Drainage*

7.5.5 It is proposed to discharge foul flows via a new connection to the existing public foul sewer network tracking the southern boundary. This approach is subject to Anglian Water Limited approval under Section 106 of the Water Industries Act.

#### *Flood Risk Management Measures*

7.5.6 As far as practically possible; floor levels would be raised in relation to adjacent hardstanding. In areas where this would not be achievable, levels would be manipulated to form flood flow lines away from access locations. The proposed drainage system would be designed to

intercept and convey the high intensity rainfall experienced during the 100 year return period and include a 40% increase in peak rainfall intensities to combat the potential effects of future climate change.

7.5.7 The proposed development would also be registered to receive flood warnings from the Environment Agency Flood Warning Direct Service and the access to the southern car park would be gated with life rings and warning signage. This approach would enable the hospital management team to prevent the use of the southern car park if a flood warning had been received. The management team would also prepare a flood emergency response plan which would be communicated and made available to employees of the site (and occupants if appropriate).

7.5.8 Due to resourcing issues at Hertfordshire County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), the LLFA is temporarily unable to comment on planning applications. The Council has procured the services of an independent drainage consultant. The consultant reviewed the information provided with respect to flood risk and drainage and prepared two technical notes advising the Planning Authority on how the proposed drainage strategy for the site could be improved. The advice can be summarised as follows:

- The existing culverted Ash Brook should be daylighted through the site;
- New outfalls and headwalls would be required up and downstream
  - Upstream outfall for the remaining culvert (in the east)
  - Downstream headwall for the remaining culvert under Hitchin Road (in the west);
- New downstream embankment required (the new headwall would be placed through this). This would turn the proposed floodplain compensation area into a flood storage area, thus realising the betterment. A 'flood storage area' would be created by adding a bund in the western corner of the site, maximising the benefit of the excavated area. Water would then drain into the daylighted Ash Brook through a new culvert headwall located close to the Hitchin Road (in the new embankment) and onto the Corey's Water Meadow flood storage area adjacent to Sainsburys.

7.5.9 Detailed design for the above would be secured via planning conditions.

*Strategic Policy benefits to daylighting the culvert*

7.5.10 Local Flood Risk Management Policy 7 (Works to ensure betterment to ordinary watercourses) includes that "when there is an existing culverted ordinary watercourse section, betterment of the situation should be sought, such as re-opening or diverting the channel. If not achievable, the applicant must provide evidence as to why betterment is not viable."

7.5.11 Policy 7 above is repeated in Hertfordshire Council Council's Ordinary Watercourses Policy Statement (2017), which includes a similarly worded Policy. The objective of the policy goes beyond flood risk purposes and acknowledges the opportunity for conservation and enhancement to meet the Water Framework Directive targets for water quality and ecological purposes, with the aim being to restore ordinary watercourses to their natural state and characteristics.

7.5.12 Hertfordshire County Council's position of daylighting culverts is supported by Stevenage Borough Council Local Plan policy too, namely; Part F of Local Plan Policy FP3 (covering sites which fall within Flood Zones 2 and 3) states that planning permission will be granted where any culverted watercourse present on site can be re-naturalised. The Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment includes a 4 page site assessment which relates specifically to the application site - Health Campus site HC3. The site assessment advises that:

*“According to the Local Plan, development proposals which do not involve deculverting will have an adverse impact on the town’s river corridors and water meadows. Opening up river corridors can help to improve the chemical and biological quality of a watercourse. This, in turn, improves habitats for biodiversity and also contributes to open space and health and wellbeing in the town. Where the developer cannot deculvert the water course or improve the health of the water course, they should provide mitigation elsewhere in the Borough as an offset to their development. This may involve the deculverting of an alternative length of watercourse. Should the developers wish to keep the watercourse culverted beneath the site, then special attention should be given to the maintenance of this culvert. Nevertheless, it is recommended to re-naturalise the culverted watercourse and set back development at least 8m either side as it can improve water quality and health and wellbeing in the town.”*

7.5.13 The objectives of de-culverting the watercourse are not just limited to flood risk, but with significant weight given to ecological and well-being benefits too. An alternative section of culverted watercourse would need to be identified for daylighting and delivered as part of this application should the section running through the application site not be daylighted and the applicant is unlikely to find a more-suitable stretch of culverted watercourse to daylight than exists on-site.

#### *Site-specific benefits to daylighting the culvert*

7.5.14 There are also a number of site-specific benefits to daylighting the culvert:

- Reduction in flood risk to the pedestrian underpass under the A602. As observed in 2014, the Hitchin Road pedestrian underpass is liable to flooding at present. Floodwater currently bypasses the Ash Brook culvert at the headwall to the east and then passes through the southern part of the site and into the underpass, due to there being no other route to re-enter the watercourse (due to it being culverted);
- Drainage of the compensatory flood storage area. The significant time estimated to drain the compensatory storage area following a flood event as stated in the submitted Flood Risk Assessment is due to there being no discharge point and infiltration rates in the lower southern part of the site are very low;
- Alternative discharge location for on-site drainage in the event that infiltration is not possible as is anticipated for the southern car park, thus avoiding the need for a pumped solution;
- Discharge point for exceedance rainfall.

7.5.15 For the above reasons, the applicant has agreed to the daylighting of the culvert in principle, subject to detailed design which would turn the proposed floodplain compensation area into a flood storage area, thus realising the betterment in accordance with both strategic and local flood policies. The applicant has submitted an updated Flood Risk Assessment and drainage plans to reflect the daylighting of the culvert. Subject to conditions to agree detailed design for daylighting the culvert, it is considered the proposed flood risk and drainage strategy for the site is acceptable.

## **7.6 Biodiversity, Ecology and Protected Species**

7.6.1 The NPPF and accompanying Planning Practice Guidance requires the Council to achieve measurable net gains in biodiversity at development sites and 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:

- i. Permitted development;
- ii. Householder development, including extensions;
- iii. Nationally significant infrastructure, which falls within scope of the Planning Act 2008;
- iv. Some brownfield sites with marginal viability and substantial constraints. It is expected that full details to be set out in secondary legislation, but considerations are likely to include where sites contain a high proportion of derelict land and buildings and only a small percentage of the site is undeveloped, land values are significantly lower than average, and the site does not contain any protected habitats; and
- v. Developments that would not result in measurable loss or degradation of habitat, for instance change of use of or alterations to building

- 7.6.2 The site is approximately 3.3ha in size and comprises mainly improved grassland with small areas of tall ruderals. The application is accompanied by a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and Preliminary Ecological Appraisal to assess the potential for the site and adjoining habitats to have species that receive legal protection at either UK and/or European level. The survey comprised a desk top study from Hertfordshire Biological Records Centre and from the multi-agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC). A field survey was also undertaken.
- 7.6.3 The Ecological Appraisal identifies that there would be no impact on any designated sites as a result of construction or use of the development. In terms of plants, all of the plant species recorded at the site are widespread native or naturalised species. With regards to invertebrates, the largest areas of onsite habitats of highest theoretical value to invertebrates (woodland) would not be impacted by the proposed development. With regards to great crested newts, there are 3 ponds within 500m of the site. However, the site does not contain any potential breeding habitat, and is separated from any breeding habitat; therefore the site is not considered to have potential to support Great Crested Newts. In terms of bats, the preliminary roost assessment of the established trees onsite identified one tree (TN5) of low suitability to support roosting bats. The woodland and trees around the site boundary/adjacent to the site provide connectivity and foraging habitat for bats.
- 7.6.4 In terms of reptiles, the site margins provide suitable habitat for basking and hibernating reptiles. The improved grassland which comprises the majority of the site is sub-optimal, but may be used occasionally by species in the local area. With regards to birds, the trees and scrub around the site margin provide habitat for nesting birds, during the breeding season. The improved grassland appears to be cultivated regularly and as such is not an established habitat, however; ground nesting birds may still make use of the grassland for breeding. No evidence of badger was noted onsite however; the site may be used by foraging badger. The site provides suitable foraging habitat for hedgehog in the grassland and suitable nesting and hibernating habitat in the woodland, scrub, and tall ruderals. No records of Hazel Dormouse were returned in the desk study. Finally, no watercourses were present near the site; as such the site was considered not suitable for Water Vole or Otter.
- 7.6.5 In terms of recommendations, the report suggests that mature trees should be retained where possible. Any trees or hedgerows that are removed during development should be replaced using similar species. A sensitive lighting scheme should be adhered to during the construction and operational phases of the proposed development to mitigate any impact on foraging bats. With regards to badgers, the report recommends prior to any construction works the site should be checked by an ecologist to ensure that badgers have not inhabited the site since the original survey visit. All open excavations should be covered overnight to prevent entrapment of badgers or other mammals during development. With regards to breeding birds, it is recommended that any vegetation clearance work is undertaken outside of the bird

nesting season. If it is not possible to undertake clearance works outside of the breeding bird season, a suitably qualified ecologist should be employed to determine if nesting birds are using the site prior to works commencing.

7.6.6 In terms of reptiles, avoidance measures are not possible as it is likely a large area of the grassland would be impacted by development. As such, a presence/absence survey is proposed to be undertaken commencing mid-March 2022 targeting areas of suitable habitat. Following this, an appropriate mitigation strategy for reptiles would need to be produced should reptiles be confirmed as being present on site. This can be subject to a planning condition. Finally, with regards to Hedgehogs, if hibernation habitat (tall, tussocky grassland) is cleared over winter (November to February) an Ecological clerk of works should be present to supervise works, to ensure Hedgehogs are not harmed during construction.

7.6.7 The following general enhancements have been recommended to be included within the final development:

- Planting of native plant species beneficial to wildlife should be incorporated into the final design. This would provide additional habitat for invertebrates, which would in turn provide a food source for reptiles, birds, bats, and Hedgehog.
- The final development plan should incorporate bat and bird boxes into the scheme. This would provide additional roosting and nesting habitats for bats and birds post-development.
- Log piles should be placed in connectivity to the boundary vegetation onsite, enhancing the habitats onsite for both reptiles and invertebrates post-development;
- A green or brown roof could be designed into the scheme to provide additional habitat for invertebrates;
- To help achieve Biodiversity Net Gain on the site, areas of natural habitat would need to be included within the scheme. Metric calculations would likely be a requirement of planning, in order to show that net gain can be achieved.

7.6.8 With regards to biodiversity net gain, the applicant has undertaken a Biodiversity Net Gain calculation utilising the Defra Metric. The calculation identified that the baseline value of the site is 5.51 habitat units. Post development, including all biodiversity enhancements, the site would provide 6.79 units, achieving a net gain of 1.28 units or 23.18%. This exceeds the requirements of the Council's Biodiversity SPD (2021), which requires a minimum of 10% net gain.

7.6.9 Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT) have confirmed they have no objection, provided that all management regimes to achieve the stated condition scores in the metric are secured by a Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP), which can be attached as a condition should planning permission be granted. HMWT have also asked for the details of biodiversity enhancement measures in the ecological report, consisting of 10 integrated bat cavity boxes and 15 integrated swift boxes to be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to development commencing. This would also be attached as a condition should planning permission be granted.

## **7.7 Trees and Landscaping**

7.7.1 With regards to trees, Policy NH5 of the adopted Local Plan (2019) states that development proposals will be expected to protect and retain individual trees within the development site and should include new planting where appropriate. The application is accompanied by a preliminary Arboricultural Impact Assessment, which identifies 8 trees one of which is located

inside of the fence line of the site boundary (a category B Oak) and 7 trees located around the site boundaries or off site, 5 of which are low value category C, one category B and one high quality category A comprising a mixture of Hawthorn, Field Maple, Elm, Pedunculate Oak, Cherry, Elder, Common Lime and Norway Maple. The report recommends all trees should be retained within the development if possible and adequate tree protection measures should be put in place during construction. Construction should be avoided within the root protection area. Should planning permission be granted, planning conditions requiring tree protection measures to be put in place during construction would be added. Likewise, replacement planting would be required should any trees die.

7.7.2 The proposed development would be supported by a comprehensive hard and soft landscaping scheme designed around the needs of the various users of the healthcare facility and to provide a relaxing and welcoming experience for all service users, visitors and staff. The landscaping scheme comprises the following:

- Providing rooms that have views of nature
- Gardens to have a domestic scale and feel
- Create places for private conversation and social interaction
- Provide a choice of seating options: type, height and location
- Use focal elements to create a distraction or talking point
- Use warm to touch natural materials to help relax users
- Scented plants located near seating areas or doorways: scent is the slowest sense taking longer for the information to reach the brain
- Seasonal change and variation through plant choice
- Gardens to encourage activity through creation of wandering routes of discovery, growing beds, and flexible open space for fitness and sport.

7.7.3 The planting style has been designed in both public and private areas to appear inviting and calming, through gentle grasses and ornamental shrubs. At the main entrance, seasonal interest would create a sense of arrival and provide attractive views out from the café space. Multi stem trees that are spreading and beautiful to look at have been chosen to be less imposing and formal, with groups of both evergreen and flowering varieties that provide areas of dappled shade to sit beneath. Car park tree planting would be more formal with standard trees that have an upright compact canopy due to the space required for the movement of large service vehicles. Tree species would offer seasonal change and interest. Resin bound gravel in a warm tone would complement the building materials and provide a smooth, even surface for all users. Similar to the proposed planting, resin bound gravel appears less imposing than hard paving blocks and has a more relaxed feel. Internal and external boundary fencing has been chosen to complement the external finish of the building and landscaping.

7.7.4 The landscaping strategy for each courtyard space has been carefully considered depending on whether it would be public or secure space, the end users and its purpose. Features would include kick about space and Astroturf lawn, raised planters with seating edges, safety surfacing with fitness equipment, non-poisonous low maintenance plants, group and individual seating options to allow for passive and social situations and art sculptures.

7.7.5 The Council's arboriculture and conservation manager has confirmed they have no in principle objection to the proposed scheme or landscaping strategy. However, they have raised a query about how far the south western corner of the proposed building is likely to intrude within the root protection area of the nearby mature Oak tree. The applicant's agent has advised they would accept a condition requiring an arboriculture impact assessment, tree protection plan

and method statement to be submitted as part of any planning permission granted. This would provide information on the RPA of all trees, including the mature Oak tree.

## **7.8 Climate Change Mitigation**

7.8.1 A BREEAM Pre-Assessment prepared by Method Consulting has been submitted with the application. The Pre-Assessment demonstrates that the development would achieve a BREEAM rating of 'excellent', exceeding the 'very good' requirement in the Stevenage Design Guide (2009). Consequently, the proposed development accords with the overarching principles of the NPPF and the sustainability requirements of Local Plan policies SP2 and FP1.

7.8.2 An Energy Statement has also been submitted with the planning application. It is considered that the energy strategy for the proposed development meets Policy FP1 "Climate change" as follows:

- The development has implemented the industry best practice principles by following the energy hierarchy (Be Lean, Be Clean, Be Green & Be Seen) to ensure energy consumption through efficiency measures are incorporated first. A 5% reduction in energy consumption has been achieved against the baseline through Be Lean measures alone;
- The industry best practice cooling hierarchy has been adopted, reducing active cooling demand by following a passive first approach, with high efficiency cooling systems provided at the final step;
- District heating networks have been considered as part of the Be Clean step in the hierarchy, however this is discounted primarily due to its reliance on fossil fuel technology (CHP) with no plans currently in place to decarbonise this;
- Renewable / low carbon energy technologies have been considered for this project. PV and a hybrid ground and air source heat pump system have been incorporated into the design, achieving a total reduction from the baseline of 48%;
- The industry best practice cooling hierarchy has been adopted, reducing active cooling demand by following a passive first approach, with high efficiency cooling systems provided at the final step;
- A thermal comfort analysis has been carried out in accordance with CIBSE TM52 using current 2020 and future 2050 and 2080 weather files. This modelling has been carried out to test and ensure the building is resilient to likely future variations in temperature without resulting in unacceptable internal comfort conditions. The building performs well in all three tests, though by 2080 additional cooling may be necessary in some rooms.

7.8.3 The proposed development is therefore in accordance with the overarching principles of the NPPF and the sustainability requirements of Policies SP2 and FP1 of the SBC Local Plan.

## **7.9 Impact on Residential Amenity**

7.9.1 The application site is bounded by the A602 Hitchin Road to the south and west, the Graveley Road to the north and other hospital and care home buildings to the east. There are no residential dwellings in close proximity to the site. Pinelodge care home (assisted living accommodation) is sited to the north east of the site and is considered to be a sufficient distance away for the proposed mental health unit not to raise any amenity issues for the residents of this building. The application proposal would not raise any issues connected with impact on residential amenity.

## **7.10 Local Employment and Apprenticeships**

7.10.1 The Developer Contributions SPD (2021) introduces a requirement that developers of major development will enter into a legal agreement with the Council to:

- i. attempt to fill 5% to 10% of construction jobs on-site associated with their development with Stevenage residents,
- ii. attempt to fill one apprenticeship position per 10 construction jobs on-site with a Stevenage resident or student (with a cap for requirement of 10 apprenticeships),
- iii. report whether or not they met these requirements, and provide a financial contribution in lieu of not achieving either or both targets.

7.10.2 A legal agreement would be prepared to secure this obligation, subject to planning permission.

## **7.11 Archaeology**

7.11.1 The Site has been assessed for its below ground archaeological potential in advance of the proposed development. The results of this assessment are contained in the Archaeological Desk Based Assessment, prepared by RPS, and submitted with the planning application. In summary the Assessment concludes that the proposed development would not impact on any designated archaeological assets and that the site is not located within a locally defined Area of Archaeological Significance.

7.11.2 The Assessment has concluded a moderate archaeological potential at the site for the Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman periods, as well as for Medieval agricultural activity. A low potential has been considered for all other past periods of human activity. If present at the site, any remains would most likely be of local significance, although it is possible that well-preserved evidence for Bronze Age funerary activity, Iron Age/Roman settlement activity, or a Roman roadway, could be considered of regional significance.

7.11.3 HCC Historic Environment Advisor (Archaeology) considers that the proposed development should be regarded as likely to have a potential impact on heritage assets of archaeological interest and recommends that an appropriately worded condition on any planning permission would be sufficient to provide for the level of investigation that this proposal warrants.

## **7.12 External Lighting**

7.12.1 The application is accompanied by an External Lighting Report and associated External Lighting Layout Drawing EN54-CAP-XX-XX-DR-E-6301 Rev 02, prepared by Capita. The Report confirms that the lighting scheme would provide illumination to the pedestrian walkways and the surrounding external areas of the proposed development in accordance with BS EN 12464-2 and ILP Institution of Lighting Professionals Guidance Note 01/20. The lighting scheme would ensure lighting levels beyond the site boundary do not exceed the required levels, the luminaire upward light ratio (ULR) does not exceed 5% and would not cause excessive glare to neighbouring areas and properties. The external lighting scheme would therefore provide appropriate and safe levels of lighting whilst having minimal impact to the site surroundings and environment.

## **7.13 Construction Impacts**

7.13.1 The Highway Authority have requested a condition be imposed requiring the submission of a construction management plan. This would ensure all construction traffic is carefully managed and routed appropriately. A condition restricting hours of construction to 07.30 – 18.00 weekdays and 08.00 – 13.00 Saturdays only to safeguard the amenity of nearby occupiers.



Whilst there is likely to be some disruption to the area during construction, the use of the above conditions would keep this to a minimum.

## **7.14 Other Matters**

### Equality and Human Rights Considerations

- 7.14.1 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. It is not considered that the decision would result in a violation of any person's rights under the Convention.
- 7.14.2 When considering proposals placed before the Council as Local Planning Authority, it is important that it is fully aware of and has themselves rigorously considered the equalities implications of the decision that they are taking. Therefore, rigorous consideration has been undertaken by the Council as the Local Planning Authority to ensure that proper appreciation of any potential impact of the proposed development on the Council's obligations under the Public Sector Equalities Duty. The approach adopted in response to inclusive design includes level access internally, and flush thresholds. Externally a maximum of 1:20 gradients is required where level changes occur linking the proposed pathway to the existing pathways. The building would be designed to comply with current approved document M under the Building Regulations.
- 7.14.3 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.
- 7.14.4 It is considered that the decision has had regard to this duty. The development would not conflict with either Stevenage Borough Council's Equality Policy or the commitments set out in our Equality Objectives, and would support the Council in meeting its statutory equality responsibilities.

## **8. CONCLUSIONS**

- 8.1 In summary, the erection of a 54 bed building for C2A planning use with access, car parking, landscaping and associated works is considered acceptable, subject to conditions. The proposal, with high quality design and landscaping features, would comply with the relevant land use policies for this area. Furthermore, it would not impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties and would not be in conflict with any environmental or highways policies.
- 8.2 Given the aforementioned, the proposed development under this application is considered to be acceptable in line with the Council's adopted Local Plan (2019), Parking Provision and Sustainable Travel SPD (2020), Stevenage Design Guide SPD (2009), The Impact of Development on Biodiversity SPD (2021), the NPPF (2021) and NPPG (2014).

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 That planning permission be GRANTED subject to the applicant having first entered into a unilateral undertaking to secure/provide contributions towards:-

- Local Employment and Apprenticeships

The detail of which would be delegated to the Assistant Director of Planning and Regulation in liaison with the Council's appointed solicitor.

9.2 The proposal be subject to the following conditions:-

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

EN54-RYD-00-ZZ-DR-A-0100-S2-P4; EN54-RYD-00-ZZ-DR-A-0101; EN54-RYD-00-ZZ-DR-A-1001; EN54-RYD-00-ZZ-DR-A-1120; EN54-RYD-00-ZZ-DR-A-3601; EN54-RYD-00-ZZ-DR-A-3602; EN54-RYD-00-ZZ-DR-A-3603; EN54-RYD-00-ZZ-DR-A-3604; EN54-RYD-00-ZZ-DR-A-3605; EN54-RYD-MB-01-DR-A-3002-S2-P10; EN54-RYD-MB-LG-DR-A-3000-S2-P10; EN54-RYD-MB-RF-DR-A-3040; EN54-RYD-MB-UG-DR-A-3001-S2-P12; EN54-RYD-SW-01-DR-L-2110-S2-P12; EN54-RYD-00-01-DR-L-2113; EN54-RYD-00-LG-DR-L-2111; EN54-RYD-00-UG-DR-L-2112; EN54-CAP-XX-XX-DR-E-6301 P05

**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 The building works required to implement this permission shall be carried out only between the following times:

0730 to 1800 Mondays to Fridays  
0830 to 1300 Saturdays  
And not at all on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

The hours specified relate to activities which are audible at the site boundary.

**REASON:-** To satisfactorily protect the residential amenities of nearby occupiers and the operation of adjoining businesses.

4 No development shall commence until a Construction Traffic Management Plan has been 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 Plan. The Construction Traffic Management Plan shall include details of:

- Construction vehicle numbers, type, routing;
- Access arrangements to the site;
- Traffic management requirements
- Construction and storage compounds (including areas designated for car parking, loading / unloading and turning areas);
- Siting and details of wheel washing facilities;
- Cleaning of site entrances, site tracks and the adjacent public highway;
- Timing of construction activities (including delivery times and removal of waste) and to avoid school pick up/drop off times;
- Provision of sufficient on-site parking prior to commencement of construction activities;
- Post construction restoration/reinstatement of the working areas and temporary access to the public highway;
- 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.

**REASON:-** In order to protect highway safety and the amenity of other users of the public highway and rights of way in accordance with Policies 5, 12, 17 and 22 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan.

- 5 Prior to first occupation of the development hereby permitted, the existing access onto the A602 shall be gated and a sign erected stating the access is for emergency access only.  
**REASON:-** To ensure the development does not prejudice the safety and operation of the highway.
- 6 Prior to first occupation of the development hereby permitted, pedestrian dropped kerbs and tactile paving shall be provided over the Victoria Court access on approach to the site.  
**REASON:-** In order to deliver sustainable transport objectives including improving pedestrian access to the site.
- 7 Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted full details of the secure and covered cycle parking stores shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Details shall also include how the stores are to be managed and maintained. The cycle stores shall thereafter be completed and ready for use in accordance with the approved details and thereafter retained for the sole use of cycle parking.  
**REASON:-** To ensure adequate secure and covered cycle parking provision is available at all times to promote sustainable modes of transport.
- 8 The Travel Plan as submitted with this planning application shall be implemented, monitored and reviewed in accordance with the agreed travel plan targets to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.  
**REASON:-** In order to deliver sustainable transport objectives including a reduction in car journeys and increased use of public transport, walking and cycling.
- 9 The parking, turning and servicing areas shown on drawing number EN54-RYD-SW-01-DR-L-2110-S2-P12 shall be provided, marked out and hard surfaced ready for use prior to the first occupation of the development and shall be retained in that form and kept available for those purposes thereafter.  
**REASON:-** To ensure that adequate parking and servicing facilities are available within the site and that there is no detriment to the safety of adjoining highways.
- 10 No above ground works shall take place until a scheme for the provision of adequate water supplies and fire hydrants, necessary for firefighting purposes at the site, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be occupied until the scheme has been implemented in accordance with the approved details.  
**REASON:-** To ensure adequate water infrastructure provision is made on site for the local fire service to discharge its statutory firefighting duties.
- 11 Prior to the commencement of the development the developer shall carry out a noise assessment in accordance with relevant guidance and standards and a scheme for sound insulation and noise control measures shall be submitted for the Council's written approval. Once implemented, the scheme of measures shall be maintained in accordance with the approved details.  
**REASON:-** To protect the amenities of future residents and in accordance with Local Plan Policy FP7.
- 12 No development shall take place (including site clearance) until a comprehensive study into the options for daylighting Ash Brook and the creation of an accompanying flood storage area has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The study shall be prepared in accordance with relevant good practice guidance and based on (but not limited to) the following principles:

- a) An approach which seeks to maximise the range of benefits, betterment and opportunities associated with daylighting of Ash Brook and the creation of an associated flood storage area. Daylighting opportunities should include benefits to biodiversity and water quality.
- b) Inclusion of a formal flood storage area in the location currently identified for floodplain compensation, including indicative design of embankments, flow control structures and spillways.
- c) A comprehensive baseline understanding of the existing Hitchin Culvert to allow informed decisions to be taken, identifying relevant constraints and opportunities, including watercourse survey cross sections, numerous photographs of the culvert and surrounds as it passes through the site, and key elevations of sections of the culvert which would remain.
- d) Indicative design drawings and layout plans for a range of feasibility design options (including indicative elevations, cross sections and outfall and headwall structures) for selection to take forward to detailed design (the next stage is to confirm the details of the agreed design only).
- e) Hydraulic modelling to support the assessment of feasibility design options identified. Both the baseline and with-development modelling will need to be subject to independent external technical review to ensure suitable assurance of the options is undertaken.
- f) An approach developed in consultation with relevant stakeholders, including but not limited to Stevenage Borough Council, the Lead Local Flood Authority, the Environment Agency and, if necessary/appropriate, the statutory undertaker for sewerage (foul and surface water).

**REASON:-** To realise betterment with respect to biodiversity, water quality and flood risk associated with naturalised watercourses.

- 13 Prior to occupation, a final detailed design for the selected option agreed under condition 12 for daylighting of Ash Brook and the creation of an accompanying flood storage area should be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Ash Brook daylighting and floodplain storage scheme should be constructed within 6 months of occupation of the development.

**REASON:-** To ensure sustainable and suitable design of naturalised watercourses and flood storage features.

- 14 No development shall take place (including site clearance) until a final detailed design for the drainage scheme for the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall be based on the following principles:

- a) Discharging surface water run-off generated by the 1 in 100 year + 40% climate change critical storm by gravity and by infiltration, or if infiltration is proven not possible in specific parts of the site, by limiting the surface water run off to the QBAR greenfield run-off rate or less, in accordance with an agreement from the relevant body to whom discharges would occur.
- b) Providing attenuation on-site for all rainfall events up to and including the 1 in 100 year + 40% climate change event.
- c) Permeable paving in car parking areas;
- d) Demonstration that any 'allowable' flooding at the ground surface would be: contained within areas suitable for such a use (i.e. outside of buildings and away from key access points) for all events (including exceedance events); and also within the site boundaries to a maximum flood depth of up to 100mm during the 100 year plus 40% climate change storm events.

The scheme shall also provide the following:

- a) Evidence that flexibility in delivery of infiltration (depth and extent) is possible in case any variation in soakage rates is later identified;

- b) Evidence of further infiltration testing, carried out in accordance with BRE Digest 365, at the location and proposed depth of any infiltration measure(s);
- c) Green roofs (wherever possible);
- d) Appropriate treatment before discharge;
- e) Evidence of agreement (of principle and rates) from the relevant body or bodies to whom discharges would occur (where applicable);
- f) Updated surface water drainage calculations and modelling where appropriate for all rainfall events up to and including the 1 in 100 year plus climate change event;
- g) An updated detailed surface water drainage plan where appropriate, showing all proposed discharge points, SuDS features and pipe runs (with sizes);
- h) Detailed engineered drawings of the proposed SuDS features including their size, volume, depth and any inlet and outlet features, including any connecting pipe runs along, with all corresponding detailed calculations/modelling;
- i) Updated proposals to address flood risks associated with exceedance events, for events greater than the 1 in 100 year plus climate change event.

The approved drainage scheme shall be implemented in full prior to the beneficial occupation of the development to which this permission relates and shall be permanently retained as such thereafter unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

**REASON:-** To adhere to the hierarchy of drainage options, as set out in paragraph 080 of the Planning Practice Guidance; to maximise the use of SuDS in the interests of mitigating the risk of flooding to the site itself and downstream; to prevent pollutants entering the public water supply and nearby watercourses; and to maximise the sustainability of the development.

- 15 Prior to occupation, a management and maintenance plan for the approved SuDS features and drainage network must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include:

- a) Provision of a complete set of as built drawings, including the final drainage layout for the site drainage network;
- b) Maintenance and operational activities;
- c) Arrangements for adoption; and,
- d) Any other measures necessary to secure the operation of the scheme throughout its lifetime.

The approved plan shall be fully implemented from the date of approval and thereafter for the lifetime of the development unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

**REASON:-** To maximise the use of SuDS in the interests of mitigating the risk of flooding to the site itself and downstream; to prevent pollutants entering the public water supply and nearby watercourses; and to maximise the sustainability of the development.

- 16 Development shall not commence 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 units identified in the NE biodiversity Metric as a minimum (6.79 habitat units) to achieve a biodiversity net gain. The LEMP must 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 habitats as described in the approved metric.
- d) Prescriptions for management actions, only definitive measures are acceptable.
- e) Preparation of an annual work schedule (including a 30 year work plan capable of being rolled forward in perpetuity), 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 in the approved metric 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 bod(ies) responsible for its delivery. The plan 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.'

**REASON:-** To achieve a measurable biodiversity net gain in accordance with NPPF.

17 Prior to the commencement of the development, details of biodiversity enhancement measures in the ecological report, consisting of 10 integrated bat cavity boxes, 15 integrated swift boxes, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved measures shall be incorporated into the scheme, be fully constructed prior to occupation of the approved development and retained as such thereafter.

**REASON:-** To conserve and enhance biodiversity in accordance with NPPF.

18 If reptiles are found to be present on site following the results of the presence/absence survey, an appropriate mitigation strategy for reptiles shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust. The mitigation measures shall thereafter be put in place in accordance with the approved detail.

**REASON:-** To conserve and enhance biodiversity in accordance with NPPF.

19 Prior to the commencement of development an Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Tree Protection Plan and Method Statement shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The identified tree protection measures shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to the commencement of development and shall remain in place until the development has been completed.

**REASON:-** To ensure that the retained tree(s) are not damaged or otherwise adversely affected during site operations.

20 No tree shown retained on the approved plans, or subsequently approved Tree Protection Plan and Method Statement, shall be cut down, uprooted or destroyed, nor shall any retained tree be topped or lopped within five years of the completion of development without the written approval of the Local Planning Authority.

**REASON:-** To ensure the protection of those trees which should be retained in the interests of visual amenity.

21 If any retained tree referred to in condition 21 is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies within 5 years of the completion of development, a replacement tree should be planted in the same place and that tree shall be of such a size and species, and shall be planted at such time, as may be specified in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

**REASON:-** To ensure the replacement of those trees which should be retained in the interests of visual amenity.

22 The measures to address adaptation to climate change as set out within the BREEAM Pre-Assessment prepared by Method Consulting shall be implemented and permanently maintained in accordance with the approved details.

**Reason:-** To ensure the development is adaptable to climate change through provision of energy and water efficiency measures.

23 The external lighting shall be implemented in accordance with the recommendations within the External Lighting Report and associated External Lighting Layout Drawing EN54-CAP-XX-XX-DR-E-6301 Rev 02, prepared by Capita and permanently maintained in accordance with the approved details.

**REASON:-** To ensure a satisfactory appearance for the development and to prevent light pollution.

24 The development hereby permitted shall be completed in accordance with the external materials specified within the Design and Access Statement by Ryder as approved.

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

25 All hard and soft landscaping shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details as set out in drawing number EN54-RYD-SW-01-DR-L-2110-S2-P12 to a reasonable standard in accordance with the relevant British Standards or other recognised Codes of Good Practice.

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

26 All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the completion of the development.

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

27 No development shall take place within the proposed development site until the applicant, or their agents, or their successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which has been submitted to the planning authority and approved in writing. This condition will only be considered to be discharged when the planning authority has received and approved an archaeological report of all the required archaeological works, and if appropriate, a commitment to publication has been made.

**REASON:-** To provide for the likely archaeological implications of this development proposal.

## INFORMATIVES

1 Cadent Gas Ltd own and operate the gas infrastructure within the area of your development. There may be a legal interest (easements and other rights) in the land that restrict activity in proximity to Cadent assets in private land. The applicant must ensure that the proposed works do not infringe on legal rights of access and or restrictive covenants that exist. If buildings or structures are proposed directly above the apparatus the development may only take place following diversion of the apparatus. The applicant should apply online to have apparatus diverted in advance of any works, by visiting [cadentgas.com/diversions](http://cadentgas.com/diversions). Prior to carrying out works, including the construction of access points, please register on [www.linerearchbeforeudig.co.uk](http://www.linerearchbeforeudig.co.uk) to submit details of the planned works for review, ensuring requirements are adhered to.

2 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](http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/CIL) or by contacting the Council's CIL Team at [CIL@Stevenage.gov.uk](mailto:CIL@Stevenage.gov.uk).

- 3 Storage of materials: 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 website <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/highways-roadsand-pavements.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.
- 4 Obstruction of public highway land: 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 website <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/highways-roads-and-pavements.aspx> telephoning 0300 1234047.
- 5 Road Deposits: It is an offence under section 148 of the Highways Act 1980 to deposit mud or other debris on the public highway, and 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 are in a condition such as not to emit dust or deposit mud, slurry or other debris on the highway. Further information is available via the website <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highwaysroadsandpavements/highways-roads-and-pavements.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.
- 6 To obtain advice regarding current Building Regulations please contact Hertfordshire Building Control Ltd. by emailing us at [buildingcontrol@hertfordshirebc.co.uk](mailto:buildingcontrol@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).

## **10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

1. The application file, forms, plans and supporting documents having the reference number relating to this item.
2. Stevenage Borough Council Supplementary Planning Documents – Parking Provision and Sustainable Travel SPD (2020), Stevenage Design Guide SPD (2009) and The Impact of Development on Biodiversity SPD (2021) and Developer Contributions SPD (2021).
3. Stevenage Borough Local Plan (2019).
4. Responses to consultations with statutory undertakers and other interested parties referred to in this report.
5. Central Government advice contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) and National Planning Policy Guidance (2014).