



PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Date: Thursday, 12 March 2026
Time: 6.30pm,
Location: Council Chamber
Contact: Gemma O'Donnell (01438) 242216
committees@stevenage.gov.uk

Members: Councillors: Claire Parris (Chair), Carolina Veres (Vice-Chair), Julie Ashley-Wren, Stephen Booth, Robert Boyle, Kamal Choudhury, Forhad Chowdhury, Peter Clark, Coleen DeFreitas, Akin Elekolusi, Lynda Guy, Rob Henry, Ellie Plater and Nigel Williams

AGENDA

PART 1

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2. MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 February 2026.

5 – 26

3. 24/00058/FPM - LAND AT REDCAR DRIVE, STEVENAGE, SG1 2EN

To consider the demolition of an existing property known as Cartref and erection of 38 no. dwellings with associated road, parking, green spaces and ancillary works.

27 – 60

4. 25/00908/FP - SOUTH CAR PARK, PRIMETT ROAD

To consider the change of use of the public car park to a rental vehicle premises (Sui Generis), the erection of modular rental vehicle office and rental vehicle wash bay and associated works (including lighting and resurfacing).

61 – 76

5. 25/00893/FPM - LAND ADJACENT TO GSK CAMPUS, GUNNELS WOOD ROAD

To consider an application for Planning Permission for Development without Compliance with Conditions 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 10, 13, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 31, 32, 38, 40, 41, 42, 43, 45, 46, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, attached to planning permission reference number 23/00293/FPM for Hybrid Planning Application for a new Life Sciences Campus.

Full planning permission for the demolition of existing ancillary buildings, structures, erection of employment floorspace (Classes E(g)(ii) and (iii), B2 and B8, with provision for Class E uses at ground, lower ground and upper ground/mezzanine floors) revised junction arrangement (A602 and Gunnels Wood Road) and alterations to the site layout to include new car parking (including a multi storey car park), internal access and associated works (such as new utilities (including new substations), drainage and infrastructure hard and soft landscaping and introduction of sustainable transport facilities).

Outline planning permission for the demolition of existing ancillary buildings/structures, erection of employment floorspace (Classes E(g)(i) to (iii), B2 and B8, with provision for an ancillary auditorium, and Class E uses at ground floor) and Amenity Hub (Classes E and B2), provision of car parking (including multi storey car park(s)) and associated works (such as new access, utilities, drainage, infrastructure and hard and soft landscaping), with all matters reserved for subsequent approval.

77 – 154

6. 25/00620/OPM - LAND SOUTH OF A602/LAND EAST OF BRAGBURY END

To consider the full planning permission for the construction of the spine road, site accesses from the A602 and ancillary works. Outline planning permission for up to 500 dwelling units (including affordable housing and self-build plots), a mixed use local centre (Use Class C3, E and F2 space, public open and amenity space (including Children's Play), associated landscaping and ecological enhancement works, internal highways, parking, footpaths, cycleways, drainage, utilities, service infrastructure and ancillary works (With some matters reserved).

155 – 244

7. INFORMATION REPORT - DELEGATED DECISIONS

To note a report on decisions taken by the Assistant Director Planning and Regulatory in accordance with his delegated authority.

245 – 256

8. INFORMATION REPORT - APPEALS/CALLED IN APPLICATIONS

To note a report on decisions taken by the Assistant Director Planning and Regulatory in accordance with his delegated authority.

257 – 258

9. URGENT PART I BUSINESS

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

10. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

To consider the following motions that:

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

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

11. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

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

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STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Thursday, 12 February 2026

Time: 6.30pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present: Councillors: Claire Parris (Chair), Carolina Veres (Vice-Chair), Julie Ashley-Wren, Stephen Booth, Robert Boyle, Peter Clark, Coleen De Freitas (From 18:40pm), Lynda Guy, Rob Henry and Ellie Plater

Start / End Time: Start Time: 6.30pm
End Time: 7.15pm

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Akin Elekolusi, Kamal Choudhury, Forhad Chowdhury and Nigel Williams.

2 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Planning & Development Committee held on 2 December 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 **26/00002/FP - STEVENAGE SWIMMING POOL ST GEORGES WAY**

The Committee received a presentation on the application for partial demolition of the existing swimming centre. The officer presented the site plans and clarified that this application was a necessary step in the progression of the development of the new Leisure Centre and would ensure works relating to the wider redevelopment of the site could be implemented more seamlessly and timely given the timeframes and parameters of this strategic project.

A question was raised regarding the current use of the section that was proposed to be demolished, and clarification was given by the officer that this was an area used by staff at the swimming pool.

A Member requested further information on the full development of the new Leisure Centre, and the officer explained that they could be contacted directly for any further questions on that application.

A recorded vote* was taken on the application and it was **RESOLVED** that planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions, and Authority would be given to the Assistant Director of Planning and Regulation in consultation with the Chair of Planning Committee, to amend or add to the suggested draft conditions set out in this report, prior to the decision notice being issued, where such amendments or additions would be legally sound and most effectively deliver the development

that the Planning Committee has resolved to approve. These suggested conditions are as follows:

Conditions

1. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: SSLH-FBA-01-ZZ-D-A-0109-P02; SSLH-FBA-01-ZZ-D-A-0108-P02; SSLH-FBA-01-ZZD-A-0184-P02
2. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
3. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the measures as contained in 'Demolition Plan of Works - Method Statement' (dated 10.11.25) for the duration of the demolition.

INFORMATIVES

1. Building Regulations

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

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

Hertfordshire Building Control can also be contacted by post at Hertfordshire Building Control Ltd, Campus East, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, AL8 6AE.

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).

2. Biodiversity Net Gain

Applications where Biodiversity Net Gain is not required as development is considered De Minimis

The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for the development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition "(the biodiversity gain condition") that development may not begin unless:

- a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
- b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if one is required in respect of this permission would be Stevenage Borough Council.

There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not apply.

Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will not require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because the following statutory exemption or transitional arrangement is considered to apply.

1. Development below the de minimis threshold, meaning development which:
 - a) does not impact an onsite priority habitat (a habitat specified in a list published under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006); and
 - b) impacts less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat that has biodiversity value greater than zero and less than 5 metres in length of onsite linear habitat (as defined in the statutory metric).

Where the local planning authority considers that the permission falls within paragraph 19 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the permission which has been granted has the effect of requiring or permitting the development to proceed in phases. The modifications in respect of the biodiversity gain condition which are set out in Part 2 of the Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (Modifications and Amendments) (England) Regulations 2024 apply.

Biodiversity gain plans are required to be submitted to, and approved by, the planning authority before development may be begun, and, if subject to phased development, before each phase of development may be begun.

If the onsite habitat includes irreplaceable habitat (within the meaning of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024) there are additional requirements for the content and approval of Biodiversity Gain Plans. The Biodiversity Gain Plan must include, in addition to information about steps taken or to be taken to minimise any adverse effect of the development on the habitat, information on arrangements for compensation for any impact the development has on the biodiversity of the irreplaceable habitat. The planning authority can only

approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if satisfied that the adverse effect of the development on the biodiversity of the irreplaceable habitat is minimised and appropriate arrangements have been made for the purpose of compensating for any impact which do not include the use of biodiversity credits.

More information can be found in the Planning Practice Guidance online at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain>

***Recorded Vote**

For – Councillors Julie Ashley-Wren, Stephen Booth, Robert Boyle, Peter Clark, Lynda Guy, Rob Henry, Claire Parris, Ellie Plater and Carolina Veres

Against – 0

Abstentions – 0

Absent – Councillors Kamal Choudhury, Forhad Chowdhury, Coleen De Freitas, Akin Elekolusi and Nigel Williams

4 **25/00894/FP AND 25/00895/AD KING GEORGE V PLAYING FIELD, TENNIS COURTS SISH LANE**

The Committee received a presentation from the Senior Planning Officer regarding a planning application for the construction of a 3G non-infill floodlight play zone and the display of 13 non-illuminated vinyl banners.

The Officer clarified that the presentation covered two applications and that a separate vote would need to be taken with respect to the planning application and the advertisement consent.

Site design plans were presented to the Committee, including proposed traffic management during construction, cycle stands, and impact of light spillage from the floodlights.

It was clarified that no new parking would be provided as an existing car park was already in place next to the proposed development site. It was noted that any harm to the adjacent conservation area would be minimal and was outweighed by the public benefits of a safe and secure exercise area.

It was further noted that an objection had been received from Cycling UK as there was no new cycle network being proposed to the location of the site. The officer clarified that whilst the concerns were acknowledged, the site was positioned within an open space park that included two footpaths and that no additional cycle routes would be provided as part of the development proposal.

The Officer explained that the proposed signage would be non-illuminated, and the floodlights would have a condition imposed to make sure the majority were switched off by 10pm with one left on until 10:15pm to allow safe exit of the site.

Members asked multiple questions about the lighting which included if they would always be on, and if 10pm was too late to have them in use. It was clarified by the officer that they would only be activated during times that the play zone was being

used, that the condition for the lighting was consistent with recent approvals and the light spillage would not reach any residential dwellings.

A question was raised about the access path via Ditchmore Lane and clarification was given that this pathway would be unaffected by the application.

Members sought clarification of the acronym BEAMS used in the report and officers explained that this was the Built Environment Advisory Management Service who provide advice on listed buildings and conservation areas.

A recorded vote* was taken on the application (25/00894/FP) and it was **RESOLVED** that planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
MCA-MUK3521-01-D; MCA-MUK3521-02; MCA-MUK3521-03-A; MCA-MUK3521-04; MCA-MUK3521-05; MCA-MUK3521-06; MCA-MUK3521-07-A; MCA-MUK3521-08; MCA-MUK3521-09-A; MCA-MUK3521-10;
2. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
3. The external materials used in the development to which this permission relates shall be those detailed on the approved plans and in the accompanying planning submission documents unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.
4. In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified it must be reported in writing immediately to the local planning authority. An investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken and where remediation is necessary a remediation scheme must be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme a verification report must be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.
5. No demolition or construction work which is audible at the site boundary relating to this permission shall be carried out on any Sunday, Public or Bank Holiday nor at any other time, except between the hours of 07:30 and 18:00 on Mondays to Fridays and between the hours of 08:00 and 13:00 on Saturdays.
6. The floodlights hereby permitted shall be shut off by 22:00 hours. One light column is permitted to remain on until 22:15 to allow the multi-use games area to be vacated safely.
7. The PlayZone hereby permitted shall not come into recreational use until suitable secure cycling storage facilities in accordance with the approved plans and documents have been installed.
8. The PlayZone hereby permitted shall not come into recreational use until a written

Noise Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The contents of the Plan shall set out the physical and managerial measures for the control of noise associated with the facility. Thereafter, all agreed measures shall be maintained in perpetuity.

9. No development shall commence until a Construction Traffic Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the highway. 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:

- a. Construction vehicle numbers, type, routing.
- b. Access arrangements to the site.
- c. Measure to minimise dust, noise machinery and traffic noise impacts during construction.
- d. Screening and hoarding details to protect neighbouring residents.
- e. Traffic management requirements, including the location of routes and from the site, details of their signing monitoring and enforcement measures.
- f. Construction and storage compounds (including areas designated for car parking, loading /unloading and turning areas);
- g. Siting and details of wheel washing facilities.
- h. Cleaning of site entrances, site tracks and the adjacent public highway including end of day tidying procedures to ensure protection of the site out the hours of construction. The construction activities shall be designed and undertake in accordance with the code of best practice set out in BS 5228 1997 and the agreed details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the LPA and Highways.
- i. Timing of construction activities (including delivery times and removal of waste) and to avoid school pick up/drop off times.
- j. Provision of sufficient on-site parking prior to commencement of construction activities.
- k. Post construction restoration/reinstatement of the working areas and temporary access to the public highway.
- l. 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.

The Council has acted Pro-Actively for the following reason:-

Planning permission has been granted for this proposal. Discussion with the applicant to seek an acceptable solution was not necessary in this instance. The Council has therefore acted pro-actively in line with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

INFORMATIVE

1. Public Information on Planning Applications

Warning: all information provided on your planning application is now publicly available. Individuals and organisations offering their services may contact you. The Council does not endorse or approve any builders, surveyors, trades persons or other supplier, and advises householders to obtain quotes/references, and check the

legitimacy of any contractor who contacts them before making payment.

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 or by contacting the Council's CIL Team at CIL@Stevenage.gov.uk.

3. Building Regulations

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- Drains (when laid or tested)
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- 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).

4. Party Wall etc. Act 1996

Any work that affects a party wall, including foundations dug within 3.0m of a neighbouring building, may be controllable under the Act and may require approval from the adjoining owner(s). Party Wall Act matters are always civil matters and it is neither Stevenage Borough Council's nor Hertfordshire Building Control Ltd's remit to control or enforce Party Wall act matters. Please refer to the Government's explanatory booklet The Party Wall etc. Act 1996, a copy of which is available online at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-party-wall-etc-act-1996-revised-explanatory-booklet>

5. Biodiversity Net Gain

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- a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
- b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if one is required in respect of this permission would be Stevenage Borough Council.

There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not apply.

Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will not require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because the following statutory exemption or transitional arrangement is considered to apply.

1. Development below the de minimis threshold, meaning development which:
 - a) does not impact an onsite priority habitat (a habitat specified in a list published under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006); and
 - b) impacts less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat that has biodiversity value greater than zero and less than 5 metres in length of onsite linear habitat (as defined in the statutory metric).

Where the local planning authority considers that the permission falls within paragraph 19 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the permission which has been granted has the effect of requiring or permitting the development to proceed in phases. The modifications in respect of the biodiversity gain condition which are set out in Part 2 of the Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (Modifications and Amendments) (England) Regulations 2024 apply.

Biodiversity gain plans are required to be submitted to, and approved by, the planning authority before development may be begun, and, if subject to phased development, before each phase of development may be begun.

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More information can be found in the Planning Practice Guidance online at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain>

***Recorded Vote**

For – Councillors Julie Ashley-Wren, Stephen Booth, Robert Boyle, Peter Clark, Lynda Guy, Rob Henry, Claire Parris, Ellie Plater and Carolina Veres

Against – 0

Abstentions – 0

Absent – Councillors Kamal Choudhury, Forhad Chowdhury, Coleen De Freitas, Akin Elekolusi and Nigel Williams

A recorded vote* was taken on the application (25/00895/AD) and it was **RESOLVED** that advertisement consent be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

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

MCA-MUK3521-01-D; MCA-MUK3521-02; MCA-MUK3521-03-A; MCA-MUK3521-04; MCA-MUK3521-05; MCA-MUK3521-06; MCA-MUK3521-07-A; MCA-MUK3521-08; MCA-MUK3521-09-A; MCA-MUK3521-10;

2. A. No advertisement is to be displayed without the permission of the owner of the site or any other person with an interest in the site entitled to grant permission.

B. No advertisement shall be sited or displayed so as to:-

i) endanger persons using any highway, railway, waterway, dock, harbour or aerodrome (civil or military);

ii) obscure, or hinder the ready interpretation of, any traffic sign, railway signal or aid to navigation by water or air; or

iii) hinder the operation of any device used for the purpose of security or surveillance or for measuring the speed of any vehicle.

C. Any advertisement displayed, and any site used for the display of advertisements, shall be maintained in a condition that does not impair the visual amenity of the site.

D. Any structure or hoarding erected or used principally for the purpose of displaying

advertisements shall be maintained in a condition that does not endanger the public.

E. Where an advertisement is required under these Regulations to be removed, the site shall be left in a condition that does not endanger the public or impair visual amenity.

***Recorded Vote**

For – Councillors Julie Ashley-Wren, Stephen Booth, Robert Boyle, Peter Clark, Lynda Guy, Rob Henry, Claire Parris, Ellie Plater and Carolina Veres

Against – 0

Abstentions – 0

Absent – Councillors Kamal Choudhury, Forhad Chowdhury, Coleen De Freitas, Akin Elekolusi and Nigel Williams

5 **25/00896/FP - STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL DEPOT CAVENDISH ROAD**

The Committee considered an application for the erection of a covered storage building for household waste at the Stevenage Borough Council Waste Depot.

It was noted that household waste was currently stored within an external compound with concrete retaining walls, located toward the rear of the site backing onto Meadway. The proposed development comprised a steel-framed structure with a metal roof, designed to be in keeping with existing buildings on the site.

The Committee was advised that the purpose of the structure was to provide an enclosed environment for the storage of household waste to address pest control and meet environmental requirements. Elevation plans demonstrated that the proposed building would be similar in appearance and scale to the existing shed on site, with the new covered structure positioned adjacent to it within the identified storage area.

Members asked about how the waste was currently stored and what happened to it after it is processed at the depot. The officer explained that operationally it was stored within concrete containing walls, and that the proposed new structure would help address the new rules around storing food waste. It was noted that the member should contact the Waste Management Team for further information.

A recorded vote* was taken on the application and it was **RESOLVED** that planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:SKK4307/001 Rev B; SKK4307/101 Rev B; SKK4307/102 Rev B; SKK4307/104 Rev B; SKK4307/106 Rev B; SKK4307/002 Rev A;
2. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission
3. No construction work relating to this permission shall be carried out on any Sunday, Public or Bank Holiday nor at any other time except between the hours of 0730 and 1800 on Mondays to Fridays and between the hours of 0900 and 1300 on

Saturdays.

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

The Council has acted Pro-Actively for the following reason:-

Planning permission has been granted for this proposal. Discussion with the applicant to seek an acceptable solution was not necessary in this instance. The Council has therefore acted pro-actively in line with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

INFORMATIVE

1. Public Information on Planning Applications

Warning: all information provided on your planning application is now publicly available. Individuals and organisations offering their services may contact you. The Council does not endorse or approve any builders, surveyors, trades persons or other supplier, and advises householders to obtain quotes/references, and check the legitimacy of any contractor who contacts them before making payment.

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.

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Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will not require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because the following statutory exemption or transitional arrangement is considered to apply.

1. Development below the de minimis threshold, meaning development which:
 - a) does not impact an onsite priority habitat (a habitat specified in a list published under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006); and
 - b) impacts less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat that has biodiversity value greater than zero and less than 5 metres in length of onsite linear habitat (as defined in the statutory metric).

Where the local planning authority considers that the permission falls within paragraph 19 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the permission which has been granted has the effect of requiring or permitting the development to proceed in phases. The modifications in respect of the biodiversity gain condition which are set out in Part 2 of the Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (Modifications and Amendments) (England) Regulations 2024 apply.

Biodiversity gain plans are required to be submitted to, and approved by, the planning authority before development may be begun, and, if subject to phased development, before each phase of development may be begun.

If the onsite habitat includes irreplaceable habitat (within the meaning of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024) there are additional requirements for the content and approval of Biodiversity Gain Plans. The Biodiversity Gain Plan must include, in addition to information about steps taken or to be taken to minimise any adverse effect of the development on the habitat, information on arrangements for compensation for any impact the development has on the biodiversity of the irreplaceable habitat. The planning authority can only approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if satisfied that the adverse effect of the development on the biodiversity of the irreplaceable habitat is minimised and appropriate arrangements have been made for the purpose of compensating for any impact which do not include the use of biodiversity credits.

More information can be found in the Planning Practice Guidance online at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain>

6. Hertfordshire County Council as Highways Authority

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:

<http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/transtreets/highways/> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

7. Hertfordshire County Council as Highways Authority

Debris and deposits on the highway: It is an offence under section 148 of the Highways Act 1980 to deposit compost, dung or other material for dressing land, or any rubbish on a made up carriageway, or any or other debris on a highway to the interruption of any highway user. Section 149 of the same Act gives the Highway Authority powers to remove such material at the expense of the party responsible. Therefore, best practical means shall be taken at all times to ensure that all vehicles leaving the site during construction of the development and use thereafter are in a condition such as not to emit dust or deposit mud, slurry or other debris on the highway. Further information is available by telephoning 0300 1234047.

***Recorded Vote**

For – Councillors Julie Ashley-Wren, Stephen Booth, Robert Boyle, Peter Clark, Coleen De Freitas, Lynda Guy, Rob Henry, Claire Parris, Ellie Plater and Carolina Veres

Against – 0

Abstentions – 0

Absent – Councillors Kamal Choudhury, Forhad Chowdhury, Akin Elekolusi and Nigel Williams

6 25/00814/FPH - 1 OAKFIELDS CLOSE STEVENAGE

The Committee considered an application for the erection of a single-storey front extension at 1 Oakfields Close, Stevenage. Members were advised that, although such householder applications were normally determined under delegated powers by the Director, the application had been brought before Committee in accordance with the Council's Constitution due to the applicant being an employee of Stevenage Borough Council, or a family member thereof.

Elevation drawings and photographs demonstrated that the alterations were modest in scale and design. Officers advised that the proposal was considered acceptable and recommended that planning permission be granted.

A recorded vote* was taken on the application and it was **RESOLVED** that planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Site Location Plan; 25/36/01;
2. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

3. The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match the materials used in the construction of the original building to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

The Council has acted Pro-Actively for the following reason:-

Planning permission has been granted for this proposal. Discussion with the applicant to seek an acceptable solution was not necessary in this instance. The Council has therefore acted pro-actively in line with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

INFORMATIVE

1 Public Information on Planning Applications

Warning: all information provided on your planning application is now publicly available. Individuals and organisations offering their services may contact you. The Council does not endorse or approve any builders, surveyors, trades persons or other supplier, and advises householders to obtain quotes/references, and check the legitimacy of any contractor who contacts them before making payment.

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 or by contacting the Council's CIL Team at CIL@Stevenage.gov.uk.

3 Building Regulations

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

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

Hertfordshire Building Control can also be contacted by post at Hertfordshire Building Control Ltd, Campus East, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, AL8 6AE.

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).

4 Party Wall etc. Act 1996

Any work that affects a party wall, including foundations dug within 3.0m of a neighbouring building, may be controllable under the Act and may require approval from the adjoining owner(s). Party Wall Act matters are always civil matters and it is neither Stevenage Borough Council's nor Hertfordshire Building Control Ltd's remit to control or enforce Party Wall act matters. Please refer to the Government's explanatory booklet The Party Wall etc. Act 1996, a copy of which is available online at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-party-wall-etc-act-1996-revised-explanatorybooklet>

5 Biodiversity Net Gain

Applications where Biodiversity Net Gain is not required as application is for householder permission.

The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for the development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition "(the biodiversity gain condition)" that development may not begin unless:

- a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
- b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if one is required in respect of this permission would be Stevenage Borough Council.

There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not apply.

Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will not require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because the following statutory exemption or transitional arrangement is considered to apply.

1. Development which is subject of a householder application within the meaning of article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. A "householder application" means an application for planning permission for development for an existing dwellinghouse, or development within the curtilage of such a dwellinghouse for any purpose incidental to the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse which is not an application for change of use or an application to change the number of dwellings in a building.

Where the local planning authority considers that the permission falls within paragraph 19 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the permission which has been granted has the effect of requiring or permitting the development to proceed in phases. The modifications in respect of the biodiversity gain condition which are set out in Part 2 of the Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (Modifications and Amendments) (England) Regulations 2024 apply.

Biodiversity gain plans are required to be submitted to, and approved by, the

planning authority before development may be begun, and, if subject to phased development, before each phase of development may be begun.

If the onsite habitat includes irreplaceable habitat (within the meaning of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024) there are additional requirements for the content and approval of Biodiversity Gain Plans. The Biodiversity Gain Plan must include, in addition to information about steps taken or to be taken to minimise any adverse effect of the development on the habitat, information on arrangements for compensation for any impact the development has on the biodiversity of the irreplaceable habitat. The planning authority can only approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if satisfied that the adverse effect of the development on the biodiversity of the irreplaceable habitat is minimised and appropriate arrangements have been made for the purpose of compensating for any impact which do not include the use of biodiversity credits.

More information can be found in the Planning Practice Guidance online at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain>

***Recorded Vote**

For – Councillors Julie Ashley-Wren, Stephen Booth, Robert Boyle, Peter Clark, Coleen De Freitas, Lynda Guy, Rob Henry, Claire Parris, Ellie Plater and Carolina Veres

Against – 0

Abstentions – 0

Absent – Councillors Kamal Choudhury, Forhad Chowdhury, Akin Elekolusi and Nigel Williams

25/00869/CLPD - 467 ARCHER ROAD STEVENAGE

The Committee considered an application for a Lawful Development Certificate in respect of internal alterations and minor changes to the fenestration of a mid-terrace dwelling on Archer Road.

Members were advised that, although such applications were normally determined under delegated powers by the Director, the application had been brought before Committee in accordance with the Council's Constitution due to the applicant being an employee of Stevenage Borough Council, or a family member thereof.

Members were further advised that the matter before them was not an assessment of the planning merits of the proposal, but solely whether the works constituted lawful development and therefore did not require planning permission.

The proposal included limited alterations to windows and internal reconfiguration to allow occupation by a live-in landlord and two tenants. Officers advised that, having considered the relevant planning legislation and case law, the arrangements did not amount to a material change of use or the creation of a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO), and therefore did not require planning permission.

It was further noted that a larger rear extension had previously been approved under prior approval procedures. Given the limited nature of the fenestration changes and the absence of a material change of use, officers recommended that a Certificate of Lawfulness be granted.

Members sought clarification on whether the footprint of the property would be altered as part of the current application. The presenting officer confirmed that prior approval on the extension had previously been granted in 2024 to enlarge the property. The Officer advised that the current application related solely to internal alterations and did not propose any changes to the approved footprint.

A recorded vote* was taken on the application and it was **RESOLVED** that the Lawful Development Certificate is issued subject to the following conditions:

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

Site Location Plan; FRONT ELEVATION; FLOOR PLANS;

2 Following an assessment of the proposal, it has been determined that it accords with the criteria set out in Schedule 2, Part 1, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (England) Order 2015 (as amended). Therefore, the proposed works do not require planning permission and would be classed as permitted development.

INFORMATIVE**1 Public Information on Planning Applications**

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other supplier, and advises householders to obtain quotes/references, and check the legitimacy of any contractor who contacts them before making payment.

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.

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- Insulation
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- a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
- b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if one is required in respect of this permission would be Stevenage Borough Council.

There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not apply.

Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will not require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because the following statutory exemption or transitional arrangement is considered to apply.

1. Development which is subject of a householder application within the meaning of article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. A "householder application" means an application for planning permission for development for an existing dwellinghouse, or development within the curtilage of such a dwellinghouse for any purpose incidental to the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse which is not an application for change of use or an application to change the number of dwellings in a building.

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More information can be found in the Planning Practice Guidance online at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain>

***Recorded Vote**

For – Councillors Julie Ashley-Wren, Stephen Booth, Robert Boyle, Peter Clark, Coleen De Freitas, Lynda Guy, Rob Henry, Claire Parris, Ellie Plater and Carolina Veres

Against – 0

Abstentions – 0

Absent – Councillors Kamal Choudhury, Forhad Chowdhury, Akin Elekolusi and Nigel Williams

8 INFORMATION REPORT - DELEGATED DECISIONS

It was **RESOLVED** that the Information Report – Delegated Decisions be noted.

9 INFORMATION REPORT - APPEALS/CALLED IN APPLICATIONS

It was **RESOLVED** that the Information Report – Appeals / Called In Decisions be noted.

10 URGENT PART I BUSINESS

There was no Urgent Part I Business.

11 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraphs 1 – 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as amended by Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

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

12 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Part II Business.

CHAIR

Meeting: Planning and Development Committee **Agenda Item:**

Date: 12 March 2026

Lead Officer: Alex Robinson

Author: Thomas Frankland

Application:	24/00058/FPM
Location:	Land at Redcar Drive, Stevenage SG1 2EN
Proposal:	Demolition of existing property known as Cartref and erection of 38 no. dwellings with associated road, parking, green spaces and ancillary works.
Drawings:	14122_P205G; 14122_P215A; P25-2066_DE_003; P25-2066_DE_004 Rev I; P25-2066_DE_005 Rev J; P25-2066_DE_006 Rev I; P25-2066_DE_007 Rev I; P25-2066_DE_008 Rev I; P25-2066_DE_009 Rev I; P25-2066_DE_010 Rev I; P25-2066_DE_011 Rev H; P25-2066_DE_012 Rev I; P25-2066_DE_014-01 Rev D; P25-2066_DE_014-02 Rev D; P25-2066_DE_014-03 Rev D; P25-2066_DE_014-04 Rev D; P25-2066_DE_014-05 Rev D; P25-2066_DE_014-06 Rev D; P25-2066_DE_014-07 Rev D; P25-2066_DE_014-08 Rev D; P25-2066_DE_014-09 Rev D; P25-2066_DE_014-10 Rev D; P25-2066_DE_014-11 Rev D; P25-2066_DE_014-11 Rev D (Traditional); P25-2066_DE_014-12 Rev D; P25-2066_DE_014-13 Rev D; P25-2066_DE_014-15 Rev D; P25-2066_EN_0001_S1; P25-2066_EN_0001_S2;
Applicant:	Keepmoat Homes Limited
Agent:	CC Town Planning
Date Valid:	30 January 2024
Recommendation	Grant Planning Permission



1. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 1.1. The site comprises a former block of flats to the south-west and a large area of public open space, including mature tree belt around the perimeter, on the corner of Redcar Drive and Clovelly Way. The site is bounded to the north by existing residential properties off Symonds Green Lane and Eastbourne Avenue. To the south-west is Meadway Playing Field, a large public open space with sports pitches and a play area. The site frontage onto Clovelly Way faces the roundabout and areas of landscaping on the opposite side of the road around the subway and cycleway connections. To the south of Redcar Drive and the site are the Rutherford Close light industrial and office park complexes.
- 1.2. The area is characterised by a mix of uses. The housing on Eastbourne Avenue and Clovelly Way comprises typical New Town terraces and semi-detached dwellings, while Symonds Green Lane, which lies in the Symonds Green Conservation Area, features more individual and detached house types. Redcar Drive leads to Meadway and then west under the A1(M) to the settlement of Fishers Green. The road is set to undergo extensive changes to facilitate the urban extension on Land West of Stevenage, which will involve the construction of up to 1500 dwellings.

2. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.1. The relevant planning history for the site is set out below.

Reference	Description	Decision
12/00234/FP	Change of Use of land and buildings from residential to temporary site accommodation (offices and storage) together with community meeting room.	Granted 25/07/2012
23/00457/PADEMO	Prior approval for the demolition of one detached dwellinghouse.	Refused 11/07/2023
23/00543/PADEMO	Prior approval for the demolition of a single dwelling house.	Refused 07/08/2023
23/00612/PADEMO	Prior approval for the demolition of one single domestic dwelling.	Granted 10/08/2023

3. PROPOSAL

- 3.1. The application seeks full planning permission for the comprehensive redevelopment of the site to provide 38 dwellings (a block of 12 flats and 26 houses) with associated roads, parking, green spaces and other ancillary works.
- 3.2. The application was originally submitted by the council as applicant. It was presented to the Planning and Development Committee on 29 October 2024, where the committee resolved to grant planning permission subject to conditions and a section 106 legal agreement.
- 3.3. Keepmoat Homes has since replaced the council as applicant and amended the scheme, with the changes primarily concerning the external appearance of the proposed dwellings and access arrangements. A number of changes have also arisen from changes in planning policy since the original resolution to grant permission. Whilst the application is for substantially the same development as was originally applied for – i.e. the overall number of dwellings, housing mix and broad site layout remain unaltered –

the changes are such that officers consider the committee ought to consider the application afresh.

4. REPRESENTATIONS

4.1. The application was publicised by site notice and press advert. Notification letters were also sent to surrounding properties.

4.2. The council received letters of representation from the owners/occupiers of 13 properties. The material issues raised in the representations are summarised as follows:

- Integrated swift bricks should be secured via condition;
- No pedestrian/cycle path from new estate heading south/south-east towards Woolenwick School and the train station;
- Access to the six houses off Symonds Green Lane is very narrow, and would surely be safer off Redcar Drive;
- The site, especially the corner near the roundabout is prone to flooding, hopefully the development has made provision for this;
- Concerns for security of No's 15-29 Eastbourne Avenue, perhaps the 50 year old fence to the front of these properties could be replaced?;
- The Meadway Playing Fields will suffer from the construction of the Land West of Stevenage access;
- Whilst Meadway Playing Fields are used as a sporting asset, those that would not use it for this purpose whilst games are taking place will suffer from a net loss of green space;
- A 'tip in favour' of housing provision should be the sole basis for loss of the open space;
- Increase in traffic numbers on Clovelly Way, especially during peak times. Suggest a mini roundabout be installed at the junction of Eastbourne Avenue and Clovelly Way;
- Construction traffic should not use Symonds Green Lane;
- The retention of as many trees as possible and the ancient hedgerow alongside the footpath from Symonds Green Lane is heartening to see;
- Loss of green space;
- Surely more appropriate brownfield sites in town that could be used;
- Access to the new housing is in the wrong place and will add to existing congestion;
- Loss of habitat within the green space;
- Increased noise and air pollution from more traffic;
- Amplification of road noise from loss of trees;
- Noise levels during construction will hinder ability to work from home;
- Development close to existing properties causing ground movement and damage;
- Existing properties directly overlooked my new housing next to/behind;
- Extension of Symonds Green Lane to access development will mean I can no longer park my car outside the front of my house;
- Increased traffic could cause damage to my front garden;
- Subsidence risk to my property because of works to trees;
- Impact on existing infrastructure, doctors, dentists, schools etc;
- Site overdeveloped and density should be reassessed;
- Cartref properties have already been demolished. Could they not have been refurbished and extended?;
- Symonds Green Land and Conservation Area were not designed for the level of cars using;

4.3. Full copies of all representations are available to view on the council's website.

5. CONSULTATIONS

5.1. A summary of consultation responses is set out below. Full copies of all representations are available on the council's website.

5.2. Sport England

5.2.1. No objection.

5.3. Thames Water

5.3.1. No objection. An informative is recommended relating to groundwater discharges to public sewers.

5.4. Affinity Water

5.4.1. No objection.

5.5. Hertfordshire Constabulary

5.5.1. No objection.

5.6. Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue

5.6.1. No objection, subject to a condition to secure the installation of fire hydrants.

5.7. HCC SuDS (Lead Local Flood Authority)

5.7.1. No objection, subject to conditions to secure development in accordance with the submitted flood risk assessment, SuDS maintenance, and a verification report.

5.8. HCC Highways (Local Highway Authority)

5.8.1. No objection, subject to a financial contribution of £159,975 towards sustainable transport initiatives and conditions relating to access, crossings, footways, parking and construction management.

5.9. HCC Waste and Minerals

5.10. No objection, subject to a condition to secure a site waste management plan.

5.11. HCC Growth and Infrastructure

5.11.1. No objection, subject to a contribution of £356,114 towards new secondary education provision at the former Barnwell East site.

5.12. SBC Environmental Health

5.12.1. The submitted noise impact assessment anticipates elevated noise levels within residential gardens, which should be reduced as far as is practicable. Consideration should also be given to noise from nearby commercial properties and future residential development. Conditions are recommended relating to construction management, land contamination, and noise.

5.13. SBC Ecology Officer

5.13.1. Awaiting response.

5.14. **SBC Arboriculture Officer**

5.14.1. In principle, I have no objection to this development, as long as the protection measures detailed in the AIA are carefully adhered to, as well as the replacement planting shown.

5.14.2. A condition should be placed for the proposed works to the remaining (parts of) groups G1, G2, G6, G8 and G9. This is to ensure that they are satisfactorily pruned/cut in order to accommodate the proposed development.

5.14.3. If this development was to go ahead, I believe that G2 (the large mature trees within) would need to be coppiced, in order to prevent excessive encroachment onto the proposed nearby dwellings. Substantial pruning would also be needed for all other (retained) groups, for the same reasons and to compensate for any loss of support caused by any of the removals.

5.14.4. Finally, in order all this work be carried out to a good standard and at the right time, I agree with the recommendation from the AIA report, that the client appoints a suitably qualified arboriculturist to act as an Arboricultural Clerk of Works (ACoW). The ACoW will be engaged to monitor and oversee the implementation of the works required.

6. **SBC Green Spaces Development Officer**

6.1.1. Awaiting response.

6.2. **BEAMS (SBC Heritage Consultant)**

6.2.1. Awaiting response.

7. **PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT**

7.1. **The National Planning Policy Framework**

7.1.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans can provide for housing and other development in a sustainable manner. The latest version of the NPPF was published in December 2024 (with further minor amendments in February 2025).

7.1.2. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF must be taken into account in preparing the development plan and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

7.1.3. The NPPF should be read as a whole (including its footnotes and annexes).

7.2. **The Development Plan**

7.2.1. For Stevenage, the development plan comprises the following documents:

- Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031
- Waste Core Strategy & Development Management Policies DPD 2011-2026
- Waste Site Allocations DPD 2011-2026
- Minerals Local Plan Review 2002-2016

7.3. **Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031**

7.3.1. The Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031 was adopted in 2019. Weight must be given to the policies it contains according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

7.3.2. In addition, the council is required to regard the local plan policies most relevant to determining the application as out-of-date because the application involves the provision of housing and the delivery of housing in the borough was substantially below the housing requirement over the last three years. Those policies are:

- Policy SP1: Climate Change
- Policy SP2: Sustainable development in Stevenage:
- Policy SP5: Infrastructure:
- Policy SP6: Sustainable transport:
- Policy SP7: High quality homes:
- Policy SP8: Good design:
- Policy SP9: Healthy communities:
- Policy SP11: Climate change, flooding, and pollution:
- Policy SP12: Green infrastructure and the natural environment:
- Policy SP13: The historic environment:
- Policy IT2: West of Stevenage safeguarded corridors:
- Policy IT4: Transport assessments and travel plans:
- Policy IT5: Parking and access:
- Policy IT7: New and improved links for pedestrians and cyclists:
- Policy HO5: Windfall sites:
- Policy HO7: Affordable housing targets:
- Policy HO8: Affordable housing tenure, mix and design:
- Policy HO9: House types and sizes:
- Policy HO11: Accessible and adaptable housing:
- Policy HC8: Sports facilities in new developments:
- Policy GD1: High quality design:
- Policy FP1: Climate change:
- Policy FP2: Flood risk in Flood Zone 1:
- Policy FP7: Pollution:
- Policy FP8: Pollution sensitive uses:
- Policy NH5: Trees and woodland:
- Policy NH6: General protection for open space:
- Policy NH7: Open space standards:
- Policy NH10: Conservation areas:

7.3.3. According to the NPPF, the fact that these policies are regarded as out-of-date means that permission should be granted for the proposed development unless:

- i. the application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provide a strong reason for refusing the development; or
- ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.

7.4. **Local Plan Review and Update**

7.4.1. The council concluded a full review of the plan in 2024, as required by regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

7.4.2. In response to the review, the council has proposed a partial update of the local plan. Weight must be given to the emerging policies in the partial update according to:

- a) the stage of preparation of the emerging plan;
- b) the extent to which there are unresolved objections to the policies; and
- c) the degree of consistency between the policies and the most recent revision of the NPPF.

7.4.3. At the time of writing, the partial update is undergoing examination by the Secretary of State. Given that the examination has yet to conclude, there remain unresolved objections to a number of emerging policies. The partial update is nonetheless at an advanced stage of preparation and the council considers the emerging policies within it to have a high degree of consistency with the NPPF. Where relevant, the weight to be given to emerging policies will be set out in the assessment section of this report.

7.5. **Other Material Considerations**

7.5.1. In determining planning applications, regard must also be had to other material considerations. This may include (but is not limited to):

- The Planning Practice Guidance
- The National Design Guide
- Written ministerial statements and directions
- Guidance published by Hertfordshire County Council
- The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
- Stevenage Borough Council supplementary planning documents

7.5.2. Planning decisions must also reflect relevant international obligations and statutory requirements.

8. **MAIN ISSUES**

8.1. The main issues in the assessment of the application are:

- Housing provision
- Affordable housing
- Loss of open space
- Visual amenities
- Heritage assets
- Pollution and residential amenities
- Highway impacts
- Flood risk and drainage
- Arboricultural impacts
- Ecology and biodiversity
- Climate change
- Equality and human rights
- CIL and planning obligations

- 8.2. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 8.3. **Housing Provision**
- 8.3.1. The proposed site is not allocated in the adopted local plan. As such, the site is therefore regarded as a 'windfall site'.
- 8.3.2. Policy SP7 identifies that there is a need to provide 7,600 new homes within Stevenage and allocates 1,950 new homes to be provided on windfall sites. Taking this into consideration, the proposed development would support the council's aim of delivering a number of homes which fall outside the designated sites.
- 8.3.3. Policy HO5 of the local plan stipulates that proposals should be on previously developed land or small, underutilised urban sites. The application site currently comprises an area of green public open space, laid to grass with an established tree belt around the edges, and a previously developed area of land in the west of the site (the buildings that stood on this part of the site have now been demolished under planning application reference 23/00612/PADEMO). The majority of the site is therefore not previously developed and thus is in conflict with Policy HO5. It is a matter of planning balance as to whether public benefits of the proposal outweigh this policy conflict.
- 8.3.4. Policy HO5 also requires windfall development to have a good level of access to local facilities. The site is located close to an established bus route, with a bus stop on Clovelly Way. Woolenwick Primary School is in close proximity to the south-east off Gunnels Wood Road. The nearest secondary school would be located in the Old Town approximately a 15–20-minute walk from the site. The site abuts a large principal open space, Meadway Playing Fields, which has sports pitches and a play area. Approximately a 10-minute walk to the north-east of the site is a small neighbourhood centre with a parade of shops. As such, the application site is considered to have an excellent level of access to local facilities and alternative forms of travel to the private car and therefore deemed to be within a very sustainable location.
- 8.3.5. The site is located within the West of Stevenage safeguarded corridor as defined by Policy IT2 of the local plan, which runs along this stretch of Redcar Drive and Meadway. Both roads will be subject to extensive works as part of the Land West of Stevenage planning application (Planning reference: 21/00356/FPM), has now been granted planning permission. Notwithstanding this, the redevelopment of this site would not prejudice the delivery of the neighbouring allocated site. The works to Redcar Drive shown are in accordance with the plans proposed for Land West of Stevenage and would connect with proposed pedestrian and cycle links that will form part of the large, allocated housing permission. It would also not overburden existing infrastructure, given that it would be CIL liable, and the purpose of the CIL payment is to mitigate infrastructure impacts. In these respects, the proposal accords with criteria (b), (d) and (e) of Policy HO5. The development would also be subject to s.106 financial obligations in order to further mitigate the development's impact on infrastructure.
- 8.3.6. It is possible that the development could have a detrimental impact on neighbouring properties but if this were the case, these impacts would arise from the detailed design of the development rather than being an inevitable consequence of the use of the land for residential purposes. Surrounding land contains a mix of uses which includes residential uses and the proposed development would be consistent with this. Therefore, strictly from a land use perspective, it is considered that developing the site for housing

would not have a detrimental impact on the environment or surrounding properties. The potential impacts arising from the detailed design of the development are considered later in this report.

- 8.3.7. Paragraph 61 of the NPPF states that to support the Government's objective of significantly boosting housing supply, it is important that a sufficient amount, and variety, of land comes forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are met, and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay. In addition, the overall aim should be to meet as much of an area's identified housing need as possible, including with an appropriate mix of housing types for the local community. As such, the proposed development would contribute to the aim of boosting housing supply without compromising the delivery of housing on allocated sites or placing an undue burden on local infrastructure.
- 8.3.8. Further to the above, the proposal would provide 38 dwellings, of which 12 (the flatted development) would be affordable housing, and there would be some economic benefit during the construction phase, and future occupiers would contribute to local services and facilities. Given the quantum of development, and the provision of affordable housing, it is considered that these benefits would be considerable and therefore attract great weight in favour of the proposal.
- 8.3.9. Policy HO9 of the local plan states that there is a structural imbalance in the existing housing stock (albeit in a limited manner) whereby there is a lack of smaller properties and larger aspirational homes in the borough. The lack of housing mix is exacerbated by changes in demographics leading to an increase in the number of single person households and couples needing homes. Due to growth requirements for the town, there is a need to provide a substantial number of additional homes in Stevenage. Higher density development is set out as a key requirement of national guidance and where appropriate, densities will need to be raised in order to meet these targets for new homes.
- 8.3.10. The provision of 7no. four bedroom dwellings, 19no. three bedroom dwellings, 6no. two bedroom flats and 6no. one bedroom flats is therefore considered to accord with Policy HO9.
- 8.3.11. Policy SP2 (Sustainable Developments) states permission will only be granted where proposals can meet a number of criteria. Included in these criteria are the following:
- g) promote journeys by bus, train, bike and foot and reduce the need to travel;
 - j) support facilities and services that encourage people to live, work and spend leisure time in Stevenage;
 - k) produce places and spaces that enable people to live a healthy lifestyle;
- 8.3.12. The proposal meets these criteria as mentioned previously.

8.4. **Affordable Housing**

- 8.4.1. Policy HO7 of the local plan stipulates that planning permission would be granted for residential development which would maximise affordable housing provision. Taking this into consideration, there is a requirement to provide 30% of new homes to be affordable

on sites that are not considered previously developed. A reduced provision of 25% is acceptable in policy on previously developed sites. Given the majority of the site is green space, the higher percentage affordable housing is required. In this regard, there would be a requirement to provide 11.4 affordable units, rounded up to 12. The 12 flatted units proposed on site have been designated affordable housing, in accordance with Policy HO7.

- 8.4.2. In the emerging partial update of the local plan, Policy HO7 is amended to increase the affordable housing target on greenfield sites to 40%. The proposed development would not meet this higher revised target and is therefore contrary to the emerging version of the policy.
- 8.4.3. The weight to be afforded to this conflict is a matter of judgement, having regard to paragraph 49 of the NPPF. In this case, although the plan update is at an advanced stage of preparation, the examination has yet to conclude which includes, importantly, consultation on the proposed main modifications to the plan and the inspector's final report. While there are no main modifications proposed to Policy HO7 itself, there are a number of other modifications which are likely to affect overall plan viability and therefore have an indirect bearing on affordable housing targets.
- 8.4.4. It is also a relevant that the adopted and emerging versions of the policy deal with precisely the same question. In contrast, a conflict with an emerging policy dealing with an entirely new issue would likely have more bearing on the overall decision because there would be no existing policy by which one could judge the proposal. As it is in this case, the adopted Policy HO7 remains a useful guide on the issue of the appropriate level of affordable housing to be provided on residential sites. The proposal complies with that version of the policy, wholly meeting the higher target despite part of the site in theory being eligible for the lower target. On this basis, the proposed level of affordable housing is considered to be acceptable and the conflict with the emerging version of Policy HO7 is afforded limited weight.
- 8.4.5. Turning to affordable housing tenure, mix and design, Policy HO8 states that planning permission will be granted where those dwellings:
- a) Are provided by the developer on site with at least 70% of the units being for rent and the remainder consisting of other tenures which is to be agreed with the Council's Housing team;
 - b) Meets the requirements of Policy HO9 (House types and sizes);
 - c) Are physically indistinguishable from other types of homes and are distributed across the site to avoid over-concentration in particular; and
 - d) Will remain at an affordable price for future eligible households.
- 8.4.6. In this case, all of the affordable units would be provided on-site as affordable rent and secured as such in perpetuity. Whilst there would be no affordable units with three or more bedrooms, this broadly reflects the greatest need for affordable units, which is for one and two bedroom properties.
- 8.4.7. The units would be concentrated in a block of flats rather than distributed across the site, which represents a degree of conflict with Policy HO9. However, this arrangement provides benefits in terms of future management and an insistence on distributing affordable units across the site would likely require a reduction in the overall quantum of

housing delivered by the scheme. As such, on balance, this arrangement is considered to be appropriate.

8.5. **Loss of Open Space**

8.5.1. Policy NH6 of the local plan states that planning permission for development of any existing, unallocated open space (or part of any space) will be permitted where the loss of the open space is justified having regard to: the quality and accessibility of the open space; the existence, or otherwise, of any interventions to improve quality or access; whether the open space is serving its function or purpose; and whether alternate space(s) would remain available for community use. Reasonable compensatory provision should also be made in the form of: replacement provision of a similar type, size and quality; the upgrade of other, existing space; or exceptionally, a commuted sum to secure open space provision elsewhere.

8.5.2. The eastern half of the site is currently an unallocated area of public open space. Laid to grass, the circular shaped area surrounded by trees is used by dog walkers, and most likely occasions of non-structured play. It is of importance to note the proximity of Meadway Planning Fields immediately to the west of the site and the area of land the subject of this application. Meadway Playing Fields provides sports pitches as well as space to walk dogs, and also comprises a children's play area. The space is much better managed for recreation and useability than the open space within the red line. In respect of the council's local plan policies, it is noted that it will be inevitable that some open spaces will come under pressure from development proposals over the lifetime of this plan. Paragraph 14.35 of the Local Plan makes clear that the most valuable of open spaces should be protected and open spaces should only succumb to development where a positive outcome can be demonstrated.

8.5.3. Whilst the open space does provide an area for locals to use, it largely serves as a green space on this corner between the industrial and office uses to the south and residential development to the north. The tree-lined area provides a good green break between the built form. The application before the council does not seek to replace this open space nor pay a contribution towards open space provision elsewhere. However, the proposed plans do show a modest upgrade of a simple area of grass between Eastbourne Avenue and Symonds Green Lane with a new path, bench and soft landscaping. Whilst details of how this area will be managed have not been provided, further details can be secured in the section 106 agreement.

8.5.4. The limited quality of the existing open space which would be lost, together with the upgrade of the retained area of open space and the proximity of Meadway playing Field as an alternative open space is considered sufficient to justify the loss of the open space in this instance. Additionally, the provision of much needed housing, including affordable housing in this area and the redevelopment of an existing redundant site is considered to hold significant weight as a public benefit.

8.6. **Visual Amenities**

8.6.1. Policy GD1 of the local plan requires development to be respectful of and make a positive contribution to its surroundings. It also requires developments located on street frontages to incorporate high-quality boundary treatments and where relevant, to take account of the requirements of Policy EC5.

8.6.2. The application site is located within a mixed-use area, although it is predominantly residential given the extent of the Symonds Green and Scarborough Avenue estates to the north. Residential properties are located to the north of the site, off Eastbourne

Avenue and Symonds Green Lane. However, to the south are industrial units and offices, along with principal open space to the south-west. The residential properties are a mixture of pre-new town, new town and modern day, with the more traditional properties located along Symonds Green Lane which is also within a conservation area. Therefore, architectural styles in the area vary greatly.

- 8.6.3. The site is largely separated into two areas, six detached properties on the previously developed west of the site off Symonds Green Lane, and the larger development proposed on the open space to the east. This area is then characterised by two storey dwellings and a three-storey flat block at the eastern corner closest to the roundabout junction with Redcar Drive, Clovelly Way and Rutherford Close. The design and character of both areas is purposefully different to make a distinction between more traditional dwellings at the end of Symonds Green Lane and adjacent the Conservation Area, and the cul-de-sac of 32 properties off Eastbourne Avenue.
- 8.6.4. Looking firstly at the six dwellings located off Symonds Green Lane, these properties would for the most part present as high quality and traditionally-designed detached dwellings. The materials are a mixture of red brick and render, with grey roof tiles and detailing such as brick courses, arched brick lintels and simple pitched roof porch canopies. The dwellings all feature gable ends on the facade, with the two end dwellings being slightly wider and mirrored from each other to act as bookends. The properties have a mostly uniform front building line, turning slightly at the southern end to take account of the proposed road layout.
- 8.6.5. The dwellings on the eastern parcel would be more modern in their appearance, constructed of buff/light coloured brick with contrasting detailing on the front elevation and simple brick lintels. Most would have flat facades, but some would also feature forward-facing gable ends, with flat canopies over the entrances. The roofs would be completed in grey tiles.
- 8.6.6. The appearance of the proposed block of flats would be largely consistent with the houses on the eastern part of the site, featuring the same light buff brick, contrasting detailing, brick lintels, grey roof tiles, and a flat canopy over the entrance. The major difference between the flat block and the houses on this part of the site is that the flat block would be taller, being three storeys in height.
- 8.6.7. It is noted that the existing residential properties off Eastbourne Avenue and Clovelly Way are all two storey and whilst flattened development is visible in the area, this is also only two storeys. Notwithstanding this, given the proposed separation between the flat block and the houses, which would provide a degree of relief, and the screening afforded by the trees around the perimeter of the site, a taller building is not unacceptable in this location. Taller industrial and office buildings are also visible off Rutherford Close to the south and thus the proposal creates a suitable transition in building heights between the two areas of mixed uses.
- 8.6.8. The layout of the site retains approximately half of an existing mature band of trees running north to south, splitting the previously developed western part of the site from the open space in the east. This will provide a degree of green screening between both areas of dwellings. A band of trees fronting Clovelly Way, south of the proposed vehicular access up to the proposed flat block, would be felled and replaced by a single band of trees. The existing trees fronting Redcar Drive, which are sparser in their coverage are also proposed to be removed but this would be required in any event as part of the works for West of Stevenage. This loss has therefore already been agreed in principle. Whilst

unfortunate, the loss of trees is necessary to facilitate the development, in particular a drainage swale, and the plans do show a reasonable amount of replacement planting in the limited remaining space.

8.6.9. The loss of these trees will have a detrimental visual impact on the area, as will the loss of the green open space. The architectural quality of the proposed dwellings themselves is considered to be limited but ultimately not harmful to visual amenities. Balanced against this are the significant benefits arising from the delivery of housing and making an effective use of the land.

8.6.10. On this basis, the proposed development would be acceptable in terms of design. It would have an acceptable appearance in the street scene and would not unduly harm the visual amenities of the area such that a refusal would be warranted.

8.7. **Heritage Assets**

8.7.1. The site is located adjacent to the Symonds Green Conservation Area, which is a designated heritage asset. The grade II listed Oakfield Farm Barn is also within relatively close proximity to the site.

8.7.2. Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a general duty on local planning authorities to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess when considering whether to grant planning permission for development affecting them.

8.7.3. Section 72 of the same Act places a general duty on local planning authorities to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas when exercising functions with respect to land or other buildings in those areas.

8.7.4. Policy SP13 of the local plan states the council's strategic aim of preserving and enhancing the most important areas and characteristics of Stevenage. It goes on to say that the council will use national guidance and legislation to assess planning applications affecting heritage assets.

8.7.5. National planning policy for proposals affecting heritage assets is contained in chapter 16 of the NPPF. This requires local planning authorities, in determining applications, to take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

8.7.6. Great weight must be given to the conservation of heritage assets and the more important the asset, the greater the weight that must be given. This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to the asset's significance.

8.7.7. Any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset (including from development within its setting) should require clear and convincing justification. Where a development

proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

- 8.7.8. The application site is located adjacent to the south-eastern corner of the Symonds Green Conservation Area. The significance of the area is as the well-preserved remnant of a small agricultural hamlet with origins in the 11th century.
- 8.7.9. The grade II listed Oakfield Farm Barn is also within relatively close proximity to the site. Its significance is as a near-complete example of late 16th or early 17th century timber-framing, displaying carpentry detailing characteristic of Hertfordshire practice, and retaining evidence of later extension and adaptation for animal husbandry. It is the oldest building within the conservation area.
- 8.7.10. Falling outside the boundary of the conservation area, the proposed development would not have any direct impact on its appearance or on the fabric of the listed building. The assessment of impacts is therefore limited to the effect on setting only.
- 8.7.11. It is of note that the Symonds Green Conservation Area Management Plan (CAMP) SPD 2012 discusses the need to preserve the small settlement feel and character of Symonds Green, protecting the listed buildings and buildings of local importance from loss of historic features, especially where repairs and maintenance are required. Much modern development has taken place around Oakfield Farm Barn and as such the proposed new housing, located beyond modern development and largely screened by trees and hedging would not have a significant impact on the historical and architectural character/importance of the listed building. The harm would be less than substantial, at the lower end of the scale.
- 8.7.12. Similarly, whilst the site is not in the conservation area, the impact on its setting is important. However, given the level of development that has taken place around the conservation area and within it, the provision of the 38 dwellings proposed, along with the ancillary development would not in officers' professional opinion cause undue harm to the setting of the conservation area or its character. The open spaces to the north of the conservation area would not be compromised and these are the main focus of the conservation area's character and layout. The harm to its setting is considered to be less than substantial at the lower end of the scale and the council's heritage adviser agrees with this conclusion.
- 8.7.13. Taking account of the guidance contained within the NPPF regarding less than substantial harm, which in this instance is at the lower end of the scale, said harm must be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Great weight is given to the conservation of the listed building and conservation area but balanced against the provision of market and affordable homes on a suitable site at a time when housing delivery is constrained, it is officers' opinion that these benefits do outweigh the less than substantial harm.

8.8. **Pollution and Residential Amenities**

- 8.8.1. Policy GD1 of the local plan requires that developments do not lead to an adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring uses or the surrounding area. In the partial update of the local plan, this wording has been amended slightly to refer to "unacceptable" adverse impacts.

- 8.8.2. Policy FP7 says that development proposals should minimise and where possible, reduce air, water, light and noise pollution. Planning permission will be granted where it is demonstrated that the development will not have unacceptable impacts on:
- a) the natural environment, general amenity and the tranquillity of the wider area, including noise and light pollution;
 - b) the health and safety of the public; and
 - c) compliance with statutory environmental quality standards.

Construction Impacts

- 8.8.3. To mitigate the impacts on construction on neighbouring amenities, a condition is recommended to secure a construction management plan. The management plan would control the hours during which noisy work may take place, hours of deliveries, external construction lighting, dust suppression, and construction vehicle emissions. Subject to this condition, it is considered that the proposed development would have an acceptable impact on neighbouring amenities during the construction phase.

Natural Light and Visual Intrusion

- 8.8.4. The closest plots within the development to neighbouring properties would be plots 1 and 7. Both of these plots would be sited a sufficient distance from their nearest existing neighbour such that neither new plot would detrimentally affect the sunlight or daylight enjoyed by neighbouring properties.

Privacy

- 8.8.5. In terms of privacy, the most affected existing properties would be 5 Nursery Cottage and 29 Eastbourne Avenue (the closest properties to plots 1 and 7 respectively).
- 8.8.6. Looking firstly at the relationship between 29 Eastbourne Avenue and the proposed development, plot 7 is the nearest property and is set at a diagonal to No.29. As such it partially has a back to side relationship for the purposes of the council's separation distance guidance but this is open to debate. The distance from the rear elevation of plot 7 to the shared boundary with No.29 is between 10m and 15m given the diagonal setting. The angle at which the two properties sit is such that plot 7 does not look onto a main elevation with habitable room windows. Furthermore, at a minimum of 10m in length the garden meets the council's requirements to ensure privacy in gardens. Therefore, given the orientation of the properties, the back to side relationship isn't exact and the separation distance for this type of relationship is difficult to justify. Given the above, it is considered No.29 would retain an acceptable level of outlook and privacy.
- 8.8.7. To the north-west of the site where the red line extends south from the proposed community garden, 5 Nursery Cottages sits due north of this section of the site, separated by an existing access track and grass verge. Plot 1 is the nearest proposed dwelling and this property would sit parallel to No.5, albeit staggered further back to take account of the proposed access. As such, the proposed dwelling would not have a detrimental impact on the outlook and privacy of No.5 by virtue of the proposed separation between both properties.

Light Pollution

- 8.8.8. In terms of light pollution, the separation between the proposed dwellings and existing neighbouring dwellings would be such that any external lighting would not cause a substantive nuisance.

Noise Pollution

- 8.8.9. The council's environmental health team advise that the site is subject to relatively high levels of environmental noise but that with appropriate mitigation, it can support residential development. Even with the proposed acoustic fencing, noise within residential gardens is likely to be elevated above typically acceptable levels but in these circumstances, development should be designed to mitigate the noise as far as reasonably possible, with the acceptability of any remaining noise being a matter of planning balance.
- 8.8.10. Having regard to the site's location adjacent to existing residential development and the weight placed on delivering new housing, officers consider elevated noise levels within gardens to be unfortunate but ultimately acceptable. A condition is recommended to ensure that noise in these areas is reduced as far as practicable.
- 8.8.11. A further clause in the same condition is recommended to ensure that internal noise levels for the development are within acceptable levels. Subject to this condition, future occupants of the development would enjoy an acceptable internal noise environment.

Air Pollution

- 8.8.12. The council's Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR) 2019 shows that the development site is not located within or near to an air quality management area (AQMA). The council's environmental health team have not raised any concerns with respect to the operational impact the development would have on air quality.

Land Contamination

- 8.8.13. Policy FP5 of the local plan requires development proposals on brownfield sites to be accompanied by a preliminary risk assessment (PRA). This should demonstrate that any necessary remediation and subsequent development pose no risk to the population, environment or groundwater bodies.
- 8.8.14. The application is accompanied by a ground investigation report, which includes the results of intrusive sampling. This shows that risks from on-site contamination are generally low with the exception of elevated levels of certain metals and hydrocarbons. The report concludes that a detailed remediation strategy is required to deal with these contaminants.
- 8.8.15. The council's environmental health team are satisfied that subject to the recommended remediation, risks to the proposed development from contamination would be acceptable. Accordingly, a series of conditions are recommended to secure appropriate remediation and verification.

Living Space Standards

- 8.8.16. Policy GD1 requires residential development to provide adequate amenity space for future residents, which includes compliance with the nationally described space standard for internal areas

- 8.8.17. The submitted plans show that all of the proposed dwellings would meet the national space standards in terms of overall space and bedroom sizes. The quality of the proposed internal accommodation is therefore considered to be acceptable.
- 8.8.18. In terms of outdoor amenity space, all of the proposed houses would have private gardens, with the smallest measuring approximately 50m² and the largest measuring over 200m². The proposed apartment block would be surrounded by a landscaped area measuring in excess of 300m². The proposed development would therefore provide substantially more outdoor amenity space than is required by the local plan and accompanying design guidance.
- 8.8.19. In addition, the applicant is proposing to make a £50,000 contribution towards the provision of play equipment at Meadway Playing Fields, which lies immediately adjacent to the site to the west. This would provide enhanced facilities to cater for the recreational needs of young children living in the development in the future.

Accessibility

- 8.8.20. Policy HO11 of the local plan requires at least 50% of the dwellings within major residential developments to meet the Building Regulations optional requirement M4(2) for accessible and adaptable dwellings.
- 8.8.21. The current scheme does not include details of how many dwellings would meet optional requirement M4(2). However, this aspect of the scheme may be secured by condition. Subject to this condition, the proposed development would be acceptable in terms of accessibility.

8.9. Highway Impacts

- 8.9.1. Policy IT4 of the local plan requires development proposals to be accompanied by an appropriate transport assessment. There should be no adverse impact on highway safety or severe residual cumulative impact on the highway network. Developments exceeding the relevant thresholds should also be accompanied by a travel plan.
- 8.9.2. Policy IT5 requires developments to provide parking in accordance with the Parking Provision SPD. Suitable provision should also be made for pedestrians, cyclists and passenger transport.

Access

- 8.9.3. The proposal would involve creating a new vehicular access off the end of Symonds Green Lane to serve plots 1 to 6. A new simple priority junction would then be created off Clovelly Way to serve the remainder of the development.
- 8.9.4. Clovelly Way is designated as a local distributor road, whereas Symonds Green Lane is designated as a local access road. Both are subject to a 30mph speed limit.
- 8.9.5. HCC, as local highway authority for the surrounding road network, has reviewed the proposed access arrangements and is satisfied that they would be acceptable in terms of highway safety and would not have any severe impact on the road network. Accordingly, the proposed access arrangements are considered to be acceptable.

Parking

- 8.9.6. The council's baseline residential parking standards are as follows:

Development	Parking Standard
C3 Dwellings	
1 Bedroom house	1 space per house
2 Bedroom house	1.5 spaces per house
3 Bedroom house	2 spaces per house
4 Bedroom house and larger	2.5 spaces per house
1 Bedroom flat	1 space per flat
2 Bedroom flat	1.5 spaces per flat
3 Bedroom flat	1.5 spaces per flat
4 Bedroom flat and larger	2 spaces per flat

- 8.9.7. The application proposes six one-bed flats, six two-bed flats, 19 three-bed houses and seven four-bed houses. The majority of the proposed parking is allocated, which means that visitor parking spaces should also be provided at a rate of 0.25 spaces per dwelling. The baseline parking requirement is therefore 80 spaces.
- 8.9.8. The application proposes a total of 78 car parking spaces, which is a minor shortfall against the council's standards. However, given the extent of the shortfall, at just two spaces, officers consider that it would be unlikely to have any severe impact on the road network. As such, the shortfall in parking spaces would not warrant refusal of the application.
- 8.9.9. The council's standards require that disabled parking for residential developments be provided at a rate of one space per wheelchair user dwelling. The application does not propose any wheelchair user dwellings and therefore no disabled parking spaces are required.
- 8.9.10. In terms of cycle parking, dedicated cycle stores to serve the proposed flats are shown on the submitted plans. Officers are satisfied that these would be large enough to accommodate the required 18 cycle parking spaces.
- 8.9.11. Cycle stores should also be provided for dwellings which would not have a garage. The submitted plans do not show any such stores. However, the generous gardens would be large enough for them to be provided. Accordingly, it is recommended that these stores be secured by condition.

Conclusion on Highway Impacts

- 8.9.12. In conclusion, the proposal departs from the council's parking standards through a slight under-provision of car parking spaces but it is considered that this would not have any unacceptable impact on the highway network such that refusal of the application would be warranted. Subject to a condition to secure additional cycle parking spaces for the proposed houses, the proposed parking arrangements are considered to be acceptable. In this respect, the proposal is considered to accord with Policy IT5 of the local plan.
- 8.9.13. The proposals for access, again subject to the imposition of suitable conditions, are likewise considered to be acceptable. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with Policy IT4 of the local plan.

8.10. **Flood Risk and Drainage**

- 8.10.1. Policy FP2 of the local plan requires development proposals to be accompanied by an appropriate flood risk assessment. The use of SuDS should also be maximised so as not to increase flood risk and wherever possible, reduce flood risk. Suitable flood resilience measures must also be incorporated into schemes.
- 8.10.2. In the emerging partial update of the local plan, Policy FP1 deals with sustainable drainage and Policy FP2 deals solely with flood risk. Emerging Policy FP1 places much greater emphasis on the use of green, surface SuDS features and adherence to the surface water discharge hierarchy than the policies in the adopted local plan. Emerging Policy FP2 largely replicates national policies for flood risk and in that sense is similar to the adopted version of the policy. It is considered that both of the emerging policies should be afforded moderate weight in assessing the current application.
- 8.10.3. The site is located wholly within Flood Zone 1, which means it is at a low risk of fluvial flooding. It is at low risk from other sources of flooding.
- 8.10.4. The proposed drainage scheme for the site comprises areas of permeable paving with underground pipes and attenuation. A swale is also proposed along the southern boundary of the site.
- 8.10.5. The attenuation would discharge run-off to the Thames Water surface water network at a rate of 2L/s. This is higher than the 0.84L/s calculated greenfield run-off rate but is nonetheless a very low rate and Thames Water has confirmed that this rate is acceptable.
- 8.10.6. HCC, in their capacity as lead local flood authority, have reviewed the proposals and confirmed that they are acceptable, subject to conditions relating to construction and management of the drainage system. Subject to these conditions, the development is considered to be acceptable in flood risk and drainage terms.
- 8.11. **Arboricultural Impacts**
- 8.11.1. Policy NH5 of the local plan requires that existing trees be protected, retained and sensitively incorporated into developments. Where loss of existing trees is demonstrably unavoidable, planning permission will be granted where sufficient land is reserved for landscaping and appropriate replacement planting is provided.
- 8.11.2. The site is currently bounded on almost every side by belts of trees, with a historic hedge running the length of the western boundary along the footpath to Symonds Green Lane. A further area of trees separates the previously developed part of the site from the eastern parcel of open space.
- 8.11.3. In total, the submitted tree survey identified 23 arboricultural features on the site, including 14 individual trees and nine groups of trees. Two of the individual trees are of high quality (category A) and all of the groups on the site's boundaries are moderate quality (category B).
- 8.11.4. In total, the proposed development would result in nine of the identified arboricultural features being removed in their entirety, including one category A individual tree, one category B individual tree and five of the category B boundary groups. All four of the remaining groups would be partially removed by up to 55%.
- 8.11.5. The application proposes the planting of a total of 42 replacement trees. This is significant but it would not compensate for the proposed losses and the development would result in a considerable net loss in tree cover across the site.

- 8.11.6. However, given that the site is predominantly a greenfield site with a large extent of existing tree cover, a net loss of trees is likely to be unavoidable to facilitate the redevelopment of the site. The council's Arboricultural Manager was consulted on the application and has advised that the proposed tree works are acceptable, subject to the proposed replacement planting being implemented and the works being carried out to an acceptable standard. Given this, whilst the overall loss of trees is regrettable, it is considered acceptable in this instance.
- 8.11.7. It is recommended that an arboricultural method statement and tree protection plan be secured by condition, to ensure that retained trees will be adequately protected during construction works. Subject to this condition, the proposed development would accord with Policy NH5 of the local plan.
- 8.12. **Ecology and Biodiversity**
- 8.12.1. Policy SP12 sets out the council's strategic objective to protect the green infrastructure, natural environment and landscape of Stevenage. The loss of green infrastructure or assets of biodiversity importance as a result of development should be mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for. Any identified impacts on priority habitats or species should likewise be avoided, mitigated, or compensated for.
- 8.12.2. Paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 sets out that every planning permission granted for the development of land in England shall be deemed to have been granted subject to the 'biodiversity gain condition' requiring development to achieve a net gain of 10% of biodiversity value. There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not apply in some circumstances.
- 8.12.3. In this instance, the application was submitted before biodiversity net gain became a legislative requirement and it is therefore exempt from the statutory biodiversity gain condition. As the council's biodiversity net gain SPD has also since been revoked, there is no planning policy basis to secure a biodiversity net gain for the scheme.
- 8.12.4. The application is supported by a preliminary ecological appraisal, which presents the results of a desk study, field study, preliminary bat roost assessment, and reptile survey. These investigations revealed no direct evidence of reptiles, hedgehogs, badgers, invertebrates, or amphibians, despite the site providing suitable habitats. Likewise, no evidence of bat roosts was discovered. However, there was some evidence of bats using the site for foraging.
- 8.12.5. The report recommends that any lighting at the site be installed according to best practice for the protection of bats. It also recommends that construction work be carried out in accordance with an environmental management plan, including protection for all retained habitats, a construction programme which avoids ecologically-sensitive periods (e.g. bird nesting season) and vegetation clearance protocols.
- 8.12.6. Officers are satisfied that these recommended measures would be sufficient to adequately protect any species present on the site. Accordingly, conditions are recommended to secure the construction environmental management plan and lighting design. Subject to these conditions, the proposed development would have an acceptable ecological impact, in accordance with Policy SP12 of the local plan.
- 8.13. **Climate Change**

- 8.13.1. Policy FP1 of the local plan says that planning permission will be granted for development that incorporates measures to address climate change. New developments are encouraged to include measures such as:
- Ways to ensure development is resilient to likely future variations in temperature.
 - Reducing water consumption to no more than 110 litres per person per day including external water use.
 - Improving energy performance of buildings.
 - Reducing energy consumption through efficiency measures.
 - Using or producing renewable or low carbon energy from a local source.
 - Contributing towards reducing flood risk through the use of SuDS or other appropriate measures.
- 8.13.2. In the emerging partial update of the local plan, detailed climate change policies are set out under a new dedicated chapter, with the revised Policy FP1 dealing with sustainable drainage. The majority of the new policies provide support for various measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change, without placing any firm requirements on new developments.
- 8.13.3. The notable exception to this is new Policy CC1, which would require major development to be net zero carbon in operation. However, there are significant unresolved objections to this policy and so it should be afforded limited weight in assessing the current application.
- 8.13.4. The application documents do not include firm details of performance in terms of carbon emissions. However, they do state that the development will utilise air source heat pumps for heating and hot water, and mechanical ventilation with heat recovery. Photovoltaic panels may also be considered for on-site renewable energy generation. The stated intention is to exceed the energy performance requirements of Part L of the Building Regulations, albeit the extent of this improvement is not specified.
- 8.13.5. In the event that planning permission is granted for the development and in the absence of firm details at this stage, it is recommended that details of energy performance be secured by condition. Subject to this condition, the proposed development would make an acceptable contribution to the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change, in accordance with Policy FP1 of the local plan.
- 8.14. **Refuse and Recycling**
- 8.14.1. Policy GD1 of the local plan requires developments to make adequate provision for the collection of waste.
- 8.14.2. The submitted plans show two bin stores to serve the proposed flat block, including capacity which greatly exceeds the council's minimum standards.
- 8.14.3. Having regard to the above, it is considered that the proposed development would make adequate provision for the collection of waste. In this respect, the proposal accords with Policy GD1 of the local plan.

8.15. **Planning Obligations**

- 8.15.1. In accordance with the council's CIL Charging Schedule, the development would be liable for CIL at a rate of £100/m² of new residential floorspace created by the development. Any CIL receipts from the development would be spent on infrastructure to mitigate the impacts of new development within the borough, generally replacing the need for bespoke section 106 contributions to serve this purpose on a site-by-site basis.
- 8.15.2. However, in this instance, some additional contributions are necessary to mitigate the site-specific impacts of the development. HCC Growth and Infrastructure have requested a contribution of £356,114 towards the provision of secondary education facilities at the former Barnwell East site, on the basis that CIL receipts would not be sufficient to provide for these facilities. Officers agree that this request is justified having regard to the CIL regulations, in particular that it is necessary to provide for new education infrastructure to serve residents of new development in the borough, including the application site. As such, it is recommended that the requested contribution be secured as part of a section 106 agreement.
- 8.15.3. HCC Highways have also requested a contribution of £159,975 towards a bus corridor scheme to link new development to the north and south of Stevenage to Lister Hospital, the Old Town, Gunnels Wood Employment Area, and the GSK campus. This contribution is sought in addition to bus stop improvements on Clovelly Way which would be secured as part of the section 278 highways agreement associated with the development. They maintain that the contribution is necessary because the council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan identifies the North-South Bus Corridor as essential to support development growth and this site forms part of the demand requiring that investment
- 8.15.4. Officers do not consider this contribution to comply with regulation 122 of the CIL Regulations. For a contribution to be "necessary", the development must be unacceptable without it. In this case, the applicant has already demonstrated that the scheme is adequately served by existing public transport provision. Local bus services (notably the SB8 and SB9) provide reasonable coverage and frequency, and the proposed s278 works will further improve pedestrian access to these services. While additional investment could enhance the network, this is not the same as the development causing an unacceptable impact or relying on new transport infrastructure to function acceptably. On the evidence available, the development would remain acceptable without the requested contribution.
- 8.15.5. Because the scheme is not strategic, there is no site specific local plan requirement for new transport infrastructure or targeted service enhancements. The only potentially relevant policy is Policy IT5, which requires major developments to demonstrate how they will be served by passenger transport and allows for obligations "where appropriate." In this case, the applicant has already demonstrated compliance with IT5 through existing bus services and improved access via s278 works. Since the development plan does not require the specific improvement for which the contribution is sought, refusing the application in its absence would be difficult to justify.
- 8.15.6. Although enhanced public transport provision is always beneficial, the test under Reg 122 is not whether the contribution is desirable, but whether it is required to make the development acceptable. Given the site's existing public transport accessibility, the improvements secured through the s278 works, the absence of a policy requirement for the specific enhancement requested, and the operation of the tilted balance, officers cannot conclude that the development would be unacceptable without the contribution.

It therefore fails the “necessity” test under Reg 122, is irrelevant, and should not be sought.

- 8.15.7. Financial contributions are also required in line with the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Documents (2025). In this regard, only a contribution to be made towards the Local Training Fund if target employment of Stevenage residents is not met as follows:
- £4,000 per number of targeted jobs not filled by Stevenage residents;
 - £2,000 per number of targeted apprenticeships not filled by Stevenage residents or students; and
 - £500 per apprenticeship position as an administrative fee towards the brokerage system to fill apprenticeship positions;
 - If a major development could not provide suitable apprenticeship opportunities due to the quick construction of the development project, and the resultant lack of suitable opportunity to provide apprenticeships, they should pay a lesser fee of £1,000 per number of targeted apprenticeships not created rather than the £2,000 fee.
- 8.15.8. These targets do not add a requirement for additional jobs that would add a financial burden to the developer or contractor. The targets merely add a requirement that a portion of the jobs will be targeted to local residents. The in-lieu payments do not add a significant financial burden to the developer or contractor and will only be required if the developer or contractor does not meet the employment targets.
- 8.15.9. In addition, the applicant is proposing to make a £50,000 contribution towards the provision of play equipment at Meadway Playing Fields. This would be secured within the s106 agreement.
- 8.15.10. The proposed 12 affordable flats should also be secured as part of the section 106 agreement, along with a management company to facilitate maintenance of common areas of the development such as the drainage system, landscaping and internal roads.
- 8.15.11. It is recommended that the wording of the s106 agreement to secure the above contributions be delegated to the Director for Planning and Regulation in consultation with the Chair of the Planning and Development Committee. In the event that any of the above contributions are ultimately not secured (e.g. in the event that they are subsequently considered not to be CIL Reg 122 compliant), the application would be referred back to the committee to consider afresh.
- 8.16. **Equality and Human Rights**
- 8.17. Consideration has been given to articles 1 and 8 of the first protocol of the European Convention on Human Rights. In this case, it is considered that a decision to grant permission would not violate any person’s rights under the Convention.
- 8.18. When determining planning applications, it is also important to rigorously consider any equalities implications of the decisions that may be taken. This requires proper appreciation of any potential impact of the proposed development on the council’s obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 8.19. 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 protected characteristics and persons who do not; and (c) foster good relations between persons who share protected characteristics and persons who do not. 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.

- 8.20. In terms of inclusive access, at least 50% of the proposed dwellings would be designed to optional requirement M4(2) for accessible and adaptable dwellings. No disabled persons' parking would be provided but since the application does not propose any wheelchair user dwellings, disabled persons' parking is not considered to be necessary. Level access would however be provided across the site, which would be of benefit to wheelchair and pushchair users.
- 8.21. It is therefore considered that a decision to grant permission would not conflict with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1. The local plan policies most relevant to determining the application are considered to be out-of-date by reason of the council's latest Housing Delivery Test result. Accordingly, paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF is engaged and permission should be granted for the development unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF as a whole. This does not however override the statutory requirement to determine the application in accordance with the development plan.
- 9.2. The proposed development would deliver one clear public benefit, which is the provision of 38 good quality dwellings, of which 12 would be affordable, at a time when housing delivery in the borough is constrained. This carries great weight in favour of granting permission.
- 9.3. Balanced against this, the proposal would result in the loss of a significant area of open space, along with many of the trees currently upon it. It would also result in less than substantial harm, at the lower end of that scale, to the grade II listed Oakfield Farm Barn and Symonds Green Conservation Area. These harms carry significant weight against the proposal.
- 9.4. However, the harm to the listed building and conservation area is outweighed by the public benefits of the scheme. Similarly, the harm arising from the loss of open space and trees is outweighed by the provision of good quality housing, having regard to the quality of the open space and the availability of higher-quality alternative spaces in the area.
- 9.5. Subject to the recommended conditions, the proposal is considered acceptable in all other respects, including its effects on neighbouring residential amenity, parking, highway safety, flood risk, and ecology. These matters are considered neutral in the overall planning balance.
- 9.6. The application must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance, the proposal is considered to accord with the development plan when read as a whole. Although the NPPF is a material consideration, the fact that the development accords with the development plan

means it is not necessary to carry out the balancing exercise set out under paragraph 11(d). Accordingly, it is recommended that planning permission be granted.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1. That planning permission be GRANTED subject to the conditions set out below and the completion of a section 106 agreement to provide for:

- Affordable housing
- Management company for administration of common areas
- Employment and skills plan
- Secondary education contribution of £356,114
- An appropriate trigger for s278 off-site highway works

10.2. That delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director for Planning and Regulation, in consultation with the council's appointed solicitor, to agree the wording of the s106 agreement.

10.3. That delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director for Planning and Regulation, in consultation with the Chair of the Planning and Development Committee, to amend or add to the conditions subject to which permission would be granted, where such amendments or additions would satisfy the relevant national policy tests and would most effectively deliver the development which the Committee has resolved to approve.

Conditions

General

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

14122_P205G;
14122_P215A;
P25-2066_DE_003;
P25-2066_DE_004 Rev I;
P25-2066_DE_005 Rev J;
P25-2066_DE_006 Rev I;
P25-2066_DE_007 Rev I;
P25-2066_DE_008 Rev I;
P25-2066_DE_009 Rev I;
P25-2066_DE_010 Rev I;
P25-2066_DE_011 Rev H;
P25-2066_DE_012 Rev I;
P25-2066_DE_014-01 Rev D;
P25-2066_DE_014-02 Rev D;
P25-2066_DE_014-03 Rev D;
P25-2066_DE_014-04 Rev D;
P25-2066_DE_014-05 Rev D;
P25-2066_DE_014-06 Rev D;
P25-2066_DE_014-07 Rev D;
P25-2066_DE_014-08 Rev D;
P25-2066_DE_014-09 Rev D;
P25-2066_DE_014-10 Rev D;

P25-2066_DE_014-11 Rev D;
P25-2066_DE_014-11 Rev D (Traditional);
P25-2066_DE_014-12 Rev D;
P25-2066_DE_014-13 Rev D;
P25-2066_DE_014-15 Rev D;
P25-2066_EN_0001_S1;
P25-2066_EN_0001_S2;

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

2. The development 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).

3. The materials used in the external surfaces of the development shall be those listed on the application form and the approved plans.

REASON: In the interests of the character and appearance of the area.

4. At least 50% of the dwellings comprising the development shall meet the Building Regulations optional requirement M4(2) for accessible and adaptable dwellings.

REASON: In the interests of accessibility and housing choice.

5. No demolition or construction activities (including any associated collections or deliveries) shall be carried out except between the hours of 07:30 to 18:00 Monday to Friday and 08:00 to 13:00 on Saturdays. For the avoidance of doubt, no such work shall be carried out on Sundays or bank holidays.

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

6. No external lighting shall be installed or operated at the site other than in accordance with *Bat Conservation Trust and Institute of Lighting Professionals (2023) Guidance Note 08/23 Bat and Artificial Lighting at Night*.

REASON: To prevent harm to protected species.

7. The development shall be carried out in accordance with *Residential Development Redcar Drive Stevenage Flood Risk Assessment* dated September 2025. For the avoidance of doubt, all dwellings comprising the development must have a finished floor level raised a minimum of 300mm above any flood level and 150mm above the surrounding proposed ground.

REASON: To mitigate flood risk.

8. In the event that any previously unidentified contamination is found when carrying out the development, work to implement the development must cease immediately and the contamination must be reported in writing to the local planning authority as soon as reasonably practicable. Work shall not resume until the results of an investigation and where necessary, a remediation scheme, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall then be carried out in accordance with any approved remediation scheme.

REASON: In the interests of human health.

Prior to Commencement

9. Prior to the commencement of the development (including site clearance), a construction management plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The plan shall include details of all of the following:
- a) Phasing of the development (including highway works)
 - b) Hours of working (including timing of collections and deliveries)
 - c) All plant and vehicles required for construction and demolition
 - d) Vehicle routing and parking
 - e) Traffic and pedestrian management (including any necessary footway closures)
 - f) Construction and storage compounds
 - g) Site enclosure
 - h) Measures to keep the highway clear of dirt and debris (including wheel washing facilities)
 - i) Site lighting (including any necessary off-site light spill mitigation)
 - j) Noise, vibration, dust and smoke mitigation measures
 - k) Vermin control

The development shall then at all times be carried out in accordance with the approved construction management plan.

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

This condition must be a pre-commencement condition in order to be effective.

10. Prior to the commencement of the development (including site clearance), a site waste management plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved site waste management plan.

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

This condition must be a pre-commencement condition in order to be effective.

11. Prior to the commencement of the development (including site clearance), a construction environmental management plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The plan shall include details of all of the following:
- a) Buffer zones and protection measures for all retained habitats
 - b) A construction programme which avoids ecologically-sensitive periods (e.g. bird nesting season)
 - c) Vegetation clearance protocols to minimise risks to protected and notable species

The development shall then at all times be carried out in accordance with the approved construction environmental management plan.

REASON: To prevent harm to protected species.

This condition must be a pre-commencement condition in order to be effective.

12. Prior to the commencement of the development (including site clearance), an arboricultural method statement and tree protection plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved arboricultural method statement and tree protection plan.

REASON: To prevent harm to trees worthy of retention.

This condition must be a pre-commencement condition in order to be effective.

13. Prior to the commencement of the development (including site clearance), a remediation strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved remediation strategy.

REASON: In the interests of human health.

After Site Clearance / Groundworks

14. Prior to the commencement of the development (excluding site clearance and groundworks), a scheme for the provision of fire hydrants shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved fire hydrants shall then be provided prior to occupation of the development.

REASON: In the interests of fire safety.

15. Prior to the commencement of the development (excluding site clearance and groundworks), details of the energy performance of the dwellings comprising the development (specified in terms of the dwelling emission rates calculated according to SAP 10.2) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The dwellings shall then be constructed to meet the approved energy performance criteria.

REASON: In the interests of climate change mitigation.

16. Prior to the commencement of the development (excluding site clearance and groundworks), details of cycle parking facilities shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved cycle parking facilities shall be provided prior to occupation of the development and permanently retained thereafter.

REASON: To ensure sustainable transport is adequately promoted.

17. Prior to the commencement of the development (excluding site clearance and groundworks), details of bird and bat boxes to be provided within the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved bird and bat boxes shall be installed prior to occupation of the development and permanently retained thereafter.

REASON: To ensure that the ecological impacts of the development are adequately mitigated.

18. Prior to the commencement of the development (excluding site clearance and groundworks), a noise mitigation scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall ensure that the following noise levels will not be exceeded:

Room Type	Daytime (07:00 to 23:00)	Night-time (23:00 to 07:00)
Living rooms	35 dB LAeq, 16hour	-
Dining rooms	40 dB LAeq, 16hour	-
Bedrooms	35 dB LAeq, 16hour	30 dB LAeq, 8hour 45dB Lamax – no more than 10 times per night

Where mechanical ventilation is proposed it should, in normal operation, achieve compliance with NR20 in bedrooms between 23:00 to 07:00 and NR25 in all habitable rooms between 07:00 to 23:00.

Noise levels in external amenity spaces provided for the sole use of the occupiers of the dwellings shall not exceed 55dB LAeq,16hr. However, where this is not practicable it must be demonstrated that the proposed mitigation measures achieve the lowest reasonable levels.

The development shall then be constructed in accordance with the approved noise mitigation scheme.

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

Prior to Occupation

19. Where any part of the development is required to be carried out in accordance with a remediation scheme, a verification report (setting out the remedial measures actually undertaken on the site) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to occupation of the development.

REASON: In the interests of human health and the nearby public water supply abstraction.

20. Prior to occupation of the development, all accesses, crossings, roads, footways, and parking, servicing and manoeuvring areas shall be laid out in accordance with the approved plans. Those areas shall thereafter be permanently maintained in a manner fit for their intended purpose.

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

21. Prior to occupation of the development, a noise compliance report, demonstrating that any agreed noise mitigation measures have been implemented, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

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

22. Prior to occupation of the development, a SuDS management plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall thereafter be operated at all times in accordance with the approved SuDS management plan.

REASON: In the interests of flood mitigation.

23. Prior to occupation of the development, a SuDS verification report, including a survey of as-built features, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The verification report shall demonstrate that the approved SuDS scheme has been implemented as approved.

REASON: In the interests of flood mitigation.

24. Prior to occupation of the development, the refuse and recycling storage facilities shall be provided as shown on the approved plans. The storage facilities shall be permanently retained as such thereafter.

REASON: To ensure waste is properly disposed of.

Post-Completion

25. The approved soft landscaping shall be implemented in full in the first planting season following completion of the development. Any trees or other plants comprised in the landscaping works for the development, which within a period of five years from completion of the development are removed, become seriously damaged or diseased, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species.

REASON: In the interests of the character and appearance of the area.

INFORMATIVES

1. The applicant is advised that the storage of materials associated with the construction of this development should be provided within the site on land which is not public highway, and the use of such areas must not interfere with the public highway. If this is not possible, authorisation should be sought from the Highway Authority before construction works commence. Further information is available via the County Council website at <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/business-licences/business-licences.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.
2. It is an offence under section 137 of the Highways Act 1980 for any person, without lawful authority or excuse, in any way to wilfully obstruct the free passage along a highway or public right of way. If this development is likely to result in the public highway or public right of way network becoming routinely blocked (fully or partly) the applicant must contact the Highway Authority to obtain their permission and requirements before construction works commence. Further information is available via the County Council website at <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/business-licences/business-licences.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.
3. It is an offence under section 148 of the Highways Act 1980 to deposit compost, dung or other material for dressing land, or any rubbish on a made up carriageway, or any or other debris on a highway to the interruption of any highway user. Section 149 of the same Act gives the Highway Authority powers to remove such material at the expense of the party responsible.

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

4. Building Regulations

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

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

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

Once a building regulations application has been deposited with relevant drawings and fee building work may commence. You will be advised in their acknowledgement letter of the work stages we need to inspect but in most instances these are usually: excavation for foundations; damp proof course; concrete oversite; insulation; drains (when laid or tested); floor and roof construction; work relating to fire safety; work affecting access and facilities for disabled people; and completion.

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

5. Community Infrastructure Levy

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

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

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

6. The construction works and operation of the proposed development site should be done in accordance with the relevant British Standards and Best Management Practices, thereby significantly reducing the groundwater pollution risk. It should be noted that the construction works may exacerbate any existing pollution. If any pollution is found at the site then the appropriate monitoring and remediation methods will need to be undertaken. For further information we refer you to CIRIA Publication C532 "Control of water pollution from construction - guidance for consultants and contractors".

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

7. The developer is strongly encouraged to achieve Secured by Design (SBD) accreditation for the development. The Police Crime Prevention Design Advisor can be contracted by telephone on 01707 355227.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1. The application file, forms, plans and supporting documents having the reference number relating to this item. Online copies may be obtained at <https://publicaccess.stevenage.gov.uk/online-applications/>
- 11.2. The Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031
<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/local-plan>
- 11.3. The Stevenage Borough Local Plan Partial Update 2025
<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/local-plan-partial-update/submission-to-secretary-of-state>
- 11.4. Stevenage Borough Council Supplementary Planning Documents: Parking Provision SPD 2025; Design Guidance SPD 2025; Developer Contributions SPD 2025.
<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/planning-library>
- 11.5. Hertfordshire County Council Local Transport Plan LTP4 2018-2031
<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/about-the-council/consultations/ltp4-local-transport-plan-4-complete.pdf>
- 11.6. Government advice contained in the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 and the Planning Practice Guidance.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67aafe8f3b41f783cca46251/NPPF_December_2024.pdf
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>
- 11.7. Representations made by statutory consultees and other interested parties referred to in this report. Online copies can be found on Public Access (see paragraph 10.1).

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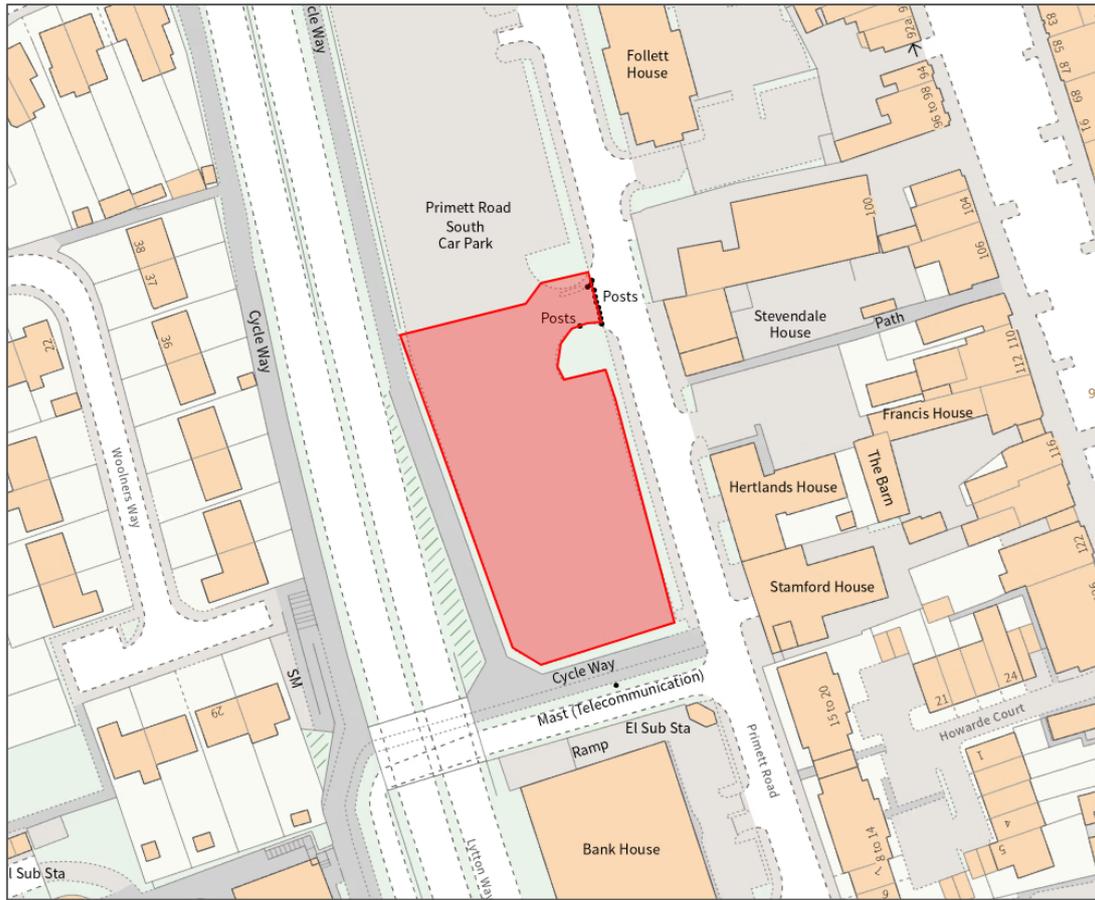
Meeting: Planning and Development Committee **Agenda Item:**

Date: 12 March 2026

Lead Officer: Alex Robinson

Author: Thomas Frankland

Application:	25/00908/FP
Location:	South Car Park, Primett Road, Stevenage, Herts
Proposal:	Change of use of public car park to a rental vehicle premises (Sui Generis), the erection of modular rental vehicle office and rental vehicle wash bay and associated works (including lighting and resurfacing).
Drawings:	PP-ERAC-STE-001; ERAC-STE-002; 0002 Rev P02; 00010; 251217.UK99.CSB.T22; ST-01; ST-02; ST-03;
Applicant:	Enterprise Rent-A-Car UK LTD
Agent:	Planning Prospects Ltd
Date Valid:	29 January 2026
Recommendation:	Grant Planning Permission



1. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 1.1. The site comprises the southern portion of the Primett Road South Car Park, which is located between Primett Road and Lytton Way on the western edge of Stevenage Old Town. It extends to roughly one quarter of a hectare, is largely flat, and is enclosed on three sides by a mixture of shrubs, semi-mature trees, metal railings and timber knee rail fencing.
- 1.2. The sole vehicular access to the site as existing is via the barrier-controlled entrance on Primett Road. To the south of this is a secondary access currently closed to vehicular traffic by the presence of bollards. There are also a number of pedestrian accesses, both formal and informal, dotted along Primett Road and the cycleway which runs between the western flank of the site and Lytton Way.
- 1.3. The surrounding area has a mixed character typical of town centre locations. Primett Road is predominantly commercial but gives way to a greater concentration of residential uses at its southern end on the approach to Games Yard. Primett Road also marks the boundary of the Old Town High Street Conservation Area, which covers the historic core of Stevenage centred around the High Street. To the west of the site, on the opposite side of Lytton Way, is more modern residential development.

2. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.1. There is no relevant planning history recorded at the site.

3. PROPOSAL

- 3.1. The application seeks full planning permission for the change of use of the site to a vehicle rental facility, together with the erection of an associated office and vehicle wash bay. Vehicular access would be provided by bringing the existing redundant access back into use, with new static hoops and removable bollards installed to control access both to the site and to the remainder of the South Car Park.
- 3.2. This application is being referred to the planning committee for its decision in accordance with the constitution as the Council is the landowner and over 5 objections have been raised.

4. REPRESENTATIONS

- 4.1. The application was publicised by site notice and press advert. Notification letters were also sent to surrounding properties.
- 4.2. The council received 72 letters of objection. The material issues raised in the representations are summarised as follows:
 - Loss of public car parking, in particular affordable and convenient long-stay parking
 - Impact on businesses in the Old Town
 - Impact on driving test centre
 - Loss of facility for alternative public uses (e.g. Charter Fair and COVID-19 testing)
 - Impact on local parking pressure, in particular cumulative impact having regard to new development in the area
 - Impact on highway safety
 - Impact on air quality
 - Failure to consider alternative sites in more suitable locations

- Failure to prioritise sustainable transport
- Harm to the character and appearance of the area

4.3. The council also received one letter which supported the application on the grounds that it would provide a valuable facility for local residents who do not own a car.

4.4. Full copies of all representations are available to view on the council's website.

5. CONSULTATIONS

5.1. A summary of consultation responses is set out below. Full copies of all representations are available on the council's website.

5.2. Affinity Water

5.2.1. Objection on the grounds of insufficient information relating to groundwater pollution and surface water drainage.

5.3. Thames Water

5.3.1. No objection, subject to the developer following the sequential approach to the disposal of surface water.

5.4. UK Power Networks

5.4.1. No objection.

5.5. HCC Highways (Local Highway Authority)

5.5.1. No objection. Informatives are recommended relating to storage of construction materials, obstruction of the highway, and highway debris/deposits.

5.6. BEAMS (SBC Heritage Consultant)

5.6.1. Neither the office nor the wash bay would adversely impact the setting of the conservation area. However, it is recommended that further information be submitted regarding materials and colour finishes, boundary treatment and lighting.

5.7. SBC Engineers

5.7.1. Support the application on the basis that the proposed loss of capacity would not have an adverse impact on parking provision for local people or businesses.

6. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

6.1. The National Planning Policy Framework

6.1.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans can provide for housing and other development in a sustainable manner. The latest version of the NPPF was published in December 2024 (with further minor amendments in February 2025).

6.1.2. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF must be taken into account in preparing the development plan and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

6.1.3. The NPPF should be read as a whole (including its footnotes and annexes).

6.2. **The Development Plan**

6.2.1. For Stevenage, the development plan comprises the following documents:

- Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031
- Waste Core Strategy & Development Management Policies DPD 2011-2026
- Waste Site Allocations DPD 2011-2026
- Minerals Local Plan Review 2002-2016

6.3. **Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031**

6.3.1. The Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031 was adopted in 2019. Weight must be given to the policies it contains according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

6.4. **Local Plan Review and Update**

6.4.1. The council concluded a full review of the plan in 2024, as required by regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

6.4.2. In response to the review, the council has proposed a partial update of the local plan. Weight must be given to the emerging policies in the partial update according to:

- a) the stage of preparation of the emerging plan;
- b) the extent to which there are unresolved objections to the policies; and
- c) the degree of consistency between the policies and the most recent revision of the NPPF.

6.4.3. At the time of writing, the partial update is undergoing examination by the Secretary of State. Given that the examination has yet to conclude, there remain unresolved objections to a number of emerging policies. The partial update is nonetheless at an advanced stage of preparation and the council considers the emerging policies within it to have a high degree of consistency with the NPPF. Where relevant, the weight to be given to emerging policies will be set out in the assessment section of this report.

6.5. **Other Material Considerations**

6.5.1. In determining planning applications, regard must also be had to other material considerations. This may include (but is not limited to):

- The Planning Practice Guidance
- The National Design Guide
- Written ministerial statements and directions
- Guidance published by Hertfordshire County Council
- The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
- Stevenage Borough Council supplementary planning documents

6.5.2. Planning decisions must also reflect relevant international obligations and statutory requirements.

7. **MAIN ISSUES**

7.1. The main issues in the assessment of the application are:

- The principle of the development

- Loss of public car parking
- Character, appearance and heritage impacts
- Neighbouring amenities
- Highway impacts
- Flood risk and drainage
- Biodiversity net gain
- CIL and planning obligations
- Equality and human rights

7.2. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

7.3. **Principle of Development**

7.3.1. The application proposes the redevelopment of an existing public car park, located on the edge of the Old Town, to provide a vehicle rental facility. The proposal does not fall within a defined use class and is therefore treated as sui generis. The adopted local plan does not contain specific policy criteria governing the location of vehicle rental operations. Accordingly, the acceptability of the proposal in principle falls to be assessed against the plan's broader strategic objectives.

7.3.2. Policy SP2 of the plan summarises those objectives. It says that the council will support applications which, among other things: deliver jobs; reduce the need to travel; respect their surroundings; and support facilities and services that encourage people to live, work and spend leisure time in Stevenage.

7.3.3. The site is previously developed land within the urban area and lies in an accessible location, adjacent to the Old Town and within a 15-minute walk of the town centre along with the railway and bus interchange. It is also well connected to the road network. The redevelopment of such land for a commercial use aligns with the local plan's overarching objective of supporting job creation, as the proposal would intensify the economic function of the site relative to its current use as a public car park and would generate 12 full-time employment opportunities.

7.3.4. It is noted that objections have been raised against the application on the grounds that it would be better suited to a designated employment area, and officers recognise that the operational characteristics of the proposed use go some way in supporting this view. However, the proposal would also provide a useful service to visiting members of the public and it would do so without inherently involving any especially significant impacts in terms of pollution. As such, the proposed use is not considered to be inherently incompatible with a location on the edge of the Old Town and indeed the proximity to other local amenities, residences and transport infrastructure would be likely to improve the accessibility of the proposed facility compared to a more peripheral industrial location.

7.3.5. It is also highly material that there is an absence in the local plan of a policy which would specifically direct the proposed use to an employment area. While these areas may also be capable of accommodating vehicle rental operations, the absence of a firm policy requirement means that the proposal does not give rise to any direct policy conflict.

7.3.6. Having regard to the above, the development is considered acceptable in principle. The proposal's compliance with other relevant policies is considered elsewhere in this report.

7.4. **Loss of Public Car Parking**

- 7.4.1. The proposal would result in the loss of 90 public car parking spaces from the Primett Road South Car Park. Policy IT8 of the local plan says that planning permission will be granted for the loss of existing public car parking where:
- i) Existing spaces are replaced within or adjacent to the new development;
 - ii) Replacement car parking provision is made within 200m of the key attractors currently served; or
 - iii) It can be robustly evidenced that the parking is no longer required.
- 7.4.2. The proposal would not involve the provision of any replacement car parking. The degree of consistency between the proposal and Policy IT8 therefore depends on whether there is robust evidence that the 90 spaces proposed to be lost are no longer required.
- 7.4.3. To inform this assessment, the council's engineers have undertaken an analysis of occupancy data for the surrounding car park network for the month of January 2026. The assessed data is a record of barrier entry and exit information from 7am to 7pm each day. It will include some limited instances of vehicles entering and exiting without stopping to park but otherwise provides an accurate picture of demand for public car parks across the Old Town. The data is for the Primett Road South, Primett Road North and Church Lane North car parks, with Church Lane South excluded on the basis that it is only available for season ticket holders.
- 7.4.4. The analysis shows that if the observed occupancy levels for January were to continue, the remaining capacity within the car parks following the development would be sufficient 98.4% of the time. During the limited periods when theoretical capacity would be exceeded, the average level of displacement would be 11 vehicles, with a maximum recorded exceedance of 37 vehicles.
- 7.4.5. In assessing this evidence, it is important to recognise that parking demand is inherently variable and that a modest degree of peak overspill does not, in itself, indicate a structural shortfall in provision. The identified exceedances are limited in both scale and duration, and the dataset is likely to marginally overstate actual parking demand because it would include any vehicles which enter and exit without parking.
- 7.4.6. Furthermore, in June of this year, an existing season ticket arrangement with the NHS will come to an end, which will release up to 100 spaces back into general availability. This would more than offset the 90 spaces which would be lost as a result of the proposal and would increase overall parking availability across the Old Town beyond the levels seen in the January assessment.
- 7.4.7. Objectors to the application have pointed out that there are a number of other developments in the area which may affect long-term demand for public car parking. In particular, reference has been made to improving office occupancy rates on Primett Road, the construction of new residential developments with limited on-site parking provision (e.g. the Icon development), and the implementation of active travel improvements along the High Street which will result in the removal of some on-street parking spaces.
- 7.4.8. These are material considerations. However, while future growth in demand cannot be discounted, it is inherently uncertain and the little evidence which could be used to

quantify a likely increase in demand does not suggest an increase of a scale that would undermine the conclusions of the engineers' analysis.

7.4.9. Taking all of the above into account, it is concluded that the proposal would result in some displacement of vehicles attempting to park in public car parks in the Old Town. However, these instances of displacement would be limited in scale and duration and should cease when the season ticket arrangement with the NHS comes to an end in June of this year. From that date, assuming that the January occupancy levels are representative, there should be a surplus capacity of at least 63 spaces, which would be sufficient to accommodate any additional demand from new office leases and the removal of spaces from the High Street as part of the Active Travel Fund (ATF) works which are being delivered by Hertfordshire County Council.

7.4.10. Accordingly, it is considered that it has been robustly evidenced that the 90 spaces subject to the application are no longer required. It follows that the proposal accords with Policy IT8 of the local plan.

7.5. **Character, Appearance and Heritage**

7.5.1. Policy GD1 of the local plan requires development to be respectful of and make a positive contribution to its surroundings. It also requires compliance with the conservation area guidance in Policy NH10. In this instance, the guidance to be utilised for the purposes of this application with respect to its assessment is the Old Town High Street Conservation Area Management Plan SPD (2012).

7.5.2. Policy NH10 itself requires development proposals affecting a conservation area to have regard to the relevant conservation area management plan. Proposals affecting heritage assets should otherwise be assessed in accordance with national policy, as set out under Policy SP13 of the local plan.

7.5.3. The application site is located adjacent to the western boundary of the Old Town High Street Conservation Area, which is a designated heritage asset. The proposal would involve the construction of two new buildings; a single storey office, measuring approximately 10m x 7m x 3.5m; and a vehicle wash bay, measuring approximately 7.5m x 10m x 4.9m. The proposals would otherwise involve less visually prominent works such as the installation of bollards and other access works.

7.5.4. Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a general duty on local planning authorities to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas when exercising functions with respect to land or other buildings in those areas.

7.5.5. National planning policy for proposals affecting heritage assets is contained in chapter 16 of the NPPF. This requires local planning authorities, in determining applications, to take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

- 7.5.6. Great weight must be given to the conservation of heritage assets and the more important the asset, the greater the weight that must be given. This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to the asset's significance.
- 7.5.7. Any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset (including from development within its setting) should require clear and convincing justification. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
- 7.5.8. The significance of the Old Town High Street Conservation Area is as the economic centre of a settlement that grew around the Great North Road from the medieval period onwards. The presence of a significant number of listed buildings ensures that the zone around the application site maintains its historic character.
- 7.5.9. Although the buildings on the eastern side of Primett Road fall within the conservation area, they generally have a much more modern appearance than the buildings on the High Street itself and as such, make a limited, if any, positive contribution towards the character of the conservation area. In addition, the buildings towards the southern end of Primett Road are more tightly spaced, which affords limited views from the west towards the historic High Street beyond.
- 7.5.10. Given this, although the proposed development would form part of the setting of the conservation area, the council's heritage consultant has advised that it would not have any adverse impact. Accordingly, the development would not result in any harm to the significance of the conservation area and there is no harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme. It follows that the proposal accords with Policies SP13 and NH10 of the local plan.
- 7.5.11. Notwithstanding the absence of any identifiable harm to the conservation area, the council's heritage consultant has requested further details of materials, boundary treatments and lighting for the scheme. Details of the materials for the proposed office building were provided on the drawings as originally submitted and further details have since been provided for the wash bay, boundary treatments and lighting.
- 7.5.12. These details generally conform to what one would ordinarily expect of a development of this nature and are considered acceptable. However, some details do still remain absent (e.g. the materials, as opposed to just the colours, of the office building) and so it is recommended that these be secured by condition.
- 7.5.13. Subject to the necessary condition, it is considered that although the proposed development would appear somewhat at odds with surrounding development, which generally comprises offices and a mix of residential development, it would not appear so out of place as to result in material harm to the character or appearance of the area. In this respect, the proposal accords with Policy GD1 of the local plan.

7.6. **Neighbouring Amenities**

- 7.6.1. Policy GD1 of the local plan requires that developments do not lead to an adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring uses or the surrounding area. In the partial update of the local plan, this wording has been amended slightly to refer to "unacceptable" adverse impacts.

- 7.6.2. Policy FP7 says that development proposals should minimise and where possible, reduce air, water, light and noise pollution. Planning permission will be granted where it is demonstrated that the development will not have unacceptable impacts on:
- a) the natural environment, general amenity and the tranquillity of the wider area, including noise and light pollution;
 - b) the health and safety of the public; and
 - c) compliance with statutory environmental quality standards.
- 7.6.3. Given the scale of the proposed development, it is considered likely that construction would be completed relatively quickly and with minimal disruption to nearby residential properties and business. As such, a construction management plan is not necessary in this instance but it is considered appropriate to control the hours of permitted construction work by condition.
- 7.6.4. Likewise, the scale of the development means that it would not appear overbearing or result in any undue loss of natural light or loss of privacy for neighbouring properties. In addition, the submitted lighting details show that there would be limited light spillage beyond the site's boundaries, including upward glare.
- 7.6.5. The main impact on neighbouring amenities is likely to be from noise but the submitted noise impact assessment confirms that the noise generated by the development, once operational, would be well below the existing background noise level throughout the proposed opening hours (07:00 to 22:00, seven days per week) and just after closing.
- 7.6.6. Having regard to the above and subject to the recommended condition regarding hours of construction, it is considered that the proposed development would have no material adverse impact on the amenities of neighbouring occupiers. In this respect, the proposal accords with Policies GD1 and FP7 of the local plan.
- 7.7. **Highway Impacts**
- 7.7.1. Policy IT4 of the local plan requires that development proposals have no adverse impact on highway safety or severe residual cumulative impact on the highway network. Policy IT5 requires parking to be provided in accordance with the Parking Provision SPD.
- 7.7.2. The proposed development would make use of the existing southern access to the car park, which is currently sitting redundant and blocked to vehicular traffic by bollards. HCC Highways, as the local highway authority, has reviewed the proposal and has raised no objections to this proposed arrangement.
- 7.7.3. HCC Highways have also reviewed the submitted transport statement, which includes a trip generation assessment showing that the number of trips generated by the development would be substantially less than the existing use as a car park. Again, the highway authority have raised no objections to this whether in terms of highway safety or impact on the road network.
- 7.7.4. The council's baseline car parking standard for car hire facilities is that three car parking spaces should be provided for every four employees, as well as one additional space for every two hire cars. The proposed development would have 12 full-time staff and would accommodate 34 rental vehicles (21 cars and 13 vans, excludes two additional car club vehicles). On this basis, the baseline car parking requirement is 26 spaces.

- 7.7.5. However, the site is located within Non-Residential Parking Accessibility Zone 2, which means that car parking should be reduced to 25% to 50% of the baseline level. This provides a final range of between 7 and 13 spaces, once rounded up.
- 7.7.6. The proposal is for 7 spaces, which exactly meets the lower extent of the recommended range. All of these spaces would be reserved for staff.
- 7.7.7. There is no corresponding standard for disabled persons' car parking at car hire facilities. However, the best fit is likely to be workspaces, which would require 1 space plus 5% of the baseline requirement. This would mean 2.3 spaces, which would be rounded up to 3 spaces. The proposal is actually for two disabled persons' spaces, which is slightly below the standard but given the extent of the shortfall, is considered to be acceptable.
- 7.7.8. Likewise there is no standard for cycle parking at car hire facilities but again applying a best fit approach, the development would require one or two cycle parking spaces. The proposal is that cycle parking would be provided for staff within the proposed office. This is not considered to be acceptable on its own, as it fails to take account of any potential need for cycle parking from visiting members of the public, including riders of adapted cycles. However, there is clearly sufficient space within the site to accommodate a single adapted cycle parking space and it is recommended that this be secured by condition in addition to the facility provided within the office for staff members.
- 7.7.9. Having regard to the above and subject to the recommended condition to secure cycle parking, it is considered that the proposed development would provide adequate parking and would have an acceptable impact on highway safety and on the road network more widely. In these respects, the proposal accords with Policies IT4 and IT5 of the local plan.
- 7.8. **Flood Risk and Drainage**
- 7.8.1. Policy FP2 of the local plan requires development proposals to be accompanied by an appropriate flood risk assessment. The use of SuDS should also be maximised so as not to increase flood risk and wherever possible, reduce flood risk. Suitable flood resilience measures must also be incorporated into schemes.
- 7.8.2. In the emerging partial update of the local plan, Policy FP1 deals with sustainable drainage and Policy FP2 deals solely with flood risk. Emerging Policy FP1 places much greater emphasis on the use of green, surface SuDS features and adherence to the surface water discharge hierarchy than the policies in the adopted local plan. Emerging Policy FP2 largely replicates national policies for flood risk and in that sense is similar to the adopted version of the policy. It is considered that both of the emerging policies should be afforded moderate weight in assessing the current application.
- 7.8.3. The site is located wholly within Flood Zone 1, which means it is at a low risk of fluvial flooding. The risk of surface water flooding varies from very low to high across the site according to its topography and existing drainage features.
- 7.8.4. Affinity Water have objected to the application on the basis that it is not accompanied by a surface water drainage strategy and contamination risk assessment. Ordinarily, a scheme of the nature proposed would not require a drainage strategy but because the site falls within a source protection zone for the public water supply, the details are necessary in this instance.
- 7.8.5. The applicant has now submitted the requested information and Affinity Water has been consulted on it. At the time of writing, officers are awaiting their response.

- 7.8.6. In the event that a response is not received before the date of the committee, it is recommended that delegated authority be given to the Director for Planning and Regulation, in consultation with the Chair of the Planning and Development Committee, to finalise the wording of any relevant conditions recommended by Affinity Water. Subject to those conditions, officers are satisfied that the proposal would accord with Policies FP1 and FP2 of the adopted local plan and the emerging versions of those same policies in the partial update of the local plan.
- 7.9. **Biodiversity Net Gain**
- 7.9.1. Paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 sets out that every planning permission granted for the development of land in England shall be deemed to have been granted subject to the 'biodiversity gain condition' requiring development to achieve a net gain of 10% of biodiversity value. There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not apply in some circumstances.
- 7.9.2. In this instance, the proposed development would not affect more than 25m² of habitat. As such, it falls under the de minimis exemption and would not be subject to the statutory biodiversity gain condition in the event that planning permission is granted.
- 7.10. **CIL and Planning Obligations**
- 7.10.1. In this instance, the development would be liable for CIL but would fall under the "all other development" category and would therefore be zero-rated. As the proposal is not for major development and there are no identified harms which require mitigation through planning obligations, there would be no need for any permission to be subject to a s106 agreement.
- 7.11. **Equality and Human Rights**
- 7.12. Consideration has been given to articles 1 and 8 of the first protocol of the European Convention on Human Rights. In this case, it is considered that a decision to grant permission would not violate any person's rights under the Convention.
- 7.13. When determining planning applications, it is also important to rigorously consider any equalities implications of the decisions that may be taken. This requires proper appreciation of any potential impact of the proposed development on the council's obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 7.14. 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 protected characteristics and persons who do not; and (c) foster good relations between persons who share protected characteristics and persons who do not. 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.
- 7.15. In this instance, the proposed development would provide an appropriate level of disabled persons' car parking and subject to the recommended condition, would also provide an adapted cycle parking space. In addition, the development would be entirely at ground floor level and would provide level access for disabled staff and customers, including persons who use buggies.

7.16. Having regard to the above, it is considered that a decision to grant permission would not conflict with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1. The local plan policies most relevant to determining the application are considered to be up-to-date. Accordingly, paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF is not engaged and the application falls to be assessed against a straightforward planning balance.

8.2. The proposed development would support the provision of 12 full-time jobs and would provide a useful facility to residents of the town. These benefits are modest but nonetheless positive and carry moderate weight in favour of granting planning permission.

8.3. Subject to the recommended conditions, the proposal is considered acceptable in all other respects, including in terms of the suitability of the site and the loss of public car parking provision. These matters are neutral in the planning balance.

8.4. The application must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance, the proposal is considered to accord with the development plan when read as a whole. Accordingly, it is recommended that planning permission be granted.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1. That planning permission be GRANTED subject to the conditions set out below, with delegated authority be given to the Director for Planning and Regulation, in consultation with the Chair of the Planning and Development Committee, to amend or add to the conditions subject to which permission would be granted, where such amendments or additions would satisfy the relevant national policy tests and would most effectively deliver the development which the Committee has resolved to approve.

Conditions

General

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

PP-ERAC-STE-001;
ERAC-STE-002;
0002 Rev P02;
00010
251217.UK99.CSB.T22;
ST-01;
ST-02;
ST-03;

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

2. The development 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).

3. No demolition or construction activities (including any associated collections or deliveries) shall be carried out except between the hours of 07:30 to 18:00 Monday to Friday and 08:00 to 13:00 on Saturdays. For the avoidance of doubt, no such work shall be carried out on Sundays or bank holidays.

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

4. The development shall not be open to the public except between the hours of 07:00 to 22:00 on any day.

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

5. No external lighting shall be installed or operated at the site other than in accordance with Lighting – Car Park Design Rev 4.

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

Prior to Commencement

6. Prior to the commencement of the development (excluding site clearance and groundworks), a schedule of external materials shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: In the interests of the character and appearance of the area.

Prior to Occupation

19. Prior to occupation of the development, cycle parking, including one space for adapted cycles, shall be provided in accordance with details which have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The cycle parking shall thereafter be permanently maintained in a manner fit for its intended purpose.

REASON: In the interests of sustainable transport and accessibility.

20. Prior to occupation of the development, all accesses, parking, servicing and manoeuvring areas shall be laid out in accordance with the approved plans. Those areas shall thereafter be permanently maintained in a manner fit for their intended purpose.

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

21. Prior to occupation of the development, all boundary treatments shall be laid out in accordance with the approved plans. The boundary treatments shall thereafter be permanently maintained in a manner fit for their intended purpose.

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

INFORMATIVES

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

website at <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/business-licences/business-licences.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

2. It is an offence under section 137 of the Highways Act 1980 for any person, without lawful authority or excuse, in any way to wilfully obstruct the free passage along a highway or public right of way. If this development is likely to result in the public highway or public right of way network becoming routinely blocked (fully or partly) the applicant must contact the Highway Authority to obtain their permission and requirements before construction works commence. Further information is available via the County Council website at <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/business-licences/business-licences.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.
3. It is an offence under section 148 of the Highways Act 1980 to deposit compost, dung or other material for dressing land, or any rubbish on a made up carriageway, or any or other debris on a highway to the interruption of any highway user. Section 149 of the same Act gives the Highway Authority powers to remove such material at the expense of the party responsible.

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

4. Building Regulations

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

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

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

Once a building regulations application has been deposited with relevant drawings and fee building work may commence. You will be advised in their acknowledgement letter of the work stages we need to inspect but in most instances these are usually: excavation for foundations; damp proof course; concrete oversite; insulation; drains (when laid or tested); floor and roof construction; work relating to fire safety; work affecting access and facilities for disabled people; and completion.

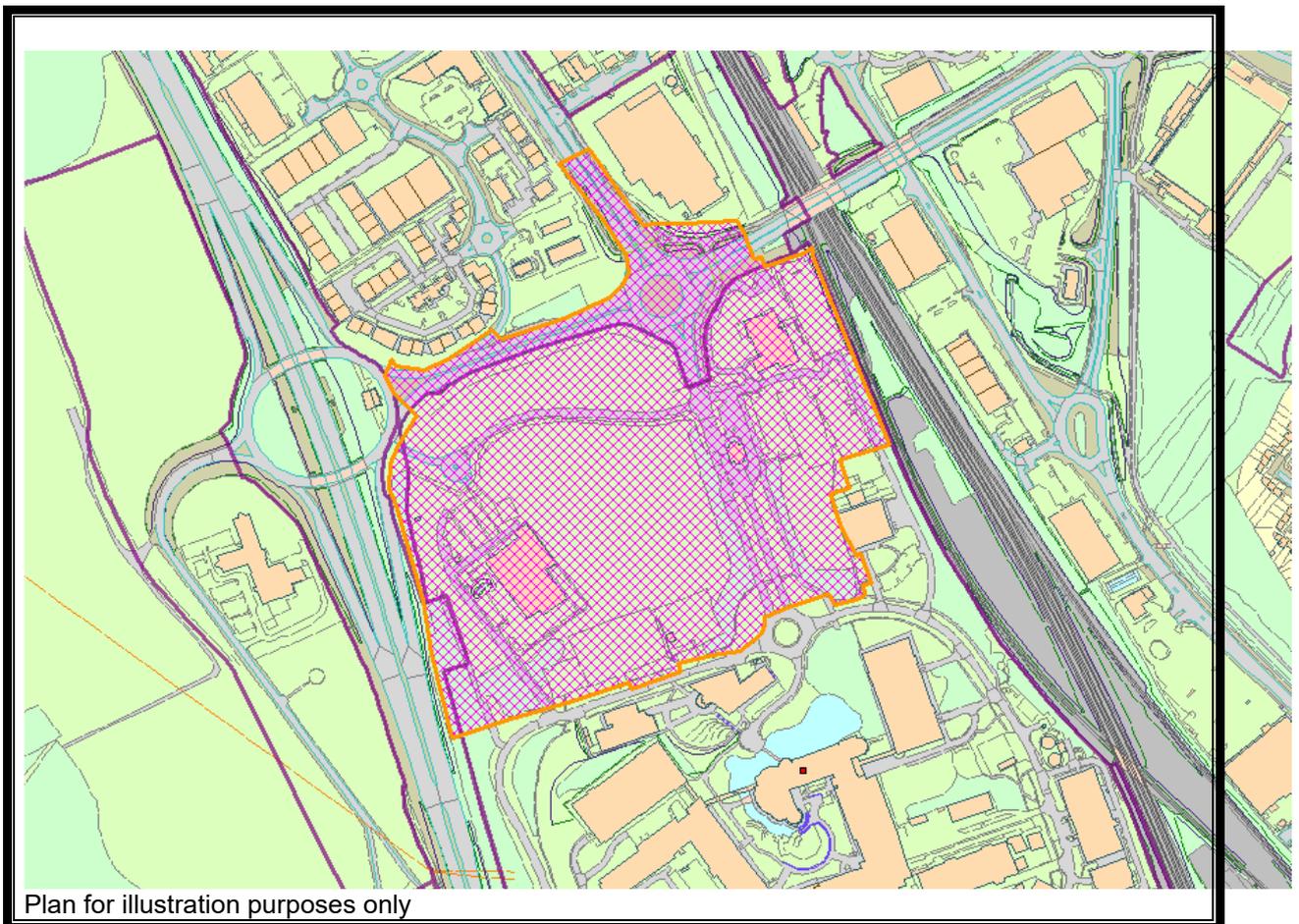
Please phone Hertfordshire Building Control on 01438 879990 before 10.00am to ensure a same day inspection (Mon - Fri).

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1. The application file, forms, plans and supporting documents having the reference number relating to this item. Online copies may be obtained at <https://publicaccess.stevenage.gov.uk/online-applications/>
- 10.2. The Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031
<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/local-plan>
- 10.3. The Stevenage Borough Local Plan Partial Update 2025
<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/local-plan-partial-update/submission-to-secretary-of-state>
- 10.4. Stevenage Borough Council Supplementary Planning Documents: Parking Provision SPD 2025; Design Guidance SPD 2025; Developer Contributions SPD 2025.
<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/planning-library>
- 10.5. Hertfordshire County Council Local Transport Plan LTP4 2018-2031
<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/about-the-council/consultations/ltp4-local-transport-plan-4-complete.pdf>
- 10.6. Government advice contained in the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 and the Planning Practice Guidance.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67aafe8f3b41f783cca46251/NPPF_December_2024.pdf
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>
- 10.7. Representations made by statutory consultees and other interested parties referred to in this report. Online copies can be found on Public Access (see paragraph 10.1).

Outline	<p>SEQ-HBA-B4-00-DR-A-082100 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B4-01-DR-A-082101 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B4-02-DR-A-082102 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B4-03-DR-A-082103 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B4-04-DR-A-082104 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B4-05-DR-A-082105 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B4-RF-DR-A-082106 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B4-XX-DR-A-082200 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B4-XX-DR-A-082201 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B4-XX-DR-A-082202 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B4-XX-DR-A-082203 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B4-XX-DR-A-082300 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B4-XX-DR-A-082301 Rev C01</p> <p>SEQ-HBA-D1-00-DR-A-085100 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D1-01-DR-A-085101 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D1-02-DR-A-085102 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D1-RF-DR-A-085103 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D1-XX-DR-A-085200 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D1-XX-DR-A-085201 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D1-XX-DR-A-085202 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D1-XX-DR-A-085203 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D1-XX-DR-A-085300 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D1-XX-DR-A-085301 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D1-XX-DR-A-085302 Rev C01</p> <p>SEQ-HBA-D2-00-DR-A-086100 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D2-01-DR-A-086101 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D2-02-DR-A-086102 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D2-RF-DR-A-086103 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D2-XX-DR-A-086200 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D2-XX-DR-A-086201 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D2-XX-DR-A-086202 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D2-XX-DR-A-086203 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D2-XX-DR-A-086300 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D2-XX-DR-A-086301 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D2-XX-DR-A-086302 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-S2-ZZ-DR-A-084100 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-S2-XX-DR-A-084200 Rev: C01; SEQ-HBA-S2-XX-DR-A-084300 Rev C01</p> <p>SEQ-HBA-S3-ZZ-DR-A-087100 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-S3-XX-DR-A-087200 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-S3-XX-DR-A-087300 Rev C01</p> <p>SEQ-HBA-M1-00-DR-A-083100 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-M1-ZZ-DR-A-083101 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-M1-ZZ-DR-A-083102 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-M1-XX-DR-A-083200 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-M1-XX-DR-A-083201 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-M1-XX-DR-A-083202 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-M1-XX-DR-A-083203 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-M1-XX-DR-A-083300 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-M1-XX-DR-A-083301 Rev C01</p> <p>SLC-HBA-SS-ZZ-DR-A-080130 P3; SLC-HBA-SS-ZZ-DR-A-080230 P2; SLC-HBA-SS-ZZ-DR-A-080330 P2; 3295-WSP-XX-XX-DR -C-00100-P03 (Rev P03); 3295-WSP-XX-XX-DR-C-00101-P02 (Rev P02)</p> <p>SEQ-HBA-SW-ZZ-DR-A-080020 Rev: C01; Ref: SEQ-HBA-SW-ZZ-DR-A-080021 Rev: C01</p>
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Applicant :	Forge Bio Master Nominee 3A Limited and Forge Bio Master Nominee 3B Limited Jointly with Glaxosmithkline Research & Development Ltd
Date Valid :	19 December 2025
Recommendation :	GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION



1. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 1.1 The application site is located within the Gunnels Wood Employment Area to the southwest of the town. The site comprises land within the wider extent of the existing GSK Campus, comprising a range of buildings associated with 'life science' research and development. The site is 'brownfield' and previously developed measuring 17.37ha. It is largely vacant, with the existing CTC building located within the west of the site boundary. The CTC building is one of four facilities in the UK for CGT Catapult, which is an independent innovation and technology organisation committed to the advancement of cell and gene therapies.
- 1.2 The site also includes the GSK security building (to be re-located onto the existing Campus under planning permission 23/00249/FP) and sports centre and the temporary Spark building located within the centre of the site. The site also includes areas of existing hardstanding and surface level car parking. There are two satellite parcels of land within the site which are located within the existing GSK Campus that would facilitate smaller scale extensions to existing buildings. The site is accessed from the north via the A602 on Gunnels Wood Road, which is included within the application boundary.
- 1.3 The surrounding area comprises a range of employment and other commercial uses, specifically the GSK Campus which is located to the south. The A1(M) is to the west of the site, including Junction 7 with the A602. Beyond the A1(M) is the Novotel Hotel with the remaining area to the west comprising Knebworth House and agricultural land. To the east of the site is the East Coast Mainline railway, beyond which lies Roebuck Retail Park and Broadwater Retail Park. The wider Gunnels Wood Employment Area is located to the north of the site, beyond the A602.

- 1.4 The site is not located within a Conservation Area and there are no listed buildings or heritage assets associated with the site. The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and therefore has a low risk of fluvial flooding.

2. RELEVANT PLANNING HISORY

- 2.1 The site and wider GSK Campus area has been subject to a number of planning applications. The below is a summary of those of relevance to the consideration of this application.
- 2.2 Outline planning permission ref. 05/00621/OP was approved on 7 April 2009 for development to include 60,000m² of office floorspace, improvements to means of access and additional 1,200 car parking spaces following the demolition of existing buildings ('2009 Outline'). The 2009 Outline was subject to a S73 application (Ref: 09/00314/FPM) which was approved on 1 March 2010.
- 2.3 The 2009 Outline is of relevance as the application boundary subject to this application is similar to what was previously approved. The application also included a new gyratory arrangement to the existing A602 and Gunnels Wood Road junction, which is also broadly similar to that proposed as part of this application.
- 2.4 An interim roadworks scheme was agreed to enable the occupation of up to 18,600m² floor space in advance of the re-shaping and signalisation of the GSK roundabout. The interim roadworks have been constructed. Part of the 18,600m² floor space has now been built and detailed planning permission has been granted for most of the remainder (ref. 15/00323/FPM), bringing the total consented floor space to 18,037m².
- 2.5 In May 2023, planning permission was granted under reference 23/00249/FP for the construction of a replacement security lodge to be located within the existing GSK Campus, with associated access, car/cycle parking and landscaping to enable the application site to be redeveloped as proposed.
- 2.6 Planning permission for development at the site was originally granted on 30 May 2024 (ref: 23/00293/FPM) (**'the May 2024 Permission'**).

"Hybrid Planning Application for a new Life Sciences Campus comprising full planning permission for the demolition of existing ancillary buildings, structures, erection of employment floorspace (Classes E(g)(ii) and (iii) and B2, with provision for Class E uses at ground, lower ground and upper ground/mezzanine floors) revised junction arrangement (A602 and Gunnels Wood Road) and alterations to the site layout to include new car parking (including a multi storey car park), internal access and associated works (such as new utilities (including new substation), drainage and infrastructure hard and soft landscaping and introduction of sustainable transport facilities) and outline planning permission for the demolition of existing ancillary buildings/structures, erection of employment floorspace (Classes E(g)(i) to (iii), B2 and B8, with provision for an ancillary auditorium, and Class E uses at ground floor) and Amenity Hub (Classes E and B2), provision of car parking (including multi storey car park(s)) and associated works (such as new access, utilities, drainage, infrastructure and hard and soft landscaping), with all matters reserved for subsequent approval."

- 2.7 On 16 September 2024, a Non Material Amendment application (ref: 24/00618/NMA) was approved by the Planning Authority (**'the September 2024 NMA'**). This amended a number of approved drawings in relation to elements of the site layout and individual buildings, with consequential amendments to relevant conditions. More recently on 19 November 2025 a Non Material Amendment application (ref: 25/00803/NMA) was approved by the LPA (**'the November 2025 NMA'**). This included changes to the wording of a number of conditions and the description of development. The description of development was amended to

include provision for B8 use within the Detailed Area, in addition to that already approved in the Outline Area, and to reflect the fact that more than one substation was included within the approved scheme.

CTC Building

- 2.8 An application for construction of a research and manufacturing building (Use Class B1) with associated infrastructure was approved on 19 August 2015 (ref: 15/00323/FPM). This building has been constructed and is known as the Catapult Building which would be retained as part of this application. It was subsequently amended by a non-material amendment application and variation of conditions applications.

Spark Building

- 2.9 This building is a single storey modular laboratory and office building constructed in 2019 which currently supports three growing companies at Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst. An application for its temporary relocation (5 years) was approved under reference 24/00557/FP on 11 October 2024.

3. THE CURRENT APPLICATION

- 3.1 The planning application is submitted under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, which allows for an application to be submitted for permission for the development of land without complying with conditions subject to which a previous planning permission was granted. It requires that Local Planning Authorities only consider the question of the conditions subject to which permission should be granted.
- 3.2 In January 2023 the High Court ruling in the case of *Armstrong v Secretary of State for Levelling-Up, Housing and Communities* [2023] EWHC 176 clarified the scope of Section 73 applications, in particular that:
- There is nothing in Section 73, or in the TCPA 1990, that limits its application to “minor material amendments” or to amendments which do not involve a “substantial” or “fundamental” variation.
 - Provided an application is limited to non-compliance with a condition (rather than any other part of the permission) it falls within the stated scope of Section 73 of the TCPA 1990.
 - The *Finney* case confirmed that Section 73 cannot be used to vary the operative part of a planning permission. Section 73 cannot be used to vary or impose a condition where the resulting condition would be inherently inconsistent with the operative part of the planning permission as well.
 - Any application under Section 73 will be subject to the necessary procedural requirements for its consideration which, for example, enable representations to be received. It states: “If Parliament had intended the power to restrict its application further (for example to limit it to “minor material” amendments to a condition, or non-fundamental variations to a condition) one would have expected that to be expressed in the language used and it could readily have done so”.

- 3.3 The proposed changes sought in this application, as detailed below, comply with the principles established through the Armstrong case. They comply with the operative part of the Permission and do not seek to alter it.
- 3.4 The application continues to be in 'hybrid' form and seeks detailed planning permission for the initial (Phase 1) suite of works and outline planning permission (with all matters reserved) for the remainder of the Masterplan. The extent of the detailed and outline application areas is shown on Drawing Ref: SEQ-HBA-SW-ZZ-DR-A-080020 REV C01.
- 3.5 A series of changes are proposed to the approved scheme which are intended to reflect changes to the market, in particular the reduction in demand for 'life science' floorspace and increasing demand for data centres. The scheme would still provide for a life science campus with significant life science floorspace included. The changes comprise alterations to the Detailed and Outline Area Boundaries and to the provision of buildings within the Detailed and Outline Areas:

Detailed Area

- The Detailed Area is increased in size, with changes to the layout of the area.
- Buildings 2 and 4 are to be relocated within the Site, with alterations to their height and combined floorspace.
- The introduction of 2 x Data Centres and associated infrastructure, including a new substation. As a Class B8 Use the provision of the data centres accords with the operative part of the May 2024 Permission, as amended by the November 2025 NMA.
- A new hard and soft landscaping scheme throughout the Detailed Area.
- Increase in height and overall floorspace to multi-storey car park 1 (MSCP1), which will measure 22,352m² GIA.
- The surface level car park north of MSCP1 would be split into two surface level car parks (surface car parks 1 & 2).

Outline Area

- The Outline Area is reduced in size.
- The provision of 5 x life science buildings (comprising Buildings 1, 3, 5, 6 and provision for an extension to the CTC building).
- The provision of 1 x multi-storey car park (MSCP2), where previously 2 x multistorey car parks were proposed in the outline area.
- The parameters and design principles for the buildings in the Outline Area have been amended but are based on the previously approved parameters. These are detailed in the Masterplan Design Code.
- The landscape principles for the Outline Area follow the principles established for the May 2024 Permission. These are set out in the Landscape Design Code.

3.6 Changes to the quantum of floorspace within each of the Detailed and Outline Areas, set out in Table 1, below, demonstrate a slight reduction in the overall floorspace across the detailed and outline areas.

Table 1 – Comparison of Approved and Proposed Floorspace

Employment Buildings	Approved (sq m GIA)	Proposed (sq m GIA)	Difference (+ / -)
Detailed Area - Buildings 2 & 4	23,692	34,703	+11,011
Detailed Area – Data Centres		31,467	+31,467
Outline Area	126,387	83,823	-42,564
Total Floorspace	150,079	149,993	-86

Note: excludes multi-storey car parks

3.7 No alterations are proposed to the layout of the approved Gyratory, or the approved substation within the detailed area in the eastern part of the Site. That substation is however referred to as substation 1 within the submitted documentation.

3.8 The changes would not involve a deed of variation to the s106 agreement, and the original planning obligations still stand.

Condition Amendments

3.9 Arising from the above changes, there are a number of proposed amendments to conditions, which are set out in the submitted Condition Amendments Schedule. These include:

- Alterations to a number of document and drawing references, to refer the relevant new document / drawing submitted with this application.
- Alterations to the wording of a number of conditions to refer for consistency with the revised scheme.
- Amendments to wording of a number of conditions to allow partial discharge and occupation of individual buildings.
- Deletion of Condition 16 as Travel Plan(s) requirements are contained within the S106 Agreement dated 30 May 2024.
- Amendments to the habitat units required to be delivered under Condition 31, to reflect the revised Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment, and that provision for an offsetting payment is included within the S106 Agreement pursuant to the May 2024 Permission.
- Deletion of Condition 32, as the requirements under this condition are already required under Condition 31.
- Additional condition 54 covering the testing of any back-up power, life safety and standby power generators.

3.10 The application proposal has gone through a pre-application process with the Local Planning Authority, which has resulted in improvements to the scheme. Pre-application discussions have also been held with Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) as Lead Local Flood Authority.

- 3.11 This application comes before the Planning and Development Committee for its decision as it is a Major.

4. DATA CENTRES

- 4.1 Data Centres are specialised physical facilities housing vast amounts of IT infrastructure including servers, storage, and networking gear to store, process, and manage an organisation's critical data and applications, acting as the backbone for digital services like banking, streaming, and cloud computing, with robust support systems for power, cooling, and security. They have evolved from single-company, on-premises rooms to massive, interconnected hubs supporting global digital activity.
- 4.2 The applicant advises the introduction of data centres to the Elevate Quarter has been driven by the rapid integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into the life sciences sector, which has accelerated drug discovery and personalised medicine, necessitating enhanced data processing and storage solutions. Data centres are pivotal in managing the vast amounts of data generated by life sciences research. They provide the necessary infrastructure for high performance computing, secure data storage, and real-time analytics. The surge in AI applications within the sector has further amplified the need for advanced data centre capabilities.
- 4.3 The co-location of data centres on the life sciences campus would allow Stevenage to sit at the forefront of life science innovation in the UK, future proofing the cluster as technological needs expand over time. The centres would facilitate the research occurring at the campus by providing access to high-quality processing power. This may be particularly beneficial for smaller firms who rely on offsite computing support.
- 4.4 These co-location benefits would extend beyond the companies at the campus. Any Stevenage company, or company from further afield, that is looking to utilise high processing power would be able to capitalise on the opportunity of this data centre provision. This would mean the benefits of the scheme would be felt across other industries, indirectly supporting further innovation and economic benefits beyond life sciences alone. Overall, the amendments to the scheme would make the proposals more robust to future market changes, whilst directly supporting the life sciences innovation campus and ensuring a wide range of firms and industries have the opportunity to drive innovation and benefits.
- 4.5 The Government has recently recognised the importance of Data Centres to the UK economy through their inclusion into the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) consenting regime under section 35 of the 2008 Planning Act on 8 January 2026. This allows the Secretary of State to direct proposals considered to be nationally significant to be determined under the Development Consent Order process, instead of local planning permission(s) to ensure greater strategic oversight and a faster, more streamlined determination process.
- 4.6 In a Written Ministerial Statement dated 12 September 2024, the Minister of State for Data Protection and Telecoms recognised the importance of data centres:

Data infrastructure - the physical data centres and cloud infrastructure which provide the foundations of the digital economy - faces significant risks and challenges that threaten the day-to-day lives of citizens and other critical infrastructure in the UK. We are today taking a significant step to meet these challenges by designating UK data infrastructure as Critical

National Infrastructure (CNI), putting our digital foundations in the same category as Energy and Water.

Data infrastructure underpins essential services that are critical to the UK economy and our way of life and will only become more vital as technologies like AI require greater data centre and cloud capacity. The data it contains is highly valuable, and as such attracts security threats from cyber and physical attacks. Data centres are also vulnerable to the effects of climate change, which is increasing the risk of environmental hazards like flooding, heatwaves, and other extreme weather that can disrupt operations and result in a compromise or loss of crucial services.

Although the sector already has high standards, CNI designation enables better mitigation of risks the sector faces through an improvement to the Government's visibility and engagement with the data centre and cloud service industry. It signals the Government's intention to better partner with the UK's data infrastructure sector to work together to mitigate these. We will also explore further how to ensure the right conditions are in place to drive necessary capacity expansion to support economic growth and innovation.

As the Department responsible for monitoring, protecting and enhancing the security and resilience of data infrastructure, DSIT will be working to better understand industry operators' existing risk mitigations and identify areas for Government support. Data infrastructure will be managed under existing cross-Government CNI structures led by the Cabinet Office, as a sub-sector of Communications. We will work closely in a joined-up approach with internal colleagues, other Government Departments and their respective CNI sectors, such as Energy and Water, contributing to cross-sector work and planning.

I am confident that these measures, taken together and implemented in close consultation with industry, will provide a high level of security and resilience for this increasingly critical infrastructure, giving confidence to the public and investors, and supporting the growth of the UK economy.

- 4.7 The above commitment from the Government recognising the importance of data centres as nationally significant infrastructure and the role they play in the day-to-day lives of citizens, other critical UK infrastructure and the economy gives significant weight to justifying their inclusion within Stevenage's Elevate Quarter life science campus and the wider region.

Economic Benefits

- 4.8 The application is accompanied by an updated Economic Statement which highlights the importance of data centres and the life science sector to the UK economy. In terms of direct economic benefits to Stevenage and Hertfordshire more widely, the proposal would:
- Overall, the construction phase would deliver 2,250 total job years in the detailed element and 3,940 total job years in the outline element. This would be supplemented by indirect benefits such as construction worker expenditure.
 - In terms of the operational phase, the proposed development is expected to support approximately 4,050-4,170 FTEs. This equates to approximately 4,375 - 4,510 jobs once part-time working patterns are accounted for. Of these, 1,400 FTEs (1,500 jobs) would be at the detailed elements of the scheme, with the rest of the employment supported in the outline elements. After accounting for the existing employment on site, the direct employment supported by the proposed development would represent an uplift of 4,020 -

4,140 gross additional FTEs (4,340 - 4,475 jobs). This would be supplemented by indirect benefits such as worker expenditure.

- An additional output in gross value added (GVA) terms of an estimated £193m – £199m per annum. Gross Value Added (GVA) is a measure of the economic value produced by the activity in a given area.
- An additional estimated tax revenue of £58m – £80m per annum.
- A total of £10.9m in annual business rate payments per annum, of which approximately £4.4m is expected to be retained by the Council.
- The proposal includes several open spaces and landscaped areas which would be open to the public. This is a significant public benefit and encourages a positive relationship between the Campus and local residents.
- The proposal would significantly exceed the minimum target for employment floorspace for this allocated employment site (50,000m²) set out within Local Plan policy EC1.

5. PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS

- 5.1 As a major planning application, the proposal has been publicised by way of two site notices and a press notice. In addition, neighbouring properties have been consulted by way of letter. At the time of drafting this report, no comments have been received either in support or against the proposal.
- 5.2 Please note that a verbatim copy of all comments and representations received are available to view on the Council's website.

6. CONSULTATIONS

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

6.2 HCC Highway Authority

- 6.2.1 No comments received. With regards to the 'May 2024 Permission', Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority did not wish to object to planning permission being granted (see section 8.6 of this report which considers highway implications of this development), but raised a number of planning conditions and obligations (see section 10 of this report for conditions and obligations). These have been updated where required and carried over to this application.

6.3 HCC Growth and Infrastructure Unit

- 6.3.1 No comments received.

6.4 Affinity Water

- 6.4.1 The Affinity Water supply area is considered by government to be under water stress, and we are aware of the growing number of data centres and their varied water demand. In some cases, developers are requesting high volumes of water that, under our current resource base and network capacity, cannot be accommodated. We ask that you get in

contact with the Developer Services team to discuss your water demand requirements as quickly as possible, to avoid impact to our operations and delays to your development.

- 6.4.2 We have reviewed the planning application documents, and we can confirm that the site is not located within an Environment Agency defined groundwater Source Protection Zone (SPZ) or close to our abstractions. The construction works and operation of the proposed development site should be done in accordance with the relevant British Standards and Best Management Practices, thereby significantly reducing the groundwater pollution risk. It should be noted that the construction works may exacerbate any existing pollution. If any pollution is found at the site, then the appropriate monitoring and remediation methods will need to be undertaken. For any works involving excavations below the chalk groundwater table (for example, piling or the implementation of a geothermal open/closed loop system), a ground investigation should first be carried out to identify appropriate techniques and to avoid displacing any shallow contamination to a greater depth, which could impact the chalk aquifer.
- 6.4.3 Being within a water stressed area, we expect that the development includes water efficient fixtures and fittings. Measures such as rainwater harvesting and grey water recycling help the environment by reducing pressure for abstractions. They also minimise potable water use by reducing the amount of potable water used for washing, cleaning and watering gardens. This in turn reduces the carbon emissions associated with treating this water to a standard suitable for drinking and will help in our efforts to get emissions down in the borough.
- 6.4.4 There are potentially water mains running through or near to part of proposed development site. If the development goes ahead as proposed, the applicant/developer will need to get in contact with our Developer Services Team to discuss asset protection or diversionary measures. Due to its location, Affinity Water will supply drinking water to the development in the event that it is constructed. Should planning permission be granted, the applicant is also advised to contact Developer Services as soon as possible regarding supply matters due to the increased demand for water in the area resulting from this development.

6.5 Thames Water

- 6.5.1 No comments received. Raised no objection to May 2024 Permission.

6.6 SBC Green Spaces and Ecology

- 6.6.1 No comments received. Raised no objection to May 2024 Permission.

6.7 Network Rail

- 6.7.1 Does not wish to comment. Raised no objection to May 2024 Permission.

6.8 Lead Local Flood Authority

Comments dated 21 January 2026

- 6.8.1 We understand that this is a Section 73 application which proposes a number of changes to the scheme approved under 23/00293/FPM. We object to this planning application in the absence of an acceptable Drainage Strategy relating to:

- Clarification into the side slopes of swales/basins across the development.
- Clarification into the use of deep borehole soakaways in the east of the development.
- The development is not in accordance with NPPF and PPG.

Reason

6.8.2 To prevent flooding in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 181, 182 and 187 by ensuring the satisfactory management of local flood risk, surface water flow paths, storage and disposal of surface water from the site in a range of rainfall events and ensuring the SuDS proposed operates as designed for the lifetime of the development.

6.8.3 We will consider reviewing this objection if the following issues are adequately addressed.

1. We note that in the West Car Park Catchment, a number of swales and an infiltration basin are proposed. The proposed side slopes for these SuDS features should be clarified – 1 in 4 or shallower is preferred, however 1 in 3 is acceptable.
2. We note that proposed drainage for Catchments P and Q (on the eastern side of the site) remains as per the previously approved strategy within 23/00293/FPM. The proposed strategy involved the use of deep borehole soakaways. The National standards for SuDS now state that the use of deep-bore infiltration features is by exception only and is not considered to follow a SuDS approach. As a result, we seek clarification into whether the use of the deep bore soakaways in Catchment P and Q has been revisited following updates to other parts of the site. Shallow infiltration and a positive connection into a surface water sewer would both be more preferable than the use of deep borehole soakaways.

Comments dated 13 February 2026

6.8.4 We understand that this is a Section 73 application which proposes a number of changes to the scheme approved under 23/00293/FPM. Since our last response, the applicant has submitted a letter to action our comments. We are satisfied with the responses provided and have no objection to this application. We note that we expect that conditions 49, 50, 51, 52 and 53 will be retained as part of this S73 application.

6.9 Environment Agency

6.9.1 We have no objections to the proposed changes. Previously we provided advice relating to the proposed surface water drainage strategy and we welcome that this revised proposal retains the approach that was previously agreed. We do note that the proposal is still reliant on infiltration, including several deep borehole soakaways and that the design has not been finalised. As such, we welcome the proposal to retain Condition 48 (surface water drainage).

6.9.2 We would like to highlight that borehole soakaways should only be utilised where no other options for surface water discharge exist as they can provide preferential pathways for contaminants to enter groundwater (that is sensitive in this area) and as such additional pollution prevention mitigations may be required. Additional assessment is required to demonstrate that borehole soakaways are feasible at this site and can be adopted and maintained and will not result in other environmental problems.

6.9.3 With respect to potential land contamination, we also welcome the proposal to retain Condition 37 (unexpected contamination). We look forward to being consulted on the discharge of Conditions 37 (unexpected contamination) and Condition 48 (surface water drainage) when the applicant submits details to discharge them. We have no comments relating to the variation proposed for other conditions as they relate to matters outside our remit.

6.10 HCC Minerals and Waste

6.10.1 No comments received. Raised no objection to May 2024 Permission.

6.11 SBC Environmental Health
Comments dated 12 January 2026

6.11.1 Thank you for consulting the Environmental Health & Licensing Service (EH&LS) regarding the above. This is clearly a complex proposed development based on an earlier planning determination and therefore I have restricted my review of this case to the following Environmental Health matters vis-a-vis the additional/different aspects of the new scheme:

Local air quality

6.11.2 The Air Quality Assessment - Stevenage Elevate Quarter report by DustScanAQ (reference ZGTEQ_AQA, Revision A, dated 17/12/2025) states that the revised scheme will result in significantly less vehicle emissions than the existing authorised development and therefore the report focuses on the emissions from the proposed 47 Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) generators which are mostly associated with the proposed new data centres. The report concludes that the emissions from these generators will not have a material impact on existing local air quality – a conclusion I believe is reasonable given the assessment approach employed. However, this conclusion is based on a number of key assumptions set out in section 3.1.2., i.e. that the ICE units will have Selective Catalytic Reduction (SCR) abatement equipment fitted and that their hours of operation will be very limited and relate only to the testing and back-up operations only.

6.11.3 There is no proposed condition relating to these assumptions and therefore I am concerned that this would permit unmitigated plant to be installed and operated for extended periods without an appropriate Local Planning Authority (LPA) control. I would therefore suggest that the LPA discusses this aspect of the revised scheme with the applicant with view to securing an additional condition that safeguards the environment in accordance with Local Plan Policy FP7.

Environmental noise

6.11.4 The Planning noise report authored by Sandy Brown Ltd. (reference 23023-R06-B, Version B, dated 15/12/2025) utilises a computer model to predict sound pressure levels arising from the proposed development at relevant receptor locations off-site. Whilst this is common practice, this approach does not permit auditing of the results by EH&LS; this is particularly relevant regarding the model input information concerning the hours of operation and duration of the ICE generators which are suggested, in the application, to be mostly restricted to the day (for testing) and for a duration of no more than 78 hours (in the event of a mains power outage). Accordingly, I cannot advise the LPA on the sensitivity, or otherwise, of the noise predictions associated with the use of the ICE plant beyond their pattern of proposed use.

6.11.5 The report's conclusions are based, in part, on assumptions such as the façade construction of the data centres (which are illustrated in Drawing No. SEQ-HBA-D1-XX-DR-A-085302 for example) and that some of the ICE generators will be housing within enclosures which will mitigate their liberation of noise (these are not so clearly illustrated, as far as I can appreciate, on specific plans or elevations associated with the data centres). The report states that the specification of some of the equipment, e.g. back-up ICE plant flues, have yet to be finalised and that further noise mitigation measures may therefore be warranted.

6.11.6 In light of the above, I would ordinarily expect that a report of this nature would provide a commentary on uncertainty – something which the Sandy Brown Ltd. report does not appear to do. Given the complexity of the proposals and stage of plant design, this is disappointing and creates some doubt as to the reliability of the criteria-based approach offered in the report (see below) and, by implication, the proposed planning condition.

- 6.11.7 The noise criteria proposed in paragraph 8.3.3. appear to be largely based on the methodology set out in BS4142 but without citing the usual terminology such as the Rating Level of the noise under consideration. This is significant in my opinion as character adjustments regarding tonality, intermittency, etc., of plant/equipment noise could well be pertinent to this application given that the ICE plant will operate intermittently and that no data has been offered concerning its tonality. The final criteria proposed (relating to the accumulative noise impact being no greater than 10 dB above background noise levels) could be interpreted to equate to an ‘...indication of a significant adverse impact...’ according to guidance set out in BS4142 and therefore would rather indicate non-conformity with Local Plan Policy FP7.
- 6.11.8 Accordingly, I have significant doubts that the above criteria can be reliably used as planning conditions (or the basis of the condition actually offered – no. 40) as suggested in Section 10 of the report. I would encourage the LPA to contact the applicant with view to securing the redrafting of condition 40 to reflect the observations above. I believe that it would be reasonable to delineate the controls between the data centre-related plant and other equipment noise sources on the site; the former may be best managed by way of a noise management plan.

Artificial lighting

- 6.11.9 The Exterior Lighting Strategy for Section 73 Planning Application report prepared by FPOV (reference J4431-SL-5101-02, dated 12/12/2025) correctly, in my view, makes reference to an appropriate environmental lighting guidance document - ‘Guidelines for the reduction of obtrusive light’ published by the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP). However, integral to the ILP guidance is the classification of the development site in terms of the pertinent environment lighting zone (‘...It is recommended that Local Planning Authorities specify the following environmental zones for exterior lighting control...’) – this appears to be absent from the FPOV report and therefore it is difficult for me to advise the LPA on whether the proposed lighting strategy will, or will not, exceed appropriate lighting levels as recommended in the ILP guidance. Accordingly, I do not believe that the proposed revised Condition 42 is currently fit for purpose and recommend that clarification on this point is secured from the applicant and/or their technical advisors.

Contaminated land

- 6.11.10 The existing conditions (36 and 37) relating to soil contamination remain appropriate in my view and therefore I have no objection to their continued use as regards the revised proposals.
- 6.11.11 In conclusion, I believe that the development of the GSK Campus site, as broadly proposed in this application, can comply with Local Plan Policy FP7 subject to the inclusion of suitable and sufficient mitigation/control measures. The two data centres do introduce some additional risks as regards the protection of local amenity/the environment and so I would advise that the controls regarding these need to be carefully thought through.

Comments dated 16 February 2026

- 6.11.12 Further to my memorandum of 12/1/2026 I have reviewed the correspondence with the Local Planning Authority (LPA) regarding this application and provide the following updated guidance:

Artificial lighting

- 6.11.13 The revised Exterior Lighting Strategy for Section 73 Planning Application report prepared by FPOV (reference J4431-SL-5101-03, dated 16/1/2026) provides welcome clarifications regarding the ILP lighting zone classification and scheme design objectives (see page 7).

Accordingly, I believe that the following revised Condition 42 (modified only to reflect the amended report reference) is appropriate:

The development to which this permission relates in respect of the Detailed Area and each Development Zone as agreed pursuant to condition 4, shall be carried out in accordance with the recommendations set out within the Exterior Lighting Strategy by FPOV (ref: J4431-SL-5101-03, January 2026) as approved or any alternatives to be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Local air quality

6.11.14 I understand that the applicant has suggested the following, additional, planning condition:

Testing of any back-up power, life safety and standby power generators shall only be undertaken in accordance with the scenarios set out in paragraph 3.1.2 of the Air Quality Assessment dated December 2025 or any alternatives to be submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority. Generators shall otherwise only be used in emergency situations. Data Centre back-up power generators shall incorporate Selective Catalytic Reduction.

6.11.15 I welcome this additional safeguard and encourage its use by the LPA should it be minded to approve this application.

Environmental noise

6.11.16 I welcome the disaggregation of the proposed noise limits, particularly as regards the emergency back-up generators, for the reasons set out in my earlier memorandum. However, my reservations regarding the following remain:

- Other than the new condition regarding air quality, above, there is no cited control when testing of the generators should take place or that they should only be used in emergency situations
- The proposed noise limit condition for the generators does not reflect BS 4142 nomenclature, i.e. a Rating Level
- I'm not sure why the Rating Levels relating to the third bullet point contains multiple question marks

6.11.17 I would advise the LPA against anchoring, indefinitely, noise limits to a stated background noise level as this is likely to change over time. The proposed conditions apply this principle regarding the back-up generators, but not to the ordinary operation of plant and so I would recommend a consistent approach.

Comments dated 2 March 2026

6.11.18 Further to my memoranda of 12/1/2026 and 16/2/2026, I have participated in discussions and correspondence with the applicant's planning and noise advisors as regards the proposed development's conformity with Local Plan Policy FP7 and provide the following update:

Local air quality

6.11.19 I understand that the following condition has been offered in connection with local air quality matters:

54. *Testing of any back-up power, life safety and standby power generators shall only be undertaken in accordance with the scenarios set out in paragraph 3.1.2 of the Air Quality Assessment dated December 2025 or any alternatives to be submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority. Testing of back-up generators shall only*

be undertaken between the hours of 07:00-23:00. Generators shall otherwise only be used in emergency situations. Data Centre back-up power generators shall incorporate Selective Catalytic Reduction.

6.11.20 This condition resolves my concern regarding the incorporation of necessary mitigation measures as regards the release of products of combustion; I believe that it also provides some comfort in connection with the proposed testing regime associated with back-up power systems, et al, from an environmental noise perspective.

Environmental Noise

6.11.21 The development proposals set out in this application represent a significant increase in risk, as regards the impact of noise on local amenity, over the currently authorised scheme – this is largely due to the inclusion of two data centres that will entail a considerable number of noise sources (e.g. 192 air handling units and 40 back-up ICE generators). Clearly, the contents of Local Plan Policy FP7 are engaged by this aspect of the proposed development and therefore I have had careful regard to the assessment of these noise sources.

6.11.22 To complicate matters, the noise climate around the development site is by no means straightforward – it is characterized by a number of transport sources – the A1(M), local road network, railway lines, and London Luton Airport overflights; there are also a considerable number of commercial activities in the area. Mostly recently an additional technical document has been provided to me by Sandy Brown Ltd. (reference M011-A, dated 27/2/2026) and also the following conditions have been proposed:

40. The cumulative rating sound level from all building services plant (excluding back-up generators and life safety systems) serving the development shall not exceed LAr,Tr 54 dB during the day (07:00-23:00) and LAr,Tr 46 dB at night (23:00-07:00) at the residential dwellings to the east, and a level of LAr,Tr 65 dB during the day (07:00-23:00) and LAr,Tr 57 dB at night (23:00-07:00) at the hotel to the west. The cumulative rating sound level of all life safety systems serving the development shall not exceed LAr,Tr 56 dB at the residential dwellings to the east, and a level of LAr,Tr 67 dB at night (23:00-07:00) at the hotel to the west.

In addition to the above, in relation to the data centres:

- Cumulative noise associated with building services plant (excluding back-up generators and life safety systems) serving the data centres shall not exceed LAr,Tr 48 dB during the day (07:00-23:00) and LAr,Tr 40 dB at night (23:00-07:00) at the residential dwellings to the east, and a level of LAr,Tr 59 dB during the day (07:00-23:00) and LAr,Tr 51 dB at night (23:00-07:00) at the hotel to the west.*
- Cumulative noise associated with the data centres whilst the backup generators are operational should not exceed LAr,Tr 54 dB during the day (07:00-23:00) and LAr,Tr 46 dB at night (23:00-07:00) at the residential dwellings to the east, and a level of LAr,Tr 65 dB during the day (07:00-23:00) and LAr,Tr 57 dB at night (23:00-07:00) at the hotel to the west.*
- Prior to first occupation of each data centre a noise impact assessment or equivalent report shall be submitted in writing and approved by the local planning authority, demonstrating that the installed plant serving data centres comply with the limits presented above.*

6.11.24 I have considered the totality of the acoustic information submitted to date in connection with this application, including the Planning noise report authored by Sandy Brown Ltd. (reference 23023-R06-B, Version B, dated 15/12/2025). I would advise the LPA that the proposals contained within application 25/00893/FPM need not materially degrade local amenity due to the release of noise from the development. This conclusion is based on the

proposed utilisation of a comprehensive set noise mitigation measures, both technical and managerial, some of which have yet to be finalised.

- 6.11.25 The guidance used by the applicant's acoustic advisor ('BS 4142:2014+A1:2019 – Methods for Rating and Assessing Industrial and Commercial Sound') to inform the selection of plant (and other design considerations) is appropriate under the circumstances. NB: the standard is not simply a numerical model seeking to equate plant noise to a prevailing background noise climate, it requires that an assessment reflects local circumstances, characterises of the noise in question, and is therefore contextual in nature.
- 6.11.26 The proposed conditions set out the maximum noise levels associated with a number of scenarios and at two principal receptor locations. If delivered in practice, these levels should not cause undue disturbance to existing occupiers. However, I am concerned that these conditions do not represent a workable means of controlling noise from the proposed development post-implementation as it will be difficult to establish the precise source of each noise (and its categorisation, e.g. pertaining to a 'life safety system') given the complexity of scheme, the existing operation of the GSK site, the uncertainty associated with establishing a presentative background noise level, etc. I fear that these issues render the proposed conditions potentially unenforceable (thereby failing the fourth test set out in Paragraph 55 National Planning Policy Framework). Also, I am mindful of the *Coventry v. Lawrence* 2014 Supreme Court judgement regarding the possible impact of the decision making of the Local Planning Authority on the subsequent determination of common law nuisance (and hence the regulatory role of the Council as regards Part III of the Environmental Protection Act 1990). Accordingly, I counsel the LPA from the direct use of the proposed conditions.
- 6.11.27 Given the peculiarities of the proposed development and its location I would recommend a more iterative mechanism of ensuring that local amenity is safeguarded going forward. This approach would have the advantage of reducing implementation risk as a number of assumptions implicit to the Sandy Brown Limited's assessment, such the selection of mitigation plant, will be clarified as the design process progresses; also, I understand that a phased approach to the development will be utilised – this will enable real world data to be collected and used in the design of subsequent phases. From a regulatory point of view, in the event of a noise complaint to the Council, its obligations set out in the Environmental Protection Act 190 would also be more able to be discharged.
- 6.11.28 In light of the above I suggest the following condition:
40. *Before any item of plant or machinery is used in connection with the data centres hereby approved, it shall be installed and operated in accordance with a written scheme first agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall set out measures both technical and managerial that will limit the acoustic impact of the plant and/or machinery so that its Rating Level does not exceed those values set out in Planning noise report authored by Sandy Brown Ltd. (reference 23023-R06-B, Version B, dated 15/12/2025 and addendum note reference M011-A, dated 27/2/2026) as assessed within the curtilage of any dwelling or other noise sensitive receptor having regard to the definitions and assessment approach set out in British Standard BS4142: 2014 + A1: 2019.*
- 6.11.29 Notwithstanding the above, I would reiterate my recommendation as regards the inclusion of the following Informatives:

The applicant is advised of the Council's powers under Part III of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to prohibit nuisances associated with noise, odour, dust, artificial light and a range of other pollutants that may arise from both demolition/construction sites and ongoing commercial/industrial land uses.

The applicant is advised of the Council's powers under the Control of Pollution Act 1974 to restrict noise generating construction (including demolition) activity audible beyond the development site boundary.

6.12 National Highways

6.12.1 We are satisfied that the proposal would not materially affect the safety, reliability and/or operation of the strategic road network. As such, National Highways would offer no objection.

6.13 Natural England

6.13.1 No comments received. Raised no objection to May 2024 Permission.

6.14 UK Power Networks

6.14.1 No comments received. Raised no objection to May 2024 Permission.

6.15 SBC CCTV Department

6.15.1 No comments received. Raised no objection to May 2024 Permission.

6.16 SBC Highways (Engineers)

6.16.1 No comments received. Raised no objection to May 2024 Permission.

6.17 Crime Prevention

6.17.1 No comments received. Raised no objection to May 2024 Permission.

6.18 HCC Ecology

6.18.1 No comments received. Raised no objection to May 2024 Permission.

6.19 SBC Planning Policy

6.19.1 No comments received. Raised no objection to May 2024 Permission.

6.20 SBC Arboriculture and Conservation Manager

6.20.1 No objection. Raised no objection to May 2024 Permission.

6.21 Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue (Fire Hydrants)

6.21.1 Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue service (hydrants only) will require a condition for the provision and installation of fire hydrants, at no cost to the county council, or fire and rescue service. This is to ensure there are adequate water supplies available for use in an emergency, at all times.

6.22 Hertfordshire LEADS (Archaeology)

6.22.1 No comments received. Raised no objection to May 2024 Permission.

6.23 Active Travel England

6.23.1 ATE recommends approval of the application, subject to the agreement and implementation of planning conditions and/or obligations as set out in this response.

7. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

7.1 National Planning Policy Framework

- 7.1.1 The latest revision of the NPPF was published in December 2024. The policies it contains are material considerations which will be taken into account in dealing with applications. Due weight will be given to development plan policies according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF.
- 7.1.2 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.

7.2 Planning Practice Guidance

- 7.2.1 The Planning Practice Guidance (“PPG”) is an online resource containing guidance supplementing the NPPF. The PPG is a material consideration which should be taken into account in determining planning applications.

7.3 National Design Guide

- 7.3.1 The National Design Guide 2019 is Government guidance on the characteristics of well-designed places and demonstrates what good design means in practice. It has the same status as the PPG and should similarly be taken into account when determining planning applications.

7.4 The Development Plan

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

- Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031
- Waste Core Strategy & Development Management Policies DPD 2011-2026
- Waste Site Allocations DPD 2011-2026
- Minerals Local Plan Review 2002-2016

- 7.4.2 The Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031 was adopted in 2019. The council concluded a full review of the plan in 2024, as required by regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

- 7.4.3 In response to the review, the council is carrying out a partial update of the local plan. The updated plan was examined in December 2025 and consultation on the Main Modifications is open until 31 March 2026. Weight will be given to emerging policies according to:

- a) the stage of preparation of the emerging plan;
- b) the extent to which there are unresolved objections to the policies; and
- c) the degree of consistency between the policies and the most recent revision of the NPPF.

- 7.4.4 In determining applications, regard will be had to other material considerations, including (but not limited to):

- The Planning Practice Guidance;
- The National Design Guide;
- Written ministerial statements and directions;
- Guidance published by Hertfordshire County Council;
- Stevenage Borough Council supplementary planning documents.

7.4.5 Where there are emerging policies which are relevant to the application, these will be highlighted in the main body of this report. The policies set out below are most relevant in the determination of this application:

Policy SP1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development
 Policy SP2: Sustainable development in Stevenage
 Policy SP3: A strong, competitive economy
 Policy SP5: Infrastructure
 Policy SP6: Sustainable transport
 Policy SP8: Good design
 Policy SP11: Climate change, flooding and pollution
 Policy SP12: Green infrastructure and the natural environment
 Policy SP13: The historic environment
 Policy EC1: Allocated sites for employment development
 Policy EC2a: Gunnels Wood Employment Area
 Policy EC5: Active frontages and gateways
 Policy IT4: Transport Assessment and Travel Plans
 Policy IT5: Parking and access
 Policy IT6: Sustainable Transport
 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 FP5: Contaminated land
 Policy FP6: Hazardous Installations
 Policy FP7: Pollution
 Policy NH5: Trees and Woodland

7.5 Supplementary Planning Documents

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

Parking Provision SPD (2025)
 Design Guide SPD (2025)
 Developer Contributions SPD (2025)

7.6 Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule

7.6.1 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. As the laboratory buildings would fall within planning use class E – commercial, business and service use, which is the same use class as retail, this proposal would be CIL liable at £60/m². However, it is recognised that the buildings would not be in retail use, but research and development Classes E(g)(ii) and (iii), with some B2/B8 (general industry/storage and distribution) and therefore would be liable for CIL at £0m² as ‘other development’ under the CIL charging schedule.

8. APPRAISAL

- 8.1.1 The main issues for consideration in the determination of this application are its acceptability in land use and policy terms, design, impact on the setting of nearby designated heritage assets, flood risk and drainage, climate change mitigation, amenity, air quality, noise, highway impact and sustainable travel, access and parking, trees, biodiversity and landscaping and planning obligations to mitigate the impact of the development.
- 8.1.2 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.

8.2 Land Use Policy Considerations

- 8.2.1 The underlying principle of the development of the site has already been established through the May 2024 Permission (as amended). This establishes the principle of the development of circa 150,000m² of employment floorspace at the site within Use Classes E(g), B2 and B8, along with associated development. As set out above, the changes to the scheme accord with the operative part of the May 2024 Permission (as amended). Adopted Local Plan Policy EC1 allocates sites within the Borough for strategic employment development and EC1/1 specifically identifies the site as 'Stevenage GSK and Bioscience Catalyst Campus' for B1(b) and (c)1 uses. The policy includes provision for primary use of the site within Classes B1(b) and B1(c) but explicitly supports ancillary uses. Policy EC1 set a target floorspace for the site of 50,000m² but also states that proposals should 'meet or exceed' the target area.
- 8.2.2 The proposed development would continue to provide for a significant quantum of employment floorspace within the former B1 use classes (now Use Class E), with 118,526m² GIA of floorspace, significantly above the target floorspace under Local Plan Policy EC1. As set out in Table 1 above, the quantum of employment floorspace proposed across the site is slightly below that of the approved scheme. This employment allocation has not changed as part of the Local Plan Review and therefore Policy EC1 with reference to the Stevenage GSK and Bioscience Catalyst Campus still carries significant weight.
- 8.2.3 The applicant is willing to accept a condition which would limit the overall quantum of floorspace for use within Class E(a) retail and on specific sub-sectors. For example, a maximum cap of 500m² is proposed for use of floorspace as 'retail' within Class E(a). It is considered such a condition would be necessary to restrict the proposed quantum of Class E floorspace on the site (other than E(g)) to ensure the proposal complies with Local Plan employment policies SP3 and EC1.
- 8.2.4 Subject to this, it is considered the principle of a new Life Sciences Campus in the manner proposed on the site is acceptable in land use policy terms, subject to satisfying design, transport and environmental policies.

8.3 Design, Layout and Visual Impact

National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance

- 8.3.1 Chapter 12 Achieving well-designed places of the NPPF (2024) stipulates that the creation of high quality, sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. 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. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants,

communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process. Where development is not well designed, permission should be refused.

8.3.2 The NPPF sets out at Paragraph 140 that local planning authorities should seek to ensure that the quality of approved development is not materially diminished between permission and completion, as a result of changes being made to the permitted scheme.

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

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

8.3.4 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.

Development Plan

8.3.5 Policy SP8 generally reflects the requirements of the NPPF in that it requires new development to achieve the highest standards of design and sustainability. In addition, Policy GD1 generally requires all forms of development to meet a high standard of design which includes form of built development, elevational treatment and materials along with how the development would integrate with the urban fabric, its relationship between buildings, landscape design and relevant aspects of sustainable design.

8.3.6 In the emerging local plan review and partial update, criterion (e) of Policy GD1 is updated to refer to “unacceptable” adverse impacts. The intention behind the change is to make clear that in some circumstances, an adverse impact might still fall within acceptable bounds and that this is a matter of judgement for the decision maker. Policy GD2 is a new policy emerging from the local plan review and partial update. It states that proposals which demonstrate they have been designed to achieve a rating of excellent or higher against the relevant BREEAM standard will be strongly supported. Having regard to paragraph 49 of the NPPF, this emerging version of the policy is afforded significant weight in the assessment of the application.

8.3.7 The proposal has gone through a pre-application process with both the Local Planning Authority and HCC as Lead Local Flood Authority, which has resulted in improvements to the scheme. The scheme 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 to be a well-designed place.

8.3.8 Given the hybrid nature of the application, it includes detailed design of buildings 2 and 4, the data centres, gyratory, substations, MSCP1, surface carparks 1 and 2 and part of the site layout and then provides parameters and design intent for the outline elements.

Included within the application is an Illustrative Masterplan which shows how the entire scheme could be developed, which would be in accordance with the submitted Parameter Plan and the Design Codes for both buildings and landscape, which set the framework for the proposed Campus.

8.3.9 Key design features and principles which would inform and establish the environment at the Campus include:

- Create bespoke buildings and floorspace which connect science and nature
- Setting a series of measurable performance targets to deliver holistic sustainability
- Townscape principles which seek to deliver a successful group of buildings and spaces
- A family of buildings (a connected genealogy of common features) but with diversity of architectural expression; and
- A range of landscape treatments that deliver amenity and establish different character areas across the site.

8.3.10 Local Plan policy EC5 requires active frontages and gateways to be created along key infrastructure routes within the Gunnels Wood Employment Area. The policy sets criteria to help guide development within the area and again, this has helped inform the proposed development and the principles set out within the Design Codes. In particular:

- a) Proposed buildings would face directly onto Gunnels Wood Road and include active frontages and / or feature elevations
- b) The buildings would not be set back from the road and instead would aim to address and establish a clear street frontage
- c) Car parking is proposed primarily within the dedicated MSCPs with dedicated service area created in discreet, secondary frontages. The Campus would not include surface level parking or servicing areas to front directly onto Gunnels Wood Road; and
- d) The tallest, 'landmark' buildings (Buildings 10, 11 and 12) would be sited on the corner plots of the site facing onto Gunnels Wood Road. The Design Code requires the façade treatment of these buildings to respond to their visibility and function as a focal point for the Campus.

8.3.11 There is no change to this policy within the Local Plan Review. The strategic vision for the proposed development is to create a Campus of exemplar design quality. The detailed design of buildings 2 and 4, the data centres, MSCP1, substations and the initial phase of landscaping works (to create the Arrival Plaza and the Forum) would provide a clear indication of the design intent. The quality of design for the subsequent phase(s) included within the outline element would be guaranteed through the updated Design Codes which are provided to guide both the buildings and landscaping. Condition 20 is to be amended accordingly to refer to the revised Masterplan Design Code, subject to planning permission.

Context and Layout

8.3.12 Amendments are sought to the May 2024 Permission (as amended) to remove 8 of the laboratory buildings, one MSCP, the amenity hub and introduce two new data centre buildings all set within a smaller publicly accessible landscaped science park, comprising The Forum, Arrival Plaza and Gateway Gardens with vehicular and pedestrian access. All other aspects of the previous planning permission would be delivered including the new gyratory.

8.3.13 The buildings would comprise a variety of different uses, including Research and Development laboratories and office buildings, GMP/flexible laboratory buildings, training and innovation buildings, amenity and collaborative spaces together with the data centres. There would be two Green Transport Hubs that would provide multi-storey car parking, cycle parking and potential scooter/e-bike hire. A site layout plan showing which area of the

application site is subject to detailed planning approval and outline approval (with all matters reserved) can be seen in Figure 2 below (drawing ref. SEQ-HBA-SW-ZZ-DR-A-080020 REV C01). An Illustrative Masterplan showing how the site could be developed as a whole is provided in Figure 3 below (drawing ref. 25021-EXA-ZZ-GF-DR-L-00001 REV P01).

- 8.3.14 Laboratory buildings 2 and 4, MSCP1, surface car parks 1 and 2, substations x 2, data centres 1 and 2 and the proposed new A602 / Gunnels Wood Road gyratory all form part of the detailed planning application. The layout of these buildings, areas and gyratory show how the site would be developed should planning permission be granted. The remainder of the site comprising laboratory buildings 1, 3, 5 and 6, MSCP 2 and the existing CTC building form part of the outline application with all matters reserved for future consideration. However, the submitted Parameter Plan (see Figure 4 below, drawing ref. SEQ-HBA-SW-ZZ-DR-A-080021 REV C01) showing the maximum development area and building heights and the Design Codes for both buildings and landscape which set the framework for the proposed Campus, are subject to re-approval and the existing conditions would be updated as part of any outline planning permission.
- 8.3.15 The masterplan has taken a campus approach to the layout of the buildings, which would be set around 'The Forum' providing outdoor amenity and collaboration workspace within a high-quality landscaped setting. Vehicular access would be provided using the existing accesses from the A602 / Gunnels Wood Road roundabout and A602 / J7 A1(M) roundabout leading to new access roads within the site which would link up with the existing GSK campus perimeter road. The main pedestrian / cycle access would be from the existing A602 underpass in the northeastern corner, which would link into proposed 'Gateway Gardens' alongside buildings 1, 3 and 5 with designated cycle and pedestrian paths leading visitors and staff across the main access road into the 'Arrival Plaza' in front of building 2 and data centre 2.
- 8.3.16 The proposed multi storey car parks and substations would be sited around the periphery of the site, on the western, northern and eastern boundaries closest to the A1(M), A602 and mainline railway. Buildings 2 and 4 would be sited to the south of the site to provide a gateway to the existing GSK campus. The data centres would be located to the north to utilise a larger portion of land with fewer below-ground constraints. They would be consolidated in a single, secure enclosure to allow all specific vehicle movements, maintenance and access to take place behind a secure line.
- 8.3.17 The layout is based on two data centres of broadly identical layouts, mirrored. This would allow for areas of servicing and plant to be consolidated in the centre of the site, whilst the more visible elevations to north, south and east are able to have a more distinct visual identity. A substation located in the north-west corner would act as a key wayfinding marker into the campus, and an adjacent security 'airlock' would manage access into the data centre site. All data centre car parking would be located within the secure boundary in surface car parks.
- 8.3.18 The proposed overarching landscape and townscape strategy has evolved from the emerging masterplan, where the key themes include nature, science, place making and community with the overall approach to create interest and diversity. Buildings connected to nature, which are outward looking and set around plot clusters to create a unique and positive setting also form part of the approach. The proposed development of the Campus would incorporate a family of buildings with diversity of architectural expression, building characters, forms and materiality, whilst sharing some key common features.

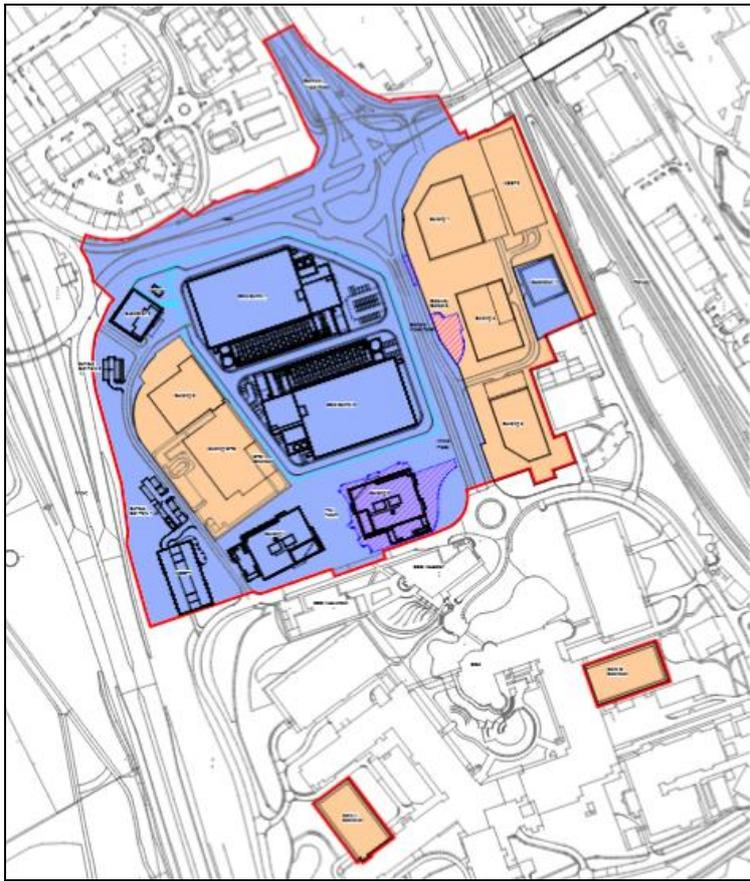


Figure 2 Detail and Outline Boundary Plan (purple zone is detailed)



Figure 3 Illustrative Masterplan



Figure 4 Parameter Plan

Scale, Massing and Visual Impact

- 8.3.17 Six key townscape principles have been identified, namely working with existing levels - higher in the north lower in the south, building height variation, landmark buildings at main site entrances, community focal point in most visible location and active-service-passive hierarchy. These principles are supported to ensure the site would be developed in the most successful way. The townscape principle of varied building heights and roofscapes is key for providing visual variation and interest.
- 8.3.18 Given Buildings 2 and 4 are subject to detailed planning approval, proposed elevations have been submitted which show they would be six storeys in height with rooftop plant above. The data centre buildings would be three storeys with rooftop flues. The MSCP 1 on the western boundary adjacent to the A1(M) would be ten storeys in height and has been designed to meet the needs of phase 1 of the development including Buildings 2 and 4 and the data centres. The car park is designed as a split-level structure for maximum efficiency.
- 8.3.19 The Parameter Plan (see Figure 4 above) showing the maximum development area and building heights shows buildings in the outline phase of the proposal would range in height from 125.9m AOD (Above Ordnance Datum) in the northwestern corner (building 6) to 144.4m AOD in the northern entrance to the site (building 1) including plant and lift overruns. The applicant has carried out a townscape and visual impact assessment looking at the proposed building heights from key views within and outside of the site to inform the proposed massing and scale, namely from the railway, pedestrian/cyclist approach, car/bus approach and from within the Campus.
- 8.3.20 Views from the east (the mainline railway) would include buildings 1, 3, 5 and MSCP2. The facade design of MSCP2 east elevation would respond to its high visibility from the railway, with opportunities for supergraphics and integration of artwork. This building character is

specified as part of the Design Code. The main pedestrian and cyclist approach to the site would be from the north, along an existing pedestrian and cycle path using the existing underpass under the A602. Key buildings in views from this approach would include building 1 and data centre 1, which would act as gateway landmarks into the new Elevate Quarter, with taller massing or identifiable features to mark the main entrance corners of the site. New landscape 'gateway gardens' with designated cycle and pedestrian paths would lead visitors and staff into the site.

- 8.3.21 There would be two key vehicle routes for cars and buses into the site from Gunnels Wood Road gyratory junction, approached from the north of the junction or the east through A602 and A1(M) junction 7. The townscape view from the main approach from Gunnels Wood Road gyratory would be dominated by building 1 and data centre 1 with a chamfered corner marking the entrance into the Campus. The view from the A602 would also provide opportunities for supergraphics on the east elevation of MSCP2, which would be visible by car as well as the railway. The view from the main approach from the A1(M) would be the existing trees to the east of the A1(M), which provide screening along the boundary of the site. The substation adjacent to data centre 1 would act as a landmark building to the A1(M) vehicle entrance to the Campus.
- 8.3.22 Considering views from within the site, the Forum would sit at the heart of the masterplan. It would be a meeting point and shared amenity for the campus, providing external amenity that would enable collaboration and innovation. The townscape view studies show the key approaches towards the Forum including the main pedestrian routes from the arrival plaza, existing GSK campus and from MSCP1. The views show that the Forum would be framed as a focal point between buildings 2 and 4. The buildings relationship with the surrounding landscape would be key, to provide activated frontages.
- 8.3.23 It is considered the submitted townscape analysis is thorough and the justification for the proposed scale and massing for all buildings in the detailed element of the proposal and within the parameter plan for the outline phase is sound. The application site sits on an island adjoined only by the existing GSK campus to the south. Bounded by the railway to the east, the A1(M) to the west and the Gunnels Wood employment area to the north, there is an opportunity for taller buildings in this location which, if well designed, could represent landmark features in this gateway part of the town.
- 8.3.24 Further to the above, it has been identified that the proposed townscape strategy of varied building heights and roofscapes is key for providing visual variation and interest. The approach of having taller buildings sited around the pedestrian and vehicular gateways to the site is justified and supported. Overall, it can be concluded that the proposed form and height of buildings 2 and 4, together with MSCP1, substations and the data centre buildings would be acceptable considering their location within the Campus. The suggested maximum height parameters of the remaining buildings would fit with the overall masterplan vision and would not have an adverse visual impact on the surrounding area and identified key views into the site.

Design and Appearance

- 8.3.25 The design and appearance of the buildings within the outline element of the proposal are reserved for future consideration, however an updated Masterplan Design Code has been submitted as a document to be re-approved as part of any outline planning permission which would provide a design framework to ensure future buildings would adhere to the high-quality architectural approach that has been adopted for buildings 2 and 4, MSCP1, substations and the data centres. Should planning permission be granted, this document would be subject to an updated planning condition 20 to ensure all future buildings comply with the approved Design Code.

- 8.3.26 Turning firstly to the specifics of the Masterplan Design Code, the proposed development of the Campus would incorporate a family of buildings with diversity of architectural expression, building characters, forms and materiality, whilst sharing some key common features. There would be six families or groups of building type, namely Landmark, Bookend, Woodland, Boundary, Link, Amenity Hub, Civic Placemaker and in addition, GSK extension buildings on the existing GSK campus.
- 8.3.27 Landmark buildings would comprise buildings 1 and substation 2, which would be the tallest buildings on the campus and/or located on key corners of the site. The Design and Access Statement advises the Landmark buildings would present a bold and memorable welcome to the visitors of the Campus and would be visibly prominent from a distance as well as close up when travelling by car, bicycle or as a pedestrian.
- 8.3.28 The Link Buildings (3, 6 and CTC Extension) would provide visual connections between buildings as visitors and staff move across the Campus. The Link buildings would have dynamic front facades with a horizontal emphasis in expression. The passive/back facades would also have a horizontal emphasis that is both curated and hardworking.
- 8.3.29 The Woodland Buildings (5 and MSCP1) would be located at key corner interfaces between GSK and the new Campus, bordered by existing and new trees on their south facades. They would comprise chamfered forms to allow for retention of existing greenery, open up views of neighbouring buildings and address the Campus Park by providing opportunities for entrances.
- 8.3.30 The Civic Buildings (2 and 4) is the key are the key buildings addressing the central Forum, through a strong civic presence and clear identity. They would act as an anchor point in the Campus. The elevations of Data Centre 2 facing onto the Forum and Arrival Plaza have also been designed to respond to the civic scale and character of this part of the campus.
- 8.3.31 The Boundary Buildings (MSCP2 and Substation 1) are peripheral buildings within the Campus that primarily front onto the roads and/or railway around the Campus. There is opportunity for supergraphics on prominent external facing elevations, whilst the quieter sides facing into the Campus can respond to the human scale and feel of the Campus through planting and screening.
- 8.3.32 The Root Buildings (data centres) are central to the Campus and form the background to key views from across the site. There is opportunity for a distinctive graphical treatment on prominent external facing elevations, whilst the quieter sides facing into the Data Centre site can provide areas for servicing and flues.
- 8.3.33 The GSK Extension Buildings would be set within the existing GSK campus. As such they are less prominent than the buildings within the primary development site. The buildings' footprint and scale would be a continuation of the existing campus buildings. Their form and materiality would be developed in an architectural language that is sympathetic to the existing campus, and cognisant of their impact on any longer views from outside the campus.

Buildings 2 and 4

- 8.3.34 The primary function of buildings 2 and 4 is for specialised laboratory use. In terms of the detailed architectural approach, the design has been considered through six key principles from masterplan to detailed scale. At masterplan scale, the buildings would respond to the landscape through the subtle rotation of massing, opening up routes to the centre of the site and making connections with the multistorey car park and adjacent GSK site. Main elevations have been given a civic quality to respond the arrival square, whilst a vertical hierarchy would give order to the overall mass. Emphasis has been placed on 'showing the science' using expressed risers, visually permeable ground floors and feature glazed

moments. At human scale, canopies would be used to clearly denote entrances, whilst the facades each have a unique character to provide identity within the wider masterplan.

- 8.3.35 The ground floor of both buildings would respond to the civic quality of the surrounding public realm. Increased areas of glazing would be used to provide visual permeability, entrances positioned in prominent locations to aid way finding and accessibility. Ground floors would be designed with generous reception spaces and surrounding lettable spaces would have connections to the wider landscape to facilitate a range of potential uses. Service areas would be discreetly located away from main public realm areas to separate heavy goods traffic from pedestrians and cycles.
- 8.3.36 In terms of detailed façade design of Building 2, the northern elevation would have a gridded elevation with fenestration to provide solar shading. The north elevation would also feature the main entrance, with a cantilevered canopy and adjacent cutaway, which provide a route through to the forum. The ground floor would be glazed to provide openness and transparency onto Meadow Walk with views in to 'show the science'. Looking onto the central Forum, the east elevation is treated as a civic frontage. The large central riser would act as a key wayfinding marker and would feature pattern and perforation to tie in with the data centre facades. Massing would step down to the south to provide an amenity roof terrace, and feature windows to the south-west would provide key moments onto the forum and Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst. An open ground floor would provide views in and out to the Forum.
- 8.3.37 The south elevation would feature balconies that provide activation towards the opposite Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst public realm. The central feature riser would break up the massing across the long elevation. Overlooking the Arrival Plaza, the north-west of Building 2 would include feature windows to provide activation and to 'show the science'. Sculptural risers would provide a distinctive identity to the elevation, with a material palette to align with the adjacent data centres. The lower portion of the elevation would feature a large extent of trees and natural landscaping to the foreground.
- 8.3.38 In terms of detailed façade design of Building 4, the southern elevation has been designed to address the existing GSK site through a strong civic presence and clear identity. A strong gridded structure defines the elevation, with a clearly located canopied entrance, further signified through the adjacent glazed cutaway chamfer. The grid extends beyond the parapet to contain a feature element of plant screen, giving a civic scale and proportion to the building. This cuts down towards the east to provide a roof terrace and step down towards the Forum. Amenity terraces are provided to the eastern elevation, both to provide solar shading and to offer the benefits of amenity to each floorplate. A feature riser tower is located on this elevation, and extends beyond parapet level, acting as a distinctive wayfinding marker with potential to incorporate distinctive artwork or light features.
- 8.3.39 The northern elevation would act as a backdrop to Meadow Walk and is designed to maximise views out through regular openings. Ground level glazing would activate the public realm to Meadow Walk, offering opportunities to 'show the science' and activities to spill out into the public realm. Distinctive riser towers are used to express the scientific function of the building on the western elevation, which is treated as a hardworking service elevation. Larger picture windows would give an outlook to the wider landscape. At ground floor, the service yard would be screened by secure fencing in a style to match the building.

Data Centres

- 8.3.40 The Data Centres would comprise flexible main data halls with associated administration and internal plant areas, along with ancillary external plant and backup generators. As critical infrastructure, the buildings would be contained within a secure enclosure with associated security huts and fencing. In addition, a dedicated substation (Substation 2) would provide power.

- 8.3.41 The design of the buildings has been considered from massing through to material use. At masterplan scale, the buildings would respond to the site through an offset in massing, opening up views across the site and staggering the building elevations to create a sense of movement. Main elevations are treated with a feature screen to respond to the key public areas, whilst inwards facing elevations deal with more intensive plant and servicing requirements. As a contained secure site, emphasis has been placed on achieving a green, discreet boundary onto key public facing elevations. The overall use of colour and pattern ties the buildings into the overall design code colour and material schemes and provides a distinctive identity to both the buildings and Campus.
- 8.3.42 As a secure site, consideration has been given to providing a positive aspect to the boundary condition for the data centres. Facing onto more public areas such as the Forum and Arrival Plaza, the boundary treatment would use a level change and planting with wire crate gabion walls to be filled with locally sourced stone to provide a more naturally screened boundary to the data centre site, whilst meeting security requirements. Boundary treatment serving more private areas away from public spaces would comprise 3.5m high weld mesh panel fencing.

MSCP 1

- 8.3.43 Multistorey car park 1 is designed to meet the needs of Buildings 2 and 4 in the detailed phase. The car park is designed as a 10-storey split level structure for maximum efficiency and features a PV canopy at roof level to provide additional power generation on site. With regards to the detailed façade design, the architects have taken inspiration from an oak tree as an overarching reference point for the project with a facade inspired by the fractal patterns of an oak leaf.

Substations

- 8.3.44 There are no changes to the approved substation 1 as part of this S73 application, with a Green PPC finish. Substation 2 serving the data centres would comprise a sinusoidal (wave form) aluminium, silver finish with illuminated wayfinding signage on an elevated structure above.

Materiality

- 8.3.45 Materials have been selected to give strong, yet unique identities to each building. The family of building types referred to above would incorporate a colour palette of brown, orange, yellow and green that would display variety and take inspiration of the changing colours of the oak tree and the existing natural colours of the site. As a phased masterplan, new buildings would incorporate colours on their facade that are complimentary of adjacent buildings and provide variety across the Campus. The facade materials would be high quality and durable. A range of primary material palettes would include anodised/PPC metal, pigmented concrete, glass, metal, timber and terracotta. Other materials may be used with care and consideration.
- 8.3.46 Both buildings 2 and 4 would use colour to provide identity and character (building 2 – green aluminium and building 4 – metallic profile finish), drawing on the overall colour scheme outlined in the Design Code. The buildings would share a common language through external risers and plant screens.
- 8.3.47 Data centre facades have been carefully considered to respond to the surrounding site, as well as the functional requirements of the buildings. Three facade types have been identified and applied in response to the surrounding site conditions. The type 1 elevation would be used as a feature backdrop to key public spaces including the Arrival Plaza and Forum, complimenting the material and colour palettes of the wider campus buildings. The

type 2 facade would provide a clear visual identity to the administration areas, and the simple type 3 facade would provide areas for servicing and would be inward facing.

- 8.3.48 Developed from the key design principles, the type 1 feature areas of elevation would be based on the concept of a dappled canopy of leaves drawing connections back to the Stevenage Oak, which runs through the wider masterplan. A faceted silver facade would play with scale and uses, folding to add depth and catch light. Coloured panels would be used to give an abstract large-scale pattern across the whole elevation, providing a sense of movement and change across the facade.

Conclusion

- 8.3.49 It is considered that the detailed design of buildings 2 and 4, MSCP1, data centres 1 and 2 and the substations is of high quality and well justified. The buildings would respond successfully to their context and the character of the wider area. With regards to the outline element of the proposal, the proposed building types and materiality as set out within the updated Masterplan Design Code provides a strong framework to guide the future development of the site. The updated Design Code would be secured via an amended planning condition 20 should planning permission be granted to ensure the architectural vision within this application is central to future reserved matters applications.
- 8.3.50 The overall design approach detailed above is supported and it is considered the proposal would be in accordance with paragraph 135 of the NPPF in respect of design, Policies SP8 and GD1 – High Quality Design of the Local Plan (2019) and Stevenage Design Guide (2025).

8.4 Historic Environment and Archaeology

- 8.4.1 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 contains ‘statutory duties’ that apply to this application:

S.66: The decision maker shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed assets (relates to Knebworth Park and Garden and associated listed buildings, Broadwater Farmhouse, Roebuck Hotel, The Smithy, Golf Club House and Deard’s End Bridge).

- 8.4.2 Case Law has determined that in this context ‘preserve’ is taken to mean ‘to do no harm’. The NPPF requires ‘great weight’ to be given to conserving the significance of designated heritage assets (212). This is regardless of whether any harm may be ‘substantial harm’ or ‘less than substantial harm’ (212). Any harm should require ‘clear and convincing’ justification (213). If a development proposal would lead to less than substantial harm, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal (214).
- 8.4.3 In undertaking that balancing, Case Law has confirmed that the presumption to preserve in the 1990 Act is a strong one and must be given ‘considerable importance and weight’. For instance, less than substantial harm is not a less than substantial planning issue. However, that presumption is not irrefutable and can be outweighed by circumstances important enough to justify it. A decision maker that has followed the processes set out in the NPPF can be considered to have discharged their duties under the 1990 Act. The balancing, however, is not ‘equal’ the presumption to preserve must come first.
- 8.4.4 Policy SP13 of the Local Plan relates to the historic environment and states that the Council will preserve and enhance the most important areas and characteristics of Stevenage. The Local Plan is consistent with the overarching policies contained within Section 16 of the NPPF. The NPPF is clear that the level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is required to understand the impact the development would have on the significance of the asset (207).

- 8.4.5 The original application was supported by a Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment, which assessed the setting and significance of the designated heritage assets in the area surrounding the application site, which could be affected by the proposed development. It found that the application site did not form part of the setting of any of the heritage assets assessed, as it does not provide any meaningful experience of the assets in question, nor form part of any key views of the assets or have any meaningful contextual relationship with them. However, the site visit confirmed that modern buildings in the vicinity of the site were visible from the setting of the following heritage assets:
- Knebworth Park and Garden, and associated listed buildings.
 - Broadwater Farmhouse (NHLE 1101201)
 - Roebuck Hotel (NHLE 1308083)
 - The Smithy (NHLE 1101200)
 - Golf Club House (NHLE 1174298)
 - Deard's End Bridge (NHLE 1003546)
- 8.4.6 The report does acknowledge however that, due to their scale, there is potential for some of the buildings to be visible in the distance from the above listed heritage assets. Any visibility however would be within the existing context of other similar scale and format buildings which form an established backdrop to the assets. It follows that any change would be small and would not materially affect the character of the setting. On that basis, the report concludes that the proposed development would result in a negligible effect on the significance of the heritage assets. It is considered the amendments to the scheme and the introduction of data centres to the site would not alter this conclusion.
- 8.4.7 The report also considers the archaeological potential and assessment of significance of the site and determines that it has a 'low potential' for the presence of prehistoric remains and below ground remains associated with the Roman period. The site has a general potential for the presence of archaeological remains associated with the Medieval period and for below ground remains associated with the Post-Medieval and Modern period. It is identified that some remains of interest may have survived in the three smaller southern parcels and therefore a condition is recommended for a programme of archaeological works. The evidence provided as part of the assessment demonstrates that the proposed development continues to accord with Policy SP13 of the Local Plan and Section 16 of the NPPF.

8.5 Public Realm and Landscaping

- 8.5.1 The application site measures 17.37ha and provides an opportunity to create meaningful areas of public realm through hard and soft landscaping. The Campus would be 'open' meaning that the public realm, including The Forum, Meadow Walk, and Motion Park with associated recreational equipment and facilities would be accessible to the general public. It follows that the proposed development would deliver substantial new recreational public space within Stevenage. However, it should be noted that due to security reasons the land around the data centres would be private and secured with fencing.
- 8.5.2 The revised Landscape Masterplan submitted in support of the s73 application sets out the general principles that guide the public realm and landscaping across the site. The revised Landscape Design Code sets out the principles that will guide future Reserved Matters submissions in the Outline Area, consistent with the original Code but updated to reflect the changes to the scheme. Condition 21 is to be amended accordingly to refer to the revised Landscape Design Code. The vision for the public realm is set out at Section 4 of the Masterplan Report which states that landscaping should be: Adaptive, Activated, Healthy and Innovative. The Illustrative Masterplan (see Figure 3 above) shows how the site could be developed in accordance with those principles.

8.5.3 The proposed development would include the following separate and defined Character Areas:

- The Forum
- Meadow Walk
- Green Links
- Motion Park
- Eco Buffer
- Data Centres

8.5.4 Each Character Area would perform a specific function and would comprise hard landscaping, planting and associated facilities (such as fitness equipment or seating) relevant to its intended use. Section 5 of the Landscape Masterplan report sets out the Character and Use for each area. In summary:

Character Area	Character	Use and Function
The Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Amenity hub of the campus, busy, activated, unique > Strong links between internal and external spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Space for working, socialising, gathering, performing, presenting > Outdoor dining / working > Space for pop up / temporary activations / public art / installations / cinema > Ecological / wetland area
Meadow Walk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Open flexible civic space with green edge / frame > Welcoming, high quality soft and hard materiality > Activated and busy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Navigate and orientate > Spill-out ground floor uses > Meanwhile / pop up activations / Public art > Integrated pop-up power, data, drainage and water for events
Green Links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Open and urban with green edge / frame > Welcoming high quality > Activated and busy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Welcome, navigate and orientate > Active travel (cycle link) > Spill-out ground floor uses > Green infrastructure > Space for recreation, gathering, working outdoors > Quiet, wild garden with ecological function and educational aspect > Quiet areas for sitting / collaborating / reading
Motion Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Open flexible civic space with green edge / frame > Welcoming, high quality soft and hard materiality > Multi-use and adaptive with integrated blue infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Sports and recreation > Meanwhile / pop up activations / public art > Integrated stormwater drainage
Eco Buffer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Natural, retained, ecological and highly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Highly vegetated and ecological

	biodiverse > Mature trees to be retained with strategy for supplementary tree planting	> Walking loops with micro destinations along the journey > Habitat features, interpretation and monitoring > Attenuation areas
Data Centres	> Soft edges to the data centre > Fencing and boarder features > Connection to the campus through colour and pattern	> Data storage

- 8.5.5 The public realm would include a range of facilities (such as outdoor meeting spaces, outdoor dining, seating, sports court, table tennis, walking trail and performance space with an option for outdoor cinema) and would be connected by pedestrian loops. The landscaping and public realm is designed to be functional and multi-purpose. The site has a complex topography and the approach to landscaping seeks to work with existing levels where possible and minimise the amount of spoil required to be removed. Gentle slopes and mounds are proposed to deliver compliant access and create naturally defined spaces. The public realm also includes integrated blue infrastructure to deliver a sustainable drainage strategy with biodiversity value and a positive aesthetic character.
- 8.5.6 The principal strategies that underpin the public realm and landscaping within the Campus are topography (the site slopes from west to east), blue infrastructure (water features), types of surface treatments (hard landscaping), furniture, fitness and recreation, health and wellbeing, boundary treatments and navigation and wayfinding. These strategies are explained in further detail in Section 6 of the updated Landscape Masterplan report.
- 8.5.7 The detailed element of the application includes a large proportion of the proposed public realm and landscaping (including The Forum, Meadow Walk, Eco Buffer and Data Centres). The applicant considers the public realm to be integral to the identity of the Campus and wants to establish the primary landscape setting for the buildings from the initial point of occupation of any floorspace.
- 8.5.8 Given the complexity of the development, particularly around site levels and phasing of the buildings in the detailed application the landscape strategy also responds to the construction phasing of the masterplan. The proposed condition for The Forum sees all proposed landscaping treatment around Buildings 2 and 4 footprints to be delivered as part of phase 1. This would also include the Arrival Plaza on Gunnels Wood Road. During the interim, the area within which Building 2 would be constructed would have a temporary retaining wall along the edge of The Forum and a loose gravel surface to the north of the existing car park which can be utilised for seating opportunities. The existing car park in the building 2 footprint would be retained while MSCP1 is constructed. The remaining meanwhile landscape would be planted with wildflower or left as existing vegetation. Once the construction of building 2 commences, the meanwhile landscape space would be removed and the proposed landscape design implemented.
- 8.5.9 The proposed public realm and landscaping at the site accords with paragraph 135 of the NPPF which seeks to ensure that developments are visually attractive and include appropriate and effective landscaping. The proposed development also accords with the guidance relating to 'Public Spaces' and 'Nature' Sections of the Design Guide SPD (2025) and Policies GD1 and SP12 of the Local Plan. It is considered the overall approach and principles that have led to the development of the proposed landscape strategy are fully justified and the resulting strategy is exemplary in terms of delivering on the overarching vision. The high-quality landscape strategy would significantly enhance the user experience

of the site and make the Campus a destination people would want to spend time in, whether for work or leisure.

8.6 Highway Impact, Access and Parking

8.6.1 The original planning application was accompanied by a Transport Assessment and a Framework Travel Plan (April 2023) which followed extensive pre-application discussions with Hertfordshire County Council, Stevenage Borough Council, and National Highways. A robust sustainable travel package was prepared to maximise the use of sustainable modes of transport with a range of infrastructure and motivational initiatives. The Transport Assessment also included detailed analysis of the impact of the development on the local road network, and specifically the new gyratory junction on the A602, Junction 7 of the A1(M), and the roundabout junction of Broadhall Way with Monkswood Way to the east of the gyratory.

8.6.2 This s73 application is supported by a Transport Assessment Addendum, which has been prepared in relation to the amended plans. The robust sustainable travel package would remain focal to the revised scheme. The revised scheme would result in no alterations to the layout of the planned new gyratory junction on the A602 or the improvements to the direct vehicle access from the A1(M) junction approved as part of the original hybrid application in May 2024.

Vehicle Access

8.6.3 Vehicle access and egress to the site is currently provided from the south side of the junction of Gunnels Wood Road and the A602 Broadhall Way. In addition, vehicle access is provided via a direct access from Junction 7 of the A1(M). The Gunnels Wood junction is currently provided as a roundabout and is designed to permit all turning movements. Free flow left turn lanes are provided between all adjacent arms to remove left turning traffic from interaction with circulatory traffic. At present the roundabout junction operates on a 'priority' system without traffic signals. Pedestrian and cycle facilities are provided via underpasses. The direct access from Junction 7 of the A1(M) provides access only to the site. There is no vehicle egress at this location.

8.6.4 As part of the detailed element of the application, a new gyratory junction would be provided in place of the current Gunnels Wood roundabout junction. The design reflects what was approved under the original application. The new gyratory junction, which would be signal controlled, would continue to provide all turning movements with the exception of A602 west to Gunnels Wood south. Traffic entering the GSK Campus site from the west would instead make use of the existing direct access from Junction 7 of the A1(M). A plan of the gyratory can be seen in Figure 5 below.

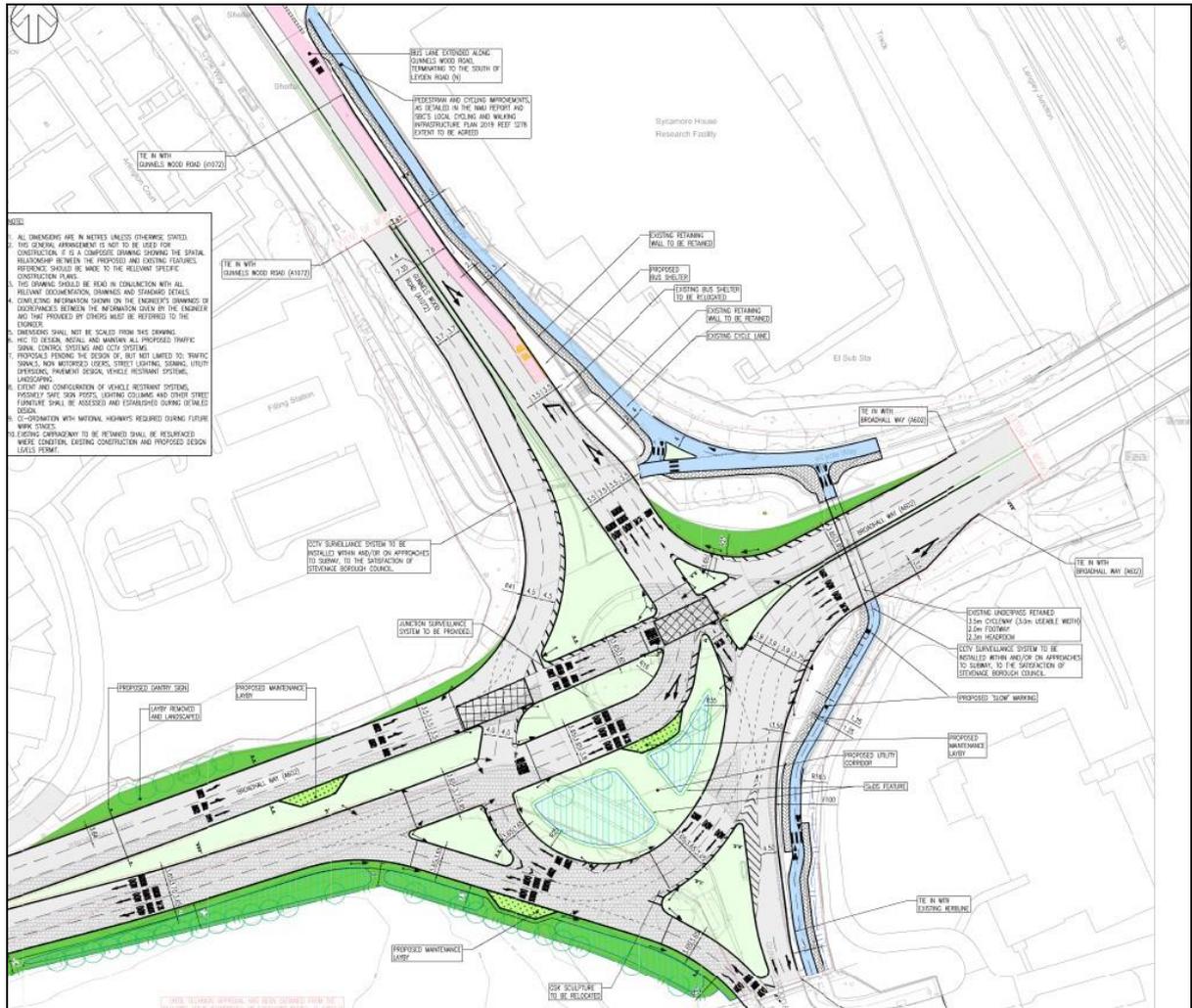


Figure 5 New Gyratory

- 8.6.5 The vehicle access to the site from the new Gunnels Wood gyratory would be provided as a two-lane entry. In order that traffic entering the site does not block back to the gyratory, no right turn movements would be permitted or possible on this road until traffic reaches the existing internal site roundabout that is located around 300m to the south of the entry from the gyratory. This would ensure that no traffic is waiting to turn right thus creating a blockage on one of the access lanes. In addition, the only left turn side road on this section of road would be around 180m south of the entry from the gyratory.
- 8.6.6 Vehicle egress from the site to the new Gunnels Wood gyratory would be provided as a two lane exit from the existing internal site roundabout, narrowing to one lane to allow for the provision of the proposed bus lane egress. Beyond the proposed bus egress gate, the two-lane provision would resume and lead to the stop line at the gyratory access. Modelling of this feature shows that forecast queues leaving the site in the PM peak hour could be accommodated within this design.
- 8.6.7 In terms of A1(M) Junction 7 access, a two-lane entrance to the Campus site fed by Link J711 would be provided. This would be supported by changes to road markings such that Lane 1 would be for GSK Campus site flows only, and Lane 2 would be for GSK Campus site and 'straight ahead' flows. The changes to road markings at Junction 7 of the A1(M) have been subjected to a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit. An audit brief setting out the terms of the Road Safety Audit was supplied to, and approved by, National Highways. Upon entry to the site from Junction 7 of the A1(M), a signalised junction would be provided within the

internal site perimeter road located 65m from the Junction 7 access. The lights would be timed to ensure traffic accessing the site would not block back to the A1(M) junction.

- 8.6.8 Within the proposed development, all internal roads would be provided with 7.5m wide two-way routes and 6m kerb radii. The detailed element of the application is made on this basis with the area within the outline application to be subject to future reserved matters applications. At present GSK security access (barriers) are provided on the Gunnels Wood Road access, approximately 140m from the current Gunnels Wood roundabout. As part of the proposed development, the GSK security lodge would be relocated to the south of the site within GSK retained land as per planning permission 23/00249/FP. This permission is valid until May 2026. As such, access to the site from the new Gunnels Wood gyratory would be unimpeded by security delays.
- 8.6.9 The junction of the internal site perimeter road with Gunnels Wood Road would be provided as a one-way eastbound route with only left turn movements permitted. By making this route one way eastbound, it would prevent traffic entering the site from the new Gunnels Wood Road gyratory turning right and potentially impeding other arriving traffic, hence removing the potential for traffic to tail back to the new gyratory. By preventing the right turn from the perimeter road to Gunnels Wood Road, this would reduce the potential for in or outbound traffic to / from the site to be impeded.
- 8.6.10 Sense checking of the proposed masterplan layout has been carried out to ensure that traffic entering the site from either the new Gunnels Wood gyratory or the A1(M) Junction 7 access, could access all areas / buildings of the proposed site.

Cycle and Pedestrian Access

- 8.6.11 The existing external cycle and pedestrian route network is good in terms of coverage, with a direct traffic free link from the town centre to the application site and links to the east and south. With regards to internal site cycle links these would connect to the cycle route access to the site which would be on the south-eastern corner of the current / proposed A602 / Gunnels Wood junction. Cycle and pedestrian access to the site would be via the existing underpass, which is located under the eastern arm of the A602 approach to the current roundabout / proposed gyratory junction. Improvements would continue to be sought for this underpass via planning condition 18 in terms of lighting, artwork and signage.
- 8.6.12 On emerging from the underpass, attractive landscaping / planting would provide separate cycle and pedestrian routes heading south on the east side of Gunnels Wood Road. Along this section of route, access to three of the proposed buildings would be provided. A 10m wide raised surface crossing would provide access to the main Arrival Plaza on the west side of Gunnels Wood Road. The crossing would feature a central reserve / refuge area so that only two lanes of traffic would have to be crossed at once. A 20mph speed limit would apply across the Campus.
- 8.6.13 Where cycle / pedestrian routes cross internal roads, raised carriageway surfaces with tactile paving / rumble strips would be provided to warn pedestrians / cyclists of the crossing. Crossing design would be carried out in line with the appropriate highways design guidance, namely LTN 1/20. At all opportunities, priority would be given to pedestrian and cycle traffic where appropriate. Master planning for the site would provide traffic free routes from the site's cycle and pedestrian access to all buildings / facilities.
- 8.6.14 Cycle routes would be provided in line with LTN1/20 guidelines. This would be key to encouraging people to cycle. Cycle / pedestrian access would be delivered as part of Phase 1 (under the detailed application) of the scheme. As further phases of the development are built out, the same design guidance would be followed. Internal cycle and pedestrian links from the site's access to each phase of the development would be

provided prior to occupation of each phase/building. Outside the site, footways on local roads connect to the network of shared pedestrian / cycleways that link to the underpass beneath the A602 on the eastern side of the Gunnels Wood Road junction. These are generally in good state of repair, are well lit and have natural surveillance when running alongside roads.

Bus Access

- 8.6.15 In terms of public bus links, the site and surrounding area is served by 13 local bus routes. Those that serve the nearest stops on Gunnels Wood Road (north of the current roundabout junction) only operate during morning and afternoon peak periods and serve local town centre destinations, while routes that can be accessed to the east of the site at the 9 Yards (Roaring Meg) and London Road retail parks operate throughout the day and tend to serve destinations further afield. Additional bus services are available on London Road to the east of the site, which can be accessed via the Monkswood Way roundabout underpasses and Monkswood Way south of the roundabout.
- 8.6.16 As part of the proposed development, an on-site bus stop serving a shuttle bus for employees linking the site with the railway station would be provided adjacent to the Arrival Plaza. This would feature a shelter, seating, lighting, real-time bus information and wayfinding information. The applicant has committed to working with the appropriate team at HCC's Passenger Transport Unit to explore the potential delivery of public bus services to serve the on-site bus stop for future phases. The provision of an on-site shuttle bus stop would form part of Phase 1 of the proposed development.
- 8.6.17 It is proposed that a bus lane / bus priority scheme would be provided on the site's egress route with provision made as part of the internal site road layout. This facility would ensure that buses serving the site are given priority over cars leaving the site. The decision to provide this facility would give potential commercial bus operators comfort that services would not be unduly impacted by queuing.

Sustainable Travel Package

- 8.6.18 The existing planning permission for the Life Sciences Campus is supported by a Framework Travel Plan, which seeks to reduce the use of private cars and promote sustainable transport for trips to and from the site. The application site has been shown to have good existing sustainable travel links in terms of pedestrian, cycle and bus access. This is reflected in data on travel characteristics for existing GSK staff and the fact that only 56% of staff travel to / from the site by car. A robust package of sustainable travel initiatives would be implemented as part of the development, both infrastructurally and procedurally, coupled with 'buy in' from site wide and tenant organisation management. The proposed initiatives are as follows:

Sustainable Travel Initiative	Details
Arrival Plaza / Mobility Hub	The scheme will feature a primary mobility hub area within the site on Gunnels Wood Road. This will be the focus for sustainable transport on the site and feature various elements of the sustainable access strategy including pedestrian / cycle access, bus stops for the shuttle bus and public buses and cycle infrastructure. The provision of the Arrival Plaza is secured as a pre-occupation condition (number 12) associated with the approved scheme and is intended to remain as part of the revised application.
Bike / E-bike Schemes	As part of the S106 Agreement, a financial

	<p>contribution towards the provision of a cycle hire scheme in Stevenage was agreed. The Council's Beryl Bikes scheme has been brought in to use as of June 2025. Discussions will be carried out with SBC and Beryl Bikes such that there are sufficient bikes to meet demand as each phase of the development is occupied, and that there are sufficient facilities on-site to accommodate the scheme. The applicant, in partnership with SBC and Beryl Bikes, would provide sufficient on-site cycle hire facilities to complement the existing Beryl Bike scheme between the site and the railway station from Day 1.</p>
On Site Bus Priority	<p>A bus lane / bus priority scheme will be provided on the site's egress route from Day 1 with provision made as part of the internal site road layout. This facility will ensure that buses serving the site (shuttle buses / public buses) are given priority over cars leaving the site. The provision of on-site bus priority measures is secured as a pre-occupation condition (number 15) associated with the approved scheme and is intended to remain as part of the revised application.</p>
Site Shuttle Bus	<p>In addition to public bus services, GSK Stevenage currently operates a peak hour shuttle bus service between GSK and Stevenage rail station. A Shuttle Bus Service Operation Plan is secured as a pre-occupation condition (number 14) associated with the approved scheme and is intended to remain as part of the revised application.</p>
Parking Strategy	<p>The proposed principal to be adopted, consistent with the approved scheme, is to provide car parking in line with Council standards at 1/35m² for the detailed phase of the development, with reduced parking ratios in subsequent phases subject to monitoring of sustainable transport usage and parking uptake. This would result in future overall parking standards at levels below the Council's standard, which would deter employees from driving to the site. The Data Centre buildings are assessed separately. Parking monitoring for future phases is secured as part of pre-occupation condition (number 17) associated with the approved scheme and is intended to remain as part of the revised application.</p>
EV Charging Facilities	<p>EV charging facilities would be provided within the site car parks from Day 1. It is proposed that EV charging facilities would be provided to satisfy the Building Regulations standard of 20% of spaces</p>

	having active EV charging facilities. The provision of EV charging is secured by condition (number 44) associated with the approved scheme and is intended to remain as part of the revised application.
Mode Share Targets	The implementation of the sustainable travel measures would aim to achieve mode share shifts, specifically reducing private car use and promoting sustainable transport. Full details of the implementation, operation, and management of these will be set out in the Travel Plan secured under condition 16 and monitoring programme secured under condition 17 associated with the approved scheme and is intended to remain as part of the revised application. With a range of sustainable travel initiatives, a reduction of up to 10% in single occupancy car trips could be achieved. This would make a significant difference to vehicle traffic traveling to and from the site and hence the operation of the proposed gyratory junction and other existing junctions in the area.

- 8.6.19 Thorough and regular monitoring would identify targets and assess to what extent they are being reached over the life of the scheme. The reporting of progress would be carried out in consultation with the Local Planning Authority. It is the aim of the scheme to reduce vehicle-based trips to and from the site. In addition, all opportunities would be taken to encourage staff and visitors to make more sustainable trips to and from the site. The Travel Plan would be implemented when the detailed phase of the development is brought into use and under the terms set out in the legal agreement. The positive comments of Active Travel England have been considered, and the proposed planning conditions relating to the sustainable travel package would address these.
- 8.6.20 On this basis, it is concluded the proposal would comply with Local Plan Policy IT5 'Parking and Access' in that it would (i) provide safe, direct and convenient routes within the development, (ii) link to existing cycleway and pedestrian networks and (iii) contribute towards improving cycleways and pedestrian routes serving the development site and Policies SP5 and SP6 in terms of the provision of new infrastructure and sustainable transport within the town.

Highway Impact

- 8.6.21 The submitted Transport Assessment addendum sets out the trip generation assessment for the proposed development. Trip generations for the proposed new Life Science / R&D buildings have been based on site specific trip rates and are consistent with the assessment methodology submitted with, and approved in-principle, as part of the approved Hybrid Application. A separate assessment is set out in relation to the planned Data Centre buildings since this is a new element in the revised scheme.
- 8.6.22 The proposed new Life Science / R&D buildings are forecast to generate a total of 3,315 vehicle trips per day, comprising 1,617 arrivals and 1,698 departures. A site wide Travel Plan and package of sustainable transport initiatives would be implemented to reduce car-based trips and promote sustainable travel. Mobility experts have suggested that the package of sustainable travel measures / Travel Plan would achieve a reduction of between 8% and 10% in car-based trips, with increases in sustainable modes. Even at the most

conservative mode share changes, the data suggests car driver trips could reduce by around 250 per day.

- 8.6.23 Data Centres typically have far lower employee to floor area ratios than other employment uses such as Life Sciences / R&D buildings. Accordingly, the ratio of generated vehicular and non-vehicular trips to floor area is significantly lower by comparison. The predicted staffing operations for the proposed Data Centre buildings have been based on precedent information submitted with a planning application for a similar Data Centre development at the former Didcot A Power Station approved in 2021.
- 8.6.24 The proposed data centre buildings are forecast to generate a total of 317 vehicle trips per day, comprising 159 arrivals and 158 departures. The predicted total daily vehicular trip rate per 100m² floorspace is around 64% less comparing data centre and Life Science / R&D use classes. In addition, there would also be an element of sustainable travel increase and car driver reduction arising from data centre staff travel behaviour once the site is operational.

Approved Scheme vs Amended Scheme Vehicle Trip Comparison

- 8.6.25 The revised scheme results in a net overall reduction of 31,553m² GIA floorspace associated with Life Sciences and an introduction of 31,467m² GIA of Data Centre floorspace compared to the approved scheme. Data suggests the revised scheme is expected to generate 491 fewer vehicle trips daily than the approved scheme, comprising 235 fewer vehicle arrivals and 256 fewer vehicle departures. This is a 12% overall decrease in forecast development vehicle trips daily. In the AM (0800-0900) and PM (1600-1700/1700-1800) peak periods, the revised scheme is expected to generate 94 and 78/79 fewer hourly vehicle trips respectively. This is a 16% decrease in forecast development vehicle trips in each peak hour.
- 8.6.26 The revised scheme is therefore predicted to result in fewer vehicle trips to / from the site in the AM and PM peak periods and across a full day, and accordingly the revised scheme would result in fewer additional vehicle trips on the local and wider road network compared to the approved scheme. The revised scheme would therefore result in less impact on the surrounding public highway, most notably the key junctions assessed as part of the approved scheme, namely the planned new Gunnels Wood Road gyratory, the A1(M) junction 7, and the Monkswood Way roundabout.

Junction Capacity Assessment

- 8.6.27 The Transport Assessment also assesses the impact of the proposed development both in terms of vehicular traffic and junction capacity. Extensive junction modelling work has been carried out to assess the impact of the proposed development on the proposed Gunnels Wood gyratory, Junction 7 of the A1(M) and the Monkswood Way roundabout. Peak hours for assessment have been determined from total vehicle flows through the junctions surveyed as 08:00-09:00 and 16:00-17:00.
- 8.6.28 The extensive junction modelling work summarised that, with regards Junction 7 of the A1(M) and the proposed Gunnels Wood gyratory, the additional vehicle trips generated by the approved development could be accommodated within design capacity of each junction. In addition, queues would not tail back on to the live running lanes of the A1(M) or on the A602 between junctions. Similarly, with regards the Monkswood Way roundabout, the junction assessments showed that the approved development could be accommodated within design capacity of the junction for all arms in both peak periods except for Broadhall Way (East arm) during the AM peak hour which is shown to operate within absolute capacity.

- 8.6.29 It is therefore evident that the lower levels of additional vehicle trips generated by the revised scheme would be adequately accommodated within design capacity of each junction. The revised scheme would result in less impact on the local road network and less impact on the performance / capacity of the Gunnels Wood gyratory, Junction 7 of the A1(M) and the Monkswood Way roundabout compared to the approved scheme. National Highways has reviewed the supporting documents and agree with the methodology and mode share presented within the Transport Assessment addendum and have raised no objection to the amended scheme.

Sustainable Travel Impact

- 8.6.30 In addition to having an impact on the local road network, the proposed development would also impact on the local sustainable travel network, although the revised scheme would have less impact than the approved scheme and it is noted that a sustainable travel package has been developed which would be implemented alongside a site wide Travel Plan.

Parking

- 8.6.31 With regards parking provision, the Parking Provision SPD (2025) sets out the requirements for car parking, accessible parking, EV charging parking, motorcycle and cycle parking. The SPD proposes a system whereby vehicle parking is provided on the basis of 5 accessibility zones, with lower levels of provision permitted in the most accessible locations and higher levels of provision in less accessible zones. For non-residential development, the main determinant of accessibility is the proximity to passenger transport and whether or not people can use non-vehicle modes of transport and whether parking levels can be reduced. The proposed development site is located in the 'All other areas' category where car parking provision is allowed at 75% to 100% of the published standards. Parking provision for the data centre buildings is provided separately from the provision associated with the wider Life Science / R&D development and would be provided within the plots for Data Centre 1 and Data Centre 2.

Vehicle Parking – Life Science / R&D

- 8.6.32 The starting point for assessment of vehicle parking is the published maximum car parking standard of 1 space per 35m² for research and development and industrial processes, which is consistent with the proposed Life Science / R&D land use and is consistent with the approach established and approved in-principle through the approved Hybrid Application. The proposals aim to provide to the lower end of the allowed parking standards which is 75% of the published standards.
- 8.6.33 The SPD goes on to set out that 5% of the total number of car parking spaces (i.e. not in addition to) should be provided for motorcycle use. Of the balance, 20% should have access to active EV charging facilities, 5% should be provided as accessible parking spaces, with a further 5% provided as enlarged standard spaces that can be adapted in the future for use by disabled drivers.
- 8.6.34 Based on the proposed development schedule, details of parking spaces by type and proposed building are shown below:

Parking based on Parking Provision SPD standards (1/35m² @ 75%)

Phase	Building/GIA	Parking Spaces by Type							Total Parking Based on SBC Standards
		Standard Passive EV	Standard Active EV	Disabled Passive EV	Disabled Active EV	Enlarged Passive EV	Enlarged Active EV	M ¹ cycle	
Detailed 1	B2 - 18,120 sqm	266	66	15	4	15	4	19	389
	B4 - 16,583 sqm	243	61	14	3	14	3	18	356
	Existing SBC Car Park	214							-
Outline 2	Up to 64,225 sqm*	941	235	52	12	52	12	69	1373
	Existing CTC Car Park	148							-
Total New Spaces	Detailed & Outline	1450	362	81	19	81	19	106	2118
Total New + Existing	Detailed & Outline + SBC/CTC	1699	427	95	23	95	23	105	2480

Planned Parking Provision by Phase

Phase	Building/GIA	Parking Spaces by Type							Total Planned Parking Provision
		Standard Passive EV	Standard Active EV	Disabled Passive EV	Disabled Active EV	Enlarged Passive EV	Enlarged Active EV	M ¹ cycle	
Detailed	B2 & B4 - 34,703	509	127	29	7	29	7	37	745
	Existing SBC Car Park	214							214
Outline	Various - 64,225 sqm	941	235	52	12	52	12	69	1373
	Full SBC and CTC re-provision	260	67	15	3	15	3	0	362
Total New + Existing	Detailed & Outline + SBC/CTC	1710	429	96	22	96	22	106	2480

- 8.6.35 Parking provision for the detailed phase (34,703m²) would be made in line with the above SPD parking standards of 1 space per 35m² at 75% by means of multi-storey car park (MSCP) 1 and two surface level car parks. Parking provision for the outline phase (64,225m² which excludes the GSK Zone A and Zone B extensions) would be made in line with the above SPD parking standards of 1 space per 35m² at 75% by means of MSCP2.
- 8.6.36 The detailed application comprises the provision of 745 new parking spaces plus the re-provision of 214 Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst (SBC) building car parking spaces. A total of 810 new parking spaces is planned to be provided within MSCP1 plus 40 parking spaces provided at-grade; therefore 850 'new' parking spaces are planned to be provided at the detailed phase. As such, there would be an over-provision of 105 new parking spaces in the detailed phase which would accommodate 105 existing re-provided SBC building parking spaces in MSCP1. The balance of 109 existing SBC building parking spaces would be temporarily re-provided utilising existing overflow and leisure centre parking spaces east of the site. This arrangement is indicatively shown in the diagram below:

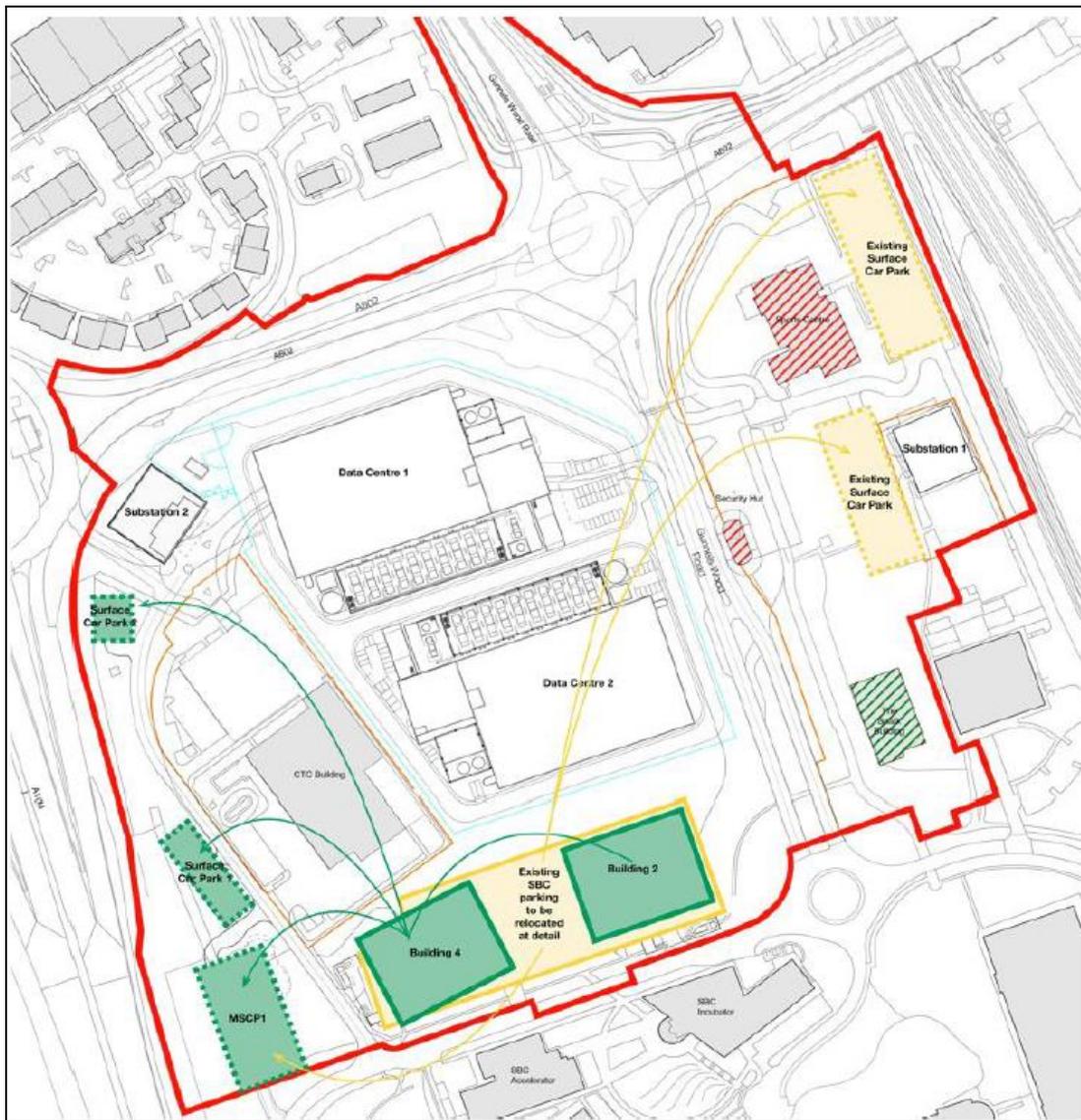


Figure 6 Temporary Parking Arrangement

- 8.6.37 For the outline phase 1,373 parking spaces would be required for the 64,225m² total floor space. All 362 existing SBC and CTC building parking spaces would also be permanently re-provided at the outline phase. The approach to parking provision for the planned new Life Science / R&D floorspace has been established as acceptable in-principle as part of the Hybrid Application consent. Consistent with the Hybrid Application, reduced parking ratios would be applied to subsequent phases, subject to monitoring of sustainable transport usage and parking uptake. This would result in future overall parking standards at levels below the Council's standard so as not to encourage driving to the site by providing more spaces than are required, and indeed at reduced levels that would actively discourage driving to the site.
- 8.6.38 The provision of parking for future phases would be controlled by Condition number 17 as part of any revised scheme planning permission. Accessible parking spaces would be provided at ground floor levels or close to lift access on upper floors. EV charging facilities would be provided in open surface level car park locations, EV parking spaces within the MSCP are to be located on the lower levels of the car park, subject to fire engineer confirmation.
- 8.6.39 The Hybrid Application was approved based on 3,145 parking spaces being provided inclusive of 362 re-provided SBC and CTC building parking spaces via three MSCPs plus surface level parking. The revised scheme is submitted based on 2,480 parking spaces

being provided inclusive of 362 re-provided SBC and CTC building parking spaces, via two MSCPs plus surface level parking. The revised scheme results in a total provision of 665 fewer parking spaces than the approved Hybrid Application scheme, inclusive of re-provided SBC and CTC building parking spaces. This is a 21% overall decrease in total parking provision for Life Science / R&D floorspace, reflecting the reduction in floorspace of that element and consequential vehicle trip reduction.

Cycle Parking

- 8.6.40 The Council's SPD for office / light industry and research land uses requires minimum levels of cycle parking provision 1 long term (staff) space per 500m² and 1 short term (visitor) space per 1,000m². The proposed cycle parking for the detailed element is based on BREEAM/BCO 1:10 (cycle stand to staff ratio) standards and provides a significantly higher quantity of spaces over the Council's minimum expectations. For example, building 2 comprises 18,120m² floorspace and would therefore require a minimum of 36 cycle parking spaces based on Council standards. Likewise, building 4 comprises 16,583m² floorspace and would require a minimum of 33 cycle parking spaces.
- 8.6.41 Building 2 is planned to have an integrated cycle store at ground floor level providing 106 cycle parking spaces comprising 84 staggered spaces, 10 wall mounted racks, and 12 wishbone stands. Building 4 is planned to have an integrated cycle store at ground floor level providing 97 cycle parking spaces comprising 40 staggered spaces, 33 wall mounted racks, 12 cradle spaces, and 12 wishbone stands. The range of cycle parking stands would allow cyclists of all abilities to access cycle parking. All long stay cycle parking provision would be covered, secure and conveniently located for access to the buildings served.
- 8.6.42 Each building would have complementary cycle facilities such as shower and changing areas with accessible features, drying rooms, hair dryers / straighteners and storage lockers and electric bike charging facilities. Cycle parking areas would also feature equipment for basic maintenance, such as spanners, Allen keys, pumps and spare inner tubes. Short term cycle parking would be provided by means of Sheffield stands at 1m spacing, with spaces on the ends of runs providing additional space for accessible / non-standard cycles and cargo bikes. The Transport Assessment addendum advises the outline buildings would meet and aim to exceed the Council's minimum cycle parking standards.

Vehicle Parking – Data Centre Buildings

- 8.6.43 The Council's Parking Provision SPD (2025) does not specify parking standards specific to data centre land use class. Therefore, the applicant has applied a first-principles basis to the proposed parking provision for the data centre buildings. It is expected up to 30 full-time staff would be on site during a typical weekday per building with up to 7 full-time staff on site during the night, including security staff. Up to 13 external staff / maintenance staff / visitors per building are also included as part of standard operation of the data centres during the day.
- 8.6.44 It is reasonable to assume that the full-time data centre staff would travel to work in a similar manner to the existing GSK travel mode patterns. Accordingly, 56% of data centre staff might drive to work based on GSK travel mode patterns, however by removing and redistributing the 5% proportion who work from home a slightly higher figure of 59% is likely since data centre staff are unlikely to work remotely. Of the 30 full-time staff per building on site during a typical weekday, around 17/18 are therefore likely to drive to work. It is also reasonable to expect that the 13 external staff / maintenance staff / visitors are likely to drive, resulting in a total daytime parking demand of 30/31 parking spaces per data centre building.
- 8.6.45 The proposal makes an allowance for 30 car parking spaces per data centre building which would be provided at-grade adjacent to each building within the data centre plot. This is a

reasonable evidence-based parking provision for the data centre buildings and reflects the strong transport sustainability focus that has been applied to the site-wide Campus. The same ratio of car parking space provision would be applied to the data centre buildings as per the Life Science / R&D element of the proposal, comprising 20% Active EV and 80% Passive EV charging provision and 10% accessible parking provision.

Cycle Parking – Data Centre Buildings

- 8.6.46 The Council's Parking Provision SPD (2025) does not specify cycle parking standards specific to data centre land use class. The proposed cycle parking for the data centre buildings is therefore based on the same BREEAM/BCO 1:10 (cycle stand to staff ratio) standards applied to the detailed Life Science / R&D buildings as set out above. Taking a worst-case scenario of 50 staff per building, the cycle parking requirement based on BREEAM/BCO standards is five long-stay spaces per building. This level of provision would exceed the likely demand for cycle parking generated by data centre staff if the existing GSK staff travel mode share for bicycles is applied, which is 6% (i.e. three staff cycling to work based on 50 total staff). The proposal makes an allowance for five secure and sheltered long-stay cycle parking spaces per data centre building which would be provided within integrated stores in each building.

Servicing and Refuse Arrangements

- 8.6.47 All types of waste would be separated according to its requirements in a secured bin store area (refuse, recycling, gas and chemical refuse). The main refuse and recycling store has been designed to allow space for manoeuvring Eurobins and drainage with a water supply for cleaning purposes. The refuse and recycling storage has been designed in accordance with BREEAM Wst 03, General Waste and OCC requirements. The applicant has allowed for 20 1100L Eurobins and assumed 50% general refuse and 50% recycling and 4no. collections a week.
- 8.6.48 With the detailed element of the application there would be an internal large waste store within the lower ground floor of Building 2. A service yard would connect to the southern road, allowing larger goods vehicle movements and servicing activities to be separated from the pedestrianised Arrival Square. The service yard would be situated along the west elevation of building 4, providing separation from public spaces to allow for segregated goods movement and access. The data centres would have an internal refuse store served by a loading bay.
- 8.6.49 In terms of laboratory and building servicing, in order to support the functionality of the laboratory-enabled office space, a number of discreet functions would need to be located externally to the buildings. This is due to requirements of health and safety, loading and access. The following support would be required to be located within the service yards:
- External gas cylinder storage
 - External liquid nitrogen tank
 - Generator
- 8.6.50 It is important that these small-scale items are considered within the landscape and architectural strategy as a whole, and the basic nature of their functions would be screened to ensure they appear part of the design language. The development proposal would also produce waste during construction works and the Council will require the preparation of a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP) to be re-secured via planning conditions 10 and 11 should planning permission be granted.

8.7 Flood Risk and Drainage

- 8.7.1 The application is supported by a revised Flood Risk Assessment, Sitewide Drainage and SuDS Strategy – Addendum, and a Drainage and SuDS Strategy – Phase 1 Supplementary

Addendum. These documents set out how the drainage strategy for the site (excluding the gyratory, which is unchanged) has been revised to reflect the changes to the scheme. They follow a pre-application meeting held with Hertfordshire County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) in October 2025 to discuss the revisions to the scheme. It should be noted that the detailed drainage scheme for the various parts of the wider site would still be required to accord with the relevant conditions, the technical requirements of which remain relevant and are not proposed to be altered.

- 8.7.2 The application site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1. The site has been identified as being at a low risk of flooding from rivers. There is a low risk of flooding from pluvial sources; with small isolated areas of high risk of flooding located in Gunnels Wood Road and at the underpass on A602. These areas are proposed to remain as existing. It has been identified that there is a low risk of flooding from groundwater sources. The proposed development has been identified as being at a low risk of flooding from all artificial sources.
- 8.7.3 The development of the site as a life science campus with data centres is therefore appropriate as set out by the 'flood risk vulnerability classification' contained within the Planning Practice Guidance. The site would be delivered with new separate foul and surface water networks. The proposed surface water drainage strategy has been designed to withstand flooding up to and including the 1-in-100 year +40% climate change return period and the network would discharge via shallow and deep infiltration with an overflow at QBar (Mean annual flood) to the public sewer. The Drainage and SuDS Strategy set out further details in respect of surface water and foul water drainage for both the detailed and outline phases.
- 8.7.4 The Environment Agency and Hertfordshire County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority have continued to raise no objection to the proposed changes, subject to the existing drainage and flood conditions being transferred over to any amended planning permission.

8.8 Trees, Ecology and Biodiversity

Trees

- 8.8.1 Policy NH5 of the 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. Tree retention is prioritised at key internal green infrastructure links, including the eastern and western site boundaries. The below table taken from the updated Landscape Masterplan illustrates the extent of trees that are proposed for removal. This would be carefully managed, and existing trees in close proximity to proposed buildings managed appropriately.

EXISTING	
Tree	Remove (No.)
Category A	1
Category B	301
Category C	364
TOTAL	665
PROPOSED	
Tree	Proposed (No.)
TOTAL	728

Figure 7 Revised Tree Strategy

- 8.8.2 Surface treatments would be carefully selected to ensure no damage to tree root networks, and no dig construction methods. Existing soft landscape extent beneath retained trees would be maximised, and elsewhere permeable surfaces are proposed. In the landscape design, two significant areas of existing trees are proposed to be retained and integrated into the overall layout. This approach would reduce the total number of trees to be removed compared to the original planning permission, from an initial 733 down to 665, resulting in a preservation of 68 additional trees compared with the original scheme. This adjustment not only minimises environmental impact but would also enhance the site's aesthetic and ecological value.
- 8.8.3 The existing tree canopy covers 14.7% of the site area. With the assumption that all proposed trees would reach a moderate mature canopy size, the estimated mature canopy coverage would increase to 20.1% of the site area, reflecting a 36.4% increase in coverage. This calculation is based on the average mature canopy size of the proposed tree species, with the assumption that no more than 15% of the canopy of medium-sized trees would overlap. This increased canopy coverage would be achieved by planting trees at appropriate spacing and ensuring proper care to support their long-term health and growth.
- 8.8.4 The overall tree strategy would define the spaces using the trees character, shape, texture and colour. The character of the trees would be chosen in accordance with the varied functions of each space and highlights the relationship between each space using landmark trees. The tree palette would incorporate native trees to support wildlife and to enhance the existing trees along with SuDS friendly trees, street trees as connectors and character feature trees that would suit each character of the designed areas.
- 8.8.5 Adding multi stem trees and variety with resilient tree species would create a naturalistic feeling to the Campus. The site wide green infrastructure networks would be reinforced through proposed tree canopy corridors. Species that are climate adaptive, robust, drought tolerant and suitable for their setting are proposed, along with a mix of evergreen and deciduous trees, with year-round interest in the form of leaf colour, flower and bark. Several species of trees are proposed with a delicate canopy to allow sunlight to penetrate through. A mix of native and non-native tree species which would provide a source of nectar, pollen and other food sources are proposed.
- 8.8.6 The Council's Arboriculture and Conservation manager has raised no objection to the proposed tree strategy for the amended scheme. The replacement trees would be of high quality, whereas many of those to be removed are in poor condition so there would be a significant qualitative improvement. The proposed development would also provide the conditions (e.g. soil quality, spacing) to allow the new trees to grow well and reach the appropriate growth / girth levels quickly. There may also be scope for additional tree planting off site as part of the Biodiversity Net Gain offset payment. The maintenance of the public realm including the trees would be the responsibility of the Management Company secured as part of the S106 Agreement and not the Council.
- 8.8.7 It is considered the proposed tree planting strategy for the amended scheme would continue to comply with Local Plan policy NH5 'Trees and Woodland' and is considered acceptable. The existing planning conditions relating to trees would also be transferred over to any new planning permission.

Biodiversity

- 8.8.8 The Environment Act (2021), paragraphs 187(d) and 193 of the NPPF and accompanying Planning Practice Guidance and Local Plan policy SP12 require 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. While every grant of planning permission in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the biodiversity

gain condition, commencement and transitional arrangements, as well as exemptions, mean that certain permissions are not subject to biodiversity net gain.

- 8.8.9 Biodiversity net gain has only been commenced for planning permissions granted in respect to an application made on or after 12 February 2024. Permissions granted for applications made before this date are not subject to biodiversity net gain and the original planning application was submitted in April 2023. It was not therefore subject to the biodiversity gain condition. Furthermore, biodiversity net gain does not apply to section 73 permissions where the original permission which the section 73 relates to was either granted before 12 February 2024 or the application for the original permission was made before 12 February 2024.
- 8.8.10 In this case, as the original application was made before 12 February 2024 biodiversity net gain does not apply to this amended scheme. In addition, since granting planning permission for the original proposal the Council has revoked the Biodiversity SPD. Development plan policies which are relevant to the assessment of this latest proposal include the relevant paragraphs from the NPPF covering conserving and enhancing the natural environment (chapter 15) and Local Plan policy SP12.
- 8.8.11 The application has been supported by an updated Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment by SLR and a Biodiversity Metric. The assessment of the proposed development against the current baseline indicates that there would be an increase in biodiversity performance of the site of approximately 5.74% in habitat units and 6.94% in hedgerow units. This would be subject to appropriate planting plans and management plans being developed to optimise the delivery of biodiversity performance on the site and to realise its intended out-turn condition. The management plans should be secured for at least 30 years and the applicant had advised they are committed to delivering these plans and securing these commitments post-consent.
- 8.8.12 It should be noted that under the S106 Agreement pursuant to the May 2024 Permission, a payment of £29,849.97 towards offsite biodiversity enhancements was agreed. This was calculated based on 5.34 area habitat units, which equates to 10.23% of existing baseline units. Biodiversity net gain condition 31 is therefore proposed to be amended to refer to the revised habitat units set out in the updated Assessment. Condition 32 is proposed to be deleted as this duplicates requirements under Condition 31 and is not considered necessary. Conditions 33 and 34 relating to the provision of swift boxes are also to be retained on any amended planning permission.
- 8.8.13 The biodiversity financial contribution secured via the s106 legal agreement will be spent on improving biodiversity on another site(s) in Stevenage to be agreed with the Council's Green Spaces Development officer. The biodiversity net gain on the application site would be subject to the development of landscape planting plans and site management plans to secure the predicted level of biodiversity delivery. On this basis, the amended proposal would continue to achieve a 10% biodiversity net gain notwithstanding the fact there is no policy requirement to do so in this instance.

Ecology

- 8.8.14 The original application was accompanied by an Ecological Impact Assessment and a Great Crested Newt Scoping and eDNA Survey Technical Note by SLR Consulting Ltd. The Ecological Impact Assessment reviewed the potential ecological impacts on the redevelopment of the site. The application site extends to approximately 17.37 hectares (ha), and comprises a range of habitats, predominantly neutral grassland, mixed scrub, and modified grassland, surrounding a number of existing research buildings. The survey, alongside details received from a desk top study confirmed that the site has potential to support the following protected and priority species including:

- moderate potential to support notable plant species
- high potential to support notable invertebrates
- moderate potential to support reptile species
- low potential to support great crested newts
- moderate potential to support notable bird species
- moderate potential to support commuting/foraging bats
- moderate potential to support roosting bats; and
- high potential/confirmed presence of commuting badgers.

8.8.15 Further surveys to assess the presence/likely absence of commuting/foraging bat species, reptiles, and great crested newts were recommended, with precautionary actions recommended for priority habitats, nesting birds, badger and hedgehog. Opportunities for biodiversity enhancement were also identified and included invertebrate habitat features, wildlife-friendly landscaping, and bird and bat boxes. Updated planning conditions 31 'Biodiversity Net Gain Management Plan' and 41 'Ecological Enhancements' would be carried forward with any amended planning permission and would secure the long-term management and ecological enhancement of the site.

8.8.16 With the implementation of appropriate ecological mitigation, compensation and the proposed biodiversity enhancement into the development design and landscaping, it is considered that the revised development proposal would result in an overall enhancement to the biodiversity and ecological value of the application site, improve access to nature and ensure compliance with Section 15 of the NPPF and policies SP12 and NH5 of the Local Plan (2019).

8.9 External Lighting

8.9.1 An updated Lighting Strategy has been submitted which seeks to develop a lighting approach to not only address the technical requirements of the proposed development, but to also ensure a multi-faceted experience for users of the Campus. The strategy follows the overarching principles established through the original strategy, updated to reflect the changes to the scheme, such as the new location of buildings and new landscaping. Condition 42 is to be amended accordingly to refer to the revised document. The lighting strategy has been amended further following comments by the Council's Environmental Health Officer, who is now satisfied with the submitted details.

8.9.2 The external lighting strategy would continue to apply different lighting approaches to different 'zones' across the Campus, to create a sense of hierarchy and usage to the various areas and guide the users around the site to points of interest. The lighting design would be respectful to the surrounding environment and would also be controlled via time clocks to minimise the impact on wildlife. All guidelines and recommendations for lighting considerations would be followed (CIBSE - LG6: A4.3, A4.8, A4.9, ILP, Guidance Note 08/18).

8.9.3 Following advice from the Council's Environmental Health Officer, the Lighting Strategy and the proposed wording for condition 42 has been amended further to address their concerns:

"The development to which this permission relates in respect of the Detailed Area and each Development Zone as agreed pursuant to condition 4, shall be carried out in accordance with the recommendations set out within the Exterior Lighting Strategy by FPOV (ref: J4431-SL-5101-03, January 2026) as approved or any alternatives to be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority."

8.9.4 Environmental Health have confirmed this condition would provide the Planning Authority with sufficient control over external lighting and it is considered the external lighting strategy would continue to comply with Local Plan policy FP7 'Pollution' with regards to limiting light pollution and protecting wildlife.

8.10 Climate Change Mitigation

- 8.10.1 Policy FP1 of the adopted Local Plan (2019) stipulates that planning permission will be granted for development that can incorporate measures to address adaptation to climate change. New developments will be encouraged to include measures such as:
- Ways to ensure development is resilient to likely variations in temperature
 - Reducing water consumption to no more than 110 litres per person per day, including external water use
 - Improving energy performance of buildings
 - Reducing energy consumption through efficiency measures
 - Using or producing renewable or low carbon energy from a local source; and
 - Contributing towards reducing flood risk through the use of SuDS or other appropriate measures.
- 8.10.2 Under the Local Plan review, Policy FP1 has been revised to cover sustainable drainage and Policy SP1: climate change is the new relevant policy in this regard. The fundamental objective of Policy SP1 remains the same as previous policy FP1, however, it sets out in more detail the objectives of adapting to climate change. This policy requires, amongst other things emission reduction targets, prioritising active travel and public transport, water usage targets, rainwater harvesting, grey water recycling, use of sustainable materials and practices on site, ultra-low and zero carbon combined heat and power systems and urban greening (green roofs and walls).
- 8.10.3 This policy is further supported by a suite of new climate change policies, CC1 through to CC6 which require developments to incorporate a range of climate mitigation measures where appropriate. Emerging policy GD2 'Design certification' also strongly supports development proposals which demonstrate that they have been designed to achieve a rating of excellent or higher against the relevant BREEAM standard.
- 8.10.4 The Council's Design Guide SPD (2025) sets out additional requirements with respect to climate change. The guide states that all developments are required to make efforts to minimise energy usage and to incorporate methods of using renewable energy, including:
- reducing energy demand
 - using passive environmental systems, e.g. natural ventilation
 - daylighting and passive solar gains
 - using high levels of insulation and air tightness in the fabric of the building
 - specifying energy efficient services, controls and appliances
 - implementing water recycling and the provision of water butts
 - using renewable energy
 - using low/zero carbon technologies to provide as much of the energy load as is technically and economically feasible, minimising use of fossil fuels; and
 - using efficient fossil fuel technologies, such as Combined Heat and Power and condensing boilers.
- 8.10.5 The vision and aspiration of the applicant is to create a truly sustainable masterplan with low carbon and energy efficient buildings, that responds to the changing trends and needs of tenants and provides climate resilience. The key themes on multiple scales have been explored and embedded in the design strategy where possible. There is commitment to further explore the Net Zero Carbon pathway and focus on delivering Net Zero Carbon ready buildings, focus on benefits of following circular economy principles, setting operational energy, embodied carbon, biodiversity net gain and water targets to further enhance the building performance and future-proof the development.
- 8.10.4 The application is accompanied by a revised Sustainability Strategy and a revised Energy Statement to reflect the changes to the scheme. The focus of these are the alterations in the Detailed Area to include the data centres and changes to Buildings 2 and 4. These

documents set out that the Detailed Buildings have been designed to achieve BREEAM Excellent and accord with the sustainability principles of the Development Plan. The approach to the data centres in particular, including their use of energy and water has been detailed, supplemented by the further sustainability information set out in the Design and Access Statement. Condition 38 is proposed to be amended accordingly to include reference to the above revised documents along with the Design and Access Statement and incorporate reference to the data centres.

8.10.5 From the overall masterplan to the detailed building designs, the following measures would be incorporated to mitigate the impact of climate change:

- Proposed development to achieve BREEAM 'Excellent' rating with an aspiration to achieve 'Outstanding'
- Adopt a fabric first building approach
- Focus on health and wellbeing for users of the Campus (WELL principles, good daylighting, low CO2/ VOC levels, good air quality, views of sky, biophilia, social value)
- Biodiversity Net Gain and use of SuDS
- Landscape design (embedding environmental benefits)
- Animating outdoor spaces with environmental strategies
- On-site energy generation
- Energy efficiency (target net zero ready in operation and EPC A rating)
- Upfront Carbon (low carbon materials, whole lifecycle carbon approach, minimise construction and excavation waste)
- Whole life carbon analysis and design approach
- Low carbon mobility (encourage use of EVs and other low carbon transport)
- Circular economy principles (sharing, reusing, repairing, recycling materials)
- Water efficiency (potable water use – Labs: <13 l/p/day (RIBA 2025), Data Centres: best practice Water Use Efficiency (WUE), BREEAM WAT-01 credit outstanding, flood protection 1:100 year event + 40%)

Data Centres

8.10.6 Data centres are among the most energy-intensive building types, with a significant proportion of their energy demand dedicated to cooling. Selecting the most efficient cooling solution is therefore critical to reducing operational energy use and environmental impact. A careful evaluation was carried out by the applicant to compare available cooling technologies. The assessment considered power usage effectiveness (PUE), water usage effectiveness (WUE), and opportunities for free cooling and waste heat recovery. The table below summarises the options reviewed.

8.10.7 The 'Direct Evaporative Air Cooling' was selected as the preferred solution. This system offers the highest annual efficiency compared to other technologies, combining low energy and water use with the potential for free cooling and future waste heat recovery:

- Direct evaporative Air Handling Units (AHU's) with variable air volume conditioning would provide cooling and ventilation air to the data processing areas and equipment rooms.
- Cooling would be based on ambient wet bulb (WB) temperature and additional cooling would be provided by evaporative pads utilising water as cooling media.
- This system is designed to offer the highest efficiency (over other cooling technologies) on an annual basis.

Cooling System	Description / Working Principle	Power Use (PUE)	Water Use (WUE)	Other Notes
1. Water Cooled Chiller (Cooling Tower)	Uses evaporation to cool a water loop from data centre cooling equipment	Low	High	Waste heat can be reclaimed
2. Air Cooled Chiller	Refrigerant-based air conditioning	High	None	Has free cooling potential
3. Indirect Evaporative Air Cooling	Uses evaporation to indirectly cool the air supply to the data centre	Low	High	Lower energy efficiency than direct evaporative cooling
4. Adiabatic Air-Cooled Chiller	Uses evaporation alongside refrigerant air conditioning during peak hot periods	Moderate	Low	Can deliver free cooling and waste heat abstraction; not the most efficient technology
5. Direct Evaporative Air Cooling	Uses evaporation to directly cool the air supply to the data centre during peak hot periods	Low	Low	Higher efficiency than indirect evaporative cooling; can deliver free cooling; most energy-efficient technology; waste heat abstraction possible in future

Figure 8 Data Centre Cooling Technology Options

- 8.10.8 As set out in paragraph 8.10.6 data centres are among the most resource-intensive building types, consuming large amounts of energy and water to maintain optimal conditions for continuous server operation. Cooling systems, power conversion, and environmental control are major contributors to this demand. Without intervention, these facilities can have a significant environmental footprint. The design approach focuses on reducing this impact through a combination of energy-saving and water-saving strategies that would improve operational efficiency while meeting best practice standards. These measures would include optimising cooling systems, reclaiming waste heat, and minimising water use through advanced evaporative technologies and recovery processes.
- 8.10.9 The below diagram summarises the strategies adopted for energy efficiency and water conservation. Together, these measures would ensure that the data centres would operate with the highest possible performance while significantly reducing their environmental impact. In terms of future potential for heat export from the data centres, the applicant has advised if a future district heat network should become available and is ready to connect prior to first occupation of the data centre, they can engage with that provider to explore the feasibility of delivering a suitable connection.



Figure 9 Data Centre Energy Efficiency and Water Conservation Measures

8.10.10 With the adoption of the above measures, it is considered the proposed development would continue to be exemplary in terms of its sustainability and promotion of health and wellbeing. It is considered the information provided within the application demonstrates that the amended scheme would continue to accord with the requirements of policies SP2 and FP1 of the Local Plan (2019) and SP1 of the Local Plan review in relation to sustainable construction and climate change mitigation.

8.11 Pollution and Hazardous Substances

8.11.1 Liquid Nitrogen if used within laboratories is considered a potentially hazardous substance and therefore the application proposal would need to be considered under Local Plan (2019) Policy FP6 'Hazardous Installations'. The policy states planning permission will be granted for development proposals involving the use, storage or movement of hazardous substances where:

- There are no additional health and safety risks to users of the site or surrounding area;
- There are no additional threats to the local environment; and
- The proposal does not cause long term land contamination.

8.11.2 In terms of Liquid Nitrogen storage tanks, these would be located within a secure storage compound within a secure delivery zone on site for authorised personal only. The storage zone would be located outdoors within secure service areas. A full health and safety assessment of the proposals would be carried out in compliance with British Compressed Gas Association (BCGA) and the UK Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance.

8.11.3 In terms of oil/chemical storage tanks, all above ground oil and chemical storage tanks would be sited on an impervious base and surrounded by a liquid tight bund wall. The bunded area would be capable of containing 110% of the volume of the tank(s) and all fill pipes and sight gauges would be enclosed within the curtilage. No drainage outlet would be provided, and the vent pipe would be directed downwards into the bund. It is considered the above arrangements are acceptable and would meet the requirements of Local Plan Policy FP6 'Hazardous Installations'.

8.12 Air Quality

8.12.1 The application is supported by a revised Air Quality Assessment (AQA) prepared by DustScan. It assesses the changes to the scheme and finds that, as there would be 12% overall decrease in forecast development vehicle trips daily compared with the approved scheme, it is not necessary to assess this element in detail as any such effects would be less than that already found acceptable under the May 2024 Permission. The AQA then considers the potential effects of back-up generators associated with the scheme, primarily for the data centres. It finds that there would be no significant short-term or long-term impacts resulting from the operation of the proposed generators, and that there would not be any further mitigation required.

8.12.2 The Council's Environmental Health Officer believes this conclusion is reasonable given the assessment approach employed, however recommends an additional condition is imposed on any future grant of planning permission to prevent unmitigated plant to be installed and operated for extended periods without an appropriate Local Planning Authority control. On this basis, the applicant is proposing the following new condition to address the matters raised in relation to back up generators. This is based on the Air Quality Assessment so ensures that it would be tied back to that document, which addresses the control of the back-up generators (usage / testing).

"Testing of any back-up power, life safety and standby power generators shall only be undertaken in accordance with the scenarios set out in paragraph 3.1.2 of the Air Quality Assessment dated December 2025 or any alternatives to be submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority. Testing of back-up generators shall only be undertaken between the hours of 07:00-23:00. Generators shall otherwise only be used in emergency situations. Data Centre back-up power generators shall incorporate Selective Catalytic Reduction".

8.12.3 Environmental Health have confirmed that the above condition would provide the necessary control and therefore it can be concluded that the amended scheme is not considered to conflict with national and local air quality planning policy (Local Plan policies FP7 and FP8) and would not result in significant impacts on air quality.

8.13 Noise Impact

8.13.1 The application is supported by a revised Planning Noise report and addendum note, which assesses the potential noise impacts associated with the revised scheme, along with the inclusion of the data centres, with their associated plant and back-up generators. It sets out the recommended plant noise limits, updated to reflect the revisions to the scheme and including when back-up generators are in use, which the proposed development would need to comply with and which it demonstrates would ensure the scheme operates within acceptable levels.

8.13.2 Following advice from the Council's Environmental Health Officer, the applicant has sought to separate out the noise of back-up generators and life safety systems that would operate in emergency scenarios, from the typical plant operating day to day, to address the issues raised and to inform the proposed wording for amended noise condition 40:

“Before any item of plant or machinery is used in connection with the data centres hereby approved, it shall be installed and operated in accordance with a written scheme first agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall set out measures both technical and managerial that will limit the acoustic impact of the plant and/or machinery so that its Rating Level does not exceed those values set out in Planning Noise Report authored by Sandy Brown Ltd. (reference 23023-R06-B, Version B, dated 15/12/2025 and addendum note reference M011-A, dated 27/2/2026) as assessed within the curtilage of any dwelling or other noise sensitive receptor having regard to the definitions and assessment approach set out in British Standard BS4142: 2014 + A1: 2019”.

8.13.3 At the time of writing this report, the precise wording of this condition is still to be confirmed with the applicant. An update will be provided to Members at the meeting. Subject to an amended planning condition securing updated noise mitigation in relation to the data centres, it is considered the revised scheme would not have an unacceptable impact on the general amenity of the wider area in terms of noise pollution. It would therefore remain in accordance with Local Plan Policy FP7 ‘Pollution’ in relation to noise.

8.14 Ground Conditions

8.14.1 The original application included a Phase I Preliminary Risk Assessment which provided an assessment of the status of the site and the potential risk of contamination. The Assessment set out that there was a ‘Low to Moderate’ level of risk to future site users from Made Ground Soils, and a ‘Moderate’ risk associated with ground gases. All other potential contaminant sources were determined as having a ‘Low’ risk to future site users and controlled waters as part of the proposed development.

8.14.2 The Council’s Environmental Health Officer advised existing planning conditions (36 and 37) relating to soil contamination remain appropriate and raised no objection to their continued use with regards to the revised proposal. The amended scheme continues to accord with Policy FP5 of the Local Plan.

8.15 Residential Amenity

8.15.1 The area surrounding the site comprises a range of employment and other commercial uses, specifically the GSK Campus which is located to the south. The A1(M) is to the west, including Junction 7 with the A602. Beyond the A1(M) is a Novotel Hotel with the remaining area to the west comprising Knebworth House and agricultural land. To the east of the site is the East Coast Mainline railway, beyond which lies Roebuck Retail Park and Broadwater Retail Park. The wider Gunnels Wood Employment Area is located to the north of the site, beyond the A602.

8.15.2 Due to the location of the site away from the residential areas of the town, it is not considered the proposed buildings would raise any residential amenity issues in terms of outlook, light, overbearing impact and privacy due to the siting of the development on the edge of town within an existing employment area. The proposal is considered acceptable in this regard and in accordance with Local Plan Policy GD1 ‘High Quality Design’.

8.16 Planning Obligations

8.16.1 The following planning obligations would continue to be attached to any amended planning permission via the existing s106 agreement dated 30 May 2024:

- S278 Agreement of the Highways Act 1980 (covering the new Gunnels Wood Road/A602 gyratory, junction improvements and public realm works on highway verge land adopted by HCC as Highway Authority)
- £6000 Travel Plan evaluation and support fee

- £29,849.97 to provide an offsite biodiversity offset
- Local Employment and Apprenticeships
- £275,000 towards a town wide cycle hire scheme, including between the application site and railway station
- Management Company to manage areas of un-adopted public realm
- s106 monitoring fee

8.17 Other Matters

Community Infrastructure Levy

- 8.17.1 The Council adopted CIL on 1 April 2020 and the CIL Charging Schedule specifies a payment for new floorspace in line with the following rates (plus appropriate indexation):

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

- 8.17.2 CIL is a non-negotiable charge. The exact charge will be determined by the Council's CIL officer after an application has been granted in accordance with the CIL Charging Schedule and the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended). Opportunities for relief or exemption from the CIL charge exist and will be taken into account in the calculation of the final CIL charge.
- 8.17.3 CIL replaces the need for S106 agreements to specify financial and/or land contributions for non-site-specific infrastructure projects. This allows infrastructure to be planned on a borough-wide scale rather than on a site-by-site basis as mitigation against the impacts of individual proposals. A CIL Form 1: Additional Information has been submitted along with the application. Although falling within planning Use Class E 'commercial, service and business' use, the buildings would not be in retail use and therefore would be liable for CIL at £0m² as 'other development' under the CIL charging schedule.

Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

- 8.17.4 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.
- 8.17.5 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.
- 8.17.6 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.

- 8.17.7 In terms of inclusive access, the proposed buildings have been designed to be fully accessible and inclusive. All spaces in the new buildings would be accessible; the floors and thresholds would be level and lifts would serve all floors. The routes into the building would be clear and signed and demarcated appropriately using landscape treatments. There would be no abrupt changes in levels on the approach to the proposed buildings. Disabled parking spaces would be provided within the MSCPs at ground floor level. The design proposals have been developed with reference to Approved Document Part M (AD-M) and BS8300:2018 'Design of an Accessible and Inclusive Built Environment.'
- 8.17.8 Level access would be provided to the development at all pedestrian access points. Dropped kerbs and tactile paving would be provided at junctions / crossings in the area. The design of the scheme provides a safe, secure and attractive environment. The immediate connectivity of a development site includes factors that relate to pedestrian and cycle access as well as access by wheelchair users. In terms of pedestrian facilities in the area, footways are generally of a high standard, are level / trip free and well lit.
- 8.17.9 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.

9. CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 Planning permission has been granted for a world class, life science campus known as the 'Elevate Quarter' which would provide state-of-the-art laboratory and associated facilities on land adjacent to the existing GSK campus in Stevenage, along with two extensions to the existing GSK Campus. This application seeks to amend this permission with a series of changes which are intended to reflect the current market, in particular the reduction in demand for 'life science' floorspace and increasing demand for data centres as UK critical infrastructure. The scheme would still provide for a life science campus with significant life science floorspace included.
- 9.2 Elevate Quarter would continue to build on Stevenage's existing reputation as a leading life science hub to meet the demand within the UK for new research and development opportunities in the sector, as well as the growing need for data centres. The aspiration of the applicant continues to embody creating a global exemplar for sustainability that would enable the next generation of innovators to thrive in Stevenage.
- 9.3 The policies considered to be most relevant for determining this application are all considered to be consistent with the most recent revision of the NPPF and are therefore considered to be up to date. Accordingly, Paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF is not engaged and the application falls to be determined against a straightforward planning balance.
- 9.4 This hybrid s73 application seeks amended detailed and outline planning permission for the phased development of a new Life Science Campus at the site incorporating two new data centres. The detailed element of the application comprises the construction of two life science buildings 2 and 4, two data centres, two substations, multi-storey car park 1, two surface carparks and the creation of a new gyratory on Gunnels Wood Road with associated landscaping and other infrastructure works. The outline element of the

application is for the remainder of the Campus and consists of further employment floorspace and parking (MSCP2), extensions to existing GSK buildings, landscaping and associated infrastructure. All matters are reserved for future submission and assessment.

- 9.5 The proposed development as amended continues to accord with the allocation of the site in the Local Plan which is for employment and ancillary uses of transformational scale (Policy EC1). The Local Plan sets a target of 50,000m² of floorspace, but acknowledges that the site is likely to have capacity to accommodate a greater quantum. The documentation and evidence submitted as part of this application demonstrates that the proposed quantum of floorspace could still be accommodated within the site when having regard to all relevant considerations (such as transportation and highways, townscape and heritage, flooding and ecology).
- 9.6 The proposed development as amended continues to accord with the strategic framework for development as established by the Local Plan. It also accords with the detailed design policies within the Local Plan and the associated guidance contained within the various Supplementary Planning Documents.
- 9.7 The amended scheme would continue to generate a number of significant economic benefits which weigh heavily in favour of the grant of planning permission. It would elevate Stevenage to a leading hub for life sciences within the UK, building on its established sector and range of occupiers (including the existing GSK Campus). It would help to meet the employment floorspace targets established within the Local Plan and generate a range of associated benefits including new high skilled jobs, enhanced training and investment.
- 9.8 The co-location of data centres on the campus would allow Stevenage to sit at the forefront of life science innovation in the UK, future proofing the cluster as technological needs expand over time. The centres would facilitate the research occurring at the campus by providing access to high-quality processing power. These co-location benefits would extend beyond the companies at the campus. Any Stevenage company, or company from further afield, that is looking to utilise high processing power would be able to capitalise on the opportunity of this data centre provision. This would mean the benefits of the scheme would be felt across other industries, indirectly supporting further innovation and economic benefits beyond life sciences alone.
- 9.9 Overall, the amendments to the scheme would make the proposals more robust to future market changes, whilst directly supporting the life sciences innovation campus and ensuring a wide range of firms and industries have the opportunity to drive innovation and benefit. Given these significant planning and economic benefits weighing in favour of the proposal and the absence of policy conflict with the Local Plan (2019), the Council's Supplementary Planning Documents, the NPPF (2024) and PPG, planning permission should be granted in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 That planning permission be GRANTED subject to the imposition of suitable safeguarding conditions, the detail of which would be delegated to the Assistant Director of Planning and Regulation in liaison with the Council's appointed solicitor.
- 10.2 Authority would be given to the Assistant Director of Planning and Regulation in consultation with the Chair of Planning Committee, to amend or add to the suggested draft conditions set out in this report, prior to the decision notice being issued, where such amendments or additions would be legally sound and most effectively deliver the development that the Planning Committee has resolved to approve. These suggested conditions are as follows:

1 **Approved Parameter Plans (Outline)**

The submission of reserved matters within any Development Zone shall be in accordance with the following approved parameter plans unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority:

SEQ-HBA-SW-ZZ-DR-A-080020 Rev: C01; Ref: SEQ-HBA-SW-ZZ-DR-A-080021 Rev: C01

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

Any request for an amendment to an approved parameter plan shall be accompanied by a report confirming that there are no new or different significant environmental impacts to those already assessed or by an appropriate report (or reports) which assesses any new or different significant environmental impacts.

2 **Approved Plans for Detailed Area**

The development hereby permitted for the Detailed Area shall be carried out in accordance with the following unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority:

25021-EXA-ZZ-GF-DR-L-00101 Rev P01; 25021-EXA-ZZ-GF-DR-L-00110 Rev P01;
25021-EXA-ZZ-GF-DR-L-00111 Rev P01; 25021-EXA-ZZ-GF-DR-L-00112 Rev P01;
25021-EXA-ZZ-GF-DR-L-00113 Rev P01; 25021-EXA-ZZ-GF-DR-L-00114 Rev P01;
25021-EXA-ZZ-GF-DR-L-00115 Rev P01; 25021-EXA-ZZ-GF-DR-L-00116 Rev P01;
25021-EXA-ZZ-GF-DR-L-00117 Rev P01; 25021-EXA-ZZ-GF-DR-L-00118 Rev P01;
25021-EXA-ZZ-GF-DR-L-00119 Rev P01; 25021-EXA-ZZ-GF-DR-L-00120 Rev P01;
25021-EXA-ZZ-GF-DR-L-00121 Rev P01;

SEQ-HBA-SW-ZZ-DR-A-080012 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-SW-ZZ-DR-A-080100 Rev C01

SEQ-HBA-B2-B1-DR-A-081100 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B2-00-DR-A-081101 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B2-01-DR-A-081102 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B2-02-DR-A-081103 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B2-03-DR-A-081104 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B2-04-DR-A-081105 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B2-05-DR-A-081106 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B2-RF-DR-A-081107 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B2-XX-DR-A-081200 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B2-XX-DR-A-081201 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B2-XX-DR-A-081202 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B2-XX-DR-A-081203 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B2-XX-DR-A-081300 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B2-XX-DR-A-081301 Rev C01

SEQ-HBA-B4-00-DR-A-082100 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B4-01-DR-A-082101 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B4-02-DR-A-082102 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B4-03-DR-A-082103 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B4-04-DR-A-082104 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B4-05-DR-A-082105 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B4-RF-DR-A-082106 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B4-XX-DR-A-082200 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B4-XX-DR-A-082201 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B4-XX-DR-A-082202 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B4-XX-DR-A-082203 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B4-XX-DR-A-082300 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B4-XX-DR-A-082301 Rev C01

SEQ-HBA-D1-00-DR-A-085100 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D1-01-DR-A-085101 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D1-02-DR-A-085102 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D1-RF-DR-A-085103 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D1-XX-DR-A-085200 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D1-XX-DR-A-085201 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D1-XX-DR-A-085202 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D1-XX-DR-A-085203 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D1-XX-DR-A-085300 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D1-XX-DR-A-085301 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D1-XX-DR-A-085302 Rev C01

SEQ-HBA-D2-00-DR-A-086100 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D2-01-DR-A-086101 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D2-02-DR-A-086102 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D2-RF-DR-A-086103 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D2-XX-DR-A-086200 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D2-XX-DR-A-086201 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D2-XX-DR-A-086202 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D2-XX-DR-A-086203 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D2-XX-DR-A-086300 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D2-XX-DR-A-086301 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D2-XX-DR-A-086302 Rev C01;

SEQ-HBA-S2-ZZ-DR-A-084100 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-S2-XX-DR-A-084200 Rev: C01; SEQ-HBA-S2-XX-DR-A-084300 Rev C01

SEQ-HBA-S3-ZZ-DR-A-087100 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-S3-XX-DR-A-087200 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-S3-XX-DR-A-087300 Rev C01

SEQ-HBA-M1-00-DR-A-083100 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-M1-ZZ-DR-A-083101 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-M1-ZZ-DR-A-083102 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-M1-XX-DR-A-083200 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-M1-XX-DR-A-083201 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-M1-XX-DR-A-083202 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-M1-XX-DR-A-083203 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-M1-XX-DR-A-083300 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-M1-XX-DR-A-083301 Rev C01

SLC-HBA-SS-ZZ-DR-A-080130 P3; SLC-HBA-SS-ZZ-DR-A-080230 P2; SLC-HBA-SS-ZZ-DR-A-080330 P2; 3295-WSP-XX-XX-DR -C-00100-P03 (Rev P03); 3295-WSP-XX-XX-DR-C-00101-P02 (Rev P02)

Any request for an amendment to an approved plan(s) shall be accompanied by a report confirming that there are no new or different significant environmental impacts to those already assessed or by an appropriate report (or reports) which assesses any new or different significant environmental impacts.

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

3 Time Limit (Detailed)

The part of the development for which full planning permission has been granted (as per approved detailed site layout plan ref. SEQ-HBA-SW-ZZ-DR-A-080100 Rev C01) shall be begun within a period of three years of the date of the original planning permission reference 23/00293/FPM.

REASON:- To comply with the requirements of Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

4 Phasing Plan Identifying Development Zones (Outline)

Accompanying the submission of reserved matters pursuant to this permission, the applicant shall submit a Plan showing the extent of the Development Zone to which that reserved matter submission relates, within the Outline Area shown on approved parameter plan ref. SEQ-HBA-SW-ZZ-DR-A-080020 Rev C01 to the Local Planning Authority.

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

5 **Submission of Reserved Matters (Outline)**

For the individual Development Zones for which outline permission is granted as agreed pursuant to Condition 4 of this permission, no development on each Development Zone (excluding site clearance, demolition, enabling works, earthworks, archaeological investigations, investigations for assessing ground conditions, remedial works in respect of any contamination or other adverse ground conditions, diversion and laying of services within the boundary of the relevant phase and which are not connected to the wider services network, erection of any temporary means of enclosure and the temporary display of site notices or advertisements) shall commence until detailed plans for the relevant Zone have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These plans shall, as applicable, show the layout (including car parking provision, access and servicing arrangements, and waste management), scale (including existing and proposed levels), design, layout and external appearance of the buildings to be constructed and the landscaping to be implemented (hereinafter referred to as "the Reserved Matters") on that Zone. The development of the relevant Development Zone shall only be carried out as approved.

REASON:- To comply with the requirements of section 92(4) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2015 and to ensure that high standards of urban design and a comprehensively planned development are achieved. To ensure construction of a satisfactory development and in the interests of highway safety.

6 **Time Limit (Outline)**

All applications for the approval of the Reserved Matters for a Development Zone agreed pursuant to Condition 4 of this permission shall be made to the Local Planning Authority no later than six years from the date of the original planning permission reference 23/00293/FPM. The commencement of a Zone shall be begun not later than the expiration of three years from the date of the last reserved matter of that Zone to be approved.

REASON:- To comply with the requirements of section 92(4) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

7 **Construction hours of working**

No demolition, construction or maintenance activities audible at the boundary of the relevant phase and no deliveries of construction and demolition materials shall be undertaken outside the hours 07:30 hours to 18:30 hours Mondays to Fridays, 08:30 hours to 13.00 hours on Saturdays and not on a Sunday or Bank Holiday, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

REASON:- To ensure the demolition of the existing buildings and the construction and maintenance of the development does not prejudice the amenities of occupiers of nearby premises due to noise pollution.

8 **Construction Management Plan (Detailed)**

No development shall commence on any individual part of the detailed element until a Construction Management Plan (or Construction Method Statement) for that part has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the construction of that part of the development shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved Plan. The Construction Management Plan / Statement shall include details of:

- a. Construction vehicle numbers, type, routing;
- b. Access arrangements to the site;
- c. Traffic management requirements
- d. Construction and storage compounds (including areas designated for car parking, loading / unloading and turning areas);
- e. Siting and details of wheel washing facilities;

- f. Cleaning of site entrances, site tracks and the adjacent public highway;
 - g. Timing of construction activities (including delivery times and removal of waste) and to avoid school pick up/drop off times;
 - h. Provision of sufficient on-site parking prior to commencement of construction activities;
 - i. Post construction restoration/reinstatement of the working areas and temporary access to the public highway;
 - j. where works cannot be contained wholly within the site a plan should be submitted showing the site layout on the highway including extent of hoarding, pedestrian routes and remaining road width for vehicle movements.
- 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 (adopted 2018).

9 **Construction Management Plan - Outline**

No development shall commence on any individual Development Zone as agreed pursuant to Condition 4 of this permission until a Construction Management Plan (or Construction Method Statement) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the construction of the Development Zone shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved Plan. The Construction Management Plan / Statement shall include details of:

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

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 (adopted 2018).

10 **Site Waste Management Plan (Detailed)**

No development shall commence on any individual part of the detailed element until a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP) for that part has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority and approved in consultation with the Waste Planning Authority. The SWMP should aim to reduce the amount of waste produced on that part of the site and should contain information including estimated types and quantities of waste to arise from construction and waste management actions for each waste type. The development of that part of the site shall be carried out in accordance with the approved SWMP.

REASON:- To promote the sustainable management of waste arisings and contribution towards resource efficiency, in accordance with Policy 12 of the Hertfordshire Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (2012).

11 **Site Waste Management Plan (Outline)**

No development shall commence on any individual Development Zone as agreed pursuant to Condition 4 of this permission until a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP) has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority and approved in consultation with the Waste Planning Authority. The SWMP should aim to reduce the amount of waste produced on site and should contain information including estimated types and quantities of waste to arise from construction and waste management actions for each waste type. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved SWMP.

REASON:- To promote the sustainable management of waste arisings and contribution towards resource efficiency, in accordance with Policy 12 of the Hertfordshire Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (2012).

12 **Highway Improvements – Offsite (Implementation / Construction)**

Prior to the first occupation of buildings 2 and 4, commencement of 'substantial works', including, but not limited to: vegetation removal; setting up of traffic management; commencement of removal of existing curb lines; clearance of existing walls and fences; service diversions and drainage of the offsite highway improvement works as shown in S278 General Arrangement Drawings 3295-WSP-XX-XX-DR -C-00100-P03 (Rev P03) and 3295-WSP-XX-XX-DR -C-00101-P02 (Rev P02) shall be completed in accordance with the approved details. No other buildings shall be occupied until all works included within the aforementioned drawings are complete.

REASON:- To ensure construction of a satisfactory development and that the highway improvement works are designed to an appropriate standard in the interest of highway safety and amenity and in accordance with Policy 5, 13 and 21 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).

13 **Completion of Arrival Plaza**

Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted the arrival plaza area shall be completed in accordance with the approved drawings ref. SEQ-HBA-SW-ZZ-DR-A-080100 Rev C01, 25021-EXA-ZZ-GF-DR-L-00118 Rev P01 and 25021-EXA-ZZ-GF-DR-L-00101 Rev P01.

REASON:- To ensure that sustainable transport measures are in place at the earliest opportunity for all employees and visitors.

Shuttle Bus Service

- 14 Prior to first occupation of the development hereby permitted a Shuttle Bus Service Operation Plan shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The Plan shall provide details of an enhanced shuttle bus service (either quantitative and / or qualitative improvement over the existing position) suitable to meet the requirements of the existing and proposed floorspace at the application site and wider campus. The Plan shall then be updated and the service adapted as may be required to meet the ongoing requirements of additional floorspace as it is delivered in each Development Zone in line with the overall objectives of the Framework and Detailed Travel Plan(s).

REASON:- To ensure that the development offers a wide range of travel choices to reduce the impact of travel and transport on the environment.

On Site Bus Priority

- 15 Prior to first occupation of the development hereby permitted bus priority measures as described in the Transport Assessment (Paragraph 5.52) will be complete.

REASON:- To ensure that sustainable travel options associated with the development are promoted and maximised to be in accordance with Policies 3, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan 2018.

Traffic, Travel Mode Split and Parking Monitoring

- 17 Prior to first occupation of the development hereby permitted, a monitoring programme to assess the level of traffic generation, travel mode split of all employees and parking accumulation at defined intervals of occupancy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The monitoring programme shall be implemented as agreed unless the Local Planning Authority gives written approval to any variation.
- REASON:-** To ensure that agreed traffic levels are not breached and thus the highway network is adequate to cater for the development proposed.

Underpass Improvements

- 18 The measures to improve the Gunnels Wood Road/A602 underpass as set out within the WSP Underpass Technical Note ref. 3295-WSP-XX-XX-TN-C-01100 P04 to make it, as far as reasonably practical, Department for Transport 'Cycle Infrastructure Design' Local Transport Note guidance, July 2020 (LTN 1/20) compliant shall be implemented and permanently maintained in accordance with the approved details.
- REASON:-** To ensure that sustainable travel options associated with the development are promoted and maximised to be in accordance with Policies 3, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).

External materials (Detailed)

- 19 The development to which this permission relates shall be carried out in accordance with the external materials specified within drawings SEQ-HBA-B2-XX-DR-A-081200 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B2-XX-DR-A-081201 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B2-XX-DR-A-081202 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B2-XX-DR-A-081203 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B4-XX-DR-A-082200 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B4-XX-DR-A-082201 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B4-XX-DR-A-082202 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-B4-XX-DR-A-082203 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D1-XX-DR-A-085200 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D1-XX-DR-A-085201 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D1-XX-DR-A-085202 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D1-XX-DR-A-085203 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D2-XX-DR-A-086200 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D2-XX-DR-A-086201 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D2-XX-DR-A-086202 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-D2-XX-DR-A-086203 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-M1-XX-DR-A-083200 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-M1-XX-DR-A-083201 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-M1-XX-DR-A-083202 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-M1-XX-DR-A-083203 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-S2-XX-DR-A-084200 Rev C01; SEQ-HBA-S3-XX-DR-A-087200 Rev C01; SLC-HBA-SS-ZZ-DR-A-080230 P2 as approved or any alternatives to be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

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

Masterplan Design Code (Outline)

- 20 For each individual Development Zone for which outline permission is granted as agreed pursuant to Condition 4 of this permission, the submission of reserved matters relating to the design and external appearance of the building(s) shall be in accordance with the approved Masterplan Design Code by Hawkins Brown SEQ-HBA-XX-XX-RP-A-080002 C01 (December 2025) or an alternative Design Code submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.
- REASON:-** To ensure a satisfactory appearance for the development.

Landscape Design Code (Outline)

- 21 For each individual Development Zone for which outline permission is granted as agreed pursuant to Condition 4 of this permission, the submission of reserved matters in relation to the landscaping strategy shall be in accordance with the approved Landscape Design Code (December 2025) by Hawkins Brown and Exterior Architecture or an alternative Design Code submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.
REASON:- To ensure a satisfactory appearance for the development.

Tree Strategy (Outline)

- 22 For each individual Development Zone for which outline permission is granted as agreed pursuant to Condition 4 of this permission, the submission of reserved matters in relation to tree planting shall be in accordance with the approved Landscape Masterplan – Section 7: Tree Strategy (December 2025) or an alternative Strategy submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.
REASON:- To ensure a satisfactory appearance for the development.

Landscaping Scheme (Detailed)

- 23 All hard and soft landscaping shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details as set out in detailed landscape general arrangement plans ref: 25021-EXA-ZZ-GF-DR-L-00101 Rev P01; 25021-EXA-ZZ-GF-DR-L-00110 Rev P01; 25021-EXA-ZZ-GF-DR-L-00111 Rev P01; 25021-EXA-ZZ-GF-DR-L-00112 Rev P01; 25021-EXA-ZZ-GF-DR-L-00113 Rev P01; 25021-EXA-ZZ-GF-DR-L-00114 Rev P01; 25021-EXA-ZZ-GF-DR-L-00115 Rev P01; 25021-EXA-ZZ-GF-DR-L-00116 Rev P01; 25021-EXA-ZZ-GF-DR-L-00117 Rev P01; 25021-EXA-ZZ-GF-DR-L-00118 Rev P01; 25021-EXA-ZZ-GF-DR-L-00119 Rev P01; 25021-EXA-ZZ-GF-DR-L-00120 Rev P01; 25021-EXA-ZZ-GF-DR-L-00121 Rev P01 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.

Planting / Seeding / Turfing (Detailed)

- 24 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 Buildings in the Detailed Area unless where identified as meanwhile landscaping subject to Condition 46.
REASON:- To ensure a satisfactory appearance for the development.

Hard Surfacing (Detailed)

- 25 All hard surfacing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out within 6 months of the completion of Buildings in the Detailed Area, or, where hard surfacing is associated with individual buildings, prior to first occupation of each building (except substations) hereby permitted, whichever is the earliest unless where identified as meanwhile landscaping subject to Condition 46.
REASON:- To ensure a satisfactory appearance for the development.

Replacement Trees (Detailed)

- 26 Any trees or plants comprised within the scheme of landscaping, which within a period of five years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
REASON:- To ensure a satisfactory appearance for the development.

Retention / Topping / Lopping of Trees (Detailed)

- 27 No tree shown on the approved landscaping scheme, 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.

Installation of Tree Protection Measures

- 28 Before any development commences, including any site clearance or demolition works, any trees on the site to be retained shall be protected by fencing or other means of enclosure. Such protection shall be maintained until the conclusion of all site and building operations.
REASON:- To ensure that the retained tree(s) are not damaged or otherwise adversely affected during site operations.

Tree Protection / Ground Levels

- 29 Within the areas to be fenced off in accordance with condition 28; there shall be no alteration to the ground level and they shall be kept clear of vehicles, materials, surplus soil, temporary buildings, plant and machinery.
REASON:- To ensure that the retained tree(s) is not damaged or otherwise adversely affected during site operations.

Bird Nesting Season / Clearance

- 30 All areas of hedges, scrub or similar vegetation where birds may nest which are to be removed as part of the development of a phase, are to be cleared outside the bird-nesting season (March – August inclusive) or if clearance during the bird-nesting season cannot reasonably be avoided, a suitably qualified ecologist will check the areas to be removed within the relevant phase immediately prior to clearance and advise whether nesting birds are present. If active nests are recorded within the relevant phase, no vegetation clearance or other works that may disturb active nests shall proceed within that phase until all young have fledged the nest.
REASON:- Nesting birds are protected from disturbance under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (As amended).

Biodiversity Net Gain Management Plan

- 31 No building within any individual part of the detailed element shall be occupied until a biodiversity net gain management plan (BNGMP) for that part has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter a BNGMP shall be submitted alongside each application for reserved matters within individual Development Zones.

The content of the BNGMPs shall demonstrate how each individual part / phase of the development can contribute to the overall delivery of a minimum increase in habitat units across the entire site of 54.99 area habitat units and 0.77 linear units to achieve a net gain in biodiversity and include the following:

- a) Description and evaluation of habitat parcels to be managed, cross referenced to individual lines in the metric.
- b) Maps of all habitat parcels, cross referenced to corresponding lines in the metric.
- c) Appropriate management options for achieving target condition for habitats as described in the approved metric.
- d) Preparation of an annual work schedule for each habitat parcel (including a 30-year work plan capable of being rolled forward in perpetuity).

- e) Details of the body or organisation responsible for implementation of the plan.
- f) Details of species selected to achieve target habitat conditions as identified in approved metric, definitively stated and marked on plans.
- g) Ongoing monitoring plan and remedial measures to ensure habitat condition targets are met.
- h) Reporting plan and schedule for informing LPA of condition of habitat parcels for 30 years.

The BNGMP shall also include details of the legal and funding mechanism(s) by which the long-term implementation of the plan will be secured by the developer with the management body(ies) responsible for its delivery. The plan shall also set out (where the results from monitoring show that conservation aims and objectives of the BNGMP 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 deliver biodiversity net gain in accordance with NPPF.

Swift Box / Tower Details (Detailed)

- 33 No building shall be occupied until details of swift boxes and/or bricks and/or a swift tower (model and location) have been submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority. These devices shall be fully installed prior to occupation and retained as such thereafter.
REASON:- To contribute to biodiversity net gain in accordance with NPPF.

Swift Box / Tower Details (Outline)

- 34 No building shall be occupied within any individual Development Zone, until details of integrated swift boxes and/or bricks and/or a swift tower (model and location) shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. This shall demonstrate that, with the provision required under Condition 33, a total of 40 swift boxes (or equivalent as provided within a tower) are provided across the site. These devices shall be fully installed prior to occupation and retained as such thereafter.
REASON:- To contribute to biodiversity net gain in accordance with NPPF.

Retail Floorspace Limit

- 35 No more than 500m² of Class E(a) retail floorspace shall be provided across the whole of the application site.
REASON:- To ensure the proposal complies with Local Plan employment policies SP3 and EC1.

Ground Conditions - Quantitative Risk Assessment

- 36 Prior to commencement of development a generic quantitative risk assessment (GQRA) shall be conducted as part of a ground investigation to inform the future engineering design.
REASON:- To prevent harm to human health and pollution of the water environment.

Unidentified Contamination / Remediation Scheme / Verification

- 37 If during a particular phase of development contamination that has not been previously identified is found, it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken and where remediation is necessary a remediation scheme must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme, a verification report must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
REASON:- To safeguard human health and ground water.

Implementation of Climate Change Mitigation / BREEAM Excellent (Detailed)

- 38 The measures to address adaptation to climate change as set out within the Design and Access Statement (December 2025) by Hawkins Brown, Sustainability Strategy (December 2025) and Energy Statement (December 2025) by KJ Tait Engineers shall achieve minimum BREEAM Excellent and be implemented in relation to Buildings 2 and 4, and Data Centres, 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.

Climate Change Mitigation / Energy and Sustainability Statement (Outline)

- 39 Each application for the Reserved Matters submitted pursuant to condition 5 of this Permission shall include an Energy and Sustainability Statement detailing requirements of how the building(s) in each Development Zone are adaptable to climate change (detailing renewable energy technologies as well detailing measures to control overheating and cooling demand in the building(s)). The details shall also include a management plan and maintenance strategy/schedule for the operation of the technologies, a servicing plan (if applicable) and a noise assessment (if applicable). The measures for adaptation to climate change as well as managing overheating and cooling shall be implemented in accordance with the details approved pursuant to condition 5 of this Permission.
REASON:- To ensure the development is adaptable to climate change and to avoid overheating and minimising cooling demand.

Noise Limits

- 40 Before any item of plant or machinery is used in connection with the data centres hereby approved, it shall be installed and operated in accordance with a written scheme first agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall set out measures both technical and managerial that will limit the acoustic impact of the plant and/or machinery so that its Rating Level does not exceed those values set out in Planning Noise Report authored by Sandy Brown Ltd. (reference 23023-R06-B, Version B, dated 15/12/2025 and addendum note reference M011-A, dated 27/2/2026) as assessed within the curtilage of any dwelling or other noise sensitive receptor having regard to the definitions and assessment approach set out in British Standard BS4142: 2014 + A1: 2019.
REASON:- To safeguard the amenity of the surrounding area.

Implementation of Ecological Enhancements

- 41 The recommended ecological and nature conservation enhancements set out within the Ecological Impact Assessment by SLR dated April 2023 in respect of the Detailed Area and each Development Zone as agreed pursuant to condition 4 shall be implemented and permanently maintained in accordance with the approved details.
REASON:- To provide a net gain in biodiversity.

External Lighting

- 42 The development to which this permission relates in respect of the Detailed Area and each Development Zone as agreed pursuant to condition 4, shall be carried out in accordance with the recommendations set out within the Exterior Lighting Strategy by FPOV (ref: J4431-SL-5101-03, January 2026) as approved or any alternatives to be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.
REASON:- To safeguard wildlife and the amenity of the surrounding area.

Water Supply and Fire Hydrants

- 43 No individual building within the Detailed Area, and each respective Development Zone as agreed pursuant to condition 4, shall be occupied until a scheme for the provision of adequate water supplies and fire hydrants, necessary for firefighting purposes for that building within each area / zone, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The relevant building within the Detailed Area / Development Zone 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

EV Charging

- 44 Prior to the first use of MSCP1, details of the location of an equivalent 20% of new car parking spaces within the detailed phase to have active EV charging shall be submitted to the LPA. 80% of remaining spaces are to have passive provision for EV charging.

Prior to first use of each respective MSCP within a Development Zone as agreed pursuant to condition 4, provision shall be made for 20% of the car parking spaces to have active provision for EV charging and 80% of the remaining car parking spaces to have passive provision for EV charging.

REASON:- To ensure construction of a satisfactory development and to promote sustainable development in accordance with Policies 5, 19 and 20 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).

Archaeological Works (GSK Extensions – outline)

- 45 No development shall take place within the southern half of the site (i.e. the Zone A and Zone B Extensions to the existing GSK building identified on drawing ref: SEQ-HBA-SW-ZZ-DR-A-080020 Rev C01) until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work for those parcels in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON:- To ensure the investigation and recording of any items of archaeological interest.

Meanwhile Uses / Landscaping

- 46 The provision of meanwhile uses / landscaping shall be in accordance with drawing ref: SEQ-HBA-SW-ZZ-DR-A-080020 Rev C01 and Landscape Masterplan - Section 10: Meanwhile Landscape (December 2025) or in accordance with alternative details as submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

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

Substation Equipment / Housings

- 47 Details of the substation equipment / housings shall be in accordance with drawing refs: SLC-HBA-SS-ZZ-DR-A-080130 Rev P3, SLC-HBA-SS-ZZ-DR-A-080230 Rev P2, SLC-HBA-SS-ZZ-DR-A-080330 Rev P2, SEQ-HBA-S2-ZZ-DR-A-084100 Rev C01, SEQ-HBA-S2-XX-DR-A-084200 Rev C01, SEQ-HBA-S2-XX-DR-A-084300 Rev C01, or alternative details as submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

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

Surface Water Infiltration

- 48 No drainage systems for the infiltration of surface water to the ground are permitted other than with the written consent of the Local Planning Authority. Any proposals for such systems must be supported by an assessment of the risks to controlled waters. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

REASON:- To ensure that the development does not contribute to, is not put at unacceptable risk from, or adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of water pollution caused by mobilised contaminants. This is in line with paragraph 174 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Detailed Drainage Strategy – Each Detailed / Outline Phase

- 49 No development shall commence on any individual part of the detailed element or any individual Development Zone as agreed pursuant to Condition 4 of this permission until a drainage strategy for that part / phase is submitted to the Local Planning Authority. This should include:

i. Detailed infiltration testing (in each relevant catchment of the detailed phase and each relevant catchment of each outline phase in accordance with BRE Digest 365 (or equivalent) at the location of each infiltration feature, at the proposed depth and along the length of any large infiltration features.

ii. Evidence to demonstrate that, the overall total site wide discharge for the entire developed site will not exceed 1.64l/s/ha (QBAR).

iii. Provision of surface water attenuation storage, sized and designed to accommodate the volume of water generated in all rainfall events up to and including the critical storm duration for the 3.33% AEP (1 in 30 year) and 1% AEP (1 in 100) rainfall events (both including allowances for climate change).

iv. Detailed designs, modelling calculations (using FEH13 or FEH22) and labelled drawings of the drainage conveyance network in the:

- 3.33% AEP (1 in 30 year) critical rainfall event plus climate change to show no flooding outside the drainage features on any part of the site.

- 1% AEP (1 in 100 year) critical rainfall plus climate change event to show, if any, the depth, volume and storage location of any flooding outside the drainage features, ensuring that flooding does not occur in any part of a building or any utility plant susceptible to water (e.g. pumping station or electricity substation) within the development. It will also show that no runoff during this event will leave the site uncontrolled.

REASON:- To ensure the flood risk is adequately addressed, not increased and users remain safe for the lifetime of the development in accordance with the NPPF and Stevenage Local Plan (2019).

Method Statement - Interim / Temporary Drainage Measures

- 50 No development shall commence on any individual part of the detailed element or any individual Development Zone as agreed pursuant to Condition 4 of this permission until details and a method statement for interim and temporary drainage measures during the demolition and construction of that part / phase have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This information shall provide full details of who will be responsible for maintaining such temporary systems and demonstrate how the site will be drained to ensure there is no increase in the off-site flows, nor any pollution, debris and sediment to any receiving watercourse or sewer system. The site works and construction phase for that part / phase shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with approved method statement, unless alternative measures have been subsequently approved by the Planning Authority.

REASON:- To prevent flooding and pollution offsite in accordance with the NPPF.

Drainage Construction Drawings / Method Statement

- 51 No development shall commence on the drainage scheme within any individual part of the detailed element or within any individual Development Zone as agreed pursuant to Condition 4 of this permission until construction drawings of the surface water drainage network, associated sustainable drainage components and flow control mechanisms and a construction method statement for that part / phase are submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall then be constructed as per the agreed drawings for that part / phase, method statement and Drainage Strategy as submitted for Condition 49 and remaining in perpetuity for the lifetime of the development unless agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No alteration to the agreed drainage scheme shall occur without prior written approval from the Local Authority.
- REASON:-** To ensure that the development achieves a high standard of sustainability and to comply with the NPPF and Stevenage Local Plan (2019).

Drainage Maintenance and Management Details

- 52 No building within the detailed part of the application or any individual Development Zone as agreed pursuant to Condition 4 of this permission hereby approved shall be occupied until details of the maintenance and management of the sustainable drainage scheme associated with that building or phase have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The drainage scheme shall be implemented prior to the first occupation of any building within that phase and thereafter managed and maintained in accordance with the approved details in perpetuity. The Local Planning Authority shall be granted access to inspect the sustainable drainage scheme for the lifetime of the development. The details of the scheme to be submitted for approval shall include:
1. A timetable for its implementation.
 2. Details of SuDS feature and connecting drainage structures and maintenance requirement for each aspect including a drawing showing where they are located.
 3. A management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development which shall include the arrangements for adoption by any public body or statutory undertaker, or any other arrangements to secure the operation of the sustainable drainage scheme throughout its lifetime. This will include the name and contact details of any appointed management company.
- REASON:-** To ensure that the development achieves a high standard of sustainability and ensure the flood risk is adequately addressed for each new dwelling and not increased in accordance with the NPPF and Stevenage Local Plan (2019).

Drainage Survey / Verification Report

- 53 Upon completion of each phase of the development's surface water drainage system, including any SuDS features, and prior to first occupation of any building within each phase; a survey and verification report from an independent surveyor shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The survey and report shall demonstrate that the surface water drainage system for that phase has been constructed in accordance with the details approved pursuant to Condition 49. Where necessary, details of corrective works to be carried out along with a timetable for their completion, shall be included for approval in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any corrective works required shall be carried out in accordance with the approved timetable and subsequently resurveyed with the findings submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
- REASON:-** To ensure the flood risk is adequately addressed, not increased and users remain safe for the lifetime of the development in accordance with the NPPF and Stevenage Local Plan (2019).

Generators and Life Safety

- 54 Testing of any back-up power, life safety and standby power generators shall only be undertaken in accordance with the scenarios set out in paragraph 3.1.2 of the Air Quality Assessment dated December 2025 or any alternatives to be submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority. Testing of back-up generators shall only be undertaken between the hours of 07:00-23:00. Generators shall otherwise only be used in emergency situations. Data Centre back-up power generators shall incorporate Selective Catalytic Reduction.

REASON:- To safeguard the amenity of the surrounding area.

INFORMATIVES

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

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

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

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

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

or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

2. The applicant is advised that in order to comply with this permission it will be necessary for the developer of the site to enter into an agreement with Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority under Section 278 of the Highways Act 1980 to ensure the satisfactory completion of the access and associated road improvements. The construction of such works must be undertaken to the satisfaction and specification of the Highway Authority, and by a contractor who is authorised to work in the public highway. Before works commence the applicant will need to apply to the Highway Authority to obtain their permission and requirements. Further information is available via the website <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/businessanddeveloper-information/development-management/highways-developmentmanagement.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.
3. Extent of Highway: Information on obtaining the extent of public highway around the site can be obtained from the HCC website:

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/changes-to-your-road/extent-of-highways.aspx

4. Parking and Storage of materials: The applicant is advised that all areas for parking, storage, and delivery 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/business-and-developer-information/development-management/highways-development-management.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.
5. 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:
<http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/transtreets/highways/> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.
6. Debris and deposits on the highway: It is an offence under section 148 of the Highways Act 1980 to deposit compost, dung or other material for dressing land, or any rubbish on a made up carriageway, or any or other debris on a highway to the interruption of any highway user. Section 149 of the same Act gives the Highway Authority powers to remove such material at the expense of the party responsible. Therefore, best practical means shall be taken at all times to ensure that all vehicles leaving the site during construction of the development and use thereafter are in a condition such as not to emit dust or deposit mud, slurry or other debris on the highway. Further information is available by telephoning 0300 1234047.
7. Avoidance of surface water discharge onto the highway: The applicant is advised that the Highway Authority has powers under section 163 of the Highways Act 1980, to take appropriate steps where deemed necessary (serving notice to the occupier of premises adjoining a highway) to prevent water from the roof or other part of the premises falling upon persons using the highway, or to prevent so far as is reasonably practicable, surface water from the premises flowing on to, or over the footway of the highway.
8. Roads to remain private: The applicant is advised that all new roads associated with this development will remain unadopted (and shall not be maintained at public expense by the Highway Authority). At the entrance of the new estate the road name plate should indicate that it is a private road and the developer should put in place permanent arrangements for long-term maintenance.
9. Adoption (section 38): The applicant is advised that Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority will likely adopt the pedestrian and cycle routes through the development to ensure their long-term continuity, however the developer should put in place permanent arrangements for long-term maintenance. Details of the specification, layout and alignment, width and levels of the said highways, together with all the necessary highway and drainage arrangements, including run off calculations must be submitted to the Highway Authority. No development shall commence until the details have been approved in writing and an Agreement made under Section 38 of the Highways Act 1980 is in place. Furthermore, the extent of adoption as public highway, once finalised, must be clearly illustrated on a plan. Further information is available via the County Council's website at:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/development-management/highways-development-management.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

10. Construction Management Plan (CMP): The purpose of the CMP is to help developers minimise construction impacts and relates to all construction activity both on and off site that impacts on the wider environment. It is intended to be a live document whereby different stages will be completed and submitted for application as the development progresses. A completed and signed CMP must address the way in which any impacts associated with the proposed works, and any cumulative impacts of other nearby construction sites will be mitigated and managed. The level of detail required in a CMP will depend on the scale and nature of development. The CMP would need to include elements of the Construction Logistics and Community Safety (CLOCS) standards as set out in our Construction Management template, a copy of which is available on the County Council's website at:
<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/development-management/highways-development-management.aspx>
11. Abnormal loads and importation of construction equipment (i.e. large loads with: a width greater than 2.9m; rigid length of more than 18.65m or weight of 44,000kg - commonly applicable to cranes, piling machines etc.): The applicant is directed to ensure that operators conform to the provisions of The Road Vehicles (Authorisation of Special Types) (General) Order 2003 in ensuring that the Highway Authority is provided with notice of such movements, and that appropriate indemnity is offered to the Highway Authority. Further information is available via the Government website www.gov.uk/government/publications/abnormal-load-movements-application-and-notification-forms or by telephoning 0300 1234047.
12. Travel Plan (TP): A TP, in accordance with the provisions as laid out in Hertfordshire County Council's Travel Plan Guidance, would be required to be in place from the first occupation/use until 5 years post occupation/use. A £1,200 per annum (overall sum of £6000 and index-linked RPI March 2014) Evaluation and Support Fee would need to be secured via a Section 106 agreement towards supporting the implementation, processing and monitoring of the full travel plan including any engagement that may be needed. Further information is available via the County Council's website at:
<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/development-management/highways-development-management.aspx> OR by emailing travelplans@hertfordshire.gov.uk.
13. During the demolition and construction phase of the development, the guidance in BS5228-1:2009 (Code of Practice for Noise Control on Construction and Open Sites) should be adhered to.
14. The applicant is advised to contact the Hertfordshire Constabulary CPDS with a view to seeking to achieve accreditation to the Police preferred minimum security standard that is Secured by Design to ensure that the development is compliant with both National and Local Planning Policies. In addition, this will also demonstrate the discharge of obligations under Approved Document 'Q' – Security of Building Regulations".
15. A Groundwater Risk Management Permit from Thames Water will be required for discharging groundwater into a public sewer. Any discharge made without a permit is deemed illegal and may result in prosecution under the provisions of the Water Industry Act 1991. We would expect the developer to demonstrate what measures he will undertake to minimise groundwater discharges into the public sewer. Permit enquiries should be directed to Thames Water's Risk Management Team by telephoning 020 3577 9483 or by emailing trade.effluent@thameswater.co.uk. Application forms should be completed online via

www.thameswater.co.uk. Please refer to the Wholesale; Business customers; Groundwater discharges section.

16. For water supply, infrastructure protection and mains diversions please get in contact with the Affinity Water Developer Services Team via the "My Developments Portal" <https://ainitywater.custhelp.com> or aw_developerservices@custhelp.com.
17. The applicant is advised of the Council's powers under Part III of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to prohibit nuisances associated with noise, odour, dust, artificial light and a range of other pollutants that may arise from both demolition/construction sites and ongoing commercial/industrial land uses.
18. The applicant is advised of the Council's powers under the Control of Pollution Act 1974 to restrict noise generating construction (including demolition) activity audible beyond the development site boundary.
19. The applicant is advised that in relation to the data centres, the design criteria to which condition 40 relates are as follows:
 - Cumulative noise associated with building services plant (excluding back-up generators and life safety systems) serving the data centres should not exceed LAr,Tr 48 dB during the day (07:00-23:00) and LAr,Tr 40 dB at night (23:00-07:00) at the residential dwellings to the east, and a level of LAr,Tr 59 dB during the day (07:00-23:00) and LAr,Tr 51 dB at night (23:00-07:00) at the hotel to the west.
 - Cumulative noise associated with the data centres whilst the backup generators are operational should not exceed LAr,Tr 54 dB during the day (07:00-23:00) and LAr,Tr 46 dB at night (23:00-07:00) at the residential dwellings to the east, and a level of LAr,Tr 65 dB during the day (07:00-23:00) and LAr,Tr 57 dB at night (23:00-07:00) at the hotel to the west.

PRO-ACTIVE STATEMENT

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

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

1. The application file, forms, plans and supporting documents having the reference number relating to this item. Online copies may be obtained at <https://publicaccess.stevenage.gov.uk/online-applications/>
2. The Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031
<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/local-plan>
3. The Stevenage Borough Local Plan Partial Update 2025
<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/local-plan-partial-update/submission-to-secretary-of-state>
4. Stevenage Borough Council Supplementary Planning Documents: Parking Provision SPD 2025; Design Guidance SPD 2025; Developer Contributions SPD 2025.
<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/planning-library>
5. Hertfordshire County Council Local Transport Plan LTP4 2018-2031
<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/about-the-council/consultations/lt4-local-transport-plan-4-complete.pdf>
6. Government advice contained in the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 and the Planning Practice Guidance.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67aafe8f3b41f783cca46251/NPPF_December_2024.pdf
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

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The Meeting: Planning and Development Agenda Item:
Committee

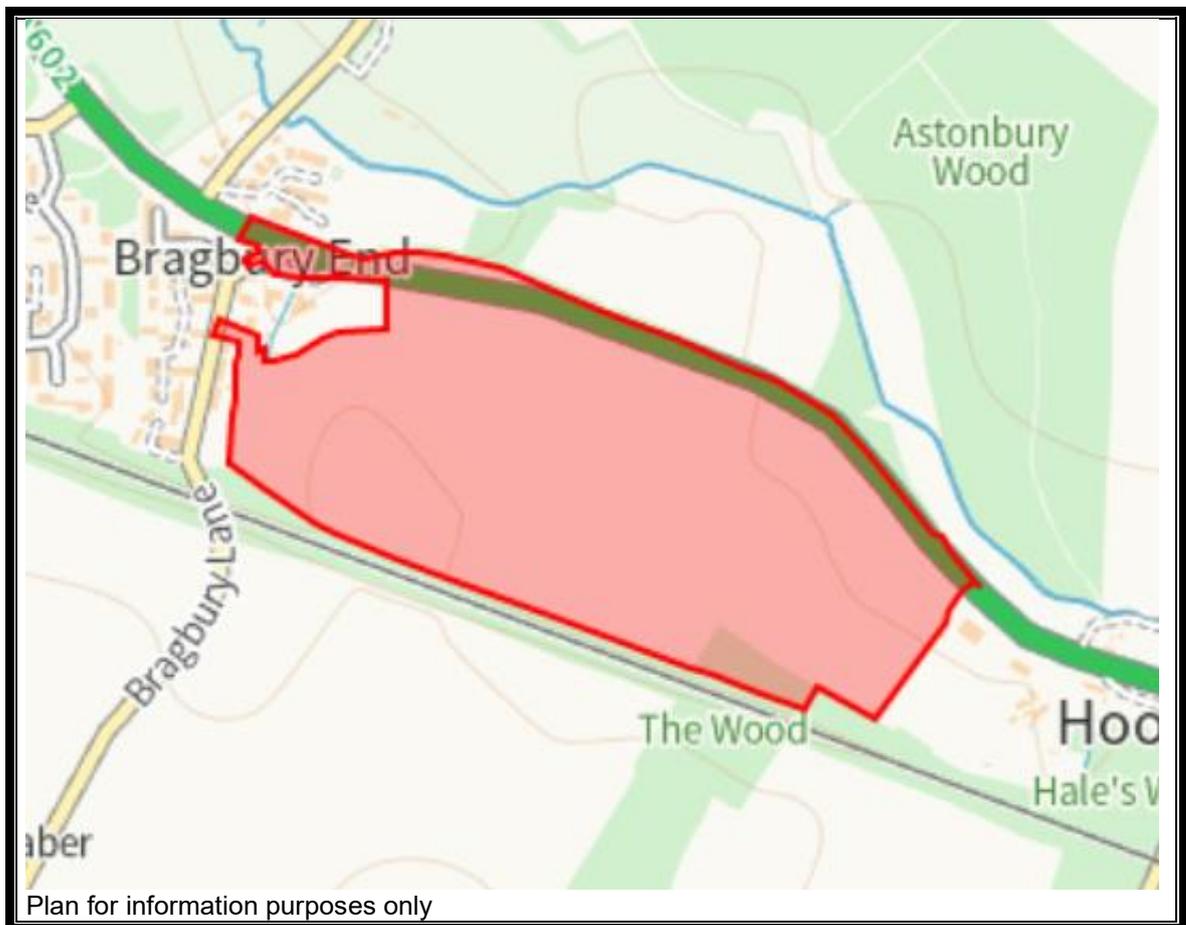
Date: 12 March 2026

Author: Rebecca Elliott

Lead Officer: Alex Robinson

Contact Officer: Rebecca Elliott

Application Nos:	25/00620/OPM
Location:	Land South of A602/Land East of Bragbury End, Stevenage.
Proposal:	Full planning permission for the construction of the spine road, site accesses from the A602 and ancillary works. Outline planning permission for up to 500 dwelling units (including affordable housing and self-build plots), a mixed use local centre (Use Class C3, E and F2 space, public open and amenity space (including Children's Play), associated landscaping and ecological enhancement works, internal highways, parking, footpaths, cycleways, drainage, utilities, service infrastructure and ancillary works (With some matters reserved).
Drawing Nos.	<p>23057su1.01C Site Location Plan</p> <p>23057su1.02C Existing Site Plan</p> <p>23057su1.04A Site Location Plan with Full Planning Boundary</p> <p>23057wd2.01J Proposed Sie Plan – Masterplan</p> <p>23057wd2.02D Proposed Sie Plan – Masterplan Lots Allocation</p> <p>23057wd2.03A Proposed Masterplan Part plan 1</p> <p>23057wd2.04A Proposed Masterplan Part plan 2</p> <p>23057wd2.05B Proposed Masterplan Part plan 3</p> <p>23057wd2.06B Proposed Masterplan Part plan 4</p> <p>23057wd2.07A Proposed Masterplan Part plan 5</p> <p>23057wd2.08A Proposed Masterplan with Full Planning Boundary</p> <p>23057wd2.10 Proposed artist impression 1</p> <p>23057wd2.11 Proposed artist impression 2</p> <p>23057wd2.12 Proposed artist impression 3</p> <p>23057wd2.13 Proposed artist impression 4</p> <p>23057wd2.14 Proposed artist impression 5</p> <p>23057wd2.15 Proposed artist impression 6</p> <p>23057wd2.16 Proposed artist impression 7</p> <p>23057wd2.17 Proposed artist impression 8</p>
Applicant:	Stevenage Borough Council
Date Valid:	13 August 2025
Recommendation:	GRANT OUTLINE AND PLANNING PERMISSION



1. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 1.1 The site is located at the southeasternmost point of Stevenage borough, forming the borough boundary along both its southern and eastern edges. The railway line defines the entire southern boundary, while The Three Horseshoes Public House directly abuts the eastern edge. To the west, the site adjoins residential properties along Bragbury Lane—an older part of Stevenage predating the New Town era and containing several listed buildings associated with the original settlement of Bragbury End. These include The Chequers Public House, which adjoins the site’s northwestern corner.
- 1.2 The A602/Broadhall Way runs in a northwest–southeast direction along the northern boundary and is subject to a 40mph speed limit, with a footpath on its southern side. The site is largely enclosed by mature trees and hedgerows, including internal field boundaries demarcated by hedgerows. A substantial woodland forms the southeastern corner of the site, while the western side contains more scattered tree cover and hedging.
- 1.3 The site includes several physical constraints, such as varied topography across both north–south and east–west gradients, overhead power lines, and a flood storage reservoir located in the western corner.
- 1.4 The site is allocated under Local Plan Policy HO4 to deliver housing jointly across the application site and the northern parcel (in private ownership), including (but not limited to) at least 5% aspirational homes, at least 1% new homes made available for self-build purposes, at least 30% (40% under updated policy) affordable housing, provision for supported or sheltered housing, and local facilities to serve the community including a GP surgery.

2. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.1 No known planning history for the site.

3. THE CURRENT APPLICATION

- 3.1 The submitted application is a hybrid application with the majority of the proposed development being outline with some highway works which are covered by full detailed permission. The proposed development seeks full planning permission for the construction of a main spine road within the development, access points from the A602 and ancillary works. Outline planning permission is sought for up to 500 dwelling units (including affordable housing and self-build plots), a mixed use local centre (Use Class C3, E and F2), public open and amenity space (including children's play), associated landscaping and ecological enhancement works, internal highways, parking, footpaths, cycleways, drainage, utilities, service infrastructure and ancillary works (with some matters reserved).
- 3.2 The main proposed access to the site would be by a four-arm signalised junction, with left and right turning lanes. A secondary access is proposed to the east of the site to allow bus and emergency vehicle access only. On entering the site, the north/south 'boulevard' would be tree lined and flanked by three storey apartment block buildings, with a neighbourhood centre below. The 'boulevard' would open onto the main spine road heading west and east to provide access to each of the proposed 'lots' of dwellings.
- 3.3 The proposed 'lots' breakdown the proposed housing into areas which could be phased through the submission of future reserved matters applications. The 'lots' have greater densities per hectare of housing the closer they are to the A602 and neighbourhood centre within the site, with lower densities towards the east and western sides of the site, taking note of the more rural surroundings of the site.
- 3.4 The Masterplan is landscape-led, utilising the Garden City Principles, with larger and smaller pockets of useable green space throughout the development. A main green recreation area sited at the end of the 'boulevard' creates open vistas in the site, with smaller pocket parks and multiple foot/cycleways around the site increasing connectivity.
- 3.5 The proposal includes Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), additional landscaping and ecological measures to mitigate the impact of the development. Aside from the new accesses and spine road, all other matters are outline and will be subject to the submission of reserved matters applications. As such, details pertaining to house types, designs, parking, final landscaping, play areas, etc are not specified in this application.
- 3.6 This application comes before the Planning and Development Committee as the development is a major strategic development submitted by Stevenage Borough Council as the applicant and landowner.

4. PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS

- 4.1 Following notification of the application via letter, the posting of three site notices and a press advert, the application has received 29 objections, 8 general comments and a petition opposing the development with 205 signatories. These have been summarised below.
- 4.2 Objections -
- Highways, Traffic congestion and road safety

- A602 already over capacity
- High accident rates and road safety concerns
- Recent real world gridlock following road works
- Impact on surrounding lanes and rural roads when incidents occur
- Concerns about proposed new junctions
- Flooding, drainage and infrastructure -
 - Existing regular flooding issues
 - Impact of development on flood risk
 - Sewer access and utilities infrastructure
- Environmental & Biodiversity concerns -
 - Loss of wildlife habitat
 - Impact of public parkland near gardens
 - Loss of mature hedgerows and trees
 - Biodiversity net gain compliance
- Impact on residential Amenity -
 - Privacy and overlooking
 - Public access directly behind gardens
 - Noise impacts
- Overdevelopment, Settlement character and local identity
 - Rural character at risk
 - Stevenage already over-expanded
 - Social infrastructure capacity
 - Schools are already at or near capacity
 - Difficulty accessing GPs, Dentists
 - Public transport, infrequent bus services, no safe pedestrian access
- Employment, accessibility and local economy
 - Local job market is already oversubscribed
 - Fear new housing will attract new residents rather than benefiting current ones
- Quality of consultation and transparency
 - Consultation letters were not widely distributed
 - Exhibitions gave conflicting information
 - A new meeting should be convened with all affected residents invited
 - Greater transparency about revised plans, updated highways modelling, drainage concerns.

4.3 Petition

A petition objecting to the proposals has been received with 205 signatories. The petition raises objections based on the inability of the A602 to cope with the extra traffic the development will create, and poor access to community services, such as schools.

4.4

A representation was received from Icen Projects on behalf of the adjoining landowner of the HO4 allocation to the north of the application site. The respondent confirms that they are in ongoing discussions with both the Council's Planning team and the Estates team regarding the progression of the HO4 site. Their primary concern relates to the access arrangements proposed within this application, specifically the nature of the connection to their landholding. They have requested further technical information from the Council's Estates team to understand the proposed access in more detail. The respondent states that they intend to provide additional comments once this information has been reviewed

4.5

Three general comments have been received from parties who promote Swifts (the birds) in Hertfordshire, seeking adequate provision of swift boxes within the development.

4.6

Comments have also been received from The Football Foundation as follows - Sport England is a non-statutory consultee, but the Football Foundation highlights the need for

investment in local sports facilities if the development is approved. The proposal for <500 homes (approx. 1,200 new residents) includes no formal football infrastructure on site.

Local policy (HO4 and HC8) requires on-site sports provision or a commuted sum, aligned with the Council's Sports Facilities Assessment and Strategy. Stevenage's emerging Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS), although not yet adopted, is a material consideration and shows significant existing shortfalls.

Natural grass pitches:

- Broad insufficiency across the authority
- Adult and youth pitches particularly lacking
- Existing provision cannot absorb new demand

3G artificial pitches:

- 176 affiliated teams require 5 full-size 3G equivalents
- Only 2 currently exist → shortfall of 3 full-size pitches

Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator shows new demand from the development:

- Adult teams: 0.07
- Youth teams: 0.65
- Mini teams: 0.38

Resulting facility requirements include:

- 1.10 natural grass pitch equivalents
- Associated capital and lifecycle costs
- Additional changing room provision
- 0.06 of a full-size 3G pitch equivalent

On-site provision is not considered necessary, but off-site financial contributions are essential to mitigate the impact of new demand. Contributions should support football facility improvements within a reasonable catchment of the development. Engagement with Hertfordshire FA is recommended to identify suitable local projects that can deliver the required additional capacity.

4.7 These comments are not verbatim. Full comments can be viewed online.

5. CONSULTATIONS

5.1 Hertfordshire County Council Highways Authority

Introduction

5.1.1 The Highway Authority notes the submission of this planning application for Land South of the A602, located in Bragbury End, Stevenage. The Highway Authority has reviewed the Transport Assessment (TA) dated July 2025 in support of the planning application. The Highway Authority note the discussions with the applicant and their consulting team on the Transport Assessment via pre and post application discussions. These discussions centred the sustainability of the site in terms of the proposed walking and cycling links, bus services and the type of access into the site. The submission of a Transport Assessment Addendum (TAA) is also noted, dated October 2025 (revision 2). The TAA deals with a number of post-application matters, including how an interim site access junction (without the northern element of the HO4 allocation), could be promoted.

Site

5.1.2 The development site is accessed from the A602, a Principal Road and a Primary Distributor in the Hertfordshire roads hierarchy. A speed limit of 40 m.p.h. is in force on this section of the A602. There are no rights of way within the site itself; however, there are footpaths 26 and 27 on the northern side of the A602, opposite the site.

Travel by Sustainable Means

Walking

5.1.3 The site is located on the south-eastern periphery of Stevenage, in the Bragbury End area. The site is capable of being connected to the west into the Stevenage footway and cycleway network. However, this notwithstanding, the site is remote from local facilities and amenities. As detailed within Table 3.2 of the Transport Assessment which summarises the walking and cycling distances from the site to local services, it is clear that the site is isolated from the wider Stevenage settlement.

5.1.4 Broadwater Crescent is the closest local shopping area, with a convenience store, public house, take-away outlets and church. However, these facilities are nevertheless located approximately 2.5km from the centre of the site. It is considered that given the site's location, residents would need to travel into Stevenage town centre, be it to access local facilities, amenities and public transport. An appropriate package of mitigation measures in order to make the development sustainable is therefore of key importance for this location.

Bus

5.1.5 The closest pair of bus stops is located to the west of the site, with the bus stops marking The Chequers public house. The bus stops are served principally by the number 390 and 907 bus services. The 390 provides a link between Hertford/Ware and Stevenage with the 907 providing a link between Stevenage and Cheshunt. It is considered that the principal travel requirement will be towards Stevenage where in the morning peak hour, to give one example, there are three weekday services in the peak hour period.

Proposed Mitigation

5.1.6 The Highway Authority consider it fitting that an enhancement and/or diversion into the site is appropriate for this proposed development. It is considered that a figure of £150,000 (index linked) per year, for 5 years to secure the futures of current services 390, 907 and/or the extension of new services introduced into the surrounding area which may be adapted to serve the development. Hertfordshire County Council's Passenger Transport Unit have examined the layout and consider that current routes could be diverted through the development for example. (Current stops, site, site with new stops and route.)

5.1.7 Should planning permission be granted, the applicant should enter into discussions with the Passenger Transport Unit, to include the precise form of the service, timing of the diversion into the site and all necessary infrastructure to facilitate such a movement and collect passengers. Recommendations:

- The cost of an ANPR system for the Bus Gate should be factored into the S106 at £100,000 (index linked) and used if traffic monitoring shows non permitted vehicles are not following the road signage; and
- Bus stops to be placed on both sides of the road with suitable infrastructure, including shelters and real time information boards where required

Cycling

5.1.8 The site is positioned on the edge of the Stevenage urban area, situated well for access into the Broadwater estate and joining with the existing cycle route on the A602 which facilitates access into Stevenage town centre and railway station. Stevenage benefits from excellent cycle connectivity, with routes spanning across the whole town, with connections from the original estates to the Old and New Town Centres and railway station/bus station.

Proposed Mitigation

5.1.9 An enhancement of the existing provision in the site's immediate vicinity and the integration of the site into the network has the potential to encourage trips by sustainable

modes. The Highway Authority welcomes the proposals as set out within the TA which provide cycle links into the site and enhancement around The Chequers public house. The connection into the Three Horseshoes public house is also welcomed and will also provide better connectivity to/from Watton-at-Stone to which the Highway Authority seeks future enhanced links by way of new infrastructure and the LCWIP process.

5.1.10 The works around The Chequers public house should be delivered by planning condition and Section 278 agreement. Given the site’s location, it is the Highway Authority’s view that cycling has the potential to contribute significantly to sustainable travel on the proposed development, being located within a comfortable distance/travel time and broadly level gradient into Stevenage town centre.

5.1.11 The Highway Authority considers that a Strand 2 contribution towards the Stevenage LCWIP Route 4 will present an excellent opportunity to facilitate a good mode share by cycle. As such, there is an opportunity to assist in the promotion of a corridor of mitigation works towards Stevenage town centre.

Trip Generation

5.1.12 Chapter 6 of the TA report and summarised below:

Peak Period	Proposed Development Trip Generation		
	Inbound	Outbound	Two-Way
	Trips	Trips	Trips
AM Peak (0800 to 0900)	63	164	227*
PM Peak (1700 to 1800)	151	68	220*

Table 6.4 – Proposed Development Vehicular Trip Generation *minor rounding error

The Highway Authority is content with the above forecasts. Furthermore, the trip distribution exercise, as set out within the TA report in accordance with local census data is acceptable.

Access

5.1.13 The Highway Authority has entered into discussions with the applicant regarding the proposed access strategy. Ensuring that the proposed access may be accommodated on this section of the network, which in particular experiences peak hour rolling queues is of key importance to the application. A number of different access options were examined with the transport consultant prior to the submission of the planning application.

5.1.14 The Highway Authority’s view is that a centrally located, signalised junction represents the most fitting form of control for access into the site. This form of junction is best suited to accommodate and control the high volumes of traffic on this section of the A602. The access is detailed within the TA as below.

“Primary Access – Signalised Junction

4.2.1 A new four-arm signalised junction is proposed in a central location on the A602. This will serve as the principal vehicular access to the site and also form a key crossing point for pedestrians and cyclists. The proposed layout is shown on Drawing ST3600-703-D

– Means of Access. Key features of the junction design include:

- Three-lane approaches on the A602 (the major road arms)
- Two-lane approaches from the development access arms (the minor road arms)
- Toucan crossing facilities across all four arms
- Advance Stop Lines (ASLs) for cyclists on all approaches”

5.1.15 The Highway Authority has examined the modelling exercise prepared by the consultant in support of the proposed access and has determined that it may be accommodated on the network. The submission of a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit is noted. The Highway Authority consider that based on the findings of the Road Safety Audit that subject to detailed design and a Section 278 agreement, that the access may be delivered satisfactorily.

5.1.16 Given the size of the development site, it is also necessary to introduce an emergency access, as detailed below. This will also have a key function as a bus gate access which will allow bus to avoid peak hour queuing on the A602 and provide a greater level of accessibility for residents of the development site. As stated within the TAA report, the layout is shown on Drawing ST-3600-750-A, Means of Access - Interim Access Option.

5.1.17 The Highway Authority note that the remaining element of the HO4 site allocation, is located immediately to the north of the site, on the opposite side of the A602. The access strategy for the northern site is not yet finalised, although it is the view of the Highway Authority that this site should share a centralised signalised access junction with the southern HO4 site allocation, the latter being the subject of this response. The Highway Authority is content that the full HO4 site allocation can be delivered and accommodated satisfactorily on the adjoining local highway network. The Highway Authority is further content that an interim access solution should only the southern element of the HO4 allocation be promoted can be delivered.

Highway Capacity

5.1.18 The Highway Authority has agreed with the applicant that a comprehensive network of junctions on the A602 are modelled in order to test highway capacity. The site access junction which is to form a signalised arrangement onto the A602 is also included. The Highway Authority notes that the northern element of the HO4 site allocation is yet to come forward as a planning application. As such, the Highway Authority has requested that an interim option where the southern site can be promoted as a standalone site is also tested. This scenario is detailed within the TAA. The TA also examines the highway capacity of the network should the full build out be constructed.

5.1.19 The Highway Authority’s signal unit has also considered in detail the operation of the site access junction. It is considered that the proposed signalised junction to the site is able to operate satisfactorily. The operation of the wider network is considered to work satisfactorily when the development traffic is added. However, contributions towards schemes as detailed within this response such as at the A602/Gresley Way roundabout are considered fitting in order to accommodate the increased level of traffic in this part of Stevenage. Should planning permission be granted, the applicant will be required to liaise with HCC's signals unit.

Contributions

5.1.20 Stevenage Borough Council operates the Community Infrastructure Levy, as detailed by the Local Planning Authority. Separately, HCC’s Guide to Developer Infrastructure Contributions (2021) implements a two-strand approach to planning obligations in order to address the immediate impacts of the new development (first strand), and the cumulative impacts of all development on non-car networks (second strand).

5.1.21 The Highway Authority uses the toolkit in conjunction with the three CIL tests, noted below: i. necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms ii. directly

related to the development; and iii. fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

- 5.1.22 The Highway Authority will seek, wherever possible, to secure highway works via planning condition and s278 agreement.

First strand (works to be undertaken under s278):

- Access works to facilitate the proposed site access and emergency access; and
- Highways works to facilitate the proposed layout in and around The Chequers and Three Horseshoe public houses.

First strand (works to be undertaken under s106):

- 5.1.23 Bus Service Improvements

£150,000 (index linked) per year, for 5 years to secure the futures of current services 390, 907 and/or the extension of new services introduced into the surrounding area which may be adapted to serve the development. Separate ANPR/bus gate contribution also sought.

- 5.1.24 Travel Plan

Approved Travel Plan(s), with individual monitoring fees in accordance with the current HCC Travel Plan guidance published in March 2020. Subsequent to the guidance being issued, the Highway Authority by way of the planning and obligations toolkit has updated the required travel plan evaluation and support contribution figure. Travel Plan Evaluation and Support Contribution” means the sum of £8,862 (index-linked) as hereinafter provided to be paid to the County Council for evaluating administering and monitoring the objectives of the Travel Plan [Note: the Travel Plan Evaluation and Support Contribution is a calculated at a rate of £1,772.40 per year for(a) five years post-full occupation for residential developments or (b) five years post-first occupation for Workplace, Visitor or Educational Schemes]

- 5.1.25 Sustainable Travel Voucher

The Highway Authority seeks a contribution towards a sustainable travel voucher in order to encourage travel by sustainable modes of transport, detailed below. Means a voucher incentive tangible or web hosted for the value of fifty pounds (£50) per flat unit or one hundred pounds (£100) per house unit forming part of the Development (index linked as hereinafter provided) to incentivise the uptake of public transport cycling or walking as appropriate to the Development. As detailed within HCC planning guidance, the Highway Authority will seek to use this sum in a flexible fashion in order to promote travel by sustainable modes.

Second Strand (S106):

- 5.1.26 As per the Hertfordshire County Council Guide to Developer Infrastructure Contributions, first issued 2021, a contribution per dwelling based on forecasted residential development proportion required to meet Active Travel funding gap (cost per dwelling): $\text{£}570,185,769 / 83,530 = \text{£}6,826$. Indexed to March 2024 = £9,861 Based upon the number of homes that are sought for planning permission, the Highway Authority note that a Strand 2 figure of 500 homes x £9,861 is applicable, amounting to £4,930,500 (excluding indexation which would be dated from the planning committee date).

Schemes

- 5.1.27 HCC have identified schemes from the Stevenage LCWIP Route 4 which are considered suitable in planning terms and compliant with the CIL regulations. It is noted that the TA/TAA documentation only sets out limited off-site mitigation, focused on the immediate site extents, connecting the development into the wider Stevenage pedestrian/cycle network.

- 5.1.28 For a development of this size in a location that in planning terms, needs to improve sustainable travel, the application of the full Strand 2 contribution is considered fitting. The Highway Authority as part of the A602 capacity upgrade project (as detailed also in the Stevenage Infrastructure Delivery Plan), seeks a potential scheme at the Gresley Way/A602 junction. Such a scheme would also alleviate the rolling queues on this section of the A602 and would assist in the movement of traffic back to the proposed site access junction. The Highway Authority therefore requests that SBC apply the appropriate portion of the CIL to be allocated to HCC in order to promote the schemes as detailed within this response.
- 5.1.29 Should the Local Planning Authority be minded to grant planning permission, the Highway Authority requests that a fitting level of CIL contributions payable to SBC for highways/transportation matters be attributed to the schemes as discussed within this response. The application of such funding is considered an essential element in order to make this development acceptable in planning terms.

Summary

- 5.1.30 The Highway Authority has reviewed the Transport Assessment (dated July 2025) in support of a residential led development in the Bragbury End area of Stevenage. The Highway Authority has also considered the addendum document dated October 2025 prepared by the transport consultant.
- 5.1.31 The Highway Authority is content with the principle of the development and the junction access strategy. It is noted that the site forms a part of the HO4 allocation, as identified within the Stevenage Borough Council Local Plan. A key element of making the development acceptable in planning terms and compliant with LTP4 is the package of mitigation, including proposed bus service and enhancements to the footway and cycle network.
- 5.1.32 The Highway Authority has also detailed key schemes that may be funded via the CIL charge. In summary, the Highway Authority does not wish to restrict the grant of planning permission, subject to the aforementioned planning conditions and Advisory Notes.

5.2 Hertfordshire County Council Lead Local Flood Authority

Comments dated 6 February 2026

- 5.2.1 We maintain our objection to this planning application in the absence of an acceptable Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Drainage Strategy or relating to:
- Submission of sufficiently detailed technical Information in relation to flood risk and surface water drainage.
 - The development is not in accordance with NPPF, PPG or Stevenage local policies.
- 5.2.2 **Reason** To prevent flooding in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 181, 182 and 187 by ensuring the satisfactory management of local flood risk, surface water flow paths, storage and disposal of surface water from the site in a range of rainfall events and ensuring the SuDS proposed operates as designed for the lifetime of the development.
- 5.2.3 We will consider reviewing this objection if the issues highlighted below are adequately addressed. The LLFA requires the applicant to:
- Submit information regarding the concerns that there is not sufficient room within the development boundary to address flood risk mitigation and also achieved the suggested density of the development. Information provided to support this point that has previously been submitted for a different application should be resubmitted to support this application.
 - In principle approval from Thames Water on the connection to the sewer and discharge rate.

5.2.4 Submission of detailed information for this development to include, but not limited to, the below points will be recommended to be secured by condition once the above points of objection have been addressed:

- Provision of a surface water drainage system that fully addressed the four pillars of SuDS and meets the National Standards for SuDS (2025), including evidence for the proposed runoff destination and including interception management.
- Submission of detailed surface water drainage design calculations for the 100% AEP event, 50% AEP event, 3.3% AEP event, 3.3% AEP event (plus climate change allowance), 1% AEP event and 1% AEP event (plus climate change allowance).
- Apply conservative design settings, including a CV value of 1, in all of the drainage design calculations.
- Detailed surface water drainage layout plan and contributing catchment details.
- Submit details on mitigation measures including freeboard to drainage features that are designed to hold water and freeboard to ground finished floor levels from the maximum design water level or flood level from any source, including from the surface water drainage provision.
- Exceedance flow information for events in excess of the 1% AEP event plus climate change allowance.
- Submit information on how the phasing of the development is occurring and how any temporary measures will be included in relation to the protection of the water environment and any newly built SuDS features.
- Details of the required maintenance (activity and frequency) of any SuDS features and structures and who will be adopting / responsible for undertaking the required maintenance of these features for the lifetime of the development.
- A high-level assessment of how water quantity and water quality will be managed during the construction phase is required. Identifying high level assumptions of a construction management plan, such as the need to discharge to a sewer or watercourse with appropriate pollution measures.

Officer response

5.2.5 At the time of writing this report, the applicant was seeking to address the points raised by the LLFA. If updated comments are received prior to the meeting and/or the drainage strategy is agreed an update will be provided, otherwise it is anticipated Members will agree to delegate powers being granted to the Director of Planning and Regulation to impose any conditions advised on any response provided after the committee meeting. However, it should be noted the LLFA does not object to the principle of the drainage strategy.

5.2.6 A decision will not be issued until the Legal Agreement associated with the development has been signed, which will allow time for updated comments to be received. Therefore, comments will be fully considered prior to a decision being issued. However, if the LLFA continues to raise an objection to this application and their concerns cannot be overcome, then this application will be referred back to the Planning and Development Committee for its decision.

5.3 Environmental Health

5.3.1 I have reviewed the documentation submitted in support of the above application and make the following observations; in the interest of clarity I have presented them as regards the two distinct phases of the development – its construction and its use thereafter.

Construction phase (noise, dust, smoke, etc)

5.3.2 The Air Quality Assessment report authored by Mayer Brown Limited (reference Bragbury End(A)9.1, dated August 2025) concludes, in Section 6, that dust from

construction activity does need to be controlled in order to minimise its harmful impacts as regards this phase of the development. The report recommends a number of mitigation measures in Appendix C.

- 5.3.3 The report recommends, which I endorse, an integrated approach to the control of pollutants during the construction phase and accordingly I suggest the following condition should the Local Planning Authority (LPA) be minded to grant consent to this development:

1(a) Prior to the commencement of the development to which this permission relates (including any demolition or site clearance), a Construction Management Plan (CMP) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plan shall include details of: a) hours of working (including deliveries and waste removal); b) all plant necessary for construction and demolition; c) noise and vibration mitigation measures with particular attention paid to piling, power floating, and vacuum excavation activities where these activities are to be undertaken; d) dust and smoke mitigation measures; e) site lighting and off-site mitigation measures;

1(b) The development shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved CMP at all times.

REASON: In the interests of the amenities of nearby residential occupiers in accordance with Local Plan Policy FP7

- 5.3.4 The Preliminary Risk Assessment (PRA) prepared by WDE Consulting Limited (see below) advises that no site works, including clearance, should take place until the risks associated with unexploded ordnance ('UXO') have been fully explored. Whilst this risk principally relates to health & safety matters, and is therefore the regulatory responsibility of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), I would nonetheless recommend that the LPA considers a condition mandating that this takes place.

End use (environment noise)

- 5.3.5 The Noise impact assessment for a proposed residential development report authored by ACA Acoustics Limited (reference 241113-R001B, dated 18/7/2025) considers transport noise in some depth but does not consider or offer noise mitigation measures as regards the following sources:

- The Chequers public house, a licensed premises, to the northwest of the development site
- Skate park or other recreational facilities
- Plant noise associated with local centre
- Operational noise, e.g. deliveries, associated with local centre.

- 5.3.6 The application contains very limited information on these sources and therefore I am unable to offer detailed advice on their potential impact on residential amenity (as regards both existing residents and also future occupiers of the proposed dwellings). Accordingly, I suggest that the LPA secures more information on the above and reconsults EH&LS before proceeding to determination of the application.

Transport noise

- 5.3.7 The ACA report is a comprehensive document as regards noise from nearby road and rail sources. It assesses that parts of the site have a high risk, both at night and during the day, of environmental noise exposure and therefore comprehensive mitigation measures are needed in order to safeguard the amenity of future residents of the development.

- 5.3.8 The mitigation measures proposed include the appropriate location and orientation of habitable rooms for dwellings with the highest façade noise exposure and also uprated glazing/ventilation arrangements. The details of the final design of the scheme have yet to be finalised and also the interplay between acoustic mitigation measures and the requirements of dwelling cooling and ventilation needs to be carefully considered when arriving at a final specification.
- 5.3.9 Some external amenity spaces are likely to be particularly challenging to mitigate given the elevation of the railway line and proposal for some flats to have balconies. The report proposes a pragmatic approach to these spaces designed ‘.....to achieve the lowest practicable noise levels in amenity spaces and should not be prohibited where there is a slight excess.’ Even with typical mitigation measures, some of these spaces are likely to have noise levels above those set out in BS 8233:2014 and therefore the LPA should have regard to this in its decision making.
- 5.3.10 In light of the above, I believe that the condition, over page, is a means of promoting the objectives of Local Plan Policy FP7 vis-à-vis internal living spaces. I have integrated the proposed mitigation strategy as regards external amenity spaces in the condition but this, for the reasons set out above, is problematic.

1(a) Prior to the construction of any dwelling a written noise impact assessment for the site shall be submitted in writing to, and approved by, the Local Planning Authority. The report shall demonstrate that the layout and construction of dwellings reflects good acoustic design together with details of appropriate mitigation measures, where required, so that internal and external noise levels specified below will not be exceeded: Room type Daytime (07:00 to 23:00) Night time (23:00 to 07:00) Living room 35 dB LAeq, 16hour - Dining room 40 dB LAeq, 16hour - Bedroom 35 dB LAeq, 16hour 30 dB LAeq, 8hour 45dB LAmax - no more than 10 times per night Where it is necessary to rely on closed windows to achieve the above internal noise levels then an alternative adequate means of ventilation or cooling, meeting the requirements of building regulations approved document F and O, shall be provided that do not materially compromise the performance of the relevant façade sound insulation. Where mechanical ventilation is proposed it should, in normal operation, achieve compliance with NR20 in bedrooms between 23:00 to 07:00 and NR25 in all habitable rooms between 07:00 to 23:00. External amenity spaces provided for the sole use of the occupiers of the dwellings shall be designed to achieve the lowest practicable noise levels and have a target of not exceeding 55dB LAeq, 16hr.

1(b) All agreed mitigation measures shall be implemented, retained, and maintained for the life of the approved use.

REASON: In the interests of the amenities of future residential occupiers in accordance with Local Plan Policy FP7

Air source heat pumps

- 5.3.11 The above report also does not consider the impact of noise arising from external plant attached to dwellings such as Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHPs) which, according to the supporting Design and Access Statement (see page 63) will feature in the development. I believe that the risk to the amenity of residents of the scheme and those currently nearby can be adequately controlled by way of the following condition:

1(a) Construction of the dwellings hereby permitted shall not take place until a written management plan detailing how noise arising from mechanical air ventilation, heating, and cooling plant is to be mitigated has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

1(b) No part of the development shall be occupied until the plant authorised by 1(a) above as regards noise control has been installed and commissioned in strict accordance with the approved management plan.

1(c) All agreed mitigation measures shall be retained and maintained for the life of the approved use.

REASON: In the interests of the amenities of existing and future residential occupiers in accordance with Local Plan Policy FP7

End use (vibration)

- 5.3.12 The ACA report concludes that vibration from the railway line is not a material constraint to development – I agree with this and therefore no mitigation measures are warranted in my opinion.

End use (local air quality)

- 5.3.13 The Mayer Brown Limited report, see above, states that the operation of the development, once constructed, will have only a very limited impact on local air quality. The data contained within the report, and also that from Council monitoring, supports that conclusion and therefore I do not believe that air quality is a material factor as regards this application.

End use (contaminated land)

- 5.3.14 The Preliminary Risk Assessment (PRA) prepared by WDE Consulting Limited (reference 21316R1, Issue A, dated August 2024) considers the previous land uses, inter alia, of the development site and concludes that, with the exception of the onsite reservoir, the development of the site is unlikely to create any significant pollutant linkages. I have no material disagreement with this conclusion but would point out that contamination of ground water is usually a matter for the Environment Agency and so I would encourage the LPA to consult that body, if it hasn't done so already, seeking guidance on the likely impacts of the proposed development on that receptor.
- 5.3.15 As regards the onsite reservoir, the report suggests that further investigation is warranted in connection with a number of potential pollutant linkages including ground water. Under the circumstances I would recommend the following condition:

Prior to any construction works to which this permission relates the results of a phase 2 site investigation together with full written details of any necessary remediation works or controls shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved remediation strategy.

REASON: In the interests of human health.

In the event that any previously unidentified ground contamination is discovered on the site, no further construction work may be carried out in the affected area until full written details of any necessary remediation works or controls has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved remediation strategy.

REASON: In the interests of human health.

Where any development to which this permission relates is required to be carried out in accordance with a remediation strategy approved by the local planning authority, a verification report (setting out the remedial measures actually

undertaken on the site) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to the beneficial occupation of the development.

REASON: In the interests of human health.

End use (external artificial lighting)

- 5.3.16 I note the inclusion within the application pack of two drawings relating to the use of artificial lighting. However, these are restricted to the lighting of roads and streets and therefore they do not set out an approach as regards the illumination of places such as the proposed delivery yard, skate park, etc.
- 5.3.17 I would therefore recommend that the LPA secures more information on the artificial lighting proposals before proceeding with determination of the application. Any assessment of this aspect of the development on residential amenity should ideally have regard to the guidance set out in: The Institute of Lighting Professionals: Guidance Note 1 for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light.

5.4 Active Travel England

Comments dated 2 February 2026

- 5.4.1 Notice is hereby given that Active Travel England's formal recommendation is as follows:
b. Conditional approval: ATE recommends approval of the application, subject to the agreement and implementation of planning conditions and/or obligations as set out in this response.

Background

- 5.4.2 Active Travel England (ATE) welcomes the opportunity to provide an additional comment on the full planning application for the construction of the spine road, site accesses from the A602 and ancillary works. Also considered is the outline planning permission for up to 500 dwelling units (including affordable housing and self-build plots), a mixed use local centre (Use Class C3, E and F2 space, public open and amenity space (including Children's Play), skate park, associated landscaping and ecological enhancement works, internal highways, parking, footpaths, cycleways, drainage, utilities, service infrastructure and ancillary works (With some matters reserved). The application is regarding part of land allocated for housing in the Stevenage Borough Council (SBC) Local Plan, with a site north of the A602 also allocated for housing. ATE provided a Deferral Response for this application on the 12th of September 2025.

Summary

- 5.4.3 ATE has received a Transport Assessment Addendum (TAA) dated December 2025 and has considered this and other updated information and drawings. Upon review of this information ATE can confirm that it is in support of the development subject to the setting of planning conditions to be made at the discretion of the local planning authority (LPA).

Active Travel Assessment (Revised)

Trip Generation, and Travel Plan Revised Rating: PASS - CONTRIBUTION/CONDITION RECOMMENDED

- 5.4.4 ATE notes that the revised TAA has provided a more comprehensive collection/analysis of multi-modal trip generation. This is representative of all hours of the day and informed by all travel purposes. It is considerate of additional of other data sources including developments with a similar context and National Travel Survey (NTS) data which could provide a more in-depth accurate representation of multi-modal movements of all the components of the proposed scheme.
- 5.4.5 ATE welcomes the applicant setting suitably ambitious TP targets with increases of active travel modes from 14.4% to 26.6% and 8.2% to 17% for public transport (Table 3.2, TP., p.15). This approach can then contribute to the production of a comprehensive Travel Plan (TP) which can make provision for relevant surveys, review/monitoring

mechanisms, targets, any mitigations, timescales, phasing programme and on-site management responsibilities. This full TP can be set as conditions of planning permission.

Active Travel Route Audit/Off-site Infrastructure/Access to amenities by Active Travel modes/Access to Public Transport and Internal Active Travel Provision Revised Rating: PASS - CONTRIBUTION/CONDITION RECOMMENDED

5.4.6 ATE notes that the applicant has provided a consideration of the current accessibility by active travel modes via the presentation of a detailed Walking and Cycling Audit in the TAA (p.46) which includes sufficiently detailed experiential analysis including photos. Within this is a reasonable analysis of the site's location and access to local amenities via active travel modes and public transport provision has been duly considered.

5.4.7 ATE is satisfied with the applicant's proposals that will link the proposed development with existing and future footway/cycle networks, and the delivery of Green Corridor along the A602. ATE also welcomes further proposed measures such as controlled pedestrian and cycle crossings for the A602, consideration of public realm improvements and provision to the bus stop as per drawing ref: ST-3600-704-H. In consideration of the above, ATE advises all future drawings/information for the proposed development should confirm precise dimensions of these including materials, lighting, and supporting features such as signage and seating etc. Proposed Active Travel Infrastructure must demonstrate how it is in adherence with all relevant national policy e.g. LTN 1-20 and Inclusive Mobility. These details can be set as planning conditions at the discretion of the LPA.

Site Permeability/ Placemaking Rating (no change): PASS - CONDITION/CONTRIBUTION RECOMMENDED

5.4.8 The proposed development benefits from an overall suitable street hierarchy and a layout with well-located amenity that benefits from such traits as passive surveillance. This can then potentially facilitate active travel modes and in turn support a more ambitious approach to travel plans as espoused in 2.1 above. Further to this, the applicant should provide all details of supporting measures, such as those which can prevent inconsiderate parking. It is also important that the applicant provide detailed technical drawings/crosssections of the entire street hierarchy.

Cycle Parking Revised Rating: CONDITION/CONTRIBUTION RECOMMENDED

5.4.9 ATE recognises that the applicant is willing to provide cycle parking for the proposed development (para 4.8.1, TA p.24) and that this will be in alignment with LTN 1- 20 parking standards. ATE advises that the applicant provides details of the cycle parking for all components of the proposed development, including one space per bedroom for apartment dwellings and also a consideration of temporary cycle parking for visitors. In addition, and also in accordance with LTN 1-20 the applicant should also commit to details of the cycle parking's location, accessibility, parking types and dimensions to ensure that this provision is suitable for all users and that there is suitable supportive amenity. It is vital that these details are embedded into the final designs and in consideration of this stage of the planning process, ATE advises that these can be subsequently agreed upon as conditions of planning permission at the discretion of the local planning authority.

Conclusion

5.4.5 It is requested that these recommendations are considered by the LPA case officer and forwarded to the agent and applicant. ATE supports the setting of planning conditions, informatives and obligations as detailed above

5.5 Hertfordshire County Council Rights of Way

5.5.1 No comments have been received at the time of drafting this report.

5.6 Hertfordshire County Council Growth and Infrastructure

5.6.1 I am writing in respect of planning obligations sought towards non-transport services to minimise the impact of development on Hertfordshire County Council Services for the local community. Based on the information to date for the development of 500 dwellings we would seek financial contributions towards the following projects.

5.6.2 **Secondary Education Contribution** towards new secondary education provision at the former Barnwell East site/ land at Redwing Close and/or provision serving the development (£3,494,866 index linked to BCIS 1Q2024). This is a proportionate request to the aforementioned project. The project is necessary to mitigate the impacts of this development as explored below.

5.6.3 HCC has a statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places are provided. The pupil yield arising from this development for mitigation is 91.42 secondary age pupils and 18.47 post-16 age pupils. This information comes from the Hertfordshire Demographic Model. This data is calculated using the development mix and build trajectory provided above. The financial contribution is a multiplication of the yield outputs above with the DfE scoreboard costs plus 10% for sustainability measures.

5.6.4 There is insufficient existing secondary education surplus in the town to mitigate the impacts of this development. When looking at the current situation there are 1307 pupils on roll at the entry year 2025/26 at the secondary schools in the SBC pupil planning area (data from August 2025 census) and 1336 total numbers of places at the entry year. Therefore, this is clearly insufficient to meet the yield from this development.

5.6.5 In addition to this, the HCC pupil yield forecasts state that there was to be 1298 pupils on roll at entry in the same year. It is worth noting therefore that the forecasts when compared to actuals over the last 3 years have been within 1% accuracy giving HCC confidence on using this data projection.

5.6.6 The schools in the town are all bar one, their own admissions authorities also therefore HCC cannot rely on these schools to increase their admissions number as a solution to mitigation.

5.6.7 This development cannot be considered in isolation, the HCC forecasts only include committed approved development, not further known development in allocations and it is known that significant further growth is set to occur in wider Stevenage with new additional secondary education provision necessary to mitigate this impact from growth. therefore the situation painted by the forecast data will be exacerbated. 12,000 dwellings are proposed across the wider Stevenage area and yet only circa 4,500 dwellings are included in the HCC forecasts.

5.6.8 It is worth noting that whilst the summer 2025 forecast indicates some years with a deficit of places and others with a surplus, we are currently projecting growth beyond the normal year of admission due to pressure from families joining the system mid-year, with there being little available capacity within the existing secondary schools in the town, with some year groups having none or very few vacancies. This request therefore meet the CIL regulation 122 tests set out below

Monitoring Fees –

5.6.9 HCC will charge monitoring fees. These will be based on the number of triggers within each legal agreement with each distinct trigger point attracting a charge of £420 (adjusted for inflation against RPI January 2024). For further information on monitoring fees please see section 5.5 of the Guide to Developer Infrastructure Contributions. HCC

also reserves the right to seek Community Infrastructure Levy contributions towards the provision of infrastructure through the appropriate channels.

- 5.6.10 The CIL Regulations discourage the use of formulae to calculate contributions however, the County Council is not able to adopt a CIL charge itself. Accordingly, in areas where a CIL charge has not been introduced to date, planning obligations in their restricted form are the only route to address the impact of a development. In instances where a development is not large enough to require on site provision but is large enough to generate an impact on a particular service, an evidenced mechanism is needed to form the basis of any planning obligation sought. HCC views the calculations and figures set out within the Guide to Developer Infrastructure Contributions as an appropriate methodology for the obligations sought in this instance.
- 5.6.11 The county council methodology provides the certainty of identified contribution figures based on either a known or estimated dwelling mix, the latter of which might be agreed with the local planning authority based on expected types and tenures set out as part of the local plan evidence base. This ensures the contributions are appropriate to the development and thereby meet the third test of Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (amended 2019): “fairly and reasonably relates in scale and kind to the development”.
- 5.6.12 **OUTLINE ONLY:** Outline applications will require the ability for an applicant to recalculate contributions at the point of a reserved matters application and as such a calculation Table will be provided as part of the S106 drafting process. This approach provides the certainty of identified contribution figures with the flexibility for an applicant/developer to amend the dwelling mix at a later stage and the financial contribution to be calculated accordingly.
- 5.6.13 Please note that current service information for the local area may change over time and projects to improve capacity may evolve. This may potentially mean a contribution towards other services could be required at the time any application is received in respect of this site.

Justification

- 5.6.14 The above figures have been calculated using the amounts and approach set out within the Guide to Developer Infrastructure Contributions (Hertfordshire County Council's requirements) document, which was approved by Hertfordshire County Council's Cabinet 12 July 2021 and is available via the following link: [Planning obligations and developer infrastructure contributions | Hertfordshire County Council](#)
- 5.6.15 In respect of Regulation 122 of the CIL Regulations 2010 (amended 2019), the planning obligations sought from this proposal are:
- (i) **Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.** Recognition that contributions should be made to mitigate the impact of development are set out in planning related policy documents. The NPPF states “Local planning authorities should consider whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through the use of conditions or planning obligations.” Conditions cannot be used cover the payment of financial contributions to mitigate the impact of a development The NPPG states “No payment of money or other consideration can be positively required when granting planning permission.” The development plan background supports the provision of planning contributions. The provision of community facilities is a matter that is relevant to planning. The contributions sought will ensure that additional needs brought on by the development are met.

- (ii) **Directly related to the development.** The occupiers of new residential developments will have an additional impact upon local services. The financial contributions sought towards the above services are based on the size, type and tenure of the individual dwellings comprising this development following consultation with the Service providers and will only be used towards services and facilities serving the locality of the proposed development and therefore, for the benefit of the development's occupants.
- (iii) **Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.** The above financial contributions have been calculated according to the size, type and tenure of each individual dwelling comprising the proposed development (based on the person yield).

5.7 Hertfordshire County Council Minerals and Waste

Minerals

- 5.7.1 In relation to minerals, the majority of the site falls within the 'Sand and Gravel Belt' as identified in Hertfordshire County Council's adopted Minerals Local Plan 2002 – 2016. The Sand and Gravel Belt is a geological area that spans across the southern part of the county and contains the most concentrated deposits of sand and gravel throughout Hertfordshire. British Geological Survey (BGS) data also identifies areas of potential superficial sand/gravel deposits at the application site.
- 5.7.2 The Minerals Planning Authority identifies the entirety of the Sand and Gravel Belt together with the identified resource blocks, as Mineral Consultation Areas. Planning applications submitted to the District and Borough Councils for nonminerals development that fall within a Mineral Consultation Area (other than applications which meet the 'excluded development' criteria), may not be determined until the county council has been given the opportunity to comment on whether the proposal would unacceptably sterilise mineral resources.
- 5.7.3 In accordance with paragraph 225 of the NPPF (Dec 2024) development proposals in Mineral Safeguarding Areas that might constrain potential future use for mineral working should not normally be permitted. After reviewing the application, the Minerals Planning Authority does not consider that the proposal would have the potential to unacceptably sterilise mineral resources. It is not necessary to investigate the potential for the prior extraction of mineral resources at this site.
- 5.7.4 Whilst prior extraction is not necessary, there may still be opportunities to utilise sand and gravel resources that are found during site preparation works, should any deposits be uncovered that are of a suitable quality. Opportunistic extraction refers to cases where preparation of a site for built development, such as excavating the foundations and footings or landscaping works, may result in suitable material being uncovered that could be extracted and processed for use on site as part of the development.
- 5.7.5 The Minerals Planning Authority would like to encourage the opportunistic extraction and subsequent use of sand and gravel deposits within developments wherever possible. Opportunistic use of minerals will reduce the need to import sand and gravel to the site and make sustainable use of these valuable resources.

Waste

- 5.7.6 Government policy seeks to ensure that all planning authorities take responsibility for waste management. This is reflected in the County Council's adopted waste Development Plan Documents (DPDs). In particular, these documents seek to promote the sustainable management of waste in the county and encourage Local Planning Authorities to have regard to the potential for minimising waste generated by development.

- 5.7.7 The National Planning Policy for Waste (October 2014) sets out the following: ‘When determining planning applications for non-waste development, local planning authorities should, to the extent appropriate to their responsibilities, ensure that:
- a) the likely impact of proposed, non-waste related development on existing waste management facilities, and on sites and areas allocated for waste management, is acceptable and does not prejudice the implementation of the waste hierarchy and/or the efficient operation of such facilities;
 - b) new, non-waste development makes sufficient provision for waste management and promotes good design to secure the integration of waste management facilities with the rest of the development and, in less developed areas, with the local landscape. This includes providing adequate storage facilities at residential premises, for example by ensuring that there is sufficient and discrete provision for bins, to facilitate a high quality, comprehensive and frequent household collection service;
 - c) the handling of waste arising from the construction and operation of development maximises reuse/recovery opportunities, and minimises off-site disposal.’
- 5.7.8 The supporting documents to this application make no reference to the adopted Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD (2012). The policies in the adopted DPD (2012) that relate to this proposal, and which must be considered by the Local Planning Authority in determining the application, include Policy 1: Strategy for the Provision for Waste Management Facilities (namely the penultimate paragraph of the policy) and Policy 12: Sustainable Design, Construction and Demolition. Many of the policy requirements can be met through the imposition of planning conditions.
- 5.7.9 The Waste Planning Authority would expect to see a SWMP prepared to support this application. The SWMP must be prepared and agreed in consultation with the Waste Planning Authority prior to commencement of the project. The SWMP must be implemented throughout the duration of the project, from initial site preparation works to final completion of the construction phase.
- 5.7.10 As a SWMP has not been produced at the planning application stage, the Waste Planning Authority request the following pre-commencement condition be attached to any approved planning application.

5.8 Hertfordshire County Council Ecology

- 5.8.1 No comments have been received at the time of drafting this report.

5.9 Hertfordshire County Council Archaeology

- 5.9.1 Albion Archaeology consulted this office on behalf of the applicant prior to a planning application being submitted (2/24/00484PRE). We advised the following:

“The applicant has submitted an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (DBA), although it was not produced in consultation with, nor recommended by, this office. The DBA does not provide any information regarding the size of the site, but it appears to be approximately 23.5 hectares. In Hertfordshire we normally expect any areas exceeding 1 hectare to contain some heritage assets.

The DBA states that no previous archaeological investigations have taken place at the site (para 4.4), yet nevertheless concludes that the site has a moderate potential to contain heritage assets from the Roman, medieval and post-medieval periods (6.2.1). It goes on to suggest that archaeological planning conditions could be placed on any planning consent to develop the site. It says, “Measures to mitigate the impact of the development on potential buried archaeological remains could entail design measures to minimise the impact of groundworks, archaeological mitigation works where impacts are unavoidable, or a combination of both”. However, in the absence of any

archaeological information to inform either the Masterplan or construction plans it is not clear how this could be judged, nor how the significance of any heritage assets with archaeological interest might be assessed or any harm understood.

The National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 207 states:

“In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.”

Therefore, in the absence of any archaeological information about a relatively large site, should we be consulted regarding development proposals we would be unable to advise the Local Planning Authority.

Examples of information which might enable us to advise the LPA could include the results of a trial trench evaluation of the site, the array being informed by an initial programme of geophysical survey.”

- 5.9.2 This advice has been ignored and an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (Albion Archaeology) and Geophysical Survey (Sumo) submitted with this planning application. The Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment concludes “As a rule, desk-based assessments cannot be used as a predictive tool for the precise location and characterisation of subsurface archaeological deposits.” (paragraph 6.2.4). This supports our advice given above.
- 5.9.3 Notwithstanding the above, should you be minded to grant consent anyway, we advise the following - A programme of archaeological investigations should identify and incorporate appropriate preservation of archaeological remains in situ and no dig areas into the scheme as well as informing appropriate mitigation of the development and recording of any archaeological remains.
- 5.9.4 I believe that the proposed development is such that it should be regarded as having the potential to have an impact on heritage assets of archaeological interest, and I recommend that the following provisions be made, should you be minded to grant consent:
1. the archaeological field evaluation of the proposed development area, prior to development commencing;
 2. such appropriate mitigation measures indicated as necessary by that evaluation. These may include:
 - a. the preservation of any remains in situ, if warranted,
 - b. appropriate archaeological excavation of any remains before any development commences on the site, with provisions for subsequent analysis and publication of results, www.hertfordshire.gov.uk
 - c. archaeological monitoring of the groundworks of the development (also including a contingency for the preservation or further investigation of any remains then encountered),
 - d. such other provisions as may be necessary to protect the archaeological interests of the site;
 3. the analysis of the results of the archaeological work with provision for the subsequent production of a report and an archive, and the publication of the results;

4. such other provisions as may be necessary to protect the archaeological interests of the site;

5.9.5 I believe that these recommendations are both reasonable and necessary to provide properly for the likely archaeological implications of this development proposal. I further believe that these recommendations closely follow the policies included within Policy 16 (para. 211, etc.) of the National Planning Policy Framework, and relevant guidance contained in the National Planning Practice Guidance, and in the Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (Historic England, 2015).

5.9.6 In this case three appropriately worded conditions on any planning consent would be sufficient to provide for the level of investigation that this proposal warrants. I suggest the following wording:

A No demolition/development shall take place/commence until an Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. The scheme shall include an assessment of archaeological significance and research questions; and:

1. The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording
2. The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording, preservation in situ of heritage assets and no dig areas as required by the evaluation
3. The programme for post investigation assessment
4. Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording
5. Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation
6. Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation
7. Provision to be made for public engagement and interpretation
8. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation.

B The demolition/development shall take place/commence in accordance with the programme of archaeological works set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition **(A)**

C The development shall not be occupied/used until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition **(A)** and the provision made for analysis and publication where appropriate.

5.9.7 If planning consent is granted, I will be able to provide detailed advice concerning the requirements for the investigations, and to provide information on professionally accredited archaeological contractors who may be able to carry out the necessary work.

5.10 UKPN

5.10.1 We note there are overhead cables on the site running within close proximity to the proposed development. Prior to commencement of work accurate records should be obtained from our Plan Provision Department at UK Power Networks, Fore Hamlet, Ipswich, IP3 8AA. In the instance of overhead cables within the vicinity, all works should be undertaken in line with GS6 guidelines as published by the HSE

5.10.2 Should any diversion works be necessary because of the development then enquiries should be made to our Customer Connections department. The address is UK Power Networks, Metropolitan house, Darkes Lane, Potters Bar, Herts, EN6 1AG. You can also

find support and application forms on our website [Moving electricity supplies or equipment | UK Power Networks](#)

5.11 Sport England

5.11.1 An objection is made to the proposals for community sports facility provision to meet the needs of the proposed development in its current form due to the lack of confirmed proposals. This position would be reviewed if it was proposed that appropriate financial contributions would be made towards off-site indoor and outdoor sports facility provision, secured through a planning obligation or CIL, as set out in this response.

5.11.2 Advisory comments are made on how the proposals have considered Sport England's Active Design guidance and a planning condition is requested requiring details to be submitted and approved which demonstrate how Active Design principles have been considered in the design and layout of reserved matters applications.

Community Sports Facility Provision

Introduction

5.11.3 This is a hybrid application for a residential led development of up to 500 dwellings on land to the south of the A602 which has been identified in the adopted Stevenage Borough Local Plan for the development of a new neighbourhood in Policy HO4. It is estimated that the population generated by the development would be up to 1,200 based on a typical dwelling occupancy ratio of 2.4 persons per dwelling. This additional population will generate additional demand for sports facilities. If this demand is not adequately met then it will place additional pressure on existing sports facilities, thereby exacerbating existing deficiencies in facility provision. In accordance with the NPPF, Sport England seeks to ensure that the development meets any new community sports facility needs arising as a result of the development. The application makes provision for informal parkland, a pump track, children's play areas, a nature park and other informal open spaces within the development but no on-site provision for formal outdoor sport or indoor sport facilities is proposed. In this context, I would wish to make the following comments on the community sports provision aspects of the application:

Evidence Base and Policy Context

5.11.4 The evidence base for community sport and local planning policy context can be summarised as follows:

- The adopted Stevenage Borough Local Plan (2011-2031) includes policy HC8 which supports residential developments where on-site sports facility provision or a commuted sum is made in accordance with the standards in the Council's Sports Facilities Assessment & Strategy.
- Stevenage Borough Council's emerging Playing Pitch Strategy and Built Facilities Strategy (2025) which are now at an advanced stage provide an assessment of current and future community sports facility needs to support the delivery of the local plan and development management. The assessment identified a range of quantitative and/or qualitative deficiencies for both indoor and outdoor sports facilities and identified priorities for addressing these needs. While needs have been identified for new facilities, there is an emphasis in the local plan and the emerging strategies on prioritising enhancements to existing facilities in order to meet both current and future needs.

5.11.5 In view of the local planning policy and evidence base context, it is considered that in accordance with Government policy in paragraph 103 of the NPPF, a robust local basis exists for justifying the provision of outdoor and indoor community sports facility provision to be made by this development proposal.

Outdoor Sports Provision

- 5.11.6 No on-site proposals are made for dedicated outdoor sports facility provision with the focus being on open space provision for informal recreation and children's play. In view of the constraints associated with providing suitable outdoor sports provision such as playing pitches on this site and the level of demand generated (see Playing Pitch Calculator outputs below) it is considered that off-site provision would be appropriate on this occasion in the form of financial contributions being secured towards the provision/enhancement of projects in the local area. It is unclear whether off-site sports facility provision will be secured through CIL or a planning obligation at this stage.
- 5.11.7 If provision is to be secured through a planning obligation, to assist the Council, an estimate of the demand generated for outdoor sports provision can be provided by Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator <https://www.sportengland.org/howwe-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport/playing-pitch-calculator> strategic planning tool. Team data from Stevenage Borough Council's emerging Playing Pitch Strategy can be applied to the Playing Pitch Calculator which can then assess the demand generated in pitch equivalents (and the associated costs of delivery) by the population generated in a new residential development. I have used the latest version of the calculator (including the latest team data for Stevenage) for estimating the demand generated by a new population in Stevenage of 1,200 and I append the outputs which provides the full data. Consideration should be given by the Council to using the figures from the Playing Pitch Calculator (and the Sports Facility Calculator for tennis courts) for informing the level of a financial contribution if provision is to be secured through a planning obligation.
- 5.11.8 The Council is therefore requested to confirm whether outdoor sports facility provision will be secured through CIL or a planning obligation and if an obligation is secured then an appropriate financial contribution should be sought that would be used towards off-site outdoor sports facilities informed by the priorities in the Playing Pitch Strategy for meeting the additional needs generated by the development.

Indoor Sports Provision

- 5.11.9 As indoor sports facilities are strategic facilities that serve large populations and as the population generated by the proposed development in isolation would not be sufficient to justify the provision of a conventional facility on-site (see appended Sports Facility Calculator figures), it is considered that off-site provision in the form of CIL or a planning obligation towards the provision or improvement of off-site facilities would be the most suitable form of provision on this occasion.
- 5.11.10 Sport England's Sports Facility Calculator (SFC) can help to provide an indication of the likely demand that will be generated by a development for certain facility types. The appended SFC outputs provide detail of the estimated demand and capital costs of meeting this demand. Consideration should be given by the Council to using the figures from the Sports Facility Calculator as a starting point for informing the level of a financial contribution if provision is to be secured through a planning obligation.
- 5.11.11 The Council is therefore requested to confirm whether indoor sports facility provision will be secured through CIL or a planning obligation and if an obligation is secured then an appropriate financial contribution should be sought that would be used towards off-site indoor sports facilities for meeting the additional needs generated by the development.

Conclusion

- 5.11.12 As there are no confirmed proposals at this stage for meeting the development's formal outdoor or indoor sports facility needs, an objection is made to the planning application in its current form. However, I would be willing to withdraw this objection in due course if it is confirmed that such provision will be secured through CIL or appropriate financial contributions, secured through a planning obligation. The advice set out above should be used to inform the scale of the contributions

Active Design

- 5.11.13 Sport England, supported by Active Travel England and OHID, has produced 'Active Design', a guide to planning new developments that create the right environment to help people get more active. The guidance sets out ten key principles for ensuring new developments incorporate opportunities for people to take part in sport and physical activity. The Active Design principles are aimed at contributing towards the Government's desire for the planning system to promote healthy communities through good urban design which is consistent with paragraph 96 of the NPPF. Sport England commends the use of the guidance in the master planning process for new residential developments.
- 5.11.14 I can confirm that the masterplan for the development was prepared in consultation with Sport England at the pre-application stage and that the applicant has sought to incorporate the Active Design principles as far as possible and has made amendments to the masterplan in response to Sport England's advice. As set out in the Design & Access Statement, the masterplan and design code have been organised around principles which include Active Design. In particular, the proposal would offer the following aspects which would encourage physical activity:
- Central Park: The park would provide a multi-functional open space in a central and accessible location within the development that could be used by children and young people for play (pump track and LEAP) and informal recreation. The open space in the middle of the park could also be used for small community events.
 - Nature Park, Pocket Parks and SuDS: All of these spaces which are distributed across the site would provide secondary opportunities for informal play and recreation as they are publicly accessible and linked to the proposed footpath network e.g. a network of footpaths supported by seating are proposed around the Nature Park and SuDS to encourage people to walk around them.
 - Footpaths/Cycleways: Footpaths and cycleways have been integrated into the development so that they are close to people's homes and connect into the existing footpath/cycleway network along the A602. As well as encouraging good active travel access within and outside the development, by providing footpaths around the periphery of the development as well as through the centre this will provide the opportunity for circular walks/runs within the development.
 - Signage and Wayfinding: It is encouraging that a wayfinding strategy has been incorporated into the Design Code to signpost residents to the facilities within the development. Case studies of waymarking to encourage physical activity are on our website such as the Kidlington and Gosford Zoo Trails.
- 5.11.15 The masterplan proposals are therefore welcomed and this application is considered to be a good practice example of applying the Active Design principles. As the majority of the planning application is in outline form it would be inappropriate to provide detailed comments at this stage because the proposed masterplan is conceptual. The Active Design guidance includes a checklist that can be applied to developments and it is recommended that the checklist is used in the preparation of subsequent reserved matters planning applications if the application is permitted to ensure that opportunities for encouraging active lifestyles have been fully explored in the detailed planning and design of the development.
- 5.11.16 It is therefore requested that a planning condition be imposed requiring the submission and approval of details to demonstrate how the reserved matters applications have considered Active Design principles. Sport England would welcome discussions with the applicant in due course to provide further advice on how Active Design can be considered in the detailed proposals. A suggested planning condition is as follows:

“For each parcel/phase of development for which Outline permission is granted, no development in relation to that parcel/phase shall commence until details have been submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority to demonstrate how Active Design principles have been met. Reason: To promote healthy lifestyles through physical activity and to accord with Development Plan policy. Informative: Consideration should be given to using the Active Design checklist in Sport England’s Active Design Guidance to assess reserved matters planning applications”.

5.12 Police Crime Prevention Officer

5.12.1 Thank you for asking me to comment on the proposal to build up to five hundred new dwellings on land at Bragbury End. I have studied the documentation on the council planning site and have the following comments to make.

5.12.2 I have no concerns regarding this proposal. However, I would ask that the applicants engage with Hertfordshire Constabulary’s Crime Prevention Design Service with a view to seeking to achieve accreditation to the Police preferred minimum security standard that is Secured by Design (SBD). The reason for this is that SBD has been proven to reduce the risk of burglary by over eighty percent.

5.12.3 In addition to the above SBD has also been shown by Professor Ken Pease to reduce the potential carbon footprint of the estate over its lifetime. His paper the Carbon Cost of Crime and its Implications, which he wrote in 2009, shows that a burglary can have a carbon generation of two-point five metric tonnes. This isn’t just the investigation it also involves the replacement of the stolen goods and can even include the fact that the residents tend to move as they no longer feel safe in their existing property.

5.12.4 As SBD can reduce this risk by over eighty percent this will result in a massive potential saving in carbon generation compared to non-SBD accredited estates. With this in mind I would request that an Informative is added to any grant of planning permission to encourage the applicants to seek accreditation to SBD. The wording could take the following form –

Prior to construction the applicant will contact the Hertfordshire Constabulary CPDS with a view to seeking to achieve accreditation to the Police preferred minimum security standard that is Secured by Design. Reason: To ensure that the development is compliant with both National and Local Planning Policies, in addition, this will also demonstrate the discharge of obligations under Approved Document Q Security of Building Regulations.

5.12.5 Given the above comments the Police will support this application

5.13 NHS

5.13.1 No comments have been received at the time of drafting this report

5.14 Stevenage Borough Council Planning Policy

5.14.1 No comments have been received at the time of drafting this report

5.15 Stevenage Borough Council Estates

5.15.1 No comments have been received at the time of drafting this report

5.16 Ramblers Association

5.16 No comments have been received at the time of drafting this report

5.17 Stevenage Borough Council Tree Manager

- 5.17.1 In principle I do not have an objection to the proposed development. I have two main concerns: Firstly, the impact of the development onto Woodland W1. This includes:
- impact onto the tree roots (RPA) caused by the installation of the proposed footpath and road on the northern and western sides.
 - Impact of the exiting woodland onto the proposed line of properties on its northern boundary (natural light due to location, encroachment and continuous growth of the woodland edge)
 - impact of the shade created by existing woodland W1 onto the ability of the newly proposed trees, in its vicinity, to establish.

Secondly, the AIA mentions T11 and T12 being significantly affected by the development. I would like to learn more about the way in which these trees would be affected and what mitigations are put in place to reduce this.

- 5.17.2 Further to the additional information submitted to address these concerns I am happy with the approach and welcome the recommendation that, at the detailed design stage of the application, a comprehensive shading assessment is undertaken and that trees along the woodland edge are accurately plotted on an updated topographical survey. This will provide a more precise understanding of shading patterns cast by the woodland and identify any plots that may benefit from minor reorientation to achieve an acceptable level of daylight and sunlight.

5.18 Stevenage Borough Council Parks and Amenities

- 5.18.1 We request confirmation concerning the specific areas that are designated for maintenance by Stevenage Direct Services (SDS), as well as those areas that will be overseen and preserved by any other entity, such as a Management Company.
- 5.18.2 SDS hasn't previously maintained this area. As a result, any areas expected to be maintained by SDS will need the necessary funding to sustain this in the long term. We can calculate the required funds using a commuted sum calculation that spans 20+ years. However, for SDS to perform this calculation, we need full details on landscaping, including area calculations.
- 5.18.3 Currently, the submitted details are minimal, so it's not possible to comment fully on the proposed landscaping. As a result, we can only provide general comments. If we receive detailed information on the hard and soft landscaping, we'll be able to offer more specific feedback.
- 5.18.4 We have concerns regarding the significant amounts of planting that are being proposed. We're particularly worried about the quantity of hedge, shrub, and herbaceous planting, as well as the resources needed to maintain this in the future if SDS is responsible. For areas SDS is expected to maintain, we specify reducing the amount of shrubs and hedge planting to minimise the burden. There's already an initiative underway to rationalise extensive shrub planting across the town, which will improve maintenance efficiency.
- 5.18.5 There is a reference to proposed planters; however, based on experience, planters are susceptible to drying out and necessitate periodic irrigation, which SDS will not be able to provide. Consequently, this aspect requires further deliberation to eliminate the need for irrigation.
- 5.18.6 We have concerns regarding the proposed planting in and around parking spaces. Based on our experience, planting around parking bays and car parks can lead to

issues with maintenance access, increased vulnerability to damage, and reduced visibility. Accordingly, we request that shrub and grass planting in these areas be omitted.

- 5.18.7 The proposed 12-month defect/establishment period for planting is considered insufficient to allow establishment; it may be necessary to extend this to a minimum of 2-3 years.
- 5.18.8 It is essential to ensure appropriate safeguarding of open spaces against unauthorised vehicle access.
- 5.18.9 Any planted beds that are directly adjacent to a hard surface must be designed to prevent soil and mulch from being washed onto the surrounding surfaces.
- 5.18.10 We note that there are proposals for a number of meadow areas. Meadows require careful consideration regarding access for maintenance purposes. An essential aspect of their upkeep involves collecting the arisings after cutting to reduce nutrient levels in the soil. This task is challenging to accomplish beneath trees, on banks, and in similar locations. Therefore, a judicious choice of species should be made to favour cutting without the necessity of collection in areas where access for collection machinery is not possible. We recommend consulting Emorsgate for advice on a suitable species selection.
- 5.18.11 We have concerns regarding the proposed 'barefoot course' within the nature park. While we advocate providing a connection with nature, we are concerned about safety, inspections and its maintenance.
- 5.18.12 SuDS Features (Swales, ponds, etc.):
- Please consult the Engineers regarding the design and maintenance of the proposed SuDS features and their associated infrastructure, as they possess the necessary expertise in this matter.
 - Stevenage Direct Services shall not be responsible for undertaking any additional maintenance requirements concerning the SuDS, beyond the occasional grass cut and/or pruning.
 - All areas shall be easily accessible for maintenance, and we also require details on the proposed gradients to ensure suitability for mechanical access.
- 5.18.13 Certain areas designated for a nature park currently function as a Flood Storage Reservoir, with historical records indicating past flooding events. It is advisable to seek specific guidance from the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) regarding the suitability and potential impacts on flooding. The developer is responsible for ensuring that flood risks are appropriately mitigated and for implementing measures to prevent pollution from entering Stevenage Brook and the River Beane.

Play

- 5.18.14 We note that numerous play elements are proposed across the site and should be rationalised.
- 5.18.15 We do not endorse the installation of equipped 'LAP' spaces, as these have been phased out within Stevenage. Instead, these should be replaced with 'playscapes' or 'play landscapes'—carefully landscaped areas that promote natural, imaginative, and exploratory play, without the need for inspections. This could include gentle mounding, boulders, sensory planting, tree planting, and more.
- 5.18.16 The details of the play elements should be conditioned and approved by SDS. Generally, all proposed equipped play areas (LEAP/Primary Sites) must be durable, mainly constructed from metal, installed according to the necessary standards (BS EN

1176 & 1177), include appropriate rubber wet pour surfacing, and be accessible and inclusive.

5.18.17 We require details of the proposed skate park/MUGA. The skate park/ wheeled sports facility shall be constructed from concrete and, in accordance with BS EN 14974 (BS EN 15312 for MUGA), be free-draining and designed to be as inclusive as possible. We highly recommend consulting with the local community on the design of this element.

5.18.18 Consideration should be given to methods to prevent children from running into the road in the kick-around area.

Planting Selection:

5.18.19 Generally, the current proposed plant selection is quite acceptable. We require further details on plant choices as soon as they become available. Bulbs are not included in the preliminary planting plan. Consideration should be given to suitable naturalising bulb planting (not larger *Narcissus spp.*) to provide a burst of colour while avoiding additional maintenance challenges.

Trees:

5.18.20 Please refer to the Arboriculture and Conservation Manager for comments, impacts and recommendations in respect of trees.

5.18.21 Orchards: We acknowledge the proposals for several orchard/orchard trees within this scheme, which raise concerns regarding their maintenance and care. Fruiting trees necessitate specialised knowledge and skills for proper upkeep, and it is currently beyond the capacity of SDS to perform such maintenance. Therefore, we recommend either omitting these trees or significantly limiting their number.

5.18.22 It is positive to see that *Tilia cordata* 'greenspire' is being proposed as a species that resists aphid secretion issues. *Rosaceae* trees are proposed in the tree-lined streets, but we require further details as to what species are being proposed to determine if they are suitable.

Material and Furniture Selection:

5.18.23 All hard surface areas must be suitable and accessible for mechanical sweeping. Self-binding gravel is proposed for open spaces, which may cause maintenance difficulties. Asphalt is preferred to lessen future maintenance and upkeep challenges, enhance durability, and also prevent weeds and washout.

5.18.24 While recognising the necessity for permeable surfacing, it is advised to refrain from utilising block paving, as it can lead to complications related to weed proliferation and management. Permeable asphalt is the preferred alternative.

5.18.25 Bins are to be standardised with the ones that are used townwide. Please contact us for more information. The use of wooden benches/furniture should be avoided as much as possible. Preference is to be given to metal/concrete for durability and resilience purposes.

5.18.26 The EIA highlights a significant impact of the development on local wildlife and habitats, alongside a series of mitigations and recommendations that need to be implemented. Our Ecology Officer will provide further advice and comments on this aspect, and we acknowledge the intention to achieve the Biodiversity Net Gain requirements.

5.19 Thames Water

Waste Comments

- 5.19.1 With the information provided, Thames Water has been unable to determine the Foul water infrastructure needs of this application. Thames Water has contacted the developer in an attempt to obtain this information and agree a position for FOUL WATER drainage, but have been unable to do so in the time available and as such, Thames Water request that the following condition be added to any planning permission.

No development shall be occupied until confirmation has been provided that either: - 1. Foul water capacity exists off site to serve the development, or 2. A development and infrastructure phasing plan has been agreed with the Local Authority in consultation with Thames Water. Where a development and infrastructure phasing plan is agreed, no occupation shall take place other than in accordance with the agreed development and infrastructure phasing plan, or 3. All Foul water network upgrades required to accommodate the additional flows from the development have been completed.

Reason - Network reinforcement works may be required to accommodate the proposed development. Any reinforcement works identified will be necessary in order to avoid sewage flooding and/or potential pollution incidents.

- 5.19.2 Should the Local Planning Authority consider the above recommendation inappropriate or are unable to include it in the decision notice, it is important that the Local Planning Authority liaises with Thames Water Development Planning Department prior to the planning application approval.

Surface Water

- 5.19.3 Thames Water would advise that with regard to the surface water network capacity, we would not have any objection to the above planning application, based on the information provided.
- 5.19.4 As you are redeveloping a site, there may be public sewers crossing or close to your development. If you discover a sewer, it's important that you minimize the risk of damage. We'll need to check that your development doesn't limit repair or maintenance activities or inhibit the services we provide in any other way. The applicant is advised to read our guide working near or diverting our pipes.
- 5.19.5 With regard to surface water drainage, Thames Water would advise that if the developer follows the sequential approach to the disposal of surface water we would have no objection. Management of surface water from new developments should follow guidance under sections 167, 168 & 169 in the National Planning Policy Framework. Where the developer proposes to discharge to a public sewer, prior approval from Thames Water Developer Services will be required.
- 5.19.6 Supplementary Comments: No foul drainage strategy document have been provided that clearly shows the foul proposed connection point, confirmation whether foul flows will discharge by gravity or pumped and proposed foul discharge rate.

Comments provided to applicant at pre-application

- 5.19.7 Thank you for providing information on your proposed greenfield development of 500 houses. Foul water to discharge via pumped at 17.36 l/s into manhole ref. TL27211101 on a 975mm foul sewer. Surface water to discharge via gravity at 2.5 l/s into TL26208950, and via gravity at 5.5 l/s into TL26219150 on a 450mm surface water sewer.

5.19.8 We have completed the assessment of the foul water flows and surface water run-off based on the information submitted in your application with the purpose of assessing sewerage capacity within the existing Thames Water sewer network.

Foul Water

5.19.9 If your proposals progress in line with the details you've provided, we're pleased to confirm that there will be sufficient sewerage capacity in the adjacent foul water sewer network to serve your development.

Surface Water

5.19.10 If the surface water hierarchy has been followed, and if the flows are restricted to your proposed rates, then Thames Water would not have any objections to the proposal.

5.19.11 In accordance with the Building Act 2000 Clause H3.3, positive connection of surface water to a public sewer will only be consented when it can be demonstrated that the hierarchy of disposal methods have been examined and proven to be impracticable. Before we can consider your surface water needs, you'll need written approval from the lead local flood authority that you have followed the sequential approach to the disposal of surface water and considered all practical means.

5.19.12 The disposal hierarchy being:

- 1) rainwater use as a resource (for example rainwater harvesting, blue roofs for irrigation)
- 2) rainwater infiltration to ground at or close to source
- 3) rainwater attenuation in green infrastructure features for gradual release (for example green roofs, rain gardens)
- 4) rainwater discharge direct to a watercourse (unless not appropriate)
- 5) controlled rainwater discharge to a surface water sewer or drain
- 6) controlled rainwater discharge to a combined sewer.

Where connection to the public sewerage network is required to manage surface water flows, we will accept these flows at a discharge rate in line with CIRIA's best practice guide on SuDS or that stated within the sites planning approval.

5.20 Affinity Water

Water quality

5.20.1 We have reviewed the planning application documents and we can confirm that the site is not located within an Environment Agency defined groundwater Source Protection Zone (SPZ) or close to our abstractions. The construction works and operation of the proposed development site should be done in accordance with the relevant British Standards and Best Management Practices, thereby significantly reducing the groundwater pollution risk. It should be noted that the construction works may exacerbate any existing pollution. If any pollution is found at the site then the appropriate monitoring and remediation methods will need to be undertaken.

5.20.2 For any works involving excavations below the chalk groundwater table (for example, piling or the implementation of a geothermal open/closed loop system), a ground investigation should first be carried out to identify appropriate techniques and to avoid displacing any shallow contamination to a greater depth, which could impact the chalk aquifer. For further information we refer you to CIRIA Publication C532 "Control of water pollution from construction - guidance for consultants and contractors".

Water efficiency

5.20.3 Being within a water stressed area, we expect that the development includes water efficient fixtures and fittings. Measures such as rainwater harvesting and grey water recycling help the environment by reducing pressure for abstractions. They also minimise potable water use by reducing the amount of potable water used for washing,

cleaning and watering gardens. This in turn reduces the carbon emissions associated with treating this water to a standard suitable for drinking and will help in our efforts to get emissions down in the borough.

Infrastructure connections and diversions

- 5.20.4 There are potentially water mains running through or near to part of proposed development site. If the development goes ahead as proposed, the applicant/developer will need to get in contact with our Developer Services Team to discuss asset protection or diversionary measures.
- 5.20.5 Due to its location, Affinity Water will supply drinking water to the development in the event that it is constructed. Should planning permission be granted, the applicant is also advised to contact Developer Services as soon as possible regarding supply matters due to the increased demand for water in the area resulting from this development.

5.21 Network Rail

- 5.21.1 Following assessment of the details provided to support the above application, Network Rail has no objection in principle to the development but below are some requirements which must be met.

Works in Proximity to the Operational Railway Environment

Development Construction Phase and Asset Protection

- 5.21.2 Due to the proximity of the proposed development to the operational railway boundary, it will be imperative that the developer liaise with our Asset Protection Team (contact details below) prior to any work taking place on site to ensure that the development can be undertaken safely and without impact to operational railway safety. Details to be discussed and agreed may include construction methodology, earthworks and excavations, use of crane, plant and machinery, drainage and boundary treatments. It may be necessary for the developer to enter into a Basic Asset Protection Agreement (BAPA) with Network Rail to ensure the safety of the operational railway during these works. We would also like to advise that where any damage, injury or delay to the rail network is caused by construction works or future maintenance (related to the application site), the applicant or developer will incur full liability. This could also include police investigation as it is a criminal offence to endanger the railway or obstruct the passage of rail traffic. It should also be noted that any damage that requires a line closure or repairs can result in costs which could exceed hundreds of thousands of pounds.

Drainage

- 5.21.3 It is imperative that drainage associated with the site does not impact on or cause damage to adjacent railway assets. Surface water must flow away from the railway, there must be no ponding of water adjacent to the boundary and any attenuation scheme within 30m of the railway boundary must be approved by Network Rail in advance. There must be no connection to existing railway drainage assets without prior agreement with Network Rail. We expect a condition regarding the disposal of surface water to be included as part of any consent.

Boundary Treatments, Landscaping and Lighting

Vehicle Incursion Measures

- 5.21.4 An Armco or similar barrier should be located in positions where vehicles may be in a position to drive into or roll onto the railway or damage the lineside fencing. Network Rail's existing fencing / wall must not be removed or damaged. Given the considerable number of vehicle movements likely provision should be made at each turning area/roadway/car parking area adjacent to the railway. This is in accord with the new

guidance for road/rail vehicle incursion NR/LV/CIV/00012 following on from DfT advice issued in 2003, now updated to include risk of incursion from private land/roadways.

- 5.21.5 Given the nature of the proposals and location of turning areas/car parking, we would expect that a condition securing the design and installation of suitable vehicle incursion measures by the developer is included in any consent. This is for the safety, operational needs and integrity of the railway.

Landscaping

- 5.21.6 It is imperative that planting and landscaping schemes near the railway boundary do not impact on operational railway safety. Where trees and shrubs are to be planted adjacent to boundary, they should be positioned at a minimum distance greater than their height at maturity from the boundary. Certain broad leaf deciduous species should not be planted adjacent to the railway boundary. Any hedge planted adjacent to the railway boundary for screening purposes should be placed so that when fully grown it does not damage the fencing, provide a means of scaling it, or prevent Network Rail from maintaining its boundary fencing. Below is a list of species that are acceptable and unacceptable for planting in proximity to the railway boundary;

Acceptable:

Birch (Betula), Crab Apple (Malus Sylvestris), Field Maple (Acer Campestre), Bird Cherry (Prunus Padus), Wild Pear (Pyrus Communis), Fir Trees – Pines (Pinus), Hawthorn (Cretaeagus), Mountain Ash – Whitebeams (Sorbus), False Acacia (Robinia), Willow Shrubs (Shrubby Salix), Thuja Plicatata “Zebrina”

Not Acceptable:

Acer (Acer pseudoplatanus), Aspen – Poplar (Populus), Small-leaved Lime (Tilia Cordata), Sycamore – Norway Maple (Acer), Horse Chestnut (Aesculus Hippocastanum), Sweet Chestnut (Castanea Sativa), Ash (Fraxinus excelsior), Black poplar (Populus nigra var, betulifolia), Lombardy Poplar (Populus nigra var, italica), Large-leaved lime (Tilia platyphyllos), Common lime (Tilia x europea)

Landscaping detail should be submitted to the Local Planning Authority and approved in conjunction with Network Rail.

Lighting

- 5.21.7 Where lighting is to be erected adjacent to the operational railway, the potential for train drivers to be dazzled must be eliminated. In addition, the location and colour of lights must not give rise to the potential for confusion with the signalling arrangements on the railway. Detail of any external lighting should be provided to the Local Planning Authority to be approved in conjunction with Network Rail.

Additional Requirements

Railway Noise Mitigation

- 5.21.8 The Developer should be aware that any development for residential or noise sensitive use adjacent to an operational railway may result in neighbour issues arising. Consequently, every endeavour should be made by the developer to provide adequate soundproofing for each dwelling. Please note that in a worst-case scenario there could be trains running 24 hours a day and the soundproofing should take this into account. Reason for above conditions: The safety, operational needs and integrity of the railway.

5.22 Stevenage Borough Council CCTV

- 5.22.1 No comments have been received at the time of drafting this report

5.23 Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue

5.23.1 Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue service (hydrants only) will require a condition for the provision and installation of fire hydrants, at no cost to the county council, or fire and rescue service. This is to ensure there are adequate water supplies available for use in an emergency, at all times.

5.24 East of England Ambulance Service

5.24.1 Thank you for consulting East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust (EEAST) on the above planning application. This letter outlines the impact on emergency ambulance healthcare infrastructure arising from the application and is in addition to any request from Hertfordshire & West Essex ICS for primary care, acute, mental health and community services.

5.24.2 This application for 500 dwellings could generate another 1,100 residents and will generate an anticipated additional 253 calls per annum on already constrained ambulance services. This is an increase of 15.1% per annum compared to existing activity, postcode area SG28 indicates 1,674 incidents per annum between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025.

5.24.3 This development, should the application be successful, will affect ambulance Stevenage Hub which respond to emergency incidents within the local area as well as impact on the regional call centres.

5.24.4 The table below shows the ambulance stations which respond to incidents for the development location. It provides the travel times in rush hour traffic to the development location (Reference ShapeAtlas) (*NB this is a standard reference point and does not mean ambulances come from these locations in order to respond to calls nor does it consider the ambulance will be travelling under blue light conditions).

Station	Travel Time(mins) to*	Year	Built GIAm2 Development
Stevenage Hub	10	2005	5,867m2 (including PTS services)

5.24.5 Modern purpose-built Hubs are ideally located close to a hospital with a GIA of 2,200m2 to deliver a high performing, sufficient space for circa 34 Dual Staffed Ambulances and 4 Rapid Response Vehicles, offices, Make Ready Centre, Vehicle Workshop, parking for staff vehicles/bicycles, health and wellbeing garden, good power supply to enable charging of electric ambulance/rapid response vehicles. Make Ready services are defined under the Lord Carter Report (2018) and mandated by Quality Care Commission (CQC), services should be delivered from a Hub.

5.24.6 Ambulances start and finish shifts from the local Hub and transfer to Ambulance Response Posts and Stations which are tactically located to meet mandated response times and can be up to 45 minutes travel time from the Hub. Response Posts/Stations provide rest facilities and parking for ambulances whilst the crew are on a break or whilst crews wait to respond to a 999 incident from one of the Regional Call Centres.

5.24.7 In order to meet the additional population growth at the development location EEAST requires mitigation which is sought through a s106 agreement.

5.24.8 Table 1 Capital Cost calculation of additional emergency ambulance health services arising from the development proposal

No Dwellings	Infrastructure Cost*	Total
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500	£340	£170,000
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* EEASTs baseline infrastructure cost* calculation of £340 is based on 2.2 persons per dwelling and adjusted pro-rata depending on the expect number of persons per dwelling.

5.24.9 Calculation is based per person using EEAST population (6.1m)/number of incidents in 2024/25

- (1.4m) to give a per person incident rate
- $6.1m/1.4m = 0.23$ incidents per person per annum

5.24.10 EEAST Capital Infrastructure Costs is based on occupancy of 2.2 persons per dwelling, adjusted pro-rata

- Estates build per m2 (£213.50)
- Cost of emergency ambulance vehicles (£126.50)

5.24.11 The capital required to create additional ambulance services to support the population arising from the proposed development is calculated to be £170,000 and are for the impact of this development only and will be used to support: - Expansion and installation of EV charging of existing Stevenage Ambulance Hub to meet the increased local demand arising from this housing development.

Defibrillators

5.24.12 EEAST would request the Council ensure via a s106 contribution sufficient defibrillators are provided for the new community and this should include installation, servicing and maintenance for 10 years (cost circa £5,000 per EEAST recommended defibrillator). These need to be located where there is electrical power and sufficient footfall to provide benefits to the new community. Research indicates 800 meters is the maximum distance to fetch a defibrillator. The s106 could be allocated either to the local parish council or to EEAST.

5.24.13 EEAST, as with all NHS Trusts, is allocated an annual capital spend limit (CDEL), which is generally used to support maintenance backlog/and replacement of existing fleet vehicles and essential onboard capital medical equipment, both of which have a maximum lifespan of 5 years before being replaced. S106/CIL funding is outside of CDEL which are in place for each Trust and provide additional financial resources for EEAST to absorb the additional patient demand generated by this development on emergency ambulance health services. The request for capital funding is distinct from revenue income from NHS England.

5.25 Stevenage Borough Council Waste Services

5.25.1 No comments have been received at the time of drafting this report.

5.26 East Hertfordshire District Council

5.26.1 No comments have been received at the time of drafting this report.

5.27 Environment Agency

5.27.1 We have no objection to the proposed development. We note the presence of a flood storage reservoir to the west of the site. Although this is not an Environment Agency asset, we would recommend that this is safeguarded so that it's able to fulfil its intended purpose and function.

5.28 BEAMS

- 5.28.1 The application site comprises an area of farm land / grass land at the southern end of Stevenage adjacent to and just west of Bragbury End. The tree lined A602 forms the north boundary of the site whilst the railway line forms the southern boundary, the eastern boundary abuts the Three Horseshoes public house and land to the rear. The land level gently rises from north to south.
- 5.28.2 The application has been accompanied by a Heritage Statement to accord with NPPF para. 207. A detailed Design Code has also been submitted.
- 5.28.3 There are a cluster of grade II listed buildings in the Bragbury End area, including the Chequers PH, Bragbury House and Bragbury End Farm and barn. There are some 19th century 'buildings of local importance' along Bragbury Lane and on the corner of Aston Lane / A602. Bragbury End is a historic settlement on the route from Watton-at-Stone to Stevenage and currently lies on the southern edge of the town with a verdant and semi-rural feel to it. The Heritage Statement provides further information upon the historic development of this settlement (now part of Stevenage town).
- 5.28.4 The area will be urbanised through the construction of new development and all that is associated with it, including the creation of a new road network / road widening as part of accessing the site. This is considered harmful to the wider setting of the listed buildings in Bragbury End.
- 5.28.5 The retention of an area of open space to the west end of the application site (between the rear gardens of Bragbury Lane fronting properties and lot 7) will provide some separation from the site, this is welcomed.
- 5.28.6 BEAMS broadly agrees with the findings of the Heritage Statement. The setting of The Chequers PH (closest to the site) will be adversely impacted but any harm is considered to be 'less than substantial'. The scale of development upon the part of the site closest to the listed building, also noting the topography of the site will need careful consideration as will changes to the road network / signage. The retention of the tree screening to the rear of The Chequers PH will be key in reducing impact upon the immediate setting of this designated heritage asset but should not be relied on.
- 5.28.7 Bragbury End Farmhouse and barn lie on the west side of Bragbury Lane and new / 20th century housing forms much of its immediate setting. No changes seem to be proposed along Bragbury Lane itself so the scheme is considered to preserve the immediate setting of Bragbury End Farmhouse, any harm to its significance will be very low to neutral.
- 5.28.8 Bragbury House is a small country house, now converted to flats - it is set back from the A602 and new development has been built to the rear. From the information submitted the immediate setting and significance of this listed building will be maintained but its wider setting, through changes to the road network / additional signage etc may be adversely impacted.
- 5.28.9 The proposal will result in 'less than substantial' harm to the significance of designated heritage assets at Bragbury End, particularly the Chequers PH and NPPF para. 215 would be engaged in the decision making process.

5.29 Hertfordshire and Middlesex Wildlife Trust

- 5.29.1 The Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT) objects to this planning application for the following reasons:
- The loss of habitat on-site is a significant negative effect on biodiversity and is not sufficiently compensated for by proposals for habitat retention and creation.

- Damage to the adjacent Astonbury Wood Local Wildlife Site by recreational disturbance.

Loss of habitat on-site

- 5.29.2 According to the EcIA Impact Assessment (EcIA, para. 5.3.5), the loss of habitats is a significant negative effect at local scale. We note efforts in the Design and Access Statement to retain existing habitat, such as hedgerows, and to create new green infrastructure such as the central park and the nature park at the western end of the site. However, this should not distract from the fact that, overall, there is a loss of biodiversity on the site. This is evidenced by the biodiversity net gain assessment which shows that there is a loss of -10.89 habitat units on the site, a biodiversity net gain of -14.69%. Hedgerows see a marginal net gain (+1.82%) and watercourses a more significant percentage loss (-59.55%), although this is small in absolute terms due to the loss of one of the ditches (para. 5.11.2).
- 5.29.3 The EcIA proposes to achieve the statutory requirement for at least 10% biodiversity net gain through a financial contribution to a biodiversity offsetting scheme, involving the provision of medium (or higher) distinctiveness grassland due to the loss of other neutral grassland units and other broadleaved woodland (para. 5.11.4).
- 5.29.4 Our expectation is that on a site of this scale, biodiversity net gain should be provided on-site. As stated in both the NPPF and Local Plan Policy SP12, compensation is a last resort; proposals which do not provide on-site biodiversity net gain have not thoroughly followed the mitigation hierarchy of avoid, then mitigate, and compensate as a last resort.
- 5.29.5 We note that the site is allocated in Local Plan Policy HO4 for 400 dwellings, compared to 'up to 500 dwelling units' in this planning application. Development at the lower number would allow the retention of more habitat on site and might give further opportunities for habitat enhancement. One option would be not to develop the eastern-most parcel of land ('Agricultural Land B' in the Design and Access Statement, p14) and reserve it for habitat enhancement to help achieve biodiversity net gain on site. This would also help to alleviate the problem identified in the second part of our objection.

Damage to Astonbury Wood Local Wildlife Site by recreational disturbance

- 5.29.6 Astonbury Wood is an ancient woodland, predominantly Oak Hornbeam coppice with a Bluebell understory. It is recognised nationally for fungi with 750 species. It is designated as a Local Wildlife Site for semi-natural woodland supporting a diverse and well-developed structure with a varied woodland ground flora. It is also a HMWT nature reserve, suitable for quiet enjoyment of the countryside. Paths are narrow and there is limited visitor infrastructure.
- 5.29.7 Astonbury Wood LWS is one of a number of LWS identified by the EcIA in the vicinity of the application site; indeed, almost all the wood is within 500m of the application site. The EcIA recognises that there is potential for there to be impacts on air and water quality during the construction phase, affecting both the wood and Stevenage Brook. It suggests suitable mitigation by means of a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP, EcIA para. 5.2.4). We support this proposal, which should be conditioned in any planning permission.
- 5.29.8 However, the EcIA completely fails to recognise the potential impact of increased recreational use of the wood. The proposal will result in potentially over a thousand people living within a very short distance of the wood; the southern entrance to the wood is less than 200m from the application site. Despite the provision of green infrastructure on site, it is a near-certainty that residents will be attracted to the wood, including for dog-walking. This impact will be exacerbated by the development of the site north of the A602, which lies even closer to the wood.

5.29.9 Guidance by Natural England and Defra states that indirect effects of development can cause the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees by a number of means, including:

- Increasing the amount of dust, light, water, air and soil pollution
- Increasing disturbance to wildlife, such as noise from additional people and traffic
- Increasing damage to habitat, for example trampling of plants and erosion of soil by people accessing the woodland or tree root protection areas
- Increasing damaging activities like fly-tipping and the impacts of domestic pets

5.29.10 With the exception of the first bullet point, none of these issues have been considered by the EclA. Given the likely impact on Astonbury Wood, the applicant should consider possible mitigation measures. Reducing the scale of the development by reserving the eastern-most part of the site for biodiversity net gain, as suggested above, is a possible mitigation measure. HMWT would also be happy to discuss with Stevenage Borough Council potential improvements to the reserve infrastructure which might also help to mitigate the impact of increased recreational use. For example, the provision of fencing to exclude people and their pets from recently-coppiced areas, in accordance with the site's management plan.

Local plan policy

5.29.11 Stevenage Local Plan Policy SP12 states:

'...We will

d. Mitigate, or, as a last resort, compensate for the loss of green infrastructure or assets of biodiversity importance resulting from development; and

e. Only grant planning permission if an adequate assessment of priority habitats and species has been undertaken. Any identified impacts on these habitats and/or species will need to be avoided, mitigated or compensated.'

5.29.12 This application falls short because of the loss of or damage to assets of biodiversity importance resulting from development, both on and off site, and because of an inadequate assessment of priority habitats and species.

5.29.13 Policy NH2 is also relevant. Although Astonbury Wood LWS is not listed because it lies in East Herts, its close vicinity to the application site means the policy should be applied to it: 'Planning permission will be granted where proposals:

a. Would not result in substantive loss or deterioration of a Wildlife Site; and

b. Reasonably contribute towards the maintenance or enhancement of Wildlife Sites in the vicinity of the application site.'

5.30 National Grid Plant

5.30.1 No comments have been received at the time of drafting this report

5.31 Hertfordshire County Council Public Health Service

Air quality

5.31.1 The effects of air pollution on health have been intensively studied in recent years. The results of these studies showed that air pollution harms human health and particularly is harmful for those who are already vulnerable because of their age as children and older people or existing health problems. Ambient air pollution has been associated with a multitude of health effects, including mortality, respiratory and cardiovascular hospitalisations, changes in lung function and asthma attacks.⁵ Whilst it is better to reduce air pollution at source than mitigate the consequences, every new development will have an impact on air quality, usually by increasing emissions from buildings or from traffic generation. The links between poor air quality, human health, and the environment are well documented and is classed by Public Health England as a major public health risk alongside cancer, heart disease and obesity.

- 5.31.2 Public Health advises that the developer should consider placement of sensitive receptors to air pollution. This includes careful location of any affordable dwelling contribution in areas likely to have low concentrations of air pollutants and noise.
- 5.31.3 I defer to the Stevenage Environmental Health team to ensure that development will not create air quality problems. In particular, I seek reassurance that this development will not contribute to a worsening of local air quality that may lead to poor health outcomes (through exposure) for the existing community living in the vicinity, or for new and vulnerable populations (such as the elderly or young children).
- 5.31.4 The Planning Authority may wish to consider the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) 2017 Guidance on Outdoor Air Pollution, as well as the 2019 Quality Standard (QS181) which covers road-traffic-related air pollution and its impact on health. The Quality Standard describes high-quality actions in priority areas for improvement, with Quality Statement 2 focussed on planning applications.
- 5.31.5 The Royal College of Physicians (2025) 'A Breath of Fresh Air, Responding to the Health Challenges of Modern Air Pollution' 6 provides updated evidence on the impact poor air quality has on health and provides recommendations to reduce air pollution to prevent illness. The report recommends a Health in All Policies approach to the build environment and delivery of local services in urban and rural areas to maximise health gain. The report also recommends National and local governments need to deliver improvements in the provision of public transport to reduce emissions from personal vehicle travel and ensure that the infrastructure needed for increased active travel is in place, with the goal of achieving 50% of urban journeys being made on foot or by bike by 2030.
- Indoor air quality
- 5.31.6 Exposure to poor indoor air quality can impact negatively on health⁷. The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) have recently published guidance on indoor air quality (NICE guideline NG149).
- Creating access for all
- 5.31.7 To meet the needs of an ageing population and individuals with physical disabilities and limiting illnesses, it is recommended to give consideration to the accessibility across the development. This includes: footpath surfaces and colour schemes (particularly for people with dementia) and street furniture design (i.e. seating suitable for older adults). We recommend adopting a Healthy Streets approach to improve social, economic, and environmental sustainability through how public spaces are designed and managed.
- Adoption of active travel from new occupants
- 5.31.8 We recommend there is appropriate signage for pedestrian/cycle routes towards key local destinations (including the bus and train stations) and rights of way which includes journey times. To encourage the adoption of new active travel behaviours, this needs to be in place prior to first occupation when individuals are more susceptible to change. The planning authority may wish to consider this by way of a condition.
- Active design
- 5.31.9 Sport England, with support from Active Travel England and OHID, has produced 'Active Design' a guide to planning new developments that create the right environment to help people get more active. The guidance sets out ten key principles for ensuring developments incorporate opportunities for people to take part in sport and physical activity. The Active Design principles are aimed at contributing towards the Government's desire for the planning system to promote healthy communities through good urban design which is consistent with paragraphs 96 and 129 of the NPPF. Sport

England commends the use of the guidance in the master planning process for new residential developments.

- 5.31.10 In particular, the checklist in the Active Design guidance should be used for informing the design and consideration of how the checklist has been considered should be included in a planning application e.g. as part of the Health Impact Assessment or Design and Access Statement. For outline planning applications in particular, the planning authority may wish to consider this by way of a condition to request details to be submitted and approved which demonstrate how promoting physical activity has been considered in the design and layout of the development. A standard condition can be provided upon request.

Community sports facilities

- 5.31.11 Consideration should be given to the content of Sport England's response to the planning application. General planning guidance and advice can be found on Sport England's website Sport England Planning Guidance.

- 5.31.12 If the proposal involves the provision of a new sports facility, then consideration should be given to the recommendations and priorities set out in any approved Playing Pitch Strategy or Built Sports Facility Strategy that the local authority may have in place. In addition, to ensure they are fit for purpose, such facilities should be designed in accordance with design guidance notes produced by Sport England, or the relevant sport National Governing Body (NGB). These notes cover: artificial lighting, accessible facilities, clubhouses, swimming pools, combined leisure provision, outdoor surfaces (including both artificial sports surfaces and natural turf), sports halls and cost guidance. The following link also contains details of sport specific guidance produced by NGBs Design Guidance Notes.

- 5.31.13 Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator Playing Pitch Calculator and Sports Facility Calculator Sports Facility Calculator tools can be used to estimate the additional demand for key community sports facilities from a new population and convert that demand into sport facility requirements with indicative costs that can be used as starting point for securing developer contributions. Sport England can provide further advice upon request.

Affordable housing

- 5.31.14 Having a good quality home is important to our health and wellbeing and ensuring accessibility to affordable housing is a priority across the County. It is important that the development provides its affordable housing in a way which is integrated and avoids demarcation. It should also have equal access to the green space provided.

Provision of healthy, affordable food

- 5.31.15 The environment in which we live, work and play has a considerable influence on our food choices. 10 Easy access to affordable, healthy food choices can help to support a balanced diet and prevent unhealthy weight in the population. 11 We seek to encourage affordable, healthy food choices and a balance in the range of food outlets occupying retail spaces to enable individuals to make healthy choices, whilst promoting local commercial diversity. We look to the local planning authority to consider licensing and planning restrictions for food outlets to provide a balance of food choices available and to ensure that hot food takeaways are not within walking distance of schools or other places where children congregate, in accordance with paragraph 97 of the NPPF.

Contributions towards modal shift and active recreation

- 5.31.16 We recommend the planning authority considers seeking contributions by way of a planning condition towards local schemes to encourage modal shift towards active and sustainable travel.

Charging points for electric vehicles

- 5.31.17 To encourage the use of cleaner vehicles, electric charging points should be provided for all new residential and non-residential buildings with associated parking.

Car club

- 5.31.18 We would like to see the developer making a contribution to setting up a car club.

Safe crossing points beyond site perimeter

- 5.31.19 To encourage residents to use active travel, a key indicator will be perceptions of safety. Safe crossing points will encourage behaviour change for residents to use active travel in favour of car usage.

Health Impact Assessment

- 5.31.20 Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is a recognised tool that can assist development applications demonstrate both the positives of the proposal as well as identifying any unintended consequences. Robust assessments of the health implications of development proposals consider how different populations will be positively and negatively impacted by the development; HIA can draw out these inequalities in relation to the impact of a development on existing local communities and how the development may influence the health and wellbeing of its new residents. It is also important to consider the cumulative impact of neighbouring developments on new and existing communities which can be taken into account when undertaking an HIA.
- 5.31.21 In November 2019, Herts County Council adopted a HIA Position Statement which sets out the process for carrying out a HIA. It also sets out the recommended frameworks to use for each stage of the HIA process. This includes guidance on the quality assurance framework that will be used to assess how well an HIA has been undertaken.
- 5.31.22 The HIA Position Statement does not specify a particular methodology to use for the appraisal stage - this is to be determined by the developer. However, we recommend developers familiarise themselves with the "Wales Health Impact Assessment Support Unit (WHIASU) Quality Assurance Review Framework for HIA" to ensure the framework chosen to undertake the HIA meets the requirements of a high quality HIA. Hertfordshire Public Health will be quality assessing HIAs (using the WHIASU Quality Assurance Review Framework) submitted with planning applications either as standalone assessments or as part of Environmental Impact Assessments.
- 5.31.23 Given the scale of the proposed development, Public Health will require the developer to undertake a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) to assess the potential positive and negative health impacts of this development. In doing so, the applicant would be demonstrating how it is meeting the various requirements of the NPPF, chapter 8.
- 5.31.24 In the absence of an agreed national set of guidelines on HIA, and appreciating there are different methodologies, our expectation is that an HIA must:
- consult Public Health and the planning authority on its scope.
 - have robustly considered health inequalities and demonstrate an understanding of how health inequalities apply in the context of the development proposal.
 - have clearly and appropriately identified vulnerable populations as part of the HIA process (see Population Group Checklist9 for example).
 - have utilised relevant local health profiles and other appropriate community data, preferably down to ward level where possible.
 - be robust in its consideration of the wider determinants of health and can demonstrate understanding of what these are in the context of the development proposal and wider communities.
 - be balanced in its findings.

- 5.31.25 To ensure the completeness and quality of the Health Impact Assessment: (a) the developer must ensure that the Health Impact Assessment is prepared by competent experts; and (b) the Health Impact Assessment must be accompanied by a statement from the developer outlining the relevant expertise or qualifications of such experts.
- 5.31.26 For a development of this size, we would be expecting a rapid HIA to be undertaken. The applicant should consider how much more work this would entail set against the benefits of demonstrating to the local planning authority how the proposal is positively planned and how it will offer opportunities to the existing and new communities.
- 5.31.27 The development proposals represent significant change to the built environment which, whilst intended as positive, may have unintended negative impacts on health that an HIA may highlight. There are a range of guidance and resources that can be used to inform HIA development to ensure it is robust, balanced, evidence-driven and puts health at the heart of planning. See Table 1 of the recent Public Health England publication on HIA.
- 5.31.28 We request that Public Health is consulted at the scoping stage of the HIA via HealthyPlaces@hertfordshire.gov.uk to help ensure the HIA focusses on the wider determinants of health and health inequalities. We are happy to discuss baseline information, data and intelligence that the HIA will need to utilise.

6 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

6.1 National Planning Policy Framework

- 6.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans can provide for housing and other development in a sustainable manner. The latest version of the NPPF was published in December 2024 (with further minor amendments in February 2025).
- 6.1.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF must be taken into account in preparing the development plan and is a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 6.1.3 The NPPF should be read as a whole (including its footnotes and annexes).

6.2 Planning Practice Guidance

- 6.2.1 The Planning Practice Guidance ("PPG") is an online resource containing guidance supplementing the NPPF. The PPG is a material consideration which should be taken into account in determining planning applications.

6.3 National Design Guide

- 6.3.1 The National Design Guide 2019 is Government guidance on the characteristics of well-designed places and demonstrates what good design means in practice. It has the same status as the PPG and should similarly be taken into account when determining planning applications.

6.4 The Development Plan

- 6.4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the development plan unless

material considerations indicate otherwise. For Stevenage, the development plan comprises the following documents:

- Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031
- Waste Core Strategy & Development Management Policies DPD 2011-2026
- Waste Site Allocations DPD 2011-2026
- Minerals Local Plan Review 2002-2016

6.5 Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031

6.5.1 The Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031 was adopted in 2019. Weight must be given to the policies it contains according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

6.5.2 In addition, the council is required to regard the local plan policies most relevant to determining the application as out-of-date because the application involves the provision of housing and the delivery of housing in the borough was substantially below the housing requirement over the last three years. Those policies are:

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 SP13: The historic environment:

Policy IT4: Transport assessments and travel plans:

Policy IT5: Parking and access:

Policy IT6: Sustainable transport:

Policy IT7: New and improved links for pedestrians and cyclists:

Policy HO4: South east of Stevenage:

Policy HO7: Affordable housing targets:

Policy HO8: Affordable housing tenure, mix and design:

Policy HO9: House types and sizes:

Policy HO10: Sheltered and supported housing

Policy HO11: Accessible and adaptable housing:

Policy HC8: Sports facilities in new developments:

Policy GD1: High quality design:

Policy FP1: Climate change:

Policy FP3: Flood risk in Flood Zones 2 and 3:

Policy FP4: Flood storage reservoirs and functional floodplains:

Policy FP7: Pollution:

Policy FP8: Pollution sensitive uses:

Policy NH3: Green corridors:

Policy NH5: Trees and woodland:

Policy NH7: Open space standards:

Policy NH09: Areas of archaeological significance.

6.5.3 According to the NPPF, the fact that these policies are regarded as out-of-date means that permission should be granted for the proposed development unless:

1. the application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provide a strong reason for refusing the development; or
2. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole,

having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.

6.6 Local Plan Review and Update

6.6.1 The council concluded a full review of the plan in 2024, as required by regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

6.6.2 In response to the review, the council has proposed a partial update of the local plan. Paragraph 49 of the NPPF states that Local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:

a) the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);

b) the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and

c) the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to this Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).

6.6.3 At the time of writing, the partial update has undergone examination by the Secretary of State and the Council is out to consultation on the main modifications proposed following examination. The partial update is at an advanced stage of preparation and the council considers the emerging policies within it to have a high degree of consistency with the NPPF. Where relevant, the weight to be given to emerging policies will be set out in the assessment section of this report.

6.7 Other Material Considerations

6.7.1 In determining applications, regard will be had to other material considerations, including (but not limited to):

- The Planning Practice Guidance;
- The National Design Guide;
- Written ministerial statements and directions;
- Guidance published by Hertfordshire County Council;
- Stevenage Borough Council supplementary planning documents.

6.7.2 Planning decisions must also reflect relevant international obligations and statutory requirements

7 APPRAISAL

7.1.1 The main considerations in the assessment of the application are:

- Land use policy
- Housing provision
- Affordable housing and financial contributions
- Layout, character and appearance
- Environment and amenities
- Parking
- Connectivity
- Highway safety
- Biodiversity and ecology

- Trees and landscaping
- Flooding/drainage
- Sustainable construction and climate change
- Heritage assets
- Archaeology
- Human rights and equalities.

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 Considerations

7.2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024) states that significant weight should be placed on both the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

7.2.2 The site is allocated in the Stevenage Local Plan 2011-2031 (2019) under housing allocation HO4: South East of Stevenage which sets out the provision of up to 550 dwellings on the parcel of land in question and also the parcel of land to the north of the A602. Both areas fall under the single allocation and should see the provision of requirements in the policy delivered over the two sites. Local Plan Partial Review update. Given the Inspector did not raise this policy update in the Examination in Public as requiring any modifications, the LPA are applying significant weight to this updated policy. This is discussed in more detail later in the report.

7.2.3 Given the southern site is the larger of the two and the plans show a proposed local centre, it is presumed that most of the non-residential requirements will be within the application site. This includes (but is not limited to) –

- At least 5% aspirational homes;
- 1% of plots made available for self-build purposes;
- At least 30% affordable housing;
- Provision for supported or sheltered housing;
- Local facilities, including a GP surgery;

It is of note here that the Local Plan Partial Review updated Policy HO4 to require a 40% affordable housing provision.

7.2.4 As well as these points, the allocation in general requires (specific to southern site) –

- Satisfactory vehicular access to both sites from a single point of access off the A602, in line with Highways Authority requirements;
- Designed to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport;
- Existing Public Rights of Way are incorporated, where possible;
- A full archaeological assessment is undertaken;
- A full flood risk assessment is undertaken;
- The proposals seek to preserve or enhance the setting of adjacent listed buildings;
- The schemes incorporate a network of green infrastructure, with an emphasis on high quality landscaping within and around the development to reduce the impact of the development on the surrounding greenfield / Green Belt land.

7.2.5 Policy HO9 of the local plan states that there is a structural imbalance in the existing housing stock (albeit in a limited manner) whereby there is a lack of smaller properties

and larger aspirational homes in the borough. The lack of housing mix is exacerbated by changes in demographics leading to an increase in the number of single person households and couples needing homes. Due to growth requirements for the town, there is a need to provide a substantial number of additional homes in Stevenage. Higher density development is set out as a key requirement of national guidance and where appropriate, densities will need to be raised in order to meet these targets for new homes.

- 7.2.6 As part of the pre-application process for the site a Design Review Panel (DRP) was held with an external independent consultancy. The panel picked up on several points but one being that the site lent itself to higher densities. The indicative number of dwellings proposed at 500 is over the specified 400 dwellings for the southern parcel specifically. It was also noted in the DRP report that higher rise buildings may be appropriate to seek a higher density. However, given the semi-rural nature of the site located on the south eastern cusp of the Borough, officers disagreed, and apart from possible three storey buildings in the proposed 'local centre' area of the plan, typical two storey height dwellings are deemed most appropriate for the site.
- 7.2.7 The provision of up to 500 dwellings, to include a variety of flats and houses, with 2, 3, 4 and 5 bedrooms, along with affordable housing, sheltered/supported housing, a local centre, GP surgery, play area and green spaces is considered acceptable in principle.
- 7.2.8 Since November 2018, housing delivery has been measured against the Housing Delivery Test (HDT) as set out by the Government planning policy and guidance. The results of the HDT dictate whether a local planning authority should be subject to consequences to help increase their housing delivery. Where an authority's HDT score is less than 95%, the authority should prepare an action plan to assess the causes of under delivery and identify actions to increase delivery in future years. Where an authority's HDT score is less than 85% of its housing requirement, the Council must incorporate a 20% buffer into its housing supply calculations in line with paragraph 79 of the NPPF. Based on the latest published figures for the Council (2023) the LPA's HDT figure is 38%.
- 7.2.9 Based on the Council's ED1 Housing Technical Paper (June 2025) Stevenage Borough Council's 5 year land supply identifies that the Council can demonstrate a Housing Supply of **5.49 years** over the next five years based on the draft plan to meet future demand. using the *Liverpool* methodology (spreads the delivery of historic undersupply of housing equally across the remainder of the Local Plan period) and guidance from the NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance. The 5-year land supply includes a 20% buffer.
- 7.2.10 The Council has also issued a Housing Delivery Action Plan May 2024. This provides an overview of housing delivery, analysis of barriers to delivery and actions necessary to increase the delivery of housing in the future. The action points specified in the Plan will be monitored on an annual basis to ensure delivery can be increased in order to meet the Council's target of 7,600 new homes over the Local Plan period.
- 7.2.11 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF (2024) states that where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless: (i) the application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or (ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF (2024) taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.

- 7.2.12 The Council's policies relating to housing are considered out of date pursuant to paragraph 11(d), based on its HDT score. The 'tilted balance' in paragraph 11 does not displace s.38(6) of the 2004 Act, however, the NPPF and accordingly paragraph 11(d) are material considerations. Consequently, unless either of the criteria set out at criteria (i) or (ii), as noted above are satisfied, planning permission should be granted.
- 7.2.13 Whilst the site is an allocated strategic housing site in the Local Plan, given the increase in numbers proposed, the above position has significant weight on the proposals as they stand in terms of numbers and acceptability. Subject to the proposals being compliant on other considerations or being judged on balance to outweigh any negative impacts, the principle of housing delivery on this allocated site is acceptable pursuant to the Local Plan and the NPPF.
- 7.2.14 Policy TC11 of the Local Plan relates to New Convenience Retail Provision, and states that new convenience retail floorspace provision, of an appropriate scale and in an appropriate accessible location, will be made in the new neighbourhoods as Stevenage West, North of Stevenage and South-East Stevenage. It further advises that a neighbourhood centre will be permitted in the South-East of Stevenage development of the order of 500 sqm with a convenience store and other related small-scale Use Class A1 (Now Class E as reflected in the Local Plan Partial Update) shops, sufficient to meet the day-to-day needs of the residents of the new neighbourhood.
- 7.2.15 The proposed Masterplan and associated supporting documents clearly outline the provision of a neighbourhood centre within the denser flatted area of the site, adjacent to and visible from the A602. The neighbourhood centre would provide both commercial/retail units and a GP surgery in accordance with Policy HO4. Whilst the specific footprint of commercial space is not confirmed, given the built form will come forward as part of any reserved matters applications submitted, the allowance for provision to be policy compliant with TC11 is acceptable in principle.
- 7.2.16 As mentioned above the main site policy allocation requires the provision of a GP surgery on site. Within the Healthy Communities section of the Local Plan, Policy HC5 for new health, social and community facilities does not allocate specific sites for this purpose beyond Ridlins End. However, the policy justification covers GP provision and a need to provide new surgeries where provision is stretched. The policy allocation clearly outlines a need for a new GP surgery, and provision secured in the local centre would meet the relevant policy requirements in this respect.
- 7.2.17 Policy HC8 of the local plan also relates to healthy communities and seeks major development to provide for outdoor sports facilities either on site or by way of an in-lieu financial contribution towards improvements to existing or provision of new facilities elsewhere in the Borough. Sport England have made comment on the application advising that due to the size of the site, and relative constraints provision of outdoor facilities on-site to meet borough needs is not appropriate in this case. As such financial contributions should be made.
- 7.2.18 By using Sport England's sports calculator contributions towards grass and artificial pitches and changing facilities, and other facilities such as the swimming pool, sports hall and tennis would all require a financial contribution, discussed more in the next section of this report. In terms of policy compliance, securing these contributions makes the application acceptable in policy terms. Furthermore, it is of note that the site does provide recreational spaces for non-formal sport and recreation such as kickabout football and running. This is discussed more later in the report.
- 7.2.19 Further to the above, the housing allocation policy also requires supported/sheltered housing on site. Policy HO10 of the Local Plan for sheltered and supported housing states that planning permission will be granted where:

- a) The site is well served by passenger transport;
- b) There is good access to local services and facilities such as neighbourhood centres;
- c) Appropriate levels of amenity space and car parking for residents, visitors and staff are provided; and
- d) The proposal is appropriate to its locality.

On large developments in excess of 200 units, an element of sheltered and / or supported accommodation within use Class C3 should be provided where practicable and consistent with the above criteria as part of the general housing mix requirements of Policy HO9.

7.2.20 As an outline application, details of these elements of the development, the neighbourhood centre, GP surgery, and supported / sheltered housing are limited. However, the supporting documentation submitted makes note of the policy and the retail and other stipulations required. Sufficient space is shown on the Masterplan to accommodate these elements of the Policies noted above. Therefore, subject to the imposition of suitable and reasonable conditions to ensure these key features of the development come forward, the proposals are considered to be policy compliant in this regard.

7.3 Affordable Housing, Planning Obligations and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

Affordable Housing

7.3.1 Policy HO7 of the adopted Local Plan (2019) stipulates that planning permission would be granted for residential development which would maximise affordable housing provision. Taking this into consideration, there is a requirement to provide 30% of new homes to be affordable on sites that are not considered previously developed. A reduced provision of 25% is acceptable in policy on previously developed sites. However, with respect to Policy HO4 the Local Plan update sees an increase in the requirement of affordable housing on site to 40%.

7.3.2 As mentioned above, Paragraph 49 of the NPPF advises that Local Authorities may give weight to emerging plans and their policies according to -

- a) the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);
- b) the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and
- c) the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to this Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).

7.3.3 Given the updated policy has gone through EiP it is therefore at an advanced stage and the weight given significant. The Inspector did not highlight Policy HO4 as requiring modification during the EiP and there are no unresolved objections to the policy. Furthermore, the emerging policy is considered to be consistent with the NPPF. The weight to be applied to the emerging policy is therefore considered to be significant and the requirement of the emerging policy seeking to secure 40% affordable housing is material and upheld by the LPA for this development proposal.

7.3.4 In respect of the current application there would be a requirement to provide 200 affordable units on site to meet the required 40% provision. In terms of the tenure, mix

and design of the affordable housing, Policy HO8 states that planning permission will be granted where those dwellings:

- a) are provided by the developer on site with at least 70% of the units being for rent and the remainder consisting of other tenures which is to be agreed with the Council’s Housing team;
- b) meets the requirements of Policy HO9 (House types and sizes);
- c) are physically indistinguishable from other types of homes and are distributed across the site to avoid over-concentration in particular; and
- d) will remain at an affordable price for future eligible households.

7.3.5 Paragraph 66 of the NPPF also advises on affordable housing tenure and mix, stating ‘where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed, planning policies and decisions should expect that the mix of affordable housing required meets identified local needs, across Social Rent, other affordable housing for rent and affordable home ownership tenures.’

7.3.6 In regard to affordable housing delivery, the Council’s five-year land supply includes the provision of a number of affordable housing units. The Housing Technical paper (2024) advises that that the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2023 concluded the current unmet need for affordable housing totals 1,612 households. This is made up of households in Stevenage that are currently living in unsuitable housing and are unable to afford their own housing.

7.3.7 Of these households, 802 currently occupy affordable housing that does not meet the household’s current needs. There is, therefore, a current need from 810 households in Stevenage that currently need affordable housing and do not currently occupy affordable housing. In addition, the SHMA assessment concludes there is an additional 110 households annually needing affordable housing in Stevenage. A further 312 households have then been identified as households that can afford market rents but aspire to home ownership. The Council’s most recently published affordable housing need is therefore represented below –

Figure 4: Overall need for Affordable Housing 2022-31 in Stevenage by property size

Stevenage	Affordable Housing Need Households unable to afford	Affordable Housing Need Households aspiring to home ownership	Affordable Housing (Households)
1 bedroom	94	103	197
2 bedrooms	442	125	567
3 bedrooms	993	84	1,077
4+ bedrooms	272	-	272
TOTAL HOUSING NEED	1,802	312	2,114

7.3.8 This is also reflected in the appeal decision letter for Land West of Lytton Way appeal with respect to the under delivery of affordable homes whereby the inspector states (para. 87) and quote

“I have been referred to other schemes which have been granted planning permission or it has been resolved that planning permission should be granted. In these schemes, for one reason or another, affordable housing provision has been lower than the expected policy figure of 20%. Indeed 52 homes would equate to over 17% of the affordable housing that has been delivered thus far in the Local Plan period. In these circumstances

of poor delivery of affordable homes and with sizeable unmet need for such housing, I give the provision of affordable housing significant weight”.

- 7.3.9 Paragraph 58 of the NPPF states that planning obligations must only be sought where they meet all the following tests, as contained in Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2010.
- a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
 - b) directly related to the development; and
 - c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
- 7.3.10 Paragraph 59 of the NPPF states where up-to-date policies have set out the contributions expected from development, planning applications that comply with them should be assumed to be viable. Where the viability of a development is questioned, it is up to the applicant to demonstrate whether particular circumstances justify the need for a viability assessment at the application stage. The application has been accompanied by a Viability Assessment (VA). It is for the LPA to determine the weight in which to give the assessment when considering whether the plan and viability evidence underpinning it is up to date, and any change in circumstances since the plan was brought into force.
- 7.3.11 To be policy compliant, the development would need to provide 40% affordable housing provision based on the updated HO4 policy which now carries significant weight following examination of the Local Plan update by an Inspector, with modifications as required being agreed. Policy HO4 did not require modifications and therefore, this policy carries substantial weight in its updated wording by the Inspector. A 40% provision would amount to 200 dwellings. The submitted VA assumes that the development cannot provide any affordable housing within the development.
- 7.3.12 The LPA have had the VA independently appraised by property regeneration consultants Aspinall Verdi (AV) to assess whether the assumptions made are correct, and whether any affordable housing can be provided on site. This appraisal has included numerous negotiations and discussions to try and reach an agreeable position.
- 7.3.13 The VA shows four scenarios for calculating affordable housing provision, 40% affordable housing provision, 25% provision, 10% provision and 0% affordable provision with 100% private sales. All four scenarios have an outcome that suggests the scheme is unviable, as shown in the table below.

Table ES1.1 - Applicant's Appraisal Outcomes

GDV	40% Affordable	25% Affordable	10% Affordable	100% Private
RLV	£5,920,189	£7,708,301	£8,376,036	£8,728,093
BLV	£9,639,000	£9,639,000	£9,639,000	£9,639,000
Variance	-£8,032,107	-£2,495,714	-£1,262,964	-£910,907

Source: Beacon Partnership LLP, 2026.

- 7.3.14 On review of the VA, where AV are in agreement with the applicant's position, they have assumed their cost and value inputs. However, where there is disagreement, they have adopted their own assumptions and advised the LPA as to why they have done so. The outcomes of AV's appraisals differ from the applicants due to changes in the market sale GDV, construction costs, S106 contributions and CIL.
- 7.3.15 AV have tested the same four scenarios. The outcomes of these appraisals are below and show that despite favourable adjustments by AV to the GDV, external works and

S106 contributions, compared to the applicant's assessment, the scheme remains unviable in all scenarios.

Table ES1.3 – AspinallVerdi Appraisal Outcomes

Scenario	S1 – 40% AH	S2 – 25% AH	S3 – 10% AH	S4 – 0% AH
RLV	£5,024,472	£9,279,473	£9,074,423	£8,925,084
BLV	£9,639,000	£9,639,000	£9,639,000	£9,639,000
Variance	-£4,614,528	-£359,527	-£564,577	-£713,916

Source: AVL, 2026.

- 7.3.16 It is of note that further to the submission of the applicant's VA (Feb 2026) the LPA have given further consideration to all other S106 financial contribution requests. These are discussed in more detail in Section 7.4 of this report, but for the purposes of viability, the LPA do not agree that requests made by the local highway authority and the East of England Ambulance Service meet the tests in Reg 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations and thus will not be seeking these costs are covered by the applicant as part of this development.
- 7.3.17 Ahead of the applicant having sight of AV's final response to the Council, an addendum to the VA has been provided to take account of the LPA's position on S106 financial contributions. The addendum seeks to advise that the monies previously accounted for highways and the ambulance service within the VA, but are no longer required, could be secured for affordable housing provision as a financial contribution in-lieu for off-site provision.
- 7.3.18 Some aspects of AV's review will still require review by the applicant, and a further full review of the addendum will be required by the LPA. However, in principle the LPA deem that with appropriate review mechanisms as part of the S106 agreement, some level of affordable housing could be provided, although this would not be policy compliant.
- 7.3.19 Based on the applicant's figures in the addendum, AV have advised the LPA that a possible 24% provision (approximate) or 120 units (86no. affordable or social rent and 36no. shared ownership) could be forthcoming on site. However, this will be subject to a final review of the VA numbers where there are small discrepancies between the applicant and AV.
- 7.3.20 Officers are content that a provision can be made and that whilst this is not a policy compliant (40%) provision, the application has gone through the viability process as laid out in the NPPF. The provision of review mechanisms will ensure that the LPA can clawback possible further provision, especially at reserved matters stage when more detailed costs are known for calculations. The LPA would emphasise here that any provision that is deemed viable on further assessment should be provided on site in accordance with adopted policy unless sufficient justification is forthcoming on an offsite contribution.
- 7.3.21 This stance is upheld through Policy HO8 of the Local Plan which states that where affordable housing is secured through Policy HO7, planning permission will be granted where those dwellings:
- a. **Are provided by the developer on site** with at least 70% of the units being for rent and the remainder consisting of other tenures to be agreed with the Council's Housing team;
 - b. Meet the requirements of Policy HO9;

- c. Are physically indistinguishable from other types of homes and are distributed across the site to avoid over-concentration in any particular area; and
- d. Will remain at an affordable price for future eligible households.

Exceptions to criterion a. will only be considered where it would result in the delivery of new affordable housing within a similar timescale and

- i. It would be demonstrably preferable for planning or management reasons to secure land, off-site provision or a financial contribution; or
- ii. The proposed affordable housing units respond to a specific, identified need that justifies a departure from the normal tenure requirements.

- 7.3.22 Furthermore, Paragraph 64 of the NPPF discusses affordable housing provision and states that 'where a need for affordable housing is identified, planning policies should specify the type of affordable housing required (including the minimum proportion of Social Rent homes required), and **expect it to be met on-site** unless:
- a) off-site provision or an appropriate financial contribution in lieu can be robustly justified; and
 - b) the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities.'
- 7.3.23 In the VA addendum provided by the applicant it is suggested that an off-site contribution in-lieu could be secured, with the applicant advising it would be their preference to accelerate affordable provision at other sites within Stevenage which benefit from a closer proximity to key infrastructure and better existing transport links. Given the potential timeframes to facilitate the required highways works, the Strategic Housing Team view the capturing of an off-site payment a likely better outcome for Affordable Housing need in the town.
- 7.3.24 At this stage insufficient justification has been presented and no forthcoming sites for this provision have been identified that the LPA could secure through the legal agreement process. As set out above in Paragraph 7.3.20, on-site provision is the LPA's preference in line with national and local policy but will consider alternatives if sufficient justification is provided.
- 7.3.25 In line with the NPPF and NPPG guidance, the LPA must determine the weight in which to give the assessment when considering whether the plan and viability evidence underpinning it is up to date, and any change in circumstances since the plan was brought into force. As part of the Local Plan update, which will see Policy HO4 updated seeking 40% affordable housing on site, a Viability Assessment was undertaken to establish whether any new evidence established from the Local Plan adoption in 2019 has evolved and whether the evidence underpinning the plan is still relevant.
- 7.3.26 This VA established certain parameters for costs of developing the site, based on market evidence and recent built developments in the Borough. The VA concluded the following - *The third strategic site (Policy HO4) is shown to be marginal, generating a positive residual land value but one that is lower than the BLV assumed in the testing. This is the sole strategic site in the middle-value zone, which may explain why viability is reduced.*
- 7.3.27 The VA produced to inform the Local Plan update also concluded that the following adjustments are required for HO4 to become viable with 30% affordable housing and all fixed policy costs:
- BLV reduced to £100,000 per acre (net);
 - 10% reduction to base build costs;
 - 8% increase to market sales values.
- 7.3.28 The VA therefore informs the LPA that viability of the site was deemed marginal at the time of assessing up to date evidence for the purposes of the Local Plan update process.

Notwithstanding this, the update did propose an increase of affordable housing on site from 30% to 40% and with the VA evidence this was found sound by the Inspector assigned to the Council's Examination in Public (EiP) as no modifications were sought over this policy update. The LPA can therefore give significant weight to the content of the updated policy wording.

- 7.3.29 In conclusion of the assessment of affordable housing and viability, provision of 24% affordable housing on site has been demonstrated and this is considered acceptable given the viability assessments and appraisals undertaken on the matter. However, at this time insufficient evidence has been provided for the LPA to agree to an off-site provision. However, the applicant would be justified to follow this up before the signing of the S106 agreement, or through the submission of a Deed of Variation application.

Planning Obligations and CIL

- 7.3.30 The Council is a CIL Charging Authority and under recent amendments to CIL Regulations, is required to publish an Infrastructure Funding Statement which states what the Council's spending priorities for its CIL receipts are. The PPG also states that authorities can choose to pool funding from different routes to fund the same infrastructure provided that authorities set out in infrastructure funding statements which infrastructure they expect to fund through the levy (Paragraph 166).
- 7.3.31 This means that whilst the Council may already be intending to spend CIL receipts on a particular item of infrastructure, they may also request S106 contributions towards the same project. However, in line with Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended), each developer contribution within a S106 agreement must meet the following three tests:
- a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
 - b) directly related to the development; and
 - c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
- 7.3.32 The Developers Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (2025) (SPD) advises that strategic sites allocated in the Local Plan have a large number of policy requirements as identified by stakeholders during Local Plan production and agreed through the Local Plan Examination process. The vast majority of these requirements should be provided on-site as part of the development so their delivery will be contained in submitted plans and conditioned by the planning permission.
- 7.3.33 It further explains that some of the requirements will need to be secured as a developer contribution by S106 due to the nature of how they are provided for. This includes, for example, education contributions. HCC, the local education authority, requires land to be provided and financial contributions to be made towards the build costs and this would be inappropriate through a planning condition so must be included in a S106. Statutory consultees, such as the County Council or Highways England, are able to secure developer contributions where necessary to mitigate an impact of a proposed development to make the proposal acceptable in planning terms.
- 7.3.34 As a starting point for strategic sites, and likely for large windfall sites, it is expected that the Council will seek to secure developer contributions towards the following, non-exhaustive, list of infrastructure/services in addition to collecting a CIL charge:
- Affordable Housing
 - Education
 - NHS GP provision
 - Passenger transport
 - Travel plans
 - Electric Car Clubs

- Cycle Hire Scheme
- 7.3.35 Further to the table shown above in 7.3.19, these and other financial contributions are required in line with the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (2025). The Council would like to ensure that a key direct benefit of promoting future growth is safeguarded for its residents. Consequently, developers of major development will sign a S106 agreement with the Council to:
- attempt to fill 5% to 10% of construction jobs on-site associated with their development with Stevenage residents,
 - 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),
 - report whether or not they met these requirements, and
 - provide a financial contribution in lieu of not achieving either or both targets
- 7.3.36 Should the developer be unable to fulfill these obligations the developer must provide a Local Employment Strategy which shows –
- an estimate of how many construction jobs their scheme will create, how many jobs should therefore be filled with Stevenage residents,
 - how many apprenticeships positions should therefore be filled with Stevenage residents or students,
 - how they will target local residents/students for these positions, how they will record and report the employment, and
 - the potential in-lieu payments required to be paid to the Council for non-compliance with the targets.
- 7.3.37 If the report shows that local recruitment targets have not been met by the developer or contractor, payments in lieu should be made to the Council in line with the following:
- £4,000 per number of targeted jobs not filled by Stevenage residents,
 - £2,000 per number of targeted apprenticeships not filled by Stevenage residents or students, and
 - £500 per apprenticeship position as an administrative fee towards the brokerage system to fill apprenticeship positions.
 - If a major development could not provide suitable apprenticeship opportunities due to the quick construction of the development project, and the resultant lack of suitable opportunity to provide apprenticeships, they should pay a lesser fee of £1,000 per number of targeted apprenticeships not created rather than the £2,000 fee.
- 7.3.38 These targets do not add a requirement for additional jobs that would add a financial burden to the developer or contractor. The targets merely add a requirement that a portion of the jobs will be targeted to local residents. The in-lieu payments do not add a significant financial burden to the developer or contractor and will only be required if the developer or contractor does not meet the employment targets.
- 7.3.39 The Developer Contributions SPD (2025) also introduces a new financial contribution requirement to pay towards cycle hire in the Borough following the successful introduction of 'Beryl' bikes. Only applied to residential development, the SPD requires a contribution of £25,000 for developments of 200+ dwellings. Furthermore, the SPD has a requirement for fees to be paid to cover the monitoring of legal agreements. This cover requesting payments, ensuring transfer and/or expenditure of money and keeping/publishing records of contributions in line with regulations. The Council will seek 5% of the value of the contributions being monitored with a minimum of £1000 and a cap of £50,000. This is considered a fair cost that will reflect the value of the S106 agreement and will not affect the viability of a scheme.
- 7.3.40 Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) as highways authority have requested several strand 1 contributions to cover the proposed access and highway works as shown on

the proposed drawings, bus service improvements of £150,000 (index linked) per year, for a period of 5 years to secure the futures of current services 390, 907 and/or the extension of new services introduced into the surrounding area which may be adapted to serve the new development, as well as a separate ANPR/bus gate contribution.

- 7.3.41 Furthermore, monitoring fees for the proposed Travel Plan will be required in line with HCC Toolkit to a sum of £8,862 (index linked) to cover the standard five years monitoring. To support the Travel Plan proposed a request for sums towards a sustainable travel voucher in order to encourage travel by sustainable modes of transport at a rate of £50 per flat and £100 per dwelling (index linked as hereinafter provided). This would enable HCC to promote travel by sustainable modes incentivising an uptake of public transport and cycling or walking to the development.
- 7.3.42 In addition to strand 1 contributions which the LPA deem acceptable, strand 2 contributions are sought to mitigate the impacts of the development and to meet an Active Travel funding gap (cost per dwelling) of £9,861 (indexed to March 2024 and equated from £570,185,769 / 83,530 = £6,826). This would equate to a total contribution for Active Travel of £4,930,500 for the development.
- 7.3.43 The HCC Highways response identifies key schemes for which the funds would go towards. The main of these is route 4 in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (2019) (LCWIP). Route 4 relates to the connections from South East Stevenage to Central Stevenage. Ref. 4.1 and 4.2 relate directly to the HO4 housing site.

Route 4			
RST Criterion	Issue/Opportunity	Opportunity for improvement	Ref
Connectivity Safety	Connection into new housing site	Extension of segregated route from Bragbury Lane into the South East Stevenage development	4.1
		Cycling priority junction accessing development both north and south	4.2

- 7.3.44 These connections are shown on the proposed Masterplan, with works proposed from Bragbury Lane, past The Chequers and along the A602 where a new foot/cycleway would be brought into the site frontage and stepped away from the existing footpath edge. The connections would continue into the new signalised junction and then easterly to the existing bus stop footway on the southern side of the A602 near The Three Horseshoes public house.
- 7.3.45 Further connection improvements along route 4 would in addition to points ref. 4.1 and 4.2, be covered by S106 contributions. The LCWIP are designed to assist travel by sustainable modes and provide much needed improvements on this corridor. It is highway officers' opinion that there is a clear case for these additional route 4 connections given the congested A602, helping to facilitate a high-quality route from the site to the key destinations in Stevenage, and that these are relevant in planning terms. Any car trips that can be taken off the network given the local conditions has merit.
- 7.3.46 The applicant does not agree to the financial contribution sought by HCC for the strand 2 contributions. Strand 2 relates to mitigation works that address the wider cumulative impact of developments for which the development itself is not solely responsible for but

does derive a benefit from. Whilst the applicant does not dispute there is a need to support and finance highway improvements, the financial contribution which has been sought does not accord with Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) 2010 (as amended). For reference, Regulation 122 states:-

A planning obligation may only constitute a reason for granting planning permission for the development if the obligation is –

- (a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;*
- (b) directly related to the development; and*
- (c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.*

- 7.3.47 Having reviewed the request for a sustainable transport contribution, officers' do not consider that it meets the statutory tests set out in Regulation 122 shown above. In terms of point (a) for a contribution to be "necessary", the development must be unacceptable without it. In this case, request towards bus service provision is being sought and upheld, with the scheme itself designed to accommodate a new or existing bus service into the development, along with a Travel Plan and Sustainable Travel Vouchers to promote non-car modal shift.
- 7.3.48 The main element of the contributions being requested which are not considered justified relate to the Active Travel funding gap. This identifies Route 4 in the LCWIP which seeks to improve connections between the site allocated and the Town Centre. As discussed above these connections are being provided as part of the site's Masterplan providing for shared-use route connections and linkages into the existing active travel network.
- 7.3.49 The remaining elements of Route 4 relate to improvement works along the cycleway heading north towards the Town. Whilst it is acknowledged that additional investment could enhance the network, this is not the same as the development causing an unacceptable impact or relying on new transport infrastructure to function acceptably.
- 7.3.50 The County Council make reference to a recent development in East Herts District which contributed towards Route 4 of the LCWIP, however, unlike the Hazel Park scheme, this site does not rely on major off-site cycling infrastructure to secure basic network connectivity or deliver modal shift. The development is therefore not dependent on comprehensive upgrading of Route 4 to be made acceptable. As such, the contribution is not necessary under Reg122(2)(a).
- 7.3.51 Turning then to point (b), the proposed active travel investments for Route 4 of the LCWIP beyond ref 4.1 and 4.2 shown in table at Paragraph 7.3.37 would not be directly related to the development. The requested upgrades relate to strategic improvements identified in the LCWIP, forming part of wider network enhancement across the settlement. While the development will generate additional cycle movements, the scheme already provides the infrastructure needed to connect future residents to the existing network. The wholesale upgrading of an established strategic route goes beyond addressing site-specific impacts and instead serves a wider catchment. The contribution therefore lacks a sufficiently direct relationship to this development under Reg122(2)(b).
- 7.3.52 Lastly, point (c) relates to being fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind. Given the site's expected CIL yield of approximately £4 million, and the strategic nature of the Route 4 improvements, requiring this development alone to fund the upgrade is disproportionate. The works sought would deliver benefits far beyond the site's own users and would not reasonably reflect the scale of impact generated. The request is therefore not proportionate, contrary to Reg122(2)(c).
- 7.3.53 Hertfordshire County Council Growth and Infrastructure Team have assessed the proposal on behalf of the County Council as the education authority and based on the

provision of 500 dwellings is requesting a total of £3,494,866 towards new secondary education provision at the former Barnwell East site, on the basis that CIL receipts would not be sufficient to provide for these facilities. The applicant has contested this figure challenging the underlying methodology and approach adopted by HCC. On the basis of the information provided officers agree that HCC's request for education contributions is justified having regard to the CIL regulations, in particular that it is necessary to provide for new education infrastructure to serve residents of new development in the borough, including the application site. As such, it is recommended that a contribution be secured as part of a section 106 agreement. It is noted that the final contribution could be adjusted based on more precise information on the final housing mix proposed, any amendments to yield assumptions and the status of other education upgrades. These will be resolved prior to the S106 agreement being signed. Furthermore, monitoring fees for each trigger within the legal agreement will attract a charge of £340 (adjusted for inflation against RPI July 2021) per trigger point.

- 7.3.54 East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust (EEAST) have made comment on the application and note the additional 500 dwellings could generate another 1,100 residents and will generate an anticipated additional 253 calls per annum on already constrained ambulance services. Their consultee response identifies that this is an increase of 15.1% per annum compared to existing activity, postcode SG28 indicates 1,674 incidents per annum between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025.
- 7.3.55 If approved this development would affect Stevenage Hub which respond to emergency incidents within the local area as well as impact on the regional call centres. The East of England Ambulance Service NHS are therefore requesting a financial contribution of £170,000 towards the expansion and installation of EV charging of existing Stevenage Ambulance Hub to meet increased local demand arising from this housing development.
- 7.3.56 It is noteworthy that a recent appeal decision, Richborough Estates vs Buckingham Council – North Area (Aylesbury), found that in respect of S106 contributions sought by the NHS, these must be for a defined, identified infrastructure project for primary health care, and whose amount was calculated on a methodology that considered the number of homes for which planning permission was sought. Where this has happened, the request was lawful under CIL regulations.
- 7.3.57 In this case, the request for monies to go towards EV charging bays at the ambulance hub, whilst calculated considering the number of houses, is not for primary health care as identified in Richborough Estates vs Buckingham Council. The LPA therefore consider that the request is not Reg 122 compliant under the CIL regulations, and it cannot be legitimately asked for.
- 7.3.58 The ambulance service comments do also seek a contribution through the S106 for sufficient provision of defibrillators for the new community, and this should include installation, servicing and maintenance for 10 years. The cost is circa £5,000 per EEAST recommended defibrillator. These need to be located where there is electrical power and sufficient footfall to provide benefits to the new community. Research indicates that 800m is the maximum distance to fetch a defibrillator. Officers' agree that at least one should be provided in the new local centre. This would be within 800m of the main recreational green space at the opposite end of the proposed 'boulevard' entrance and neighbourhood centre.
- 7.3.59 No response has been received by the NHS in respect of GP provision or critical care at the time of drafting this report. However, the policy allocation seeks provision of a GP surgery on site, and the application submission documents do refer to provision of a surgery in the proposed neighbourhood centre. The LPA would seek to secure this through the S106 as a formality.

7.3.60 In addition to this, using the NHS's own formula for GP provision the LPA has assumed a possible financial contribution of approximately £646,000, should a response from the NHS be received prior to a decision being issued and a contribution being sought instead of onsite provision. The LPA would be steered in this regard by comments from the NHS in respect of provision demand, as non-provision would be contrary to the policy allocation.

7.3.61 In regards on-site sports provision, which is a requirement of the Local Plan, this site is not of a sufficient size to accommodate such facilities, and this has been confirmed by Sport England. However, the site is of sufficient size and with significant dwelling numbers to generate a sufficient demand to be able to justify financial contributions in line with Sport England calculations. These calculations have been simplified into the below table –

Outdoor grass pitch (capital cost + lifecycle cost)	£126,753
Outdoor 3G pitch (capital cost + lifecycle cost)	£95,285
Outdoor changing room	£280,451
Swimming pools	£289,657
Sports hall	£244,586
Tennis court (outdoor)	£18,841
Bowls centre	£7,681
Total	£773,803

7.3.62 The submitted application does not confirm whether such contributions are to be secured, and Sport England have therefore raised an objection, as no on-site provision is made and no off-site contributions are suggested. Notwithstanding this, as part of the VA submitted in support of the application, the calculations clearly show payment of financial contributions requested at the time of the report being instructed. These include Sport England, NHS and education. As such, the applicant can viably pay the outdoor and sports provision contributions sought by Sport England in line with their toolkit.

7.3.63 Looking at the overall management and maintenance of the development, the legal agreement will look secure the provision of a Management Company. This is to ensure areas such as the drainage system, landscaping, highways (including lighting) are appropriately maintained and that the development remains to be of a high standard.

7.3.64 It is recommended that the wording of the s106 agreement to secure the above contributions be delegated to the Director for Planning and Regulation in consultation with the Chair of the Planning and Development Committee. In the event that any of the above contributions are ultimately not secured (e.g. in the event that they are subsequently considered not to be CIL Reg 122 compliant), the application would be referred back to the committee to consider afresh.

7.4 Community Infrastructure Levy

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

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

7.4.2 CIL is a non-negotiable charge. The exact charge will be determined by the Council's CIL officer after an application has been granted in accordance with the CIL Charging Schedule and the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended). Opportunities for relief or exemption from the CIL charge exist and will be taken into account in the calculation of the final CIL charge.

7.4.3 CIL replaces the need for S106 agreements to specify financial and/or land contributions for non-site-specific infrastructure projects. This allows infrastructure to be planned on a borough-wide scale rather than on a site-by-site basis as mitigation against the impacts of individual proposals. A CIL Form 1: Additional Information has been submitted along with the application. The development would be CIL liable for residential and commercial net floorspace. The total is not known at this time and will be subject to assessment by the Council's CIL officer.

7.5 Layout, Character and Appearance

National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance

7.5.1 Chapter 12 Achieving well-designed places of the NPPF (2024) stipulates that the creation of high quality, sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. 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. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process. Where development is not well designed, permission should be refused.

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

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

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

- the layout;

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

Development Plan

- 7.5.4 Whilst the policies contained in the Local Plan have limited weight, Policy SP8 generally reflects the requirements of the NPPF in that it requires new development to achieve the highest standards of design and sustainability. In addition, Policy GD1 generally requires all forms of development to meet a high standard of design which includes form of built development, elevational treatment and materials along with how the development would integrate with the urban fabric, its relationship between buildings, landscape design and relevant aspects of sustainable design.
- 7.5.5 In the emerging local plan partial review and update, criterion (e) of Policy GD1 is updated to refer to “unacceptable” adverse impacts. The intention behind the change is to make clear that in some circumstances, an adverse impact might still fall within acceptable bounds and that this is a matter of judgement for the decision maker. Policy GD2 is a new policy emerging from the local plan partial review and update. It states that proposals which demonstrate they have been designed to achieve a rating of excellent or higher against a relevant BREEAM standard and/or to achieve the BRE Home Quality Mark will be strongly supported. Having regard to paragraph 49 of the NPPF, this emerging version of the policy is afforded moderate weight in the assessment of the application.
- 7.5.6 This part of the application 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. However, it is emphasised that the application is in outline stage only with respect to all matters except the access and main roads hierarchy. Therefore, consideration of detailed matters such as design, scale, massing and visual appearance will be dealt with through the submission of reserved matters applications should members be minded to grant permission. Information submitted in support of the application is indicative only but can set a good picture of how the development is envisioned to come forward.

Layout

- 7.5.7 The indicative site layout shows a main vehicular access point off the A602 entering the site fairly centrally with a tree lined ‘boulevard’ leading to a circular spine road (covered by the full planning permission element of the application). Secondary roads extend off this spine road, and to the east the road extends to a bus only entry/exit road joining the A602. The layout includes much improved pedestrian and cycling links to the existing network which finishes just north of the Bragbury Lane junction. In particular the proposals would see an improved and extended foot/cycleway link from Bragbury Lane across the front of the layby at The Chequers Pub, across the front of the site and to existing footway connections by the Three Horseshoes Pub in the far southeastern corner of the site.
- 7.5.8 The main access junction is proposed as a four arm signalised junction with The proposed access arrangements off the A602 would see the construction of a new four-arm signalised junction centrally along the site’s boundary with the A602. This would serve as the principal vehicular access to the site and also form a key crossing point for pedestrians and cyclists. The junction would have segregated left in (heading east) and right in (heading west) lanes off the A602, as well as left and right turn lanes exiting the development. To the south east of the site, on the northeastern boundary a secondary

access is proposed to allow bus access into the site, as well as emergency vehicle access.

- 7.5.9 The junction has been designed and laid out to provide access to the application site as well as the northern parcel of land which forms part of the HO4 policy allocation. However, as the northern parcel is not as far along in its preparations of coming forward for housing in line with the Policy, an interim proposal for a three-arm signalised junction is considered acceptable. In terms of its layout, it is functionally acceptable. Visually, the introduction of the junction along this stretch of the A602 will drastically change its character, making the road wider to accommodate the segregated lanes.
- 7.5.10 However, the junction has been positioned to create the least harm to existing tree belts (including to the north, although the impact of any tree removal on land within the ownership of the northern parcel of lands red line is not considered as part of this application and would be subject to its own application. That being said, the principle is considered acceptable currently.
- 7.5.11 The proposed development would see extensive planting along the new development frontage which would compensate for the extent of the works required to be undertaken to provide the new junction and development access. The new frontage would also provide a green buffer between the vehicular highway and the proposed foot/cycleway connections shown on the masterplan.
- 7.5.12 These connections are further strengthened by the creation of new foot/cycleways around the site, and links to key desire lines in and out of the site, in particular additional access points by The Chequers Pub and pedestrian links to Bragbury End. The road network proposed also allows for a bus service provision within the development.
- 7.5.13 Aspirations at the time of allocation in the Local Plan saw the site being landscape-led utilising the 'Garden City' model with the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) Garden City principles integrated, with generous green spaces and landscaping. By virtue of the size of the site, a Garden City clearly isn't a possibility, but certainly principles of this movement can be taken forward.
- 7.5.14 These principles work based on a site/development being accessible for all, vibrant and inclusive, landscape-led and climate resilient, designed to marry town and country, local employment, genuinely affordable, nurtured, visionary and collaborative, and equitable.
- 7.5.15 The indicative layout shows a high level of green spaces for various uses, as well as landscaping including woodland, meadows and cultivated grass areas for recreation. The housing areas have been broken down in to 'lot' areas, and the overall provision would include aspirational homes and self-build plots. The provision of affordable housing is a policy requirement at 40% but this is covered in more detail above in this report. The 'lot' areas show good separations between houses, as well as policy compliant gardens and indicative car parking spaces to meet the current car parking standards as contained in the Council's adopted supplementary planning document (SPD).
- 7.5.16 The proposed density ratio for each 'lot' would see a reduction in house numbers per hectare as the built development extends into the site to take account of the neighbouring landscape and built form. Fewer houses closer to Bragbury End and the borough boundary with East Herts to the southeast is welcomed.
- 7.5.17 The provision of SuDS features including swales throughout the site is also welcomed and can provide good, alternative types of open space and opportunities for further footpath walks throughout and around the site, as well as areas to provide seating and landscaping. In conclusion, the layout is considered to be acceptable in its outline form.

Character Areas

- 7.5.18 The application proposes six main 'Character Areas' in the submitted Design Code. As the predominance of the application is for outline consent, details of the exact dwelling design, style and layout do not form part of the application, and details would be assessed and considered under the submission of reserved matters application should outline permission be granted.



- 7.5.19 The Design Code submitted in support of the application explains the Character Areas as merging 'to create a seamless transition from the heart of the village to the surrounding countryside'. Starting with a denser development in area A which includes the new local centre, and which leads to the main area D with recreational and green spaces, and then less dense traditional two storey homes on the wider character areas B, C, E and F. The Design Code then continues by stating that 'movement through the village is further enhanced by a site-wide palette of street furnishing, wayfinding and planting that provide a common visual thread throughout the development.'

- 7.5.20 Each character area seeks to provide a prescriptive set of design guidelines to outline the scale and character of each area looking at the –
- Street Character: Route Hierarchy and Connectivity
 - Landscape Character: Diversity and Hierarchy of Space
 - Built Character: Identity and Arrangement.

Once in place these will serve to inform the content of any reserved matters submission when final details can be considered.

Character Area A

- 7.5.21 This Character Area is the main entrance to the site off the A602 and provides the main vehicular access. The Design Code states 'The Avenue heralds the entrance to the Village with 3-storey apartment buildings and a tree-lined thoroughfare. It is a dense character area reflecting the bustling nature of the community hub. The areas around the building should be designed with great care to ensure privacy of the residents, whilst

maintaining a visual link throughout the Avenue. Below is a breakdown of the key areas addressed in the Design Code to show the transition of each area through the site.

Summary of Key Features:

3	Street typology A, B, C, D	Bus route, Cycle route
4	Landscape character A, B	Place making, Public Art
5	Building typology A, B	Density: 65 to 80 dwellings/hectares
6	Material palette A	Vibrant and welcoming buildings

Character Area B

7.5.22 Located between a wildflower SuDS basin to the north of the site and the existing mature hedgerow which separates the main field and the eastern part of the site, the area fronts the A602 so is important for visual interest into the site, especially around the infrastructure of the SuDS basin. The density here is lower with buildings that provide a transitional role from the local centre to rural.

Summary of Key Features:

3	Street typology C, D, G, K, L	Bus route, Cycle route
4	Landscape character B, C, E, J	Existing hedgerow & wildflower SuDS basin
5	Building typology B, D, E, G	Density: 20 to 26 dwellings/hectares
6	Material palette A, C	Transitional buildings

Character Area C

7.5.23 This Character Area forms the most easterly parcel on the site, beyond the existing hedgerow and up to the boundary with The Three Horseshoes to the southeastern corner of the site and the Borough boundary. This area has been designed to form a transition of the site into the countryside beyond, bounded by natural barriers. Traditional semi-detached, two storey homes would overlook landscape features to form a low-density area of the site.

Summary of Key Features:

3	Street typology F, G, H, I, K	Bus route, Cycle route
4	Landscape character C, D, F, I, J	Existing woodland/hedgerows & SuDS basin
5	Building typology C, D, E, F, G	Density: 25 to 30 dwellings/hectares
6	Material palette C	Rural setting, woodland and edge of site

Character Area D

7.5.24 Forming the largest of the Character Areas, area D is the land encompassed in the circular spine road route and provides the main recreational park and green spaces in the development. These would include a series of footpaths to aid running and dog walking, as well as ensuring high quality outdoor spaces for all. Whilst housing numbers appear lower per hectare, the houses (a mixture of three storey fronting the green park land, and two storeys beyond) are focused to the rear of the green open spaces and so as a result will be more densely laid out.

Summary of Key Features:

3	Street typology C, D, E, G, H, I, J, L	Bus route, Cycle route
4	Landscape character B, D, E, F, G, J	Central Park
5	Building typology C, D, E, G	Density: 22 dwellings/hectares
6	Material palette B	Wildlife corridor and formal parkland

Character Area E

7.5.25 Located on the western side of the site, Character Area E is the closest to the existing settlement of Bragbury End and benefits from a more rural setting with detached and semi-detached dwellings. The area abuts and has views over the wildlife area proposed to the far west, with pedestrian links out to Bragbury Lane, and a wildflower SuDS basin to the north. The existing natural field barrier is retained where possible to the east, providing a green break between this area and the more urban layouts of those areas closer to the local centre. Important central views to the main park area in area D are also shown.

Summary of Key Features:

3	Street typology K	Bus route, Cycle route
4	Landscape character C, F, G,H, J	Nature Park & existing hedgerows
5	Building typology D, E, F, G	Density: 25 to 35 dwellings/hectares
6	Material palette D	Natural park and edge of site

Character Area F

7.5.22 This is the last Character Area which forms the northern pocket of the development. The houses would sit behind the existing mature tree belt to the front of the site, with the improved foot and cycleway connections across the site frontage immediately to the north. Properties would provide an active frontage onto the A602 to the north. A wildflower SuDS basin is proposed in the northwest corner.

Summary of Key Features:

3	Street typology G	Bus route, Cycle route
4	Landscape character C, D, E,F, G, J	Existing hedgerow & wildflower SuDS basin
5	Building typology D, E, F, G	Density: 20 to 26 dwellings/hectares
6	Material palette C	Active frontage and transition buildings

Housing Typologies / Appearance

7.5.23 The proposed Design Code outlines the general housing hierarchy for the development to aid the submission of any future reserved matters applications. The document identifies the following general rules for across the development –

- Street junctions should be addressed by a corner house or a decorative feature on the house/apartment’s blocks.
- Elevations and gable walls without apertures are prohibited at road junctions.

- Houses should be parallel to the street.
- Building setbacks are defined in Section 3 Street Typologies.
- All dormers facing a primary street are to be a flat roof dormer unless noted otherwise: elsewhere all dormers are to be gable-fronted or hipped.
- Plots adjacent to Landscape Lanes and Pocket Parks are to have a minimum 1.8m high brick wall shared boundary with the pocket park or lane.

7.5.24 Seven housing typologies are proposed, with typology G relating specifically to self-built plots/bespoke design dwellings. Typologies A-F relate to the prescribed housing that will form the reserved matters applications should consent be granted. The house types follow through the Character Areas and lots with 3 storey flats and houses in the local and central areas and then spreading out into the wider areas of the development with 2.5 and 2 storey dwellings. These ideologies address the relationship of the house types and massing in relation to the A602, proposed neighbourhood centre, existing neighbouring properties and existing wider character of the area.

7.5.25 In respect of the self-built plots specifically, the Design Guide advises that the design of these plots should abide by the general rules of the designated Character Area within which it is located, with the houses proposed to be detached. This approach has been utilised on other large developments in the Borough such as Land to the North of Stevenage. The suggestions in the Design Guide do allow for these plots to have self-expression and individuality but also places emphasis on ensuring the development is not unbalanced by the introduction of singularly different housing types that would fail to ensure the high quality of design for the development as a wider whole.

7.5.26 The Design Code highlights certain design aspects that should be employed across the development depending on the Character Area, etc. These include pitched, gable roofs, dormer windows, aperture detailing, porches, window and door symmetry and placement, materials and features such as balconies, and brick recessing for detail.

7.5.27 These points, as well as the general design concepts expressed in terms of density, massing, scale and form are all considered acceptable in principle. The Design Code clearly draws upon character areas across Stevenage and is in accordance with the principles of Good Design as highlighted at the beginning of this section of the report. The development has been designed to respond to site constraints and the overall Masterplan seeks to deliver a development that is legible in terms of its own identity, across the site through its character areas, but through its association with nearby built form and the wider town.

Conclusion

7.5.28 Overall, it is considered the indicative supporting information and proposed Design Code would ensure the further details for submission in any reserved matters application would lend itself to a high-quality development. The layout and proposed Character Areas have taken account of the site constraints and wider setting to an acceptable standard. The proposed development is therefore, considered acceptable in accordance with the policies on design in the adopted Local Plan (2019), the Design Guide SPD (2025), the NPPF (2024) and PPG.

7.6 Impact on the Environment and Neighbouring Occupiers

National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance

7.6.1 Paragraph 135 of the NPPF (2024) sets out that planning decision should ensure create places with a high standard of amenity for existing and future residents. Paragraph 124 of the National Design Guide states that “*Good design promotes quality of life for the occupants and users of buildings. This includes function – buildings should be easy to*

use. It also includes comfort, safety, security, amenity, privacy, accessibility and adaptability". Paragraph 126 of the National Design Guide also emphasises that "well-designed homes and communal areas within buildings provide a good standard and quality of internal space. This includes room sizes, floor-to-ceiling heights, internal and external storage, sunlight, daylight and ventilation. The quality of internal space needs careful consideration in higher density developments, particularly for family accommodation, where access, privacy, daylight and external amenity space are also important".

Development Plan

- 7.6.2 Policies SP8 and GD1 of the Local Plan (2019) which generally reflect the good design principles outlined in the NPPF and National Design Guide, require that development does not adversely impact the amenities of neighbouring occupiers. In the emerging Local Plan review and partial update, criterion (e) of policy GD1 is updated to refer to "unacceptable" adverse impacts. The intention behind the change is to make clear that in some circumstances, an adverse impact might still fall within acceptable bounds and that this is a matter of judgement for the decision maker.
- 7.6.3 The emerging policy carries significant weight under paragraph 49 of the NPPF with no modifications sought by the Inspector in respect of this Policy at the recent EiP for the Local Plan Update and Review. Furthermore, there have been no objections to or challenges related to the proposed changes to this Policy's part of the update and review process.
- 7.6.4 Policy FP5 of the Local Plan requires development proposals to consider contamination and be supported by an appropriate preliminary risk assessment (PRA), demonstrating that any necessary remediation and subsequent development poses no risk to the population, environment or groundwater bodies.
- 7.6.5 Policy FP7 requires all development proposals to minimise, and where possible, reduce air, water, light, and noise pollution. Planning permission will be granted when it can be demonstrated that the development will not have unacceptable impacts on general amenity and the tranquillity of the wider area.
- 7.6.6 Construction activities, both on and off site by their nature can be noisy and intrusive for neighbouring occupiers, particularly in terms of noise, vibration, air quality (dust), smoke, odour and light. Other possible matters can also cause nuisance including construction vehicle parking or movements, or damage to neighbouring properties, services and facilities.
- 7.6.7 Noise and vibration can arise in particular from piling operations, groundworks and excavations, and plant or machinery and their associated use. Early morning deliveries can also give rise to disturbance if not properly controlled and managed. Dust from site operations can also be an issue, particularly during periods of sustained dry weather.
- 7.6.8 The nearest residential properties are contained to the west of the site along Bragbury Lane and Bragbury Close. The site abuts the two pubs The Chequers to the west and The Three Horses to the east, and to the north west on the opposite side of the A602 is the Sacombe Mews residential development.

Noise Pollution

- 7.6.9 The application is accompanied by a Noise Impact Assessment by ACA Acoustics Limited. The assessment process was carried out in two sequential stages: Stage 1 – an initial noise risk assessment of the proposed development site, and Stage 2 – a systematic consideration of four key elements 1. Demonstrating a "Good Acoustic

Design Process”; 2. Observing internal “Noise Level Guidelines”; 3. Undertaking an “External Amenity Area Noise Assessment”; and 4. Consideration of “Other Relevant Issues”.

- 7.6.10 The NIA has looked only at existing noise sources at the site, namely the A602 and the railway line to the south. The Environmental Health Officer who has provided comment on the application has noted that no data has been presented, or mitigation measures proposed against noise from sources associated with the new development once built, including the proposed local centre operations and any associated plant in this area.
- 7.6.11 In respect of potential new noise sources and their impact on proposed dwellings on site, the relationship of dwellings in flats above a local centre with retail and other uses is fairly standard given the hierarchy of neighbourhood centres in Stevenage. As such, whilst no specific information has been provided at outline stage, it is considered acceptable to impose conditions to ensure appropriate Noise Assessments are carried out in advance of and in conjunction with any reserved matters applications, to ensure noise levels are acceptable in these circumstances.
- 7.6.12 Turning then again to the existing noise sources, the NIA clearly shows the A602 as the biggest noise source, stating that during the day the proposed houses and flats facing the A602 would be subject to noise levels of LAeq 73 db, with houses near the railway line being subject to LAeq 53 db. No vibration from the railway use has been identified as an issue in the report and this is upheld by the Environmental Health Team.
- 7.6.13 The NIA proposes mitigation measures to ensure an acceptable acoustic level in the proposed houses. This includes the orientation of habitable rooms to the rear of houses/flats, so that windows relating to kitchens, bathrooms, hallways and dining rooms are located on facades that face the road. For those facing the railway line, with lower levels it is proposed to have any bedrooms on facades not facing the line. It is also identified in the NIA that it is anticipated that an acoustic ventilation scheme will be necessary so that residents can achieve background ventilation without necessarily needing to open windows. Consideration of the materials used in the house building process, as well as glazing levels and insulation will also have some impact on noise levels experienced.
- 7.6.14 On assessment of the NIA by the Environmental Health team it is recommended that conditions be imposed to ensure each of the matters addressed is sufficiently covered and secured by further details being approved and the development being carried out in accordance with the mitigation measures set out in the NIA.

Contamination

- 7.6.15 The application has been submitted with a Preliminary Risk Assessment (PRA) by WDE Consulting Limited (reference 21316R1, Issue A, dated August 2024) which considers the previous land uses, inter alia, of the development site and concludes that, with the exception of the onsite reservoir, the development of the site is unlikely to create any significant pollutant linkages.
- 7.6.16 The Environment Agency have raised no objections to the proposals in respect of water contamination but have advised the reservoir to remain available for its function. This is also upheld by the Council’s Environmental Health Team who advise conditions be imposed for further investigation in case possible pollutant links to ground water.

Light Pollution

- 7.6.17 Details of proposed lighting along the roads and streets has been provided in support of the application. However, no details pertaining to areas such as the delivery yard, skate

park, etc have been submitted. Given the application is at outline stage and further details can come forward later without affecting a recommendation, it is considered reasonable that these details can be adequately secured by the imposition of conditions.

Air Quality

- 7.6.18 An Air Quality Assessment by Mayer Brown Limited has been submitted in support of the application, which states that the operation of the development once constructed, will only have a very limited impact on local air quality. Based on the data contained in the report and that available from Council monitoring supports this conclusion. The Council's Environmental Health Team have confirmed that air quality is not a material factor as regards to this application.

Privacy, Overbearing Impact and Daylight

- 7.6.19 In respect of the impact of the development on existing neighbouring properties, the locations of the proposed dwellings based on the Masterplan would put the development more than sufficient distance away from existing properties such that amenity levels for neighbouring properties are not adversely affected.
- 7.6.20 The consideration of the impact of the development on the amenities of homeowners do not just relate to existing neighbours, however. The guidance provided in the Council's Design Guide SPD should also be applied to the new houses proposed. In this respect, as an outline application officers' should be confident that the indicative layout shows an ability to provide sufficient separation distances between houses, a layout appropriate to prevent loss of light and overbearing impact, as well as the potential to allow alterations to a property without significantly reducing or removing those mitigation measures against harm to occupier amenities.
- 7.6.21 It is considered that the information shown on the Masterplan, as well as that provided in the Design and Access Statement and the Design Code is sufficient to recommend approval of the outline permission and be confident the site can come forward with reserved matters applications which show policy compliance in terms of the above amenity values.

Construction Impacts

- 7.6.22 The disruptive effect of demolition and construction work is a material consideration. Some disruption is inevitable, insofar as vehicle movements and noisy work would be necessary to complete the development. However, the impacts can be mitigated, for example by employing dust suppression techniques, limiting the hours when deliveries can be made, and limiting the hours when work can be carried out.
- 7.6.23 The Air Quality Assessment submitted makes reference to the control of pollutants during the construction phase. Several mitigation measures have been proposed in Appendix C of the report. To this end, it is recommended that a construction management plan be secured by condition. Subject to this condition, it is considered that the impacts of construction could be mitigated to an acceptable degree.

Conclusions on Environment and Neighbouring Occupiers

- 7.6.24 Having regard to the above, it is concluded that the proposed development would not in principle result in any fundamentally unacceptable impacts on the environment and the Masterplan shows the layout and siting of the proposed dwellings would ensure acceptable living conditions for existing neighbouring and future occupiers. The application has been assessed by the Environmental Health Team and conditions

suggested where necessary. In these respects, the proposal is considered to accord with Policies FP5, FP7 and GD1 of the Local Plan.

7.7 Parking

National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance

- 7.7.1 Chapter 9 'Promoting Sustainable Transport' of the NPPF (2024) sets out a requirement to consider transport issues, which includes parking, at the earliest stages of a development proposal. Paragraph 116 of the NPPF (2024) states "*Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios*".
- 7.7.2 Taking this into consideration, paragraph 117 of the NPPF (2024) stipulates that applications for development should:
- a) give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second – so far as possible – to facilitating access to high quality public transport, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use;
 - b) address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport;
 - c) create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards;
 - d) allow for the efficient delivery of goods, and access by service and emergency vehicles; and
 - e) be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations.

Development Plan

- 7.7.3 Policy IT5 of the Local Plan requires development proposals to comply with the parking standards set out in the Council's Parking SPD (2025) and has not been updated by the Local Plan (LP) Review. Policy SP6 Sustainable Transport has been reordered to reflect the priority of sustainable transport consistent with NPPF under the LP Review and the amended policy carries significant weight. This policy requires, amongst other things, for developments to demonstrate they are in a sustainable location and will promote active travel by non-car modes of transport by providing appropriate cycle parking and prioritise public transport.
- 7.7.4 Looking firstly at the provision of housing on the site as the main car parking catalyst, the adopted SPD provides the below table to advise on parking space requirements for houses and flats, including sheltered and supported housing respectively –

Development	Parking Standard
C3 Dwellings	
1 Bedroom house	1 space per house
2 Bedroom house	1.5 spaces per house
3 Bedroom house	2 spaces per house
4 Bedroom house and larger	2.5 spaces per house
1 Bedroom flat	1 space per flat
2 Bedroom flat	1.5 spaces per flat
3 Bedroom flat	1.5 spaces per flat
4 Bedroom flat and larger	2 spaces per flat
Sheltered and supported housing	1 space per unit

- 7.7.5 In addition to the above, the SPD requires the provision of visitor parking at 0.25 spaces per dwelling/unit, as well as one disabled persons' space per wheelchair user dwelling. As an outline application, only the principle of up to 500 dwellings is sought, with no defined breakdown of bedroom numbers in houses and flats, although indicative numbers are provided. The proposed Masterplan with 'lots' indicates dwelling numbers in those respective 'lots', with a total of 479 dwellings shown. The Design and Access Statement and the Transport Assessment both identify that sufficient car parking can be provided (including visitor spaces) on site based on the above standards. The site does not fall within an accessibility zone and thus full provision should be provided.
- 7.7.6 The Masterplan does show parking areas to the fronts of houses with some properties having garages. Parking areas at the local centre are also shown. Whilst confirmation of an exact number of spaces is not provided and cannot be calculated, Officers are content that adequate parking can come forward as part of any reserved matters application to meet the current standards for residential purposes.
- 7.7.7 Turning then to the commercial aspect that would be required on site, the proposed neighbourhood centre would provide circa 500 sqm of convenience store and other small-scale shops sufficient to meet day-to-day needs of future residents, in accordance with Policy TC11. In addition, it is anticipated that a new GP surgery would also be located in this area.
- 7.7.8 The SPD breaks down non-residential provision with Use Class E(a) Retail requiring 1 space per 30 sqm for floorspace up to 500 sqm. This would equate to approximately 17 spaces required for the commercial aspect of the proposal. In terms of the GP surgery 1 space per employee and 3 spaces per consulting room are required. At this time it is not clear how big the surgery could be and how many staff or rooms it would have/require.
- 7.7.9 The Masterplan shows a parking area separate from others at the local centre that is assumed to be specific to the commercial aspect of the centre, rather than residential. This is considered sufficient at this time to suggest compliance can be provided, but that detailed layout and total provision is subject to the submission of reserved matters applications.
- 7.7.10 It is also of note that five percent of the total number of parking spaces should be set aside for the parking of powered two-wheelers. This standard applies to all development within the proposal. Again, the specific provision on site for this requirement is not confirmed but it is digressed from the Masterplan that this requirement could be met.

- 7.7.11 In respect of cycle parking, for residential properties the SPD requires 1 long term space per bedroom where the property does not have a garage. For the local centre spaces will be required both long and short term based on the square meterage of each unit. This is not known at this stage, but it considered that sufficient provision can be accommodated as part of a reserved matters submission.
- 7.7.12 Having regard to the above, the development is considered to be able to provide the required level of car and cycle parking. In this respect, the proposal accords with Policy IT5 of the Local Plan.

7.8 Highway Safety

- 7.8.1 Policy IT4 of the Local Plan has been amended under the LP Review by substituting the word “adverse” with “unacceptable” to align with the NPPF and to the travel plan threshold to align with HCC Highways policy. The amended policy carries significant weight. It states that planning permission will be granted where development will not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety. The application is accompanied by a Transport Assessment and a Travel Plan.

Access

- 7.8.2 The proposed access arrangements off the A602 would see the construction of a new four-arm signalised junction centrally along the site’s boundary with the A602. This would serve as the principal vehicular access to the site and also form a key crossing point for pedestrians and cyclists. The junction would have segregated left in (heading east) and right in (heading west) lanes off the A602, as well as left and right turn lanes exiting the development. To the south east of the site, on the northeastern boundary a secondary access is proposed to allow bus access into the site, as well as emergency vehicle access. The main and secondary accesses, all related highway works, and the creation of the main spine road have been submitted as a full permission and thus a detailed assessment has been carried out.
- 7.8.3 It is noted that Policy HO4 specifies the site being accessed via a new roundabout to be constructed towards the western end of the site, whereby access to the northern site within the policy allocation would also be provided. However, given the extent of the existing mature tree bank along the northern boundary of the site, towards the western half of the frontage, effort has been made to retain and protect this green screen where possible. This itself is also a requirement of the policy.
- 7.8.4 The provision of a signalised junction will prioritise pedestrians and cyclists, and will have less impact on tree belt, as well as visual impact on The Chequers pub and Bragbury Farmhouse, both Grade II Listed buildings.
- 7.8.5 The applicant’s highways consultants have engaged in pre-application discussions with the local highway authority. The modelling exercise prepared by the consultant in support of the proposed access has been examined by highways officers and it has been determined that it may be accommodated on the network.
- 7.8.6 A Stage 1 Road Safety Audit has been submitted in support of the application. Based on the findings of the Road Safety Audit, the local highways authority has advised that subject to a detailed design and Section 278 agreement, the access may be delivered satisfactorily.
- 7.8.7 The inclusion of the northern site as part of the Local Plan policy allocation is noted and the local highway authority have expressed that whilst the access strategy for the northern site is not yet finalised, its view is that the northern site should share the centralised signalised junction with the southern HO4 site allocation.

- 7.8.8 Consequently, the local highway authority is content that the full HO4 site allocation can be delivered and accommodated satisfactorily on the adjoining local highway network. The highway authority is further content that an interim access solution should only the southern element of the HO4 allocation be promoted can be delivered.

Highway Capacity

- 7.8.9 The Transport Assessment submitted in support of the application includes the modelling of a comprehensive network of junctions on the A602 to test highway capacity, as agreed by the local highway's authority. This modelling also includes the proposed site access junction.
- 7.8.10 Given the northern part of the HO4 allocation has not yet come forward the highways authority also requested an interim junction option, where only the southern site is accessed and can be promoted as a standalone site to be tested, as part of the modelling. The Transport Assessment details both the interim option and the capacity of the network should the full build out of both the northern and southern allocations be constructed.
- 7.8.11 Based on the information provided in the Transport Assessment, the highways authority, including the authority's signal unit has determined that the proposed signalised junction to the site is able to operate satisfactorily. Furthermore, the operation of the wider network is also considered to work satisfactorily when the development traffic is added.
- 7.8.12 However, the local highways authority has made it clear that financial contributions towards schemes as detailed in their response such as the A602/Gresley Way roundabout are considered fitting in order to accommodate the increased level of traffic in this part of Stevenage.

Connectivity

- 7.8.13 Following pre-application advice, the proposals have focused on providing good connectivity routes through and around the site, and further on to existing connections along the A602 both east and west, on to Bragbury Lane and existing cycleway networks along Broadhall Way further west of the site.
- 7.8.14 The re-modelled frontage of the site allows for a segregated foot/cycleway to be set back from the main highway and greatly increases access along the A602 to the site and signalised junction, which in turn would allow access to the northern site as and when it comes forward. Further to comments made by Sport England and Active Travel England (ATE), the development has included connections throughout the site that allow for leisure and recreation (a 3 or 5km run route included) and paths around infrastructure such as SuDS on site, making them more than a functional drainage system.
- 7.8.15 The application has further been supported by the submission of an addendum to the transport Assessment following an initial objection from Active Travel England. Through dialogue with ATE the addendum provided additional information relating to modal shift and a Walking and Cycling Audit. This audit has adequately demonstrated that the site's location and access to local amenities via active travel modes and improved connectivity has been duly considered.

7.9 Biodiversity and Ecology

- 7.9.1 The Environment Act received royal ascent in 2021. Within the legislation is the requirement for proposals to bring about a positive net gain in biodiversity. The regulations make a 10% net gain a statutory requirement (with a standard condition).

The requirement and the ways in which this gain is measured apply to planning applications for major development submitted after the regulations came into force on 12 February 2024. The NPPF and accompanying PPG require the Council to achieve measurable net gains in biodiversity at development sites across the Borough unless they are exempt. Policy SP12 of the Local Plan requires the protection of assets of ecological and biodiversity value. This policy has not been amended by the Local Plan Review and carries significant weight.

7.9.2 The application is supported by an Ecological Impact Assessment. As part of the assessment a desk study was carried out to identify:

- Internationally protected sites within the potential zone of influence of the site (minimum of 7km);
- Nationally protected sites within 5km of the site; and
- Non-statutory designated sites and records of protected or priority species within 2km of the site (central OS national grid reference TL 27253 20899).

Furthermore, a 2km search radius for species and non-statutory designated sites was considered justified by the consultants of the assessment, due to the size of the site and scale of the development works being undertaken. It is thought highly unlikely that species or non-statutory sites outside this search zone would be affected by the project. A larger search radius was applied for internationally and nationally designated sites as these sites are protected to a higher level and can often be more sensitive to disturbance. These search distances were also based on industry standard guidance.

7.9.3 Secondary to this a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) which included a survey of the habitats on site utilising the standard UK Habitat Classification system. Opportunities for or evidence of protected and priority species were also identified as part of the PEA. Where potential impacts on features of ecological interest are identified, the PEA was extended to include an assessment of impact by way of the submitted Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA).

7.9.4 The function of the EclA was to identify, quantify and evaluate the potential effects of the proposed development on designated sites, notable/protected habitats and species. The EclA was informed by the desk study, PEA and survey work and undertaken with reference to best practice guidelines (CIEEM, 2019) whereby:

- the scope of the EclA was informed by a desk study and initial site survey;
- importance of ecological features within the site was established and ecological importance identified with reference to known criteria and geographic context where appropriate and available;
- assessment of potential impacts of the proposed development was made with reference to their significance and geographic context (except for breeding birds and dormouse due to incomplete surveys); and
- avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures were identified and recommended as appropriate.

7.9.5 The EclA provides detailed information on surveys relating to bats, great crested newts, badgers, breeding birds, door mice and other reptiles. The assessment concludes that in order to enhance the local area for wildlife ecological features and contribute towards biodiversity net gain, the proposals include the following:

- Native planting and wildlife-friendly planting as recommended in R3;
- Bat boxes and roosting features as recommended in R6;
- Bird boxes will be incorporated as recommended in R8;
- Creation of reptile hibernacula as recommended in R11; and
- Inclusion of hedgehog highways and gaps in boundary fencing and residential fences throughout the scheme

- 7.9.6 The application has been assessed by Hertfordshire and Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT), who have raised objections to the proposals. These relate to loss of biodiversity on site and the proposal for off-site net gain of biodiversity units and potential damage to Astonbury Wood Local Wildlife Site. The objection regarding biodiversity will be covered shortly. In respect of the impact on the nearby local woods, HMWT state that the EclA completely fails to recognise the potential impact of increased recreational use of the wood.
- 7.9.7 HMWT advise that Astonbury Wood is an ancient woodland of predominantly Oak Hornbeam coppice with a Bluebell understory. The woodland, located in the borough of East Hertfordshire District Council is designated as a Local Wildlife Site (LWS) for semi-rural woodland supporting a diverse and well-developed structure with a varied woodland ground flora.
- 7.9.8 Astonbury Wood LWS is one of a number of LWS identified by the EclA in the vicinity of the application site; with almost all the wood being within 500m of the application site. The EclA recognises that there is potential for there to be impacts on air and water quality during the construction phase, affecting both the wood and Stevenage Brook. It suggests suitable mitigation by means of a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP, EclA para. 5.2.4) and this is supported by HMWT.
- 7.9.9 However, HMWT suggest that the EicA fails to consider the impact of the possible number of occupants of the northern and southern parcels on the woodland, given its proximity. It is therefore recommended by HMWT that the applicant consider possible mitigation measures.
- 7.9.10 In respect of biodiversity, the application has been supported by the submission of the statutory biodiversity metric tool to establish existing and proposed habitat credits on the site and determine whether a 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG) can be delivered on site, which is the LPA's preference. The metric identifies that the site has a baseline value of 74.17 habitat units, 9.05 hedgerow units and 0.94 watercourse units. The proposals will result in the delivery of 63.28 habitat units (resulting in -10.89 habitat units, equivalent to -14.69%) and 9.21 hedgerow units (resulting in +0.16 hedgerow units, equivalent to +1.82%) on the site. Due to the loss of one of the ditches, the baseline watercourse units of 0.94 will have a post development value of 0.38 (resulting in -0.56 watercourse units, equivalent to a loss of - 59.55%).
- 7.9.11 The EclA concludes on the BNG that, given the context, size and location of the site, financial contribution to a biodiversity offsetting scheme would be the most appropriate mechanism to achieving a net gain in biodiversity as a result of the proposals. Although HMWT disagree with this assumption.
- 7.9.12 A biodiversity offset of 18.31 habitat units, 0.74 hedgerow units and 0.66 watercourse units are required off-site to achieve the mandatory +10% Biodiversity Net Gain for the site overall. The EclA also concludes that to satisfy the metric trading rules, these offsite units should comprise medium (or higher) distinctiveness grassland due to loss of other neutral grassland units and other broadleaved woodland.
- 7.9.13 Whilst on-site BNG uplift would be preferable, as HMWT have advised also, the proposals are in line with the national requirements and having regard to the above ecology measures proposed, it is considered that the proposed development would have an acceptable impact on ecology and biodiversity. In this respect, the proposal accords with Policy SP12 of the Local Plan.

7.10 Green Spaces, Landscaping and Trees

- 7.10.1 Policy NH3 of the Local Plan relates to Green Corridors. It identifies key routes within the Borough as Green Corridors, protected as a means of linking and connecting to the town's open spaces as well as facilitating movement by pedestrians and cyclists. They can differ in character and perform different roles. They can promote the movement of people by more sustainable forms of transport but also provide routes and networks to enable the diversification and sustenance of biodiversity.
- 7.10.2 Bragbury Lane is identified as an Ancient Lane within the policy, and Broadhall Way a Structurally Important Route. These two areas sit in close proximity of the site, and so the proposed development could have implications regarding their function and character. The Policy advises that planning permission will be granted where proposals:
- Would not have a substantive adverse effect upon a Green Corridor;
 - Retain and sensitively integrate any Green Corridor which must be crossed or incorporated into the site layout;
 - Provide replacement planting, preferably using locally native species, where hedgerow removal is unavoidable; and
 - Reasonably contribute towards the improvement of Green Corridors in the vicinity of the application site.
- 7.10.3 In respect of Bragbury Lane, the red line plan does include a small section of land which fronts the Ancient Lane, but it does not propose any alterations to the frontage. Paragraph 14.19 of the Local Plan specifically mentions the Ancient Lanes and their respective hedgerows needing protection from future development as they cannot be replaced. As the proposals do not affect this the Ancient Lane is considered preserved.
- 7.10.4 The Structurally Important Routes are major highways within the built-up area of Stevenage that include significant areas within and alongside the highway that provide open space, landscaping and/or cycleways. They are primarily for human movement and are particularly conducive to cycling because of the segregated routes. Broadhall Way runs from the north western corner of the site northwards towards the town centre. There is a very clear segregated cycleway along the western side of the main road, with grass expanses on each side at times, and a significant number of mature trees lining the road, and on landscaped banks, screening the built form within Broadwater to the west, and similar green spaces screening the smaller residential parcels along parts of its eastern edge.
- 7.10.5 The proposed works would see extensive works along the site frontage to provide the required cycleway link from Bragbury Lane to the south-east corner of the site. Currently the existing narrow footpath to the front of the site runs immediately parallel of the vehicular highway, which is a busy main road into the town, with no set-back or segregation. The proposed Masterplan would see a new widened foot/cycleway with additional green landscaping, creating a greater separation from cars using the A602.
- 7.10.6 The existing tree belt along the frontage of the site at the north western corner is to be retained and will further add to the Green Corridor of this stretch of the road. Given there will be extensive works to provide the access junction slightly to the east, the proposed additional landscaping and segregated cycleway in this area is considered positive and goes a fair way to mitigate against the visual impact of developing the land.
- 7.10.7 Policy NH5 of the 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.
- 7.10.8 The existing landscape of the site is predominantly agricultural fields of grassland with surrounding established hedges and tree belts. The western side of the site is densely

overgrown, with established field barriers, but significant self-seeded trees, nettles and brambles. To the southeast of the site is an established woodland that falls within the red line boundary. The southern boundary abuts the railway line where there is established planting although much of these falls within the ownership and jurisdiction of the railway network.

7.10.9 The proposals would see the retention of the much of the existing tree belts and hedgerows, including the existing field barrier hedgerows. The development proposals propose the complete removal of a nine trees, one group of trees, and the partial removal of six groups of trees and two hedges. The below table taken from the submitted Arboricultural Report show the extent of the tree removals in their respective tree category.

Table 2: Summary of Trees to be removed

Removal	Tree Category				Total
	A	B	C	U	
Number of Trees	0	1	6	2	9
Number of Groups (in full)	0	1	0	0	1
Number of Groups (in part)	0	2	4	0	6
Number of Hedges (in full)	0	0	0	0	0
Number of Hedges (in part)	0	0	2	0	2
Total	0	4	12	2	18

7.10.10 For those trees and groups of trees being retained the Report outlines necessary root protection areas (RPA) and identifies particular methods of excavation where development might impinge on these RPAs. Furthermore, tree protection measures for all required tree retention on site is also outlined. The Council's Tree Manager has assessed the application and has no standing objections.

7.10.11 Policy NH7 of the Local Plan seeks to ensure developments provide on-site open spaces, that these are useable and coherent areas of an appropriate size and that arrangements are made to ensure the long-term maintenance of the open space. The proposed Masterplan, Design and Access Statement and Design Code all highlight the provision of green spaces within the site. Most notably is the 'Central Park' shown on the Masterplan, which provides a large green space for informal sport and social gatherings, with the idea that small fetes or similar could be held here within the community.

7.10.12 The space is a good size and also offers up a small tree lined area with footpaths, as well as a Locally Equipped Area of Play (LEAP) and pump track (a continuous circuit of dirt, asphalt or concrete featuring rollers (mounds) and banked turns (berms) designed for wheeled sports). Beyond this area there are several other useable but smaller spaces which provide green space or 'pocket parks' around the development. Further to the west of the site, where the ground levels change substantially to slope towards the 'reservoir' area along the back of Bragbury Lane, the external space offers footpaths and green spaces to be enjoyed, although these provide more for biodiversity on site.

7.10.13 Furthermore, in terms of general landscaping, the Masterplan highlights the use and presence of tree-lined streets, dry basins with reed bed planting, landscaped lanes, meadows, a nature park, existing woodland and existing hedgerows across the site.



7.10.14 The details provided in the Design Code emphasis the ideology of the development being landscape-led, and the type and siting of the various green spaces have taken into account comments provided by Sport England during the pre-application phase, as well as ideas that came about from the Design Review Panel undertaken at pre-app. The spaces are considered to bring the scheme together to create a community whilst addressing physical constraints/topologies on site.

7.10.15 In terms of more specific landscaping, trees and planting contained within the main Boulevard and spine road are considered as part of the full planning permission of this application. These details are considered acceptable, with no further comments from Highways or the Council's Green Spaces team in this regard. The planting will ensure the main entrance roads are tree lined and create attractive entryway into the development.



7.10.16 The remaining development proposals are at outline stage only and thus further planting details are not specified, with the Masterplan showing an indicative landscaping scheme. Notwithstanding, the Design and Access Statement and Design Code both provide sufficient information to outline the objectives for landscaping across the development. The Design Code, much like with the built form, provides Landscape Character areas for across the development, focusing on key principles for each area, including native and specimen tree planting, pollinator friendly planting palettes, species rich meadow areas and parklands.

7.10.17 The Council's Green Spaces team have provided comment, and these are largely positive. Comments pertaining to further detail around adoption of spaces, maintenance of and by whom, as well as finer details of landscaping around parking areas etc can all be appropriately dealt with during the reserved matters process. Although for clarity it is not envisaged that SBC will adopt any of the open spaces within the development, with a Management Company proposed, and to be secured through the S106 process.

7.10.18 It is considered the overall landscaping and tree strategy would create an attractive landscaped setting for the proposed buildings, with clear biodiversity and visual amenity benefits in accordance with policies SP12 and NH5 of the Local Plan (2019).

7.11 Flood Risk and Drainage

Development Plan

7.11.1 Policy FP2 of the Local Plan requires applications for major development in Flood Zone 1 to be accompanied by an appropriate flood risk assessment. The Policy also requires that the use of SuDS is maximised on site so as not to increase flood risk and to reduce flood risk wherever possible.

7.11.2 In the emerging local plan review and partial update, flood risk and drainage policies are significantly revised. Existing policy FP1 is replaced by a new sustainable drainage policy, which places an emphasis on the use of the most sustainable SuDS features and methods of surface water discharge. Meanwhile, existing policies FP2 and FP3 are combined into a new, more comprehensive flood risk policy, which largely reflects national flood risk policies but also seeks to protect watercourses and flood defences. Having regard to paragraph 49 of the NPPF, these emerging policies carry significant weight in the assessment of the application.

7.11.3 Drainage strategies should adhere to the Sustainable Drainage Strategy (SuDS) hierarchy provided in the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2 (2019). The hierarchy identifies that living roofs and walls are the most-sustainable SuDS features, followed by ponds and basins, infiltration devices and permeable surfaces. Tanked and piped systems are identified as the least sustainable, providing no pollution reduction nor biodiversity benefit.

Existing Drainage

7.11.4 The application has been accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA). The FRA reviews the drainage and flood risk issues associated with the proposed development and sets out how surface water run-off would be accommodated. The report states that the application site is located within Flood Zone 1, with a very small strip in the north eastern corner of the site being Zone 2, and that based on the 'flood risk vulnerability classification' contained within the Planning Practice Guidance table 2 the development would be 'Less Vulnerable' and so the residential use is appropriate for the site.

7.11.5 The Report advises that the nearest EA designated Main River to the site is Stevenage Brook, located approximately 45m north of the site at its closest point, and that further watercourses are present at both the northwestern and eastern ends of the site. The northwestern stream runs through the site, and the eastern watercourse is located approximately 180m from the site. The site is currently underlain by silty, sandy, gravelly clay.

7.11.6 Assessments of the sites infiltration characteristics of the ground have been undertaken. The Report states that because of the underlying soil make-up, infiltration via traditional soakaways is not feasible as a means of discharging surface water.

7.11.7 To the northwest of the site is an existing shallow basin which is fed by overland runoff from higher areas of the site into low-lying meadow land via an upstream pipe and headwall. The FRA advises that the outgoing ditch flows to the north, via a large gridded manhole structure, and then runs past the western side of The Chequers public house into a headwall to the northwest of the building. From here it runs via a 300mm diameter culvert under the A602 and on to an outfall headwall at Stevenage Brook. The existing basin appears to form part of the Bragbury End Flood Storage Reservoir (FSR).

7.11.8 Identified in the 2016 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, undertaken on behalf of the Council to help inform the Local Plan process, Bragbury End FSR is located within the site, to the west, behind existing properties off Bragbury Lane. It is a small on-line FSR constructed in 1975/76 to cater for residential development in the southeast corner of the Borough.

7.11.9 There are no surface water sewers within the area, however there is a public foul water sewer to the north of the site, adjacent Stevenage Brook. There is also a further public foul water sewer to the west, originating from the residential development to the west of Bragbury Lane. This sewer connects to a trunk foul sewer adjacent the south side of Stevenage Brook, which runs along the A602 and Stevenage Brook.

Flood Mitigation

7.11.10 Located in Flood Zone 1, with a small encroachment of Zone 2 along part of the northern boundary, the site would not be considered at risk of flooding from fluvial sources.

7.11.11 The surface water flood map shows there is a very low to low risk of flooding on site, apart from the lowest ground levels to the west of the site where the existing reservoir area is located which is a high-risk area. This is linked with a high-risk surface water flow path running through this western side. Beyond this there are two low-risk surface water flow paths to the north-east of the site which follow natural topography of the land.

7.11.12 The presence of overland flow paths has been taken into consideration in the design of proposed drainage on site. On-site drainage systems have been designed to accommodate runoff volume from a 1 in 100 year storm plus 40% climate change rainfall event, to minimise overland flows except during storms above this event.

7.11.13 In terms of groundwater flooding, there is no evidence from the SFRA and British Geological Survey (BGS) Groundwater Susceptibility data for Bragbury Lane that suggests groundwater flooding has occurred on site historically. The site is located in an area at no risk of groundwater flooding, although mapping details are not specific enough to advise there is no risk, although the risk is considered minimal overall.

Surface Water Drainage

7.11.14 The Planning Practice Guidance states that types of sustainable drainage system to consider will depend on the proposed development and its location, as well as any planning policies and guidance that apply locally. It continues that preference should be given to multi-functional SuDS, and to solutions that discharge surface water according to the following hierarchy –

1. Into the ground (infiltration);
2. To a surface water body;
3. To a surface water sewer, highway drain, or another drainage system;
4. To a combined sewer.

7.11.15 Based on the ground investigations carried out, infiltration at the site is not possible. The nearest watercourse has been identified as Stevenage Brook, located approximately 45m north of the site at its closest point. The FRA advises that a gravity-based Concept SuDS Plan and Drainage Strategy has been prepared to identify potential SuDS features which are considered feasible across the site and to demonstrate a proposed layout of flow control and attenuation features to enable a positive discharge to the Stevenage Brook via existing ditch/pipe networks.

7.11.16 The areas identified have been broken down into five areas as below –

- Area A: this has an area of 1.2ha. It is proposed that surface water storage would be via a pond/wetland with an outfall to the public sewer.
- Area B: this has an area of 2.5ha. This system will discharge to a pond/wetland which will discharge into the public surface water sewer at Thames Water manhole 9150.
- Area C: this has an area of 7.3ha. It is proposed that a pond/wetland would be used within the north-east of the site which will discharge into the existing outfall from the ditch network, which ultimately discharges into Stevenage Brook.
- Area D: this has an area of 0.5ha. It is proposed that this area would drain via permeable pavement which would discharge into Stevenage Brook.
- Area E: this has an area of 2.5ha. It is proposed that a pond/wetland would be used within the north-east of the site which would discharge into Stevenage Brook

7.11.17 The FRA states that the proposed SuDS features will provide sufficient storage to avoid flooding during the 1 in 100-year storm event plus 40% allowance for climate change.

7.11.18 At the time of writing this report the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) have raised objections to the proposals due to lack of information for certain areas of the proposals. The applicant is aware of these and further information in line with that requested is being collated. Any decision made on the application will not be issued until the Legal Agreement associated with the development has been signed, which will allow time for the objection to be removed. Therefore, further comments will be fully considered prior to a decision being issued. However, if the LLFA continues to raise an objection to this

application and their concerns cannot be overcome, then this application will be referred back to the Planning and Development Committee for its decision.

7.12 Sustainable Construction and Climate Change

Development Plan

7.12.1 Policy FP1 of the adopted Local Plan (2019) stipulates that planning permission will be granted for development that can incorporate measures to address adaptation to climate change. New developments will be encouraged to include measures such as:

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

7.12.2 Under the Local Plan review, Policy FP1 has been revised to cover sustainable drainage and Policy SP1: climate change is the new relevant policy in this regard. The fundamental objective of Policy SP1 remains the same as previous policy FP1, however, it sets out in more detail the objectives to adapting to climate change. This policy requires, amongst other things the off-setting of emissions targets if not met on site, water usage targets, rainwater harvesting, grey water recycling, use of sustainable materials and practices on site, ultra-low and zero carbon combined heat and power systems and urban greening (green roofs and walls).

7.12.3 The Council's Design Guide SPD (2025) sets out additional requirements with respect to climate change. The guide states that all developments are required to make efforts to minimise energy usage and to incorporate methods of using renewable energy, including:-

- reducing energy demand
- using passive environmental systems, e.g. natural ventilation
- daylighting and passive solar gains
- using high levels of insulation and air tightness in the fabric of the building
- specifying energy efficient services, controls and appliances
- implementing water recycling and the provision of water butts
- using renewable energy
- using low/zero carbon technologies to provide as much of the energy load as is technically and economically feasible, minimising use of fossil fuels; and
- using efficient fossil fuel technologies, such as Combined Heat and Power and condensing boilers.

Sustainability and Energy Strategies

7.12.4 The submitted Design and Access Statement highlights how the development is proposed to adhere to adopted climate change policies. However, it is noted that the final design is subject to the submission of reserved matters applications as the housing design and details is only at outline at this stage.

7.12.5 The proposals state at least 40% of dwellings being designed to M4(2) Building Regulations standards. Solar panels would be included on roofs and Air Source Heat Pumps are proposed for all heating and water. The development is proposed to be a Fabric First approach to achieve Building Regulations standards as a minimum, with high levels of thermal insulation and water efficiency measures incorporated.

7.12.6 The development will also look to ensure overheating in dwellings, as a result of climate change, is avoided by reducing opening sizes on south facing elevations. Further analysis of thermal comfort is suggested on detailed applications through the undertaking of the CIBSE TM59 (modelling overheating risk for residential buildings) overheating assessment.

7.12.7 Given the above, and subject to conditions securing the measures identified to address adaptation to climate change, the development would exceed the requirements of the existing policy FP1, with the emerging policies carrying moderate weight.

7.13 **Impact on Heritage Assets**

Planning Act and Case Law

7.13.1 The *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* imposes several 'statutory duties' for decision-makers, all of which are applicable to the proposed development:

- "Section 16(2): In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority or the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses".
- "Section 66(1): In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses".
- "Section 72: In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area".

7.13.2 Case law (South Lakeland, 1992) has determined that 'preserve' means 'to do no harm'. However, if harm is identified, the NPPF provides a means of weighing either 'substantial harm' or 'less than substantial harm' to the significance of a designated heritage asset against the public benefits of the proposal.

7.13.3 In doing so, case law has emphasised the need to give "considerable importance and weight" to preserving listed buildings or the character and appearance of conservation areas (Barnwell Manor, Case No: C1/2013/0843). However, the presumption 'to preserve' is not irrebuttable and "can be outweighed by material considerations powerful enough to do so" (Forge Field (Case Nos: CO/735/2013; CO/16932/2013) and a decision maker that has followed the process set out in the NPPF, in respect to weighing harm and benefits, can reasonably be expected to have complied with the 'statutory duties' of the 1990 Act (Mordue, Case No. C1/2015/1067).

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

7.13.4 Paragraph 203 of the NPPF (2024) states that 'in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.'

- 7.13.5 As established through case law, if there is *any* harm to designated heritage assets, great weight must be given to it. Paragraph 212, it stipulates that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss, or less than substantial harm to its significance. Paragraph 200 sets out that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.
- 7.13.6 Paragraph 214 sets out that where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss.
- 7.13.7 Paragraph 215 sets out that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use. In undertaking this balance, considerable importance and weight must be attached to the less than substantial harm.
- 7.13.8 Paragraph 217 sets out that Local Planning Authorities should not permit the loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred. With respect to paragraph 218, this sets out that Local Planning Authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.
- 7.13.9 In considering public benefits, the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (2019) (Reference ID: 18a-020-20190723) sets out that the National Planning Policy Framework requires any harm to designated heritage assets to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Public benefits may follow from many developments and could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental objectives as described in paragraph 8 of the NPPF. For reference, paragraph 8 of the NPPF states that “Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):
- a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
 - b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and
 - c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy”.

7.13.10 The planning practice guidance goes on to state that public benefits should flow from the development. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and not just private benefit. However, benefits do not always have to be accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits, for example, works to a listed building which secure its future as a designated heritage asset could be a public benefit. Consequently, while a range of benefits that help deliver sustainable communities could be relevant, the PPG provides examples of heritage based public benefits, as follows:

- Sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting;
- Reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset;
- Securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long term conservation.

Development Plan

7.13.11 Turning to the adopted Local Plan, Policy SP13 relates to the historic environment. This states that the council will preserve and enhance the most important area and characteristics of Stevenage. The policy goes on to state that the Council will:-

- a. Have carried out Heritage Impact Assessments for development sites within, or adjacent to, conservation areas. Site specific mitigation measures have been incorporated to minimise the impacts of development.
- b. Will use national guidance and legislation to review, designate and determine planning applications affecting heritage assets.
- c. Will protect areas of archaeological importance and other relevant heritage assets by applying the detailed policies set in this plan.

7.13.13 Finally, Policy NH10 Conservation Areas states that development proposals within, or affecting a conservation area should have regard to the guidance provided by the relevant Conservation Area Management Plan Supplementary Planning Document.

Impact on Heritage Assets

7.13.14 The site is in close proximity to several listed buildings, The Chequers public house (Grade II listed), Bragbury End Farmhouse (Grade II listed) off Bragbury Lane and Bragbury House (Grade II Listed) the large manor house located off the modern Sacombe Mews development to the northwest of the site and A602. There are some 19th century 'buildings of local importance' along Bragbury Lane and on the corner of Aston Lane / A602. Bragbury End is a historic settlement on the route from Watton-at-Stone to Stevenage and currently lies on the southern edge of the town with a verdant and semi-rural feel to it. The area is not a designated Conservation Area, but there is an area of Archaeological interest as identified in the Local Plan.

7.13.15 The application has been supported by the submission of a Heritage Statement which identifies the local Heritage Assets which would be impacted by the development and advises a level of harm. The Councils Listed Building and Conservation Consultants BEAMS have commented on the application also. They have advised that the area will be urbanised through the construction of new development and all that is associated with it, including the creation of a new road network / road widening as part of accessing the site. This is considered harmful to the wider setting of the listed buildings in Bragbury End.

7.13.16 BEAMS broadly agrees with the findings of the Heritage Statement. The setting of The Chequers PH (closest to the site) will be adversely impacted but any harm is considered to be 'less than substantial' and at the lower end of the scale. The scale of development upon the part of the site closest to the listed building, also noting the topography of the site will need careful consideration as will changes to the road network / signage. The

retention of the tree screening to the rear of The Chequers PH will be key in reducing impact upon the immediate setting of this designated heritage asset but should not be relied on.

- 7.13.17 Bragbury End Farmhouse and barn lie on the west side of Bragbury Lane and new / 20th century housing forms much of its immediate setting. No changes are proposed along Bragbury Lane itself so the scheme is considered to preserve the immediate setting of Bragbury End Farmhouse, any harm to its significance will be very low to neutral.
- 7.13.18 Bragbury House, known simply as Bragbury in the Historic England listings is an 18th Century Country House, enlarged in the early 19th Century and again more recently. The building has been converted to flats and the grounds of the property have been extensively developed with the construction of the Sacombe Mews development, providing detached and terraced dwellings to the rear of the building. The asset is separated from the application site by the A602, The Chequers public house to the south and the extensive tree belt to the northwestern corner of the site. From the information submitted the immediate setting and significance of this listed building will be maintained but its wider setting, through changes to the road network / additional signage etc may be adversely impacted.
- 7.13.19 The proposal will result in 'less than substantial' harm to the significance of designated heritage assets at Bragbury End, particularly the Chequers PH and NPPF para. 215 would be engaged in the decision-making process. Additionally, Sections 66(1) and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, decision makers must give *considerable importance and weight* to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their settings. Case law (*Barnwell Manor, Forge Field, Mordue*) reaffirms that any harm, even if minor, triggers this heightened statutory duty.
- 7.13.20 Having applied these statutory and policy tests, officers conclude that although the scheme gives rise to a low level of less than substantial harm to the setting of the Heritage Assets, this harm carries considerable weight in the overall planning balance.
- 7.13.21 Considering then the public benefits that would be derived from the development in this case, the proposal delivers a range of significant public benefits, which are material to the heritage balance under NPPF paragraph 215. These include strategic housing delivery, with delivery of 0 to 500 new homes on an allocated strategic site (HO4), responding directly to acute local housing needs and the Council's HDT position.
- 7.13.22 Affordable housing delivery, either on site or through a contribution in-lieu for provision at a different SBC site, and whilst not a policy compliant level due to viability issues, some level of affordable housing provision is of benefit, recognising the substantial unmet need in the Borough.
- 7.13.23 Social infrastructure, with the provision of land/use for a neighbourhood centre, including community facilities and GP surgery provision. Contributions towards education, sports facilities, biodiversity net gain, and sustainable transport, addressing infrastructure needs generated by the development.
- 7.13.24 The proposal delivers a range of significant public economic benefits which are material to the heritage balance under NPPF paragraph 215. These include construction employment, supply-chain investment and commitments to local employment and apprenticeships through the S106.
- 7.13.25 Environmental Enhancements would be provided through the delivery of a landscaped masterplan, including green infrastructure, SuDS, biodiversity improvements and off-site BNG contributions where necessary.

- 7.13.26 Sustainable Transport Improvements include bus service contributions, active travel measures, new pedestrian/cycle links and a signalised junction improving safety and connectivity for the wider area.
- 7.13.27 Applying the statutory duties, case law and NPPF requirements, officers conclude that the proposals result in less than substantial harm (lower end) to the setting of the identified Heritage Assets, there are substantial public benefits—including significant housing delivery, affordable housing, community facilities, infrastructure improvements, sustainable transport upgrades, and high-quality landscape and ecological enhancements, which carry very significant weight, and when weighed in the planning balance, these public benefits are considered to clearly outweigh the identified heritage harm.
- 7.13.28 Accordingly, the proposal is judged to comply with the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the NPPF (2024) and the relevant policies of the Stevenage Local Plan, when read as a whole.

7.14 Archaeology

- 7.14.1 Policy NH09 identifies areas of archaeological significance in the Borough, with Bragbury End being identified under the allocation NH9/12. The Policy states that where a development proposal affects an area of archaeological significance or has the potential to affect important archaeological remains on adjoining sites, developers will be required to submit the results of an archaeological field evaluation.
- 7.14.2 The Local Plan Proposals Map identifies the policy designation of NH09 covering the far western edge of the site as it connects with Bragbury Lane. Some of the reservoir area in the western end of the site, and within the lowest ground level area here falls within the map designation. However, the rest of the site does not form part of the policy designation.
- 7.14.3 The Heritage Statement submitted in support of the application, produced by Albion Archaeology, was unable to survey the designated area of the site due to its topography and level of landscaping, shrubbery on site, The area is very overgrown with brambles, self-seeded saplings and other shrubs.
- 7.14.4 Despite the mainly flat arable fields being outside the area of archaeological interest, the area was surveyed for the purposes of archaeology. The Heritage Statement advises that if archaeological remains are present these could be affected by the development. However, using information on the site's archaeological background and on undertaking a geophysical survey of the land, the likelihood for potential heritage assets on the site has been assessed as: *low* for the prehistoric and Anglo-Saxon periods; *low to moderate* for the Roman, medieval and post-medieval periods; and *negligible* for the modern period.
- 7.14.5 Hertfordshire County Council Archaeology Team have reviewed the submitted information, and whilst disappointed that pre-application advice provided to the applicant was ignored, they do advise that if the LPA are minded to approve permission they advise that a programme of archaeological investigations should identify and incorporate appropriate preservation of archaeological remains in situ and no dig areas into the scheme as well as informing appropriate mitigation of the development and recording of any archaeological remains.
- 7.14.6 Furthermore, the proposed development is such that it should be regarded as having the potential to have an impact on heritage assets of archaeological interest. Consequently, conditions are advised to be imposed to sufficiently provide for the level of investigation that the proposal is considered to warrant.

7.15 Other Matters
Human Rights and Equalities

Human Rights Act 1998

7.15.1 In assessing this application, the Local Planning Authority has had due regard to the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998, including the rights contained within the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). Particular consideration has been given to: - Article 1 of the First Protocol – protection of property; and - Article 8 – the right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence.

7.15.2 Having carefully considered the impacts of the development, including matters relating to residential amenity, noise, privacy, access, and the environmental effects identified elsewhere in this report, it is not considered that the proposal would result in any unlawful interference with any individual's Convention rights. Any impacts arising from the development are assessed to be proportionate, justified and capable of being mitigated through planning conditions and obligations. Accordingly, the Council is satisfied that a fair balance has been struck between the rights of individuals and the wider public interest in delivering a strategic site allocated for housing.

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (Section 149, Equality Act 2010)

7.15.3 In exercising its functions, including determining planning applications, the Council must have due regard to the need to: 1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, 2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, and 3. Foster good relations between those groups.

7.15.4 The protected characteristics under the Equality Act are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.

7.15.6 In consideration of Equalities in the Proposed Development, the Council has rigorously considered the potential equality implications of the proposal, taking into account the nature of the development, representations received, and the protected characteristics identified above. The following matters are of particular relevance:

- The proposal includes dwellings designed to Building Regulations M4(2) standards, improving accessibility and adaptability for disabled and older residents.
- A policy compliant level of disabled parking can be accommodated on site, with further detailed layouts to be secured at Reserved Matters stage.
- The design code and masterplan demonstrate the ability to provide inclusive and accessible open spaces, including play areas capable of incorporating inclusive equipment.
- The proposed local centre and community infrastructure will increase access to local services for all groups, including those with reduced mobility.
- No evidence has been submitted to suggest that the development would disproportionately disadvantage any group with a protected characteristic.

7.15.7 As this is an outline planning application, full details of level thresholds, accessible routes, inclusive landscaping, and disabled parking provision will be finalised and assessed at the Reserved Matters stage to ensure full compliance with PSED and relevant policy requirements.

Conclusion on Equalities

7.15.8 Based on the information provided and the assessment undertaken, the proposed development is not considered to give rise to any material or disproportionate adverse impacts on persons with protected characteristics. The Council is satisfied that due regard has been given to its obligations under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, and

that the development, subject to conditions and obligations, advances equality of opportunity and promotes inclusive access as far as reasonably practicable for a scheme of this nature.

Waste and Recycling

- 7.15.9 The Design Guide (2025) states that provision should be made within new developments for the storage and collection of waste from a site. The Council's standards per dwelling as set out below and that new Government Legislation "Simpler Recycling" is pushing for increased recycling rates:
- General waste – 90lt
 - Paper/card – 30lt
 - Plastics/cans – 30lt
 - Glass – 12.5lt
 - Food – 23lt
- 7.15.10 Whilst the application is in outline form whereby details with respect to waste and recycling storage will be submitted as part of any future reserved matters application, the Council as LPA considers the development will be able to accommodate the requisite requirements based on the details submitted as part of the outline application.

8 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the construction of a new signalised junction on the A602, ancillary highway works, including improved foot/cycleway connections by The Chequers public house, a second bus and emergency vehicles access to the east of the site, and provision of the main spine road to allow access to the proposed 'lots' on site. The details proposed have been found to be acceptable by the local highway authority subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions. The access would enable the site to come forward and provides better connectivity routes in this southeastern area of the Borough.
- 8.2 Outline permission is sought for up to 500 dwelling units (including affordable housing and self-build plots), a mixed use local centre (Use Class C3, E and F2 space, public open and amenity space (including Children's Play), associated landscaping and ecological enhancement works, internal highways, parking, footpaths, cycleways, drainage, utilities, service infrastructure and ancillary works (With some matters reserved). The site is allocated in the local plan and thus the principle of housing is acceptable.
- 8.3 The proposed Masterplan, Design and Access Statement and Design Code thoroughly convey how the site has been designed and its process, along with how it should come forward as part of any reserved matters applications and any phased development. The proposals have good consideration of the sites location within the Borough and its surrounding area, and other matters such as layout, character and appearance are also well conveyed.
- 8.4 The scheme is well landscape-led, with a good mix of small and larger green spaces, for visual amenity and recreation, including a 'village green' type area, play spaces and wildlife areas, with good connectivity links around these areas. Matters relating to climate change, drainage and ecology, whilst to be covered in more detail at reserved matters stage are all well-articulated in the application, such that the proposed end result can be visualised, with proposals being policy compliant in principle based on the information provided.

- 8.5 Located close to three Grade II listed buildings, a Heritage Statement has been submitted, and officers are content that the harm ranges from neutral to less than substantial at the lower end of the scale.
- 8.6 The proposals would secure financial contributions and other matters through the S106 process, affordable housing, including highways contributions, education contributions, sports and outdoor facilities contributions, Travel plan monitoring, bus service contributions, sustainable travel vouchers, local employment, defibrillator provision and cycle hire contributions, as mitigation for any harm created.
- 8.7 Having regard to the above, the proposal is considered to accord with the development plan when read as a whole. In the absence of any other material considerations which indicate that permission should be refused, it is recommended that planning permission be granted.

9 RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 That planning permission be GRANTED subject to conditions and subject to planning obligations to secure/provide contributions towards:

- Affordable housing (24% on-site provision)
- Viability review mechanisms with appropriate clawback clauses
- Secondary education contribution of £
- Bus service provision contribution of £
- An appropriate trigger for S278 off-site highway works
- Travel Plan evaluation and support fee of £
- Sustainable travel vouchers
- Cycle hire contribution of £25,000 and relevant infrastructure as required
- Outdoor and indoor sports provision totalling £
- Local Employment and Apprenticeships
- Management company for administration of all common and public areas, including SuDS
- Maintenance and management bonds
- Monitoring fees for SBC and HCC
- Secure neighbourhood centre on site
- Secure GP surgery or financial contribution in-lieu towards GP provision
- Possible delivery of a temporary shop at the neighbourhood centre
- Provision of a defibrillator on site within the neighbourhood centre
- BNG management and maintenance report/plan
- Possible car club provision

- 9.2 The detail of the planning obligations would be delegated to the Director of Planning and Regulation in liaison with the Council's appointed solicitor, along with the recommendations of the Lead Local Flood Authority.

- 9.2 Authority would be given to the Assistant Director of Planning and Regulation in consultation with the Chair of Planning Committee, to amend or add to the suggested draft obligations and conditions set out in this report, prior to the decision notice being issued, where such amendments or additions would be legally sound and most effectively deliver the development that the Planning Committee has resolved to approve. These suggested conditions are as follows:

Conditions

To be confirmed and provided in an addendum report ahead of the committee meeting.

Pro-active Statement

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

INFORMATIVES

To be confirmed and provided in an addendum report ahead of the committee meeting.

10 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 10.1 The application file, forms, plans and supporting documents having the reference number relating to this item. Online copies may be obtained at <https://publicaccess.stevenage.gov.uk/online-applications/>
- 10.2 The Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031
<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/local-plan>
- 10.3 The Stevenage Borough Local Plan Partial Update 2025
<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/local-plan-partial-update/submission-to-secretary-of-state>
- 10.4 Stevenage Borough Council Supplementary Planning Documents: Parking Provision SPD 2025; Design Guidance SPD 2025; Developer Contributions SPD 2025.
<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/planning-library>
- 10.5 Hertfordshire County Council Local Transport Plan LTP4 2018-2031
<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/about-the-council/consultations/ltp4-local-transport-plan-4-complete.pdf>
- 10.6 Government advice contained in the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 and the Planning Practice Guidance.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67aafe8f3b41f783cca46251/NPPF_December_2024.pdf
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>
- 10.7 Representations made by statutory consultees and other interested parties referred to in this report. Online copies can be found on Public Access (see paragraph 10.1).

Meeting: Planning and Development
Committee

Agenda Item:

Date: 02.03.2026

IMPORTANT INFORMATION - DELEGATED DECISIONS

Author – Technical Support 01438 242838

Lead Officer – Alex Robinson 01438 242257

Contact Officer – James Chettleburgh 01438 242266

The Assistant Director of Planning and Regulation has issued decisions in respect of the following applications in accordance with his delegated authority:-

1. Application No : 25/00540/COND
Date Received : 15.07.25
Location : Autolus Marshgate Stevenage Herts
Proposal : Discharge of conditions 4 (parking permits); and 5 (cycle parking) attached to planning permission reference number 24/00550/FP
Date of Decision : 03.02.26
Decision : **The discharge of Condition(s)/Obligation(s) is APPROVED**

2. Application No : 25/00640/COND
Date Received : 20.08.25
Location : 18 - 24 Ellis Avenue Stevenage Herts SG1 3SA
Proposal : Discharge of conditions 12 (Construction Management Plan) and 16 (Drainage 2) attached to planning permission reference number 24/00064/FPM
Date of Decision : 03.02.26
Decision : **The Condition(s)/Obligation(s) cannot be discharged but are deemed Acceptable**

Please note that the condition(s) cannot be discharged given that a breach of planning control has occurred in this instance. However, the Local Planning Authority would not seek any enforcement action against the breach at this time. Notwithstanding this, the Local Planning Authority still reserves the right to undertake enforcement action if a further breach of the condition(s) occurs at a later date.

The case officer's letter is attached providing further information.

3. Application No : 25/00733/COND
Date Received : 03.10.25
Location : Brent Court Silam Road Stevenage Herts
Proposal : Discharge of conditions 18 (landscaping) and 22 (boundary treatments) attached to planning permission reference number 22/00963/FPM
Date of Decision : 25.02.26
Decision : **The discharge of Condition(s)/Obligation(s) is APPROVED**
4. Application No : 25/00743/FP
Date Received : 09.10.25
Location : Courtlands Todds Green Stevenage Herts
Proposal : Erection of 1no. 5 bedroom detached dwelling
Date of Decision : 27.02.26
Decision : **Planning Permission is GRANTED**
5. Application No : 25/00812/FP
Date Received : 07.11.25
Location : 6 Burwell Road Stevenage Herts SG2 9RF
Proposal : Retrospective application for the continued use of the premises as a Use Class Sui Generis Hot Food Takeaway and alterations to the shopfront
Date of Decision : 03.02.26
Decision : **Planning Permission is GRANTED**

6. Application No : 25/00833/COND
Date Received : 18.11.25
Location : Land To Rear Of 48, 49 And 50 Conifer Walk Stevenage Herts SG2 7QR
Proposal : Discharge of Conditions 3 (Sample of Materials); Condition 8 (Climate Change Adaptions); Condition 14 (Landscaping Scheme); Condition 15 (Open Space Provision); Condition 17 (Landscape Management Plan); Condition 18 (Boundary Treatments) & Condition 19 (Construction Management Plan) attached to planning reference number 23/00066/FP
Date of Decision : 09.02.26
Decision : **The discharge of Condition(s)/Obligation(s) is APPROVED**
7. Application No : 25/00864/FP
Date Received : 02.12.25
Location : 67 Whitney Drive Stevenage Herts SG1 4BH
Proposal : Erection of 1no. 3no. bedroom detached dwelling following demolition of garage, single storey front extension to existing dwelling, and associated car parking and access
Date of Decision : 05.02.26
Decision : **Planning Permission is GRANTED**
8. Application No : 25/00868/FPH
Date Received : 03.12.25
Location : 8 Lodge Way Stevenage Herts SG2 8DB
Proposal : Erection of first floor rear extension, single storey front and side extension, garage roof alteration
Date of Decision : 12.02.26
Decision : **Planning Permission is GRANTED**

9. Application No : 25/00877/FP
Date Received : 10.12.25
Location : Glaxo SmithKline Research And Development Ltd Gunnels Wood Road Stevenage Herts
Proposal : Installation of freestanding internally illuminated sign on concrete plinth
Date of Decision : 04.02.26
Decision : **Planning Permission is GRANTED**
10. Application No : 25/00878/AD
Date Received : 10.12.25
Location : Glaxo SmithKline Research And Development Ltd Gunnels Wood Road Stevenage Herts
Proposal : Installation of freestanding internally illuminated sign on concrete plinth
Date of Decision : 04.02.26
Decision : **Advertisement Consent is GRANTED**
11. Application No : 25/00880/FPH
Date Received : 10.12.25
Location : 47 Grove Road Stevenage Herts SG1 3NT
Proposal : Erection of single storey rear extension to replace existing conservatory and elevational alterations for garage conversion.
Date of Decision : 05.02.26
Decision : **Planning Permission is GRANTED**
12. Application No : 25/00885/FPH
Date Received : 15.12.25
Location : 2 Langmoor Cottages Symonds Green Road Stevenage Herts
Proposal : Erection of a two storey side extension and front porch
Date of Decision : 20.02.26
Decision : **Planning Permission is GRANTED**

13. Application No : 25/00888/FPH
Date Received : 16.12.25
Location : 27 Broad Oak Way Stevenage Herts SG2 8QN
Proposal : Erection of two storey rear extension
Date of Decision : 11.02.26
Decision : **Planning Permission is GRANTED**
14. Application No : 25/00899/CLPD
Date Received : 19.12.25
Location : 22 Lawrence Avenue Stevenage Herts SG1 3JX
Proposal : Lawful Development Certificate (Proposed) for the use of the land to station a mobile home (granny annexe)
Date of Decision : 24.02.26
Decision : **Certificate of Lawfulness is APPROVED**
15. Application No : 25/00902/COND
Date Received : 22.12.25
Location : The Oval Stevenage Herts SG1 5LW
Proposal : Discharge of condition 58 (Surface Water Drainage - Parcels E and F); and partial discharge of conditions 61 (SuDS Maintenance and Management); and 62 (Temporary Drainage Measures) for parcels E and F attached to planning permission reference number 23/00954/FPM.
Date of Decision : 17.02.26
Decision : **The discharge of Condition(s)/Obligation(s) is APPROVED**

16. Application No : 25/00906/FPH
Date Received : 22.12.25
Location : 17 Cromwell Road Stevenage Herts SG2 9HT
Proposal : Part single, part two story rear extension, first floor side extension above existing ground floor single story extension, and alterations to front porch.
Date of Decision : 19.02.26
Decision : **Planning Permission is GRANTED**
17. Application No : 26/00001/CLPD
Date Received : 02.01.26
Location : 15 Ashdown Road Stevenage Herts SG2 8TY
Proposal : Lawful Development Certificate (Proposed) single story rear extension
Date of Decision : 26.02.26
Decision : **Certificate of Lawfulness is APPROVED**
18. Application No : 26/00011/AD
Date Received : 09.01.26
Location : Indoor Market, Market Square Stevenage Herts
Proposal : 2no. Fascia signs and 5no. hanging signs
Date of Decision : 09.02.26
Decision : **Advertisement Consent is GRANTED**
19. Application No : 26/00021/COND
Date Received : 12.01.26
Location : 224-230 Bedwell Crescent Stevenage Herts SG1 1NG
Proposal : Discharge of Condition 31 (LLFA Condition - Surface Water and Drainage System) Phase 2 Drainage Report attached to planning permission reference number 22/00965/FPM
Date of Decision: 09.02.26
Decision : **The discharge of Condition(s)/Obligation(s) is APPROVED**

20. Application No : 26/00022/TPCA
Date Received : 12.01.26
Location : Games Yard High Street Stevenage Herts
Proposal : T1 Silver Birch, prune tree as overhanging growth is causing interference with the parking area
Date of Decision : 23.02.26
Decision : **CONSENT TO CARRY OUT WORKS TO A TREE IN A CONSERVATION AREA**
21. Application No : 26/00079/CLEU
Date Received : 13.01.26
Location : 5 Forest Row Stevenage Herts SG2 8BY
Proposal : Lawful Development Certificate (Existing) for conversion of dwelling to a House of Multiple Occupation
Date of Decision : 11.02.26
Decision : **Certificate of Lawfulness is APPROVED**
22. Application No : 26/00088/BNGCO
Date Received : 15.01.26
Location : Wiltron House Rutherford Close Stevenage Herts
Proposal : Compliance with Biodiversity Net Gain details required by planning permission 25/00221/FPM
Date of Decision : 03.02.26
Decision : **The Biodiversity Net Gain Condition is discharged**
23. Application No : 26/00091/COND
Date Received : 16.01.26
Location : The Cromwell Hotel 25 - 27 High Street Stevenage Herts
Proposal : Discharge of Conditions 4 (Materials) and 5 (Cladding, Doors and Cornices) attached to planning permission reference number 24/00863/FP
Date of Decision : 13.02.26
Decision : **The discharge of Condition(s)/Obligation(s) is APPROVED**

24. Application No : 26/00094/COND
Date Received : 20.01.26
Location : 58 - 90 Queensway And Forum Chambers Town Centre
Stevenage Herts
Proposal : Discharge of Condition 10 (Material Samples) attached to
planning permission reference number 23/00502/FPM
Date of Decision : 13.02.26
Decision : **The discharge of Condition(s)/Obligation(s) is APPROVED**
25. Application No : 26/00096/CLPD
Date Received : 20.01.26
Location : 29 The Muntings Stevenage Herts SG2 9DN
Proposal : Lawful Development Certificate (Proposed) for building a timber
car port in rear garden
Date of Decision : 09.02.26
Decision : **Certificate of Lawfulness is APPROVED**
26. Application No : 26/00099/NMA
Date Received : 20.01.26
Location : 49 Lincoln Road Stevenage Herts SG1 4PJ
Proposal : Non material amendment to planning approval 22/00158/FPH to
replace the current brickwork with a white/cream (off-white)
render finish
Date of Decision : 11.02.26
Decision : **Non Material Amendment AGREED**
27. Application No : 26/00100/TPCA
Date Received : 20.01.26
Location : Bayley House Sish Lane Stevenage Herts
Proposal : Reduction of crown by 1-2m to T3, Fell and remove both trees
in G3 and reduction of lateral limbs by 1-2m to T4 and T8
Date of Decision : 25.02.26
Decision : **CONSENT TO CARRY OUT WORKS TO A TREE IN A
CONSERVATION AREA**

28. Application No : 26/00104/NMA
Date Received : 21.01.26
Location : SG1 Development Site Town Centre Stevenage Herts
Proposal : Non material amendment to planning permission 19/00743/FPM to split Phase 1A into two separate subphases
Date of Decision : 12.02.26
Decision : **Non Material Amendment AGREED**
29. Application No : 26/00113/CLEU
Date Received : 26.01.26
Location : 209 Vardon Road Stevenage Herts SG1 5PY
Proposal : Lawful Development Certificate (Existing) for house of multiple occupation
Date of Decision : 11.02.26
Decision : **Certificate of Lawfulness is APPROVED**
30. Application No : 26/00114/NMA
Date Received : 26.01.26
Location : Priory Meadow Rectory Lane Stevenage Herts
Proposal : Non-material amendment to planning approval 21/01356/FPH for addition of obscure glass window to ground floor cloak/bathroom and replace two single garage doors with one double width single garage door
Date of Decision : 03.02.26
Decision : **Non Material Amendment AGREED**
31. Application No : 26/00118/CLEU
Date Received : 27.01.26
Location : 35 Devonshire Close Stevenage Herts SG2 8RY
Proposal : Lawful Development Certificate (Existing) 6 bedroom House in Multiple Occupation (HMO)
Date of Decision : 12.02.26
Decision : **Certificate of Lawfulness is APPROVED**

32. Application No : 26/00122/NMA
Date Received : 28.01.26
Location : Walpole Court Blenheim Way Stevenage Herts
Proposal : Non-material amendment to planning approval 24/00047/FPM to remove Condition 22 (BNG)
Date of Decision : 09.02.26
Decision : **Non Material Amendment AGREED**
33. Application No : 26/00125/PADEMO
Date Received : 30.01.26
Location : Walton Lodge Veterinary Group Maxwell Road Stevenage Herts
Proposal : Prior Approval for the demolition of former Walton Lodge Veterinary Surgery
Date of Decision : 25.02.26
Decision : **Prior Approval is NOT REQUIRED**
34. Application No : 26/00129/COND
Date Received : 30.01.26
Location : Brent Court Silam Road Stevenage Herts
Proposal : Discharge of conditions 17 (fire hydrants) attached to planning permission reference number 22/00963/FPM
Date of Decision : 12.02.26
Decision : **The discharge of Condition(s)/Obligation(s) is APPROVED**
35. Application No : 26/00141/COND
Date Received : 05.02.26
Location : 57 Warwick Road Stevenage Herts SG2 0QT
Proposal : Discharge of Conditions 7 (Construction Method Statement) and 8 (Climate Adaptation Measures) attached to planning permission reference number 25/00613/FP
Date of Decision : 27.02.26
Decision : **The discharge of Condition(s)/Obligation(s) is APPROVED**

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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 adopted January 2020.
3. Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031 adopted May 2019.
4. Local Plan Partial Review (2024).
5. Hertfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan 4 adopted May 2018.
6. Responses to consultations with statutory undertakers and other interested parties referred to in this report.
7. Central Government advice contained in the National Planning Policy Framework December 2024 and Planning Policy Guidance.

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Meeting: Planning and Development
Committee

Agenda Item:

Date: 12 March 2026

INFORMATION REPORT - APPEALS / CALLED IN APPLICATIONS

Author – Linda Sparrow

Lead Officer – Alex Robinson

Contact Officer – Alex Robinson

1. APPEALS RECEIVED

1.1 NONE.

2. DECISIONS AWAITED

2.1. 21/01025/ENFAPL, 7 Boxfield Green. Appeal against the serving of an Enforcement Notice relating to the development not in accordance with approved plans under planning permission reference number 17/00734/FPH.

3. DECISIONS RECEIVED

3.1 None.

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