

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

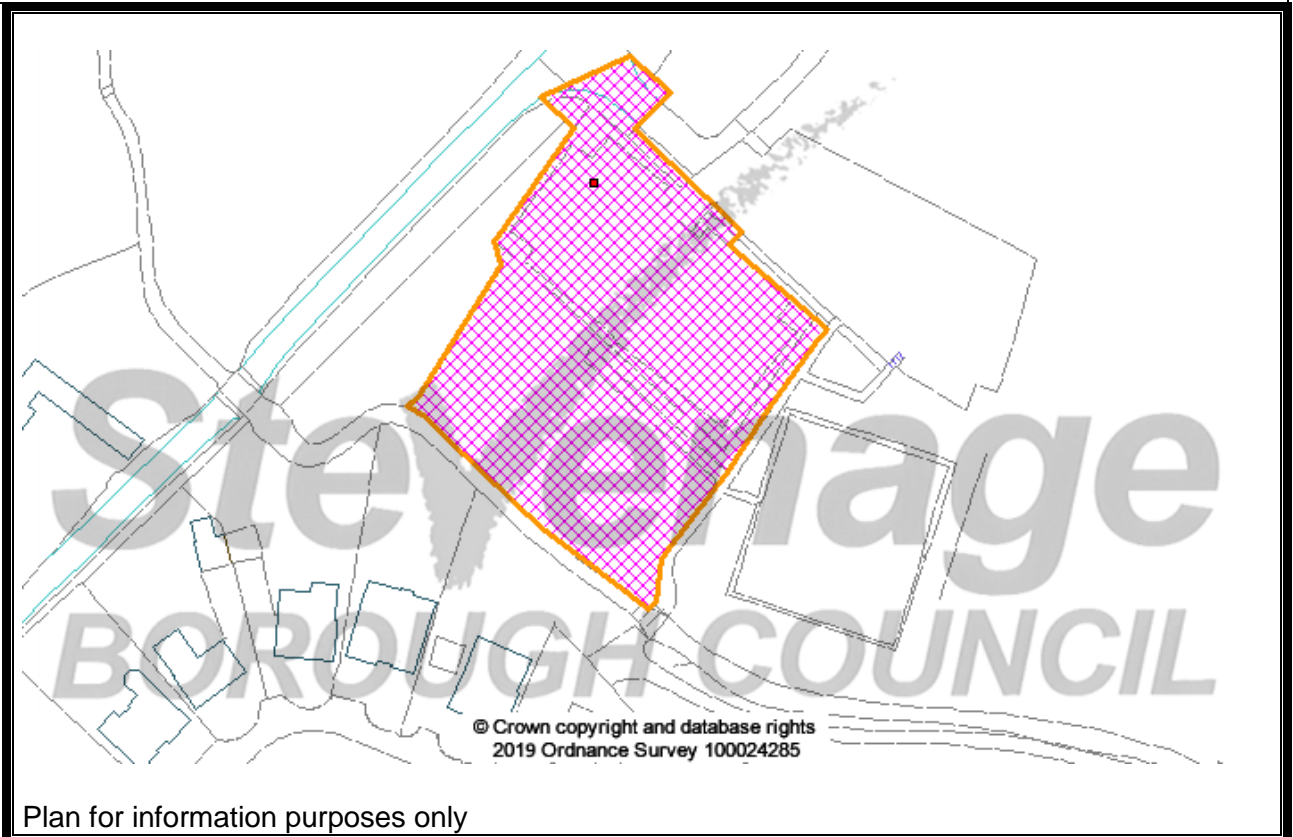
Date:

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Application No:	21/00847/FP
Location:	Car Park, Bragbury End Sports Ground, Aston Lane, Stevenage
Proposal:	Erection of five residential dwellings (Class C3), together with associated development including access, parking and landscaping
Drawing Nos.:	2279-10-RevB; 2279-11-RevC; 2279-12-RevA; 2279-13-RevA; 2279-14-RevA; 2279_16; 2279-21-RevA; RLA.LBE.003; 1583-KC-XX-YTREE-TCP01RevB; 1583-KC-XX-YTREE-TPP01RevB; 2279-15-RevH; RLA.LBE.004 REV A
Applicant:	Iceni Projects
Date Valid:	2 August 2021
Recommendation:	GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION.



1. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 1.1 The application site comprises a 0.18 hectare area of walled scrubland located to the south of the Bragbury End Sports Ground carpark, to the east of Aston Lane and north of

Sacombe Mews. The land is accessed through the sports ground car park via the vehicular access off Aston Lane, which is a single lane rural road. The land is surrounded by a brick wall and a mature tree belt along the western boundary with Aston Lane. Running along the southern boundary is Stevenage Brook and the dwellings of Sacombe Mews beyond. The north and east of the site is adjoined by the Bragbury End Sports Ground car park and training pitches used by Stevenage Football Club.

- 1.2 The surrounding area is rural in character, located on the southern edge of Stevenage. To the west of Aston Lane is Stevenage Golf Club with agricultural land and woodland beyond in all other directions. The site is designated within the Stevenage Local Plan (2019) as an allocated housing site for up to 8 dwellings under Policy HO1/2 and falling within an Area of Archaeological Significance. The adjacent Aston Lane is also identified as being an 'Ancient Lane', under Policy NH3 (Green Corridors). According to the Environment Agency's (EA) Flood Map for Planning Purposes, the site is located within fluvial Flood Zones 1, 2 and 3 (low to high probability) due to its relatively steep topography.
- 1.3 The surrounding land, with the exception of the application site and Sacombe Mews to the south, is designated as Green Belt. The land to the south east of the site is also designated as a strategic housing site within the Local Plan (Policy HO4), with 150 dwellings allocated to the north of the A602. It is considered this is a green field transition site going from the built up character of Bragbury End to the south to the open Green Belt to the west, north and east.

2. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

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

3. THE APPLICATION

- 3.1 This application seeks planning permission for the erection of five residential dwellings (Class C3), together with associated development including access, parking and landscaping. The development proposal comprises 5 x five bedroom detached dwellings opening up onto private gardens at the rear of each property. The proposed dwellings would be three storeys in height, with accommodation within the gable roofing.
- 3.2 The proposed design, materiality and architectural approach make reference to key local styles, through a modern high-quality residential design. The proposed dwellings have been designed to share a material palette of brick, render, tiles and weatherboarding. Vehicular access would be from the existing access point onto Aston Lane and shared with the neighbouring Stevenage FC training ground. A new gated access point would be provided off this for both the Football Club and the housing development. The existing access would be split into two, to avoid potential conflict between the residential dwellings and the football club, with a new wall separating the two and providing appropriate security.
- 3.3 In total, 15 parking spaces are proposed for residents with each dwelling having access to three parking spaces. Further, the development makes provision for visitors by designating a further three visitor spaces.
- 3.4 This application comes before the Council's Planning and Development Committee as the application has been 'called in' by Cllr Simon Speller, Ward Member for Shephall and Chair of the Planning and Development Committee.

4. PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS

- 4.1 Following notification of the application via letter, the erection of two site notices and being publicised in the local press, no representations have been received.

5. CONSULTATIONS

5.1 Hertfordshire County Council as Highways Authority

5.1.1 Subject to the imposition of conditions and informatives, it is not considered that the proposed development would have an unreasonable impact on the safety and operation of the adjoining highways and consequently do not have any objections on highway grounds.

5.2 Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust

5.2.1 No objection, subject to the imposition of a condition requiring the submission of a landscape and ecological management plan (LEMP).

5.3 Environment Agency

5.3.1 Objection 1: Building next to a main river

We object to this application as it involves works within 8 metres of the Stevenage Brook main river. As submitted, it is unlikely that we would grant a flood risk activity permit for this application.

Overcoming Objection 1

The applicant can overcome our objection by:

- Removing any flow obstructions from the area of floodplain by maintaining the floodplain as an open space. Ideally the buffer zone should incorporate the whole flood zone corridor which not only removes any obstructions to flow, and ensures that ground levels are not raised, but also provides a valuable green infrastructure asset and provides a natural buffer to the ancient woodland to the north of the site. If there is reasonable justification provided as to why this cannot be achieved, it would need to be demonstrated that there will be no increase in flood risk as a result of the obstructions (from obstructions to flood flow routes or caused by debris blockages).
- Relocating the proposed structures a minimum of 8 metres away from the main river and by demonstrating that the proposed development would restrict essential maintenance and emergency access.
- Providing a Management Plan to show how the space will be managed to ensure there is no increase in flood risk for the lifetime of the development.

5.3.2 Objection 2: Inadequate FRA

In the absence of an acceptable Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) we object to this application and recommend that planning permission is refused.

The submitted FRA does not comply with the requirements for site-specific flood risk assessments, as set out in paragraphs 30 to 32 of the Flood Risk and Coastal Change section of the planning practice guidance and Policy FP3(c) of your Local Plan.

Overcoming Objection 2

The applicant should revise their FRA to include:

- A map illustrating the ground levels (as indicated by the topographical survey rather than Lidar data) together with the extent of the design floodplain, as derived from the modelled flood levels.
- An overlay map of the proposed development illustrating ground levels to demonstrate that the proposed ground raising and more vulnerable elements of the development are located outside of the floodplain and in Flood Zone 2.
- The applicant should provide a management plan to set out how the space will be managed to ensure no increase in flood risk elsewhere over the lifetime of the development.
- The applicant should revise their FRA to demonstrate that raised finished flood levels, can be provided to prevent internal flooding of the development and damage to people and property.

5.3.3 Additional information was provided to overcome the Environment Agency objection and updated comments were received dated 25 January 2022 confirming the amended plans are acceptable from a flood risk perspective and the Environment Agency has no objection to the proposed development.

5.4 Council's Arboriculture and Conservation Manager

5.4.1 No comments received to date. Any comments received will be reported verbally.

5.5 HCC Historic Environment Advisor, Hertfordshire LEADS (Archaeology)

5.5.1 Previous archaeological investigation in the immediate vicinity has demonstrated a large degree of modern 20th century make for the existing sports facilities (ref: 17/0082). Therefore, in this instance, I consider that the development is unlikely to have a significant impact on heritage assets of archaeological interest and I have no comment to make upon the proposal.

5.6 Council's Environmental Health Officer

5.6.1 No objection, subject to the imposition of conditions relating to contaminated land and hours of construction.

5.7 Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue (Fire Hydrants)

5.7.1 The following planning application will require a condition for the installation of a fire hydrant, to ensure all proposed dwellings have sufficient water in the event of an emergency.

6. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

6.1 Background to the Development Plan

6.1.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides that the decision on the planning application should be in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. For Stevenage the statutory development plan comprises:

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

6.2 Central Government Advice

- 6.2.1 A revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in July 2021. This largely reordered the policy substance of the earlier 2012 version of the NPPF albeit with some revisions to policy. The Council are content that the policies in the Local Plan are in conformity with the revised NPPF and that the Local Plan should be considered up to date for the purpose of determining planning applications. The NPPF provides that proposals which accord with an up to date development plan should be approved without delay (para.11) and that where a planning application conflicts with an up to date development plan, permission should not usually be granted (para.12). This indicates the weight which should be given to an up to date development plan, reflecting the requirements of section 38(6) of the 2004 Act.
- 6.2.2 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 85% of its housing requirement, the Council must incorporate a 20% buffer into its housing supply calculations in line with paragraph 73 of the NPPF. Where an authority's score is below 75%, the Council will be subject to the HDT's most severe penalty and must apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The latest HDT results, published by the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) (**now the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities**) in January 2022, identifies that Stevenage delivered 79% of its housing requirement in 2021. This is above the 75% target, but still less than 85%. Consequently, Stevenage Borough Council must include the 20% buffer in its 5 year housing land supply calculations, which it already does.
- 6.2.3 The Council also has to prepare an Action Plan to show how it is responding to the challenge of ensuring more homes are delivered in the Borough. It will have to be prepared in accordance with Planning Practice Guidance and analyse the reasons for under-delivery of new homes against the Government's requirements. It also has to set out clear actions on how to improve housing delivery. Consequently, Stevenage Borough Council is considering its position in relation to preparing an action plan to enhance housing supply on deliverable sites.
- 6.2.4 In terms of 5 year land supply, the Council recently published the Five Year Land Supply Update (August 2021) which reveals that Stevenage had a 5.85 year supply of housing. A copy of the statement is found on:
<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/planning-policy/monitoring/five-year-housing-land-supply-position-statement-august-2021.pdf>
- 6.2.5 However, since the Land West of Lytton Way (APP/K1935/W/20/3255692) appeal decision has been quashed by a High Court Consent Order, the Council will need to prepare an updated 5 year land supply report. This is because the Council can now only demonstrate a 5.24 year supply of housing following the quashing of the appeal decision.
- 6.2.6 The Council will also be commencing preliminary work into a potential review of its Local Plan, last adopted in May 2019. This is to ensure the policies within the Local Plan are up to date in accordance with the NPPF as well as ensuring the Council is delivering a sufficient supply of housing and employment.

6.3 Planning Practice Guidance

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

6.4 Adopted Local Plan (2019)

- 6.4.1 The policies set out below are relevant in the determination of this application:

Policy SP1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development;
Policy SP2: Sustainable development in Stevenage;
Policy SP5: Infrastructure;
Policy SP6: Sustainable transport;
Policy SP7: High quality homes;
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 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 HO1: Housing allocations;
Policy HO9: House types and sizes;
Policy GD1: High quality design;
Policy FP1: Climate change;
Policy FP2: Flood risk in Flood Zone 1;
Policy FP3: Flood risk in Flood Zones 2 and 3;
Policy FP5: Contaminated land;
Policy FP7: Pollution;
Policy FP8: Pollution sensitive uses;
Policy NH3: Green Corridors;
Policy NH5: Trees and woodland;
Policy NH9: Areas of archaeological significance.

6.5 Supplementary Planning Documents

Parking Provision Supplementary Planning Document October 2020
Stevenage Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document January 2009.
The Impact on Biodiversity SPD 2021

6.6 Community Infrastructure Levy

Stevenage Borough Council adopted a Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule in 2020. This allows the Council to collect a levy to fund infrastructure projects based on the type, location and floorspace of a development. This development is CIL liable at £100/sqm.

7. APPRAISAL

- 7.1.1 The main issues for consideration in the determination of this application are its acceptability in land use policy terms, visual impact of the development, impact upon neighbouring amenities, impact upon future amenities of residents, parking provision, highway

implications, development and flood risk, impact on the environment, trees, landscaping and the Ancient Lane, Biodiversity, Ecology and Protected Species.

7.1.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that all planning applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

7.2 Land Use Policy Considerations

Compliance with the Council's Housing Policies

7.2.1 The NPPF states at paragraph 7 that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF also stipulates that decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area. In addition, the Framework also sets out that sustainable development needs to be pursued in a positive way and at the heart of the framework is a "presumption on favour of sustainable development". Paragraph 62 of the NPPF (2021) requires that the planning system should deliver, inter alia, a mix of housing particularly in terms of tenure and price to support a wide variety of households in all areas. Paragraph 69 of the Framework sets out that small and medium sites can make an important contribution to meeting housing requirements in an area, and this includes supporting the development of windfall sites.

7.2.2 Paragraph 119 of the NPPF stipulates that planning policies and decisions should promote the effective use of land in meeting the need for homes such as through the use of brownfield sites (previously developed land) and the development of underutilised land.

7.2.3 The site is allocated in the Local Plan under Policy HO1/2 for up to 8 dwellings. The policy states planning permission will be granted for residential development on allocated sites where the proposed development satisfactorily demonstrates how any site specific considerations have been properly addressed and / or incorporated into the proposal. With regards to this site, the policy excerpt below from the Local Plan references the following site specific considerations:

	that a lower level will still meet the needs of the centre.
Bragbury End sports ground car park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Within Area of Archaeological Significance - assessment will be required. ● Flood Risk Assessment required - within flood risk area. ● Preserve or enhance the setting of adjacent listed buildings. ● Emphasis on high quality landscaping within and / or around the development to reduce impact of greenfield development and create transition to Green Belt beyond. ● Satisfactory vehicular access will need to be ensured. ● Special consideration to sustainable transport measures due to edge-of-town location. ● An Ancient Lane runs along the site boundary. ● Suitable location to provide aspirational housing.
Burwell Road neighbourhood centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Community facilities to be retained or reprovided, or their loss justified. ● Garages to be retained or reprovided, unless it can be demonstrated that they

- 7.2.4 With regards to the housing delivery test and 5 year land supply, Paragraph 74 of the NPPF stipulates that strategic policies should include a trajectory illustrating the expected rate of housing delivery over the plan period, and all plans should consider whether it is appropriate to set out the anticipated rate of development for specific sites. Local planning authorities should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies, or against their local housing need where the strategic policies are more than five years old. The supply of specific deliverable sites should in addition include a buffer (moved forward from later in the plan period) of:
- a) 5% to ensure choice and competition in the market for land; or
 - b) 10% where the local planning authority wishes to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable sites through an annual position statement or recently adopted plan, to account for any fluctuations in the market during that year; or
 - c) 20% where there has been significant under delivery of housing over the previous three years, to improve the prospect of achieving the planned supply.
- 7.2.5 Turning to Five Year Housing Land Supply, the Council issued an Update Housing Land Supply Document in August 2021. This document was produced following the Appeal Decision for Land West of Lytton Way (APP/K1935/W/20/3255692). It set out that the Council could demonstrate a Housing Land Supply of 5.85 years for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2026, using the Liverpool methodology and guidance from the NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). However, since the Land West of Lytton Way (APP/K1935/W/20/3255692) appeal decision has been quashed by a High Court Consent Order, the Council will need to prepare an updated 5 year land supply report. This is because the Council can now only demonstrate a 5.24 year supply of housing following the quashing of the appeal decision.
- 7.2.6 Notwithstanding the above, since November 2018, housing delivery has been measured against the Housing Delivery Test (HDT) as set out by 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 85% of its housing requirement, the Council must incorporate a 20% buffer into its housing supply calculations in line with paragraph 74 of the NPPF. Where an authority's score is below 75%, the Council will be subject to the HDT's most severe penalty and must apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 7.2.7 The latest HDT results, published by MHCLG in January 2022, identify that Stevenage delivered 79% of its housing requirement in 2021. This is above the 75% target, but still less than 85%. Consequently, Stevenage Borough Council must include the 20% buffer in its 5 year housing land supply calculations, which it already does. As this is an allocated housing site within the Local Plan, the housing proposed under this application forms part of the Council's five year housing land supply and is considered acceptable in principle, subject to addressing the site specific considerations outlined in paragraph 7.2.3 above.
- 7.2.8 In respect to Policy HO9 (House types and sizes) of the adopted Local Plan (2019), the proposed development seeks to deliver five larger five bedroom aspirational homes. Criterion (c) states aspirational homes should be provided in appropriate sites where they would complement the prevailing character. Supporting paragraph 9.69 refers to the shortage of larger homes within Stevenage and seeks to ensure a modest proportion of aspirational homes are provided in suitable locations. Policy HO1/2 identifies the application site as being suitable for larger aspirational homes. On this basis, it is considered the proposed house type (detached) and size (five bedrooms) on this site is compliant with Policy HO9 and appropriate for this edge of town location.

7.2.9 Taking the aforementioned assessment into consideration, it can be concluded that the proposed development is acceptable in land use policy terms as this is an allocated housing site and the principle of larger, aspirational homes in this location has been established by Policy HO1/2.

7.2.10 Consideration of the effects of the development on the character of the area and neighbouring amenities, and the ability of the site to provide good living conditions for future residents as well as impact on the environment, biodiversity and infrastructure will be considered in the following sections of this report.

7.3 Visual impact of the development

7.3.1 Paragraph 126 of the NPPF states that “The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve”. It goes on to state that “good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities”.

7.3.2 Paragraph 130 of the NPPF sets out a number of requirements for new development, including that development:

- will function well and add to the overall quality of an area;
- is visually attractive as a result of good architecture; layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- is sympathetic to local character and history;
- establishes or maintains a strong sense of place;
- optimises the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development;
- creates places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

7.3.3 Paragraph 131 of the NPPF places great importance on the role of trees in helping to shape quality, well designed places “Trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change”.

7.3.4 Policy SP8 of the adopted Local Plan (2019) requires new development to achieve the highest standards of design and sustainability which can deliver substantial improvements to the image and quality of the town’s built fabric. Policy GD1 of the Local Plan generally requires all forms of development to meet a high standard of design which includes form of built development, elevational treatment and materials along with how the development would integrate with the urban fabric, its relationship between buildings, landscape design and relevant aspects of sustainable design.

7.3.5 The Council’s Design Guide SPD (2009) generally reflects the aforementioned policies requiring development to respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, massing, height and design. As such, it encourages good design as it can enhance the appearance of places.

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

- the context for places and buildings;

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

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

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

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

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

7.3.9 Paragraph 40 of the National Design Guide states that well-designed places are:

- Based on a sound understanding of the features of the site and the surrounding context, using baseline studies as a starting point for design;
- Integrated into their surroundings so they relate well to them;
- Influenced by and influence their context positively; and
- Responsive to local history, culture and heritage.

7.3.10 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. The proposed development would comprise the construction of 5 no. 5 bedroom detached dwellings. However, it is noted the 'TV room' on the third floor is large enough to be a sixth bedroom if desired. The dwellings would measure approximately 9.14m in width and 13.5m in depth. The eaves height of each dwelling would be 4.87m with a ridge height of 8.5m. The roof design would be of the 'jerkinhead' style, incorporating a half-hip on the main roof, front and rear dormer windows and gable end projections reflecting the footprint.

7.3.11 In terms of appearance, the properties have been designed to a high standard. Each dwelling would look slightly different in terms of its external finish to provide variety and architectural interest. Whilst the crown element of the roof design is large, it is considered to be acceptable in this instance given this is a standalone site outside of an existing residential area, adjacent to the Stevenage FC training ground and screened from the west and south by mature trees and vegetation. The external finish palette would comprise a

mixture of white render and dark brickwork, with dark framed aluminium windows and a dark slate roof.

- 7.3.12 With regards to layout, the site has been designed to accommodate 5 detached houses to run along the rear of the walled garden, with the gardens running down to the southwest at the lower level to the rear towards Stevenage Brook. It is envisaged that the rear wall of the walled plot would be removed so that the occupants would have access to the lower garden level. The frontage of the site has been laid out with a communal driveway and parking for each property, with 3 parking spaces per dwelling. In addition, 3 visitor parking spaces would be provided giving 18 spaces in total. The main entrance to the site off Aston Lane currently serves the Bragbury End Sports Ground, which provides the Stevenage Football Club training ground and car park which is shown on the Proposed Site Plan.
- 7.3.13 The Sports Club entrance and the housing entrance have been delineated by way of a new wall and widening the driveway, so that both the new housing development and the Sports Club have a drive wide enough for vehicles entering and exiting the site at the same time. There is a landscaped linear island separating the two drives where the access road nears Aston Lane. Both entrances would be gated to provide security for both sites. The application site would allow a refuse vehicle to enter and exit. A swept path analysis has been provided to show the turning head is adequate for a refuse vehicle and fire appliance. There is a communal bin store area adjacent to the site entrance for collection of waste to accommodate the individual bins from each property.
- 7.4.14 With regards to landscaping, the layout and footprint of the proposed dwellings has been designed to sit within a landscaped setting retaining the mature tree belt along the boundary with Aston Lane, which would also screen the dwellings from the road. Small areas of planting would be introduced in front of the dwellings and adjacent to the site entrance in the north western corner. A native scrub border in line with the recommendations contained within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal would be created along the south eastern boundary. The proposed rear gardens would slope down towards Stevenage Brook. The rear boundary, comprising a metal mesh fence planted with native scrub species would be sited 8m from the Brook to allow for flood attenuation and maintenance by the Environment Agency. The 8m buffer would also provide a wildlife area enhanced with grassland and shade tolerant perennials and shrubs.
- 7.4.15 Taking the aforementioned into consideration, it is considered that the low density, high quality designed dwellings set within an attractive landscaped setting sympathetic to the ancient lane running along the western boundary and Stevenage Brook to the south would respect the semi-rural / edge of town character of the site and would represent an acceptable transition to the Green Belt beyond. The proposed development is therefore, considered acceptable in terms of its design and appearance in accordance with the policies on design in the adopted Local Plan (2019), the Design Guide SPD (2009), the NPPF (2021) and PPG.

7.5 Impact on setting of Listed Bragbury House

- 7.5.1 The application site lies approximately 100m to the north of the Grade II listed Bragbury House, which the listing description describes as:

C18 or earlier small country house, remodelled and enlarged early C19, further enlarged in recent past. Cement rendering, tiled roof gabled either end of front and with 3 hipped dormers. 2 storeys and attics, 2 storey semi-octagonal bay on right, 5:3 windows, mainly sashes, those on ground floor without glazing bars. Central 2 storey graceful early C19 verandah. Round attic windows in gables.

- 7.5.2 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 buildings (relates to the indirect impact on the statutory listed Bragbury House).

- 7.5.3 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 (199). This is regardless of whether any harm may be 'substantial harm' or 'less than substantial harm' (199). Any harm should require 'clear and convincing' justification (200). If a development proposal would lead to less than substantial harm, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal (201).
- 7.5.4 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.
- 7.5.5 In respect of this proposal, planning permission was granted in 2006 for a residential development of 15 dwellings known as 'Sacombe Mews' located immediately south of the application site across Stevenage Brook comprising 9 large, detached houses and 6 mews houses. Bragbury House itself has been converted into flats. The Sacombe Mews development sits within the grounds of Bragbury House and in between Bragbury House and the application site. As such, the immediate setting of Bragbury House is dominated by the Sacomb Mews development. It is considered the application proposal sited 100m to the north beyond the Sacomb Mews dwellings, across the Brook and screened by the mature trees along the Brook would preserve the setting of the Grade II listed country house under S.66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and would be in accordance with Local Plan Policy SP13 'The Historic Environment'.

7.6 Archaeology

- 7.6.1 The site lies within Area of Archaeological Significance No. 15, which encompasses the medieval and later settlement of Bragbury End. A desk based archaeological assessment has been submitted with the application, which advises based on the known archaeology, the site is judged to have a generally limited archaeological potential, with only a low potential for Roman, medieval and post-medieval archaeology, and a low to moderate potential for prehistoric and Anglo-Saxon remains. The most significant potential of the site is for surviving remnants of a former walled garden, which formed part of the Bragbury House grounds and date from the early 19th century. The existing brick walls within the site are in a poor state of repair, extensively damaged and partially demolished. The former gardens walls are therefore not regarded as a significant heritage asset.
- 7.6.2 The HCC Historic Environment officer has advised previous archaeological investigation in the immediate vicinity has demonstrated a large degree of modern 20th century make for the existing sports facilities (Stevenage FC training ground) to the north. Therefore, the proposed development is considered unlikely to have a significant impact on heritage assets of archaeological interest.

7.7 Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

7.7.1 In assessing the impact on neighbouring amenity, the Council's Design Guide sets out standards which should be met to safeguard the privacy and outlook of adjoining properties from new development. In this regard, when assessing developments which are two storeys in height, the recommended separation distances are as follows:

No of Storeys	Type of Separation	Min. distance (metres)
Between existing and new 2 storey or a mix of 1 and 2 storey dwellings.	Back to Back Back to Side	25m 15m
Between new 2 storeys or a mix of 1 and 2 storey	Back to Back Back to side	20m 12m
Over 2 storeys between existing and new dwellings	Back to Back Back to Side	35m 25m
Between new dwellings over 2 storeys in height.	Back to Back Back to Side	30m 20m

7.7.2 The proposed dwellings would have a back to back separation distance from the rear of the dwellings in Sacombe Mews, across Stevenage Brook of a minimum of 63m. This exceeds the above standards. The presence of mature trees along the Brook would also serve to visually screen the proposed development from Sacombe Mews to the south. There are no other residential properties sited in close proximity to the application site.

7.7.3 Due to the generous separation distance and presence of mature trees, it is considered the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the amenities of the neighbouring residential properties on Sacombe Mews by reason of overbearing impact or loss of privacy, light or outlook. As such, the proposal would accord with the policies in the adopted Local Plan (2019), the Council's Design Guide SPD (2009), the NPPF (2021) and PPG. In regards to the impact of noise and light pollution on the amenities of neighbouring residents, these aspects have been considered in detail in section 7.12 of this report.

7.8 Impact upon future amenities of residents

7.8.1 In considering a residential scheme of this nature it is also important to ensure that living conditions for any future occupiers are appropriate. In regards to private amenity space, the Council's Design Guide (2009) states the minimum standard garden space for a terraced or semi-detached family dwelling should normally be 50 square metres. Each dwelling should normally have a minimum rear garden depth of 10m. The shape and slope of the garden should ensure that it is useable. Larger detached houses will generally be required to provide a larger rear garden area. To ensure privacy, the garden should normally be enclosed by a 1.8m high close boarded fence or wall. Direct access should be afforded to rear gardens for activities such as refuse storage, cycle parking and maintenance. All rear gardens and communal open spaces should generally enjoy a reasonable amount of sunlight and have a relatively open outlook.

7.8.2 Each dwelling would be provided with a rear garden ranging from 310m² to 500m² in area with a depth of 23.7m, excluding the patio. The gardens would be enclosed by timber featherboard boundary fencing and have a southerly aspect looking towards Stevenage Brook with direct side access to the front. It is considered the gardens would provide a generous, pleasant area of usable private amenity space for future occupiers, which would enjoy plenty of sunshine due to their southerly orientation and would exceed the minimum size requirements set out within the Design Guide (2009).

- 7.8.3 With regard to the requirements for new residential properties to meet Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS) as defined by Policy GD1 of the adopted Local Plan (2019), for a 5 bedroom, 8 person occupancy (4 double bedrooms 1 single) three storey dwelling, there is a requirement to provide 134m² of floorspace. The proposed dwellings would be 266m² in area, in excess of the standards. The dwellings would therefore provide an acceptable internal living environment for future occupiers.
- 7.8.4 In terms of outlook, privacy, sunlight and daylight, due to the siting and position of the proposed dwellings combined with their overall height, each property would have an acceptable level of privacy and outlook. In addition, each dwelling would receive sufficient sunlight and daylight in accordance with BRE guidance.
- 7.8.5 It can be concluded that the proposed dwellings would provide an acceptable internal and external living environment for future occupiers and as such, the proposal would accord with the policies in the adopted Local Plan (2019), the Council's Design Guide SPD (2009), the NPPF (2021) and PPG.

7.9 Parking Provision

- 7.9.1 Policy IT5 of the adopted Local Plan (2019) states that planning permission will be granted where proposals comply with the parking standards set out in the plan. The Council's Parking Provision and Sustainable Transport SPD (2020) provide requirements for 4+ bedroom dwellings of 2.5 spaces per dwelling, giving a total requirement for 12.5 spaces (rounded up to 13). Visitor spaces must be provided at a standard of 0.25 spaces per dwelling. If parking is to be allocated, which it is understood it is these should be in addition to the above standards giving a total requirement of 1.25 space (rounded down to one). The application site does not fall within an Accessibility Zone and therefore the maximum provision is expected to be provided.
- 7.9.2 The proposal is seeking to provide a total of 18 parking spaces, equating to 3 spaces per dwelling and 3 visitor spaces. This is in excess of the policy requirements. It is accepted that the size and type of dwelling proposed is likely to lead to greater parking requirements, given future occupancy could be up to 8/9 people and combined with the site's location on the edge of town, the proposed parking provision in excess of the standards is considered acceptable in this instance.
- 7.9.3 In regards to cycle parking, the Council's Parking Standards SPD stipulates for this development, there is the requirement to provide a minimum of 15 long term and 1 short term cycle parking spaces (3 per dwelling). The Transport Note advises the development would provide 16 cycle parking spaces in total, although no details of this have been shown on the application drawings. As such, there would be sufficient provision of cycle parking to encourage sustainable travel to/from the site. The Transport Note states secure and covered cycle storage would be provided within rear garden sheds. However, no details have been provided. It is accepted that there is space for sufficient cycle parking to be provided within the rear gardens and it could be secured via a planning condition should planning permission be granted.
- 7.9.4 Turning to electric vehicle parking, the Car Parking SPD (2020) now introduces a minimum requirement for electric vehicle parking. The requirements for new developments would need to abide by the following:-
- All new car parking should be designed to fulfil a Passive Electrical Vehicle Charging Point standard (providing the necessary underlying infrastructure);
 - The blend of access to charging points provided within new developments;
 - A minimum of 20% of new parking on a site to have access to an active EV charging point;

- A flexible approach to the requirement of charging facilities as technology changes.

7.9.5 The Transport Note advises parking provision in the proposed development would provide facilities for EV charging of vehicles. All allocated spaces would be designed to a passive EV charging point standard, along with 20% active EV charging points being in the unallocated visitor spaces (1 space). The installation of passive infrastructure would allow individual homeowners to install their own EV charging point easily, if they purchased an electric vehicle.

7.9.6 Given the aforementioned assessment, and through the use of an appropriately worded condition regarding cycle parking, there would be sufficient parking (including cycle parking, and EV parking) in accordance with the Council's adopted Parking Standards. With regards to disabled parking, as the parking provision would be allocated to each dwelling and not communal, there would be no policy requirement to demarcate any space(s) as disabled. Therefore, the proposal would be in accordance with policies set out in the adopted Local Plan (2019), the Council's Parking Provision SPD (2020), the NPPF (2021) and PPG.

7.10 Highway implications

Access

7.10.1 The proposed site plan (ref. 2279_15_REVH) shows the existing vehicular access on Aston Lane as shared with Stevenage Football Club training ground complex and car park. The proposals are for the access to have two separate gated entrances. These are to be set back 12m from the back edge of the carriageway which the Highway Authority consider acceptable. The width of the access driveway into the proposed site is approximately 4.5m with 5.0m width to the training ground. It is likely two vehicles would not be able to pass however; there is space for a vehicle to wait.

7.10.2 Aston Lane has a 60mph posted speed limit which requires a visibility splay of 2.4m x 215m. The applicant has provided a speed survey, which demonstrates speed survey data recorded between the 1st and 7th of November 2021. The data has shown the 85th percentile speed north bound to be 53.9 mph equal to a visibility splay of 55.7m and south bound 85th percentile 36.1mph equal to a visibility splay of 56.1m. The Highway Authority considers the proposed visibility splays to be acceptable.

7.10.3 The Highway Authority considers the submitted vehicle tracking details for the refuse and recycling vehicle, box van and large saloon car to be acceptable and demonstrate vehicles would be able to access the site and manoeuvre safely.

Pedestrian Access

7.10.4 The site is approx. 340m from the junction with Broadwater Lane and Sacombe Mews (privately maintained road). Pedestrians would have to walk along Aston Lane to reach Broadwater Lane by crossing the access to Sacombe Mews, which has a pedestrian dropped kerb and tactile paving on the Broadwater Lane side. There are no pedestrian facilities from Broadwater Lane to the site. The nature, narrow width, high bank areas and fencing, no lighting and in many places overgrown vegetation would make walking along Aston Lane unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists. Furthermore, vehicles cannot pass and have to give-way at certain points between the junction of Broadwater Lane and the proposed and existing access.

7.10.5 In discussions with the applicant, a betterment of the access would help in some way to mitigate the lack of pedestrian access. This would take the form of lighting around the access from Aston Lane and signage along Aston Lane to the junction with Broadhall Way

displaying pedestrians in the road / triangular warning signs. This would be secured via an Offsite Highway Works condition should planning permission be granted.

Trip Rates

7.10.6 Section 56 of the Transport Note states that Trip Rate Information Computer System (TRICS) has been used in assessing likely trip generation from the proposed development. The Highway Authority accepts the basis upon which survey sets have been selected. The Transport Note presents that the proposed development would generate between 2-3 vehicle trips in the AM (08:00 – 09:00) and PM (17:00 – 18:00) peaks. Such level of trips amounts to approximately 1 additional vehicle every 20 minutes across an hour in the AM and PM, which the Highway Authority considers would not present an unacceptable impact on local highway conditions.

Refuse / Recycling

7.10.7 There would be a secure bin store adjacent to the entrance gates with sufficient space provided at the collection location/area for refuse vehicles to access the collection point. Refuse vehicles would enter through the existing access off Aston Lane and set down to collect from the temporary collection point. The Highway Authority has confirmed there is sufficient available space within the existing site access to allow for a refuse vehicle to manoeuvre on access and egress. The proposed refuse arrangements are considered acceptable.

7.10.8 Subject to the imposition of appropriately worded conditions to ensure the development is acceptable in highway terms, it is not considered by the Highway Authority that the proposed development would prejudice the safety and operation of the highway network. Therefore, it can be concluded that the proposal would accord with the policies set out in the adopted Local Plan (2019), the County Council's Local Transport Plan 4 (2018), the NPPF (2021) and PPG. Turning to the suggested conditions themselves, if the Council was minded to grant permission these would cover the following:-

- Offsite highway improvement works to include lighting and signage; and
- Provision of cycle parking.

7.10.9 The Highway Authority has also suggested informatives are imposed relating to highway related works associated with the development being in accordance with HCC Highway requirements.

7.11 Development and Flood Risk

7.11.1 According to the Environment Agency's (EA) Flood Map for Planning Purposes, the application site is located within fluvial Flood Zones 1, 2 and 3 (low to high probability) due to its relatively steep topography. The proposed development has been located sequentially, with the proposed dwellings and car parking sited in Flood Zones 1 and 2; this is in accordance with the guidance included in the Level 2 SFRA (AECOM, 2016). The Site benefits partially from the presence of informal flood defences. According to the EA's Risk of Flooding from Rivers and Sea (RoFRS) map, which considers the type, condition and crest height of flood defences, the site has a Very Low to Medium risk of flooding from Rivers and the Sea. The areas proposed for the dwellings and car parking have a Very Low and Medium risk of flooding; however the site could potentially be at risk from flooding due to blockage or failure of local culverts, bridges and/or weirs associated with the Stevenage Brook adjacent to the Site.

7.11.2 The application is accompanied by the following:-

- Flood Risk Assessment by GeoSmart Information Ltd (December 2021);
- Sustainable Drainage Assessment by GeoSmart Information Ltd (February 2021).

7.11.3 The sustainable urban drainage strategy (SuDS) for this scheme comprises the use of rainwater harvesting, permeable paving and five soakaways. Permeable paving would provide some water quality benefits (interception and filtration) prior to infiltrating to ground. The five soakaways, one located within each plot garden, would attenuate a minimum of 71m³ of rainwater collected from the residential roofs before infiltrating to ground. Soakaway dimensions of 4m length, 2m width, 2m depth and 95% porosity would provide a total individual attenuation of 15.2m³. The proposed SuDS strategy would ensure surface water runoff is stored on-site in SuDS features for the 1 in 100 year event including a 40% allowance for climate change and 10% allowance for urban creep and will not cause flooding to the proposed development in accordance with DEFRA's non-statutory technical standards (DEFRA, 2015).

7.11.4 Should site investigations confirm the underlying ground conditions are not conducive to infiltration, the condition and capacity of the surface watercourse (Stevenage Brook) would be confirmed and permission obtained from the Environment Agency or other authorities for proposed outfalls and any other permits required. Where discharging to the surface watercourse is not viable due to flood risk, the capacity of the public sewer network and permission to connect would be confirmed with the utility provider.

7.11.5 As part of the site falls within Flood Zones 2 and 3, the Environment Agency was consulted. The EA initially objected, requiring the applicant to provide the details outlined in paragraphs 5.3.1 and 5.3.2 above to demonstrate the Flood Risk Assessment would comply with the requirements for site-specific flood risk assessments, as set out in paragraphs 30 to 32 of the Flood Risk and Coastal Change section of the planning practice guidance and Policy FP3(c) of the Local Plan (2019). On receipt of the amended site layout plan and Flood Risk Assessment, the Environment Agency withdrew their objection to the scheme.

7.11.6 The proposed development is considered to be in accordance with Local Plan Policies FP2 – Flood Risk in Zone 1 and FP3 – Flood Risk in Zones 2 and 3 and would not lead to an increased risk of surface water flooding or fluvial flooding from Stevenage Brook.

7.12 Impact on the environment

7.12.1 Following consultation with the Council's Environmental Health Section, they do not raise any concerns from a land contamination perspective subject to the imposition of conditions. The conditions imposed would require a Phase One investigation desk top study to assess any contamination on the site and whether or not it originates on the site.

Air Quality

7.12.2 Policy FP7 of the adopted Local Plan (2019) states that all development proposals should minimise, and where possible, reduce air, water, light and noise pollution. Looking at air quality and air pollution specifically, the Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR) 2019 by Stevenage Borough Council identifies that the development site is not located within or in close proximity to an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).

7.12.3 In order to mitigate the construction phase, it is recommended a condition is imposed to any permission issued requiring the applicant to prepare and submit a Construction Management Plan, which details measures on controlling levels of dust and air pollutions which are generated during the construction phase of development. With regards to the operational aspect of the development, the Council's Environmental Health Section has not

raised any concerns with respect to the residential development of the site and its impact on air quality.

Noise Pollution

- 7.12.4 With respect to noise, Policy FP8: Pollution Sensitive Uses stipulates that planning permission for pollution sensitive uses will be granted where they will not be subjected to unacceptably high levels of pollution exposure from either existing, or proposed pollution generating uses.
- 7.12.5 Dealing firstly with the impact of noise from the construction phase of the development, detailed measures would be set out in the Construction Management Plan which would be submitted via a planning condition prior to the commencement of development. Through the CMP, the hours in which noisy activities take place would be controlled, along with the imposition of relevant mitigation measures being put in place to minimise the impact of noise from construction activities. Moreover, if a breach were to take place, the Council would enforce the condition accordingly. Consequently, the imposition of such a condition controlling the hours of construction is supported by the Council's Environmental Health Section.
- 7.12.6 With regards to noise which could arise during the operational phase of development, the Council's Environmental Health Section has not raised any concerns with respect to the residential development of the site and noise.

Light Pollution

- 7.12.7 In terms of light pollution, Policy FP7: Pollution of the adopted Local Plan (2019) requires all development proposals should minimise, where possible, light pollution. Applications for development where pollution is suspected must contain sufficient information for the application to make a full assessment on impacts. Planning permission will be granted where it can be demonstrated that the development will not have unacceptable impacts on:
- a. the natural environment, general amenity and the tranquillity of the wider area which includes light pollution;
 - b. health and safety of the public; and
 - c. The compliance with statutory environmental quality standards.
- 7.12.8 Turning to the operational side of the development, the applicant has not submitted a detailed lighting strategy. Given the potential of the site to provide a habitat for foraging bats (see paragraph 7.14.3), it is considered expedient to request details of external lighting via a planning condition should planning permission be granted. This is to ensure any lighting would not disrupt the foraging habitat of bats or lead to light pollution across the wider area. In terms of lighting associated with the construction aspect of the proposed development, this would be covered by the Construction Management Plan, the submission of which would be subject to a planning condition.

7.13 Trees, landscaping and the Ancient Lane

- 7.13.1 Policy NH3 Green Corridors of the adopted Local Plan (2019) identifies that Aston Lane (NH3/1) is defined as an ancient lane which is located along the north western site boundary and also comprises the site entrance. As such, the proposal could potentially have an impact on the Ancient Lane. Therefore, regard is given to the following criterion set out under Policy NH3, i.e. planning permission will be granted where proposals:
- a. Would not have a substantive adverse effect upon a Green Corridor;

- b. Retain and sensitively integrate any Green Corridor which must be crossed or incorporated into the site layout;
- c. Provide replacement planting, preferably using local native species, where hedgerow removal is unavoidable; and
- d. Reasonably contribute towards the improvement of Green Corridors in the vicinity of the application site.

7.13.2 With regards to trees, Policy NH5 of the adopted Local Plan (2019) states that development proposals will be expected to protect and retain individual trees within the development site and should include new planting where appropriate.

7.13.3 Dealing firstly with the Ancient Lane, the site boundary running along the lane comprises young, mixed vegetation including some holly, ash and elm saplings. Within the band of vegetation stand some visually significant trees. These include Wellingtonia and one large English oak tree of category A and B value. The Arboriculture Impact Assessment submitted with the application has surveyed the trees along the Ancient Lane boundary with the application site and concludes the proposed development would result in no tree loss along Aston Lane and can be achieved without material harm to any of the retained trees. Given the Highway Authority have also confirmed the access would provide the appropriate visibility splays (without tree or vegetation removal), it is considered the access and proposed development would not have a substantive adverse effect upon the Green Corridor and is therefore acceptable under Policy NH3.

7.13.4 With regards to trees, as mentioned above there is a band of young, mixed vegetation including some holly, ash and elm saplings along Aston Lane. Within the band of vegetation stand some visually significant trees. These include Wellingtonia and one large English oak tree. On the southern boundary is a row of predominantly holly and yew with occasional sycamore sapling. Within the row are a group of larger sycamore. Beyond the southern boundary, within the gardens of residential properties in Sacombe Mews is a mixture of deciduous trees. In the southeast corner is a group of mixed ornamental trees of some visual significance.

7.13.5 The Arboriculture Impact Assessment confirms the proposals seek to retain all the significant trees at and adjoining the site and are designed to avoid material harm to the retained trees. The landscaping strategy would also involve the planting of additional trees throughout the development to supplement the already well tree'd location and result in a net gain of tree cover.

7.13.6 The proposed dwelling closest to the boundary with Aston Lane would intercept the root protection area of trees 2 and 3. Tree 2 is a Wellingtonia and tree 3 is an English oak. As such, the Arboriculture Impact Assessment recommends the use of specialist foundations to minimise the likelihood of encountering roots. It also recommends some pruning of the oak tree (number 3) to provide clearance from the dwelling and further, careful and selective pruning of the tree crown to reduce the propensity for future limb loss. The report advises the necessary pruning would not materially impact the health of the tree nor the overall amenity the tree provides. The use of specialist foundations and pruning can be secured via planning conditions should planning permission be granted.

7.13.7 In terms of tree protection during construction, the Arboriculture Impact Assessment prepared by Keen Consultants and drawing number 1583-KC-XX-YTREE-TPP01RevB provide details of the measures in accordance with BS5837:2012 which need to be put in place prior to commencement of development. These measures need to be implemented in advance of construction and maintained until such time as soft landscape proposals require their removal. In some instances specialist construction techniques or approaches are indicated on the protection plan. These would be implemented in accordance with site progress. In order to ensure the protective and specialist measures are understood, implemented and maintained, a scheme of monitoring and supervision would be put in

place. These measures once in place would ensure that any retained tree is not detrimentally affected by the proposed development.

- 7.13.8 Taking the above into consideration, through the use of an appropriately worded condition, the tree protection measures would need to be put in place prior to any construction works taking place. In addition, that the construction methodology is strictly adhered to. Through these measures, the development would not have a detrimental impact on any tree which is to be retained.
- 7.13.9 In regards to hard and soft landscaping, drawing RLA.LBE.004 REV A provides details of a planting specification for trees, shrubs and amenity grass areas. The landscaping strategy includes the provision of a new wildlife buffer area between Stevenage Brook and the rear garden boundaries, which would be enhanced with grassland and shade tolerant perennials and shrubs. With respect to hard landscaping, this would comprise permeable paving for all car parking and rear patio areas. Subject to appropriately worded conditions, the proposed landscaping strategy once delivered would help to create a well-designed development in line with policy requirements.

7.14 Biodiversity, Ecology and Protected species

- 7.14.1 The NPPF and accompanying Planning Practice Guidance requires the Council to achieve measurable net gains in biodiversity at development sites and across the Borough. To achieve a biodiversity net gain, a development must deliver a minimum of 10% net gain post development, when compared with the pre-development baseline. The Council's recently adopted Biodiversity SPD (2021) requires all major and minor applications other than the following exemptions currently suggested by the Government to demonstrate a net gain in biodiversity:
- i. Permitted development;
 - ii. Householder development, including extensions;
 - iii. Nationally significant infrastructure, which falls within scope of the Planning Act 2008;
 - iv. Some brownfield sites with marginal viability and substantial constraints. It is expected that full details to be set out in secondary legislation, but considerations are likely to include where sites contain a high proportion of derelict land and buildings and only a small percentage of the site is undeveloped, land values are significantly lower than average, and the site does not contain any protected habitats; and
 - v. Developments that would not result in measurable loss or degradation of habitat, for instance change of use of or alterations to building
- 7.14.2 The site is approximately 0.18ha in size and comprises twelve habitat types, namely; Scattered Scrub, Scattered Broadleaved Trees, Semi-improved Calcareous Grassland, Tall Ruderal, Amenity Grassland, Introduced Shrub, Species-poor Hedge and Trees, brick wall, bare ground, concrete hard standing and four shipping containers. The site is located in a semi-rural setting and is bordered by Stevenage Brook and residential properties to the south, Stevenage FC training ground to the north and east. The application is accompanied by a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and Preliminary Ecological Appraisal to assess the potential for the site and adjoining habitats to have species that receive legal protection at either UK and/or European level. The survey comprised a desk top study from Hertfordshire Biological Records Centre and from the multi-agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC). A field survey was also undertaken along with a Bat Survey.
- 7.14.3 The Ecological Appraisal identifies that there would be no impact on any designated sites as a result of construction or use of the development. In terms of roosting bats, Tree TN2, located outside the site boundary, was identified as having low potential to support roosting

bats. With regards to foraging and commuting bats, the site was identified as having moderate habitat suitability. With regards to badgers, the site was considered to provide some limited foraging and commuting opportunities. In terms of great crested newts, the site was considered to be of very limited value during the terrestrial phase of their lifecycle. In terms of reptiles, the site was identified as having moderate potential to support reptiles providing foraging, commuting, basking and hibernating opportunities. Finally, with regards to nesting birds the site was identified as having potential to support nesting birds.

- 7.14.4 In terms of recommendations, the report suggests that a sensitive lighting scheme be adhered to during the construction and operational phases of the proposed development to mitigate any impact on foraging bats. With regards to badgers, the report recommends that during construction works; all excavations should be excavated individually and back filled immediately after where possible. Where this is not possible excavations must be covered to prevent badgers (or other animals) becoming trapped. In terms of great crested newts, the report recommends excavation works or actions that would impact upon potential GCN hibernation features should be carried out outside the GCN hibernation season (October to March inclusive). It is recommended vegetation clearance be conducted during the aquatic phase of the GCN lifecycle (i.e. between mid-March and mid-June). With regards to reptiles, it is recommended that any excavation works or actions that would impact upon potential reptile hibernation features should be carried out outside the reptile hibernation season (October to March inclusive). It is recommended that a sensitive vegetation clearance approach be adopted when removing suitable habitat. The timing of these works should coincide with reptiles being active (i.e. between April – September inclusive). In terms of nesting birds, it is recommended habitat clearance works should be undertaken outside the main nesting bird season. Should this not be possible, all trees and buildings must be inspected by an ecologist to determine the presence/absence of any nesting birds immediately prior to clearance.
- 7.14.5 Turning to ecological enhancements, the report suggests the installation and maintenance of artificial bat bricks or bat tubes into any new buildings and installation of bat boxes on to suitable retained trees to increase the roosting opportunities for bats within the site. The provision of bird boxes installed on retained trees is also recommended. Consideration should also be given to the installation of a 'Beebrick' into the new dwellings. Areas should be set aside for ecological landscaping to increase the biodiversity value of the site. Consideration should also be given to the planting of a native species rich hedgerow along all the site boundaries. It is also noted the proposed garden boundary fencing includes the provision of ground level holes (130mmx130mm) for hedgehog movement. The inclusion of the above enhancements into the final scheme can be secured by way of a condition should planning permission be granted.
- 7.14.6 With regards to biodiversity net gain and following recent correspondence with Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, the applicant has undertaken a Biodiversity Net Gain calculation utilising the Defra Metric. The calculation identified that the baseline value of the site is 0.76 habitat units and the post-intervention value of the site is 0.88 habitat units. The total net unit change including all on site and off site habitat retention, creation and enhancement is +0.12 units, giving a total net gain of 15.98%. This exceeds the requirements of the Council's Biodiversity SPD (2021), which requires a minimum of 10% net gain.
- 7.14.7 Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust have confirmed they have no objection, provided that all management regimes to achieve the stated condition scores in the metric are secured by a Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP), which can be attached as a condition should planning permission be granted.

7.15 Other Matters

Sustainable construction and climate change

7.15.1 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.

7.15.2 Details on how the development would incorporate measures to address adaptation to climate change have not been submitted. A planning condition is therefore recommended to secure this prior to commencement of development to ensure the development is designed to be adaptable to climate change.

Community Infrastructure Levy

7.15.3 As indicated above, 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	

7.15.4 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.

7.15.5 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.

Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

- 7.15.6 Consideration has been given to Articles 1 and 8 of the First Protocol of the European Convention on Human Rights. It is not considered that the decision would result in a violation of any person's rights under the Convention. It is not considered that the decision would result in a violation of any person's rights under the Convention.
- 7.15.7 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.
- 7.15.8 The Equalities Act 2010 requires the Council when exercising its functions to have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and (c) foster good relations between persons who share protected characteristics under the Equality Act and persons who do not share it. The protected characteristics under the Equality Act are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief; sex and sexual orientation.
- 7.15.9 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.

8. CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 In summary, the application site is an allocated housing site within the Local Plan, identified as being suitable for aspirational housing. The development of the site for 5 larger detached dwellings is therefore considered acceptable in principle. On consideration of the details of the proposal, it can be concluded the scheme would subject to conditions, not have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the area or the amenities of neighbouring residential properties. Furthermore, the scheme would have acceptable living standards, would have sufficient off-street parking and the proposed access arrangements would not prejudice highway safety. A suitable drainage strategy can be secured through appropriately worded conditions. The development would not have a detrimental impact on the environment, flood risk, archaeology or the setting of nearby listed buildings. It has been demonstrated a high quality landscaping strategy can be delivered, which would enhance the ecological value of the site, protect the Ancient Land / Green Corridor and the Stevenage Brook watercourse.
- 8.2 Given the aforementioned, the development would accord with the relevant policies in the adopted Local Plan (2019) as well as the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Documents. It would accord with the policies set out in the NPPF (2021) and PPG. Therefore, it is recommended that planning permission be granted.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 That outline planning permission be GRANTED as well as the imposition of suitable safeguarding conditions, with authority given to the Assistant Director of Planning and Regulation in consultation with the Chair of Planning Committee, to amend or add to the suggested draft conditions set out in this report, prior to the decision notice being issued, where such amendments or additions would be legally sound and most effectively deliver the development that the Planning Committee has resolved to approve. The suggested conditions are as follows:-

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

2279-10-RevB; 2279-11-RevC; 2279-12-RevA; 2279-13-RevA; 2279-14-RevA; 2279_16; 2279-21-RevA; RLA.LBE.003; 1583-KC-XX-YTREE-TCP01RevB; 1583-KC-XX-YTREE-TPP01RevB; 2279-15-RevH; RLA.LBE.004 REV A

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

2 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

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

3 No demolition or construction works relating to this permission shall be carried out on any Sunday or Bank Holiday, nor before 07.30 hours or after 18.00 hours on any weekdays, nor on any Saturday before 08.00 hours or after 13.00 hours. These times apply to work which is audible at the site boundary.

REASON:- To safeguard the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring properties.

4 No development shall take place until a schedule and samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the dwellings hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

REASON:- To ensure the development has an acceptable appearance.

5 All planting, seeding and turfing comprised in soft landscaping as detailed in drawing number RLA.LBE.004 REV A shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the first use of the site or the completion of the development whichever is the sooner.

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

6 Any trees or plants comprised within the approved plans or subsequently approved landscaping scheme, 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.

- 7 No tree shown retained on the approved plans, or subsequently 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.

- 8 No development shall take place until a landscape and ecological management plan (LEMP) has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The content of the LEMP shall ensure the delivery of the agreed number of habitat and hedgerow units as a minimum (0.88 habitat units, 0.40 hedgerow units) to achieve a net gain in biodiversity and include the following:

- a) Description and evaluation of features to be managed.
- b) Aims and objectives of management.
- c) Appropriate management actions for achieving target condition for habitats as described in the approved metric.
- d) Preparation of a work schedule (including a 30 year work plan capable of being rolled forward in perpetuity), clearly marked on plans.
- e) Details of the body or organisation responsible for implementation of the plan.
- f) Ongoing monitoring plan and remedial measures to ensure habitat condition targets are met.
- g) Details of species selected to achieve target habitat conditions as identified in approved metric, definitively stated and marked on plans.
- h) Details of make, model and location of 5 integrated bat boxes, 5 integrated swift boxes, 2 integrated bee bricks, hedgehog highways between all garden barriers.

The LEMP shall also include details of the legal and funding mechanism(s) by which the longterm 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 LEMP are not being met) how contingencies and/or remedial action will be identified, agreed and implemented so that the development still delivers the fully functioning biodiversity objectives of the originally approved scheme. The approved plan will be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

REASON:- To provide a net gain in biodiversity.

- 9 Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted, provision of bird and bat boxes, bee bricks and hedgehog highways between garden boundary fencing as specified in the landscape and ecological management plan (LEMP) referred to in condition 8 shall be erected accordingly and thereafter permanently retained and maintained.

REASON:- To provide suitable roosting and nesting opportunities for bats, birds and bees and movement for hedgehogs as an ecological enhancement of the site.

- 10 All areas of hedges, scrub or similar vegetation where birds may nest which are to be removed as part of the development, are to be cleared outside the bird-nesting season (March – August inclusive) or if clearance during the bird nesting season cannot be reasonably be avoided, a suitably qualified ecologist will check the areas to be removed immediately prior to clearance and advise whether nesting birds are present. If active nests are recorded, no vegetation clearance or other works that may disturb active nests shall proceed until all young have fledged the nest.

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

- 11 All hard surfacing and boundary treatments as specified in landscape drawing RLA.LBE.004 REV A shall be carried out prior to the first use of the site or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner and shall be permanently maintained during the lifetime of the development.
REASON:- To ensure a satisfactory appearance for the development and as an ecological enhancement of the site .
- 12 No development shall take place (excluding site clearance) until the tree protection measures as detailed in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment prepared by Keen Consultants (document reference 1583-KC-XX-YTREE-TreeSurvey-and-ImpactAssessment-RevB, dated July 2021) and drawing numbers 1583-KC-XX-YTREE-TPP01RevB and 1583-KC-XX-YTREE-TCP01RevB have been implemented accordingly. The tree protection measures shall remain in place until the development has been completed. In addition, the methodology of construction for works which are to be undertaken within the root protection areas of those trees which are to be retained shall be carried out in accordance with the documents and plans specified in this condition.
REASON:- To ensure the protection of those trees which should be retained in the interests of visual amenity.
- 13 Prior to occupation of the dwelling located within the root protection area of tree 3 (English Oak) as identified on tree protection plan 1583-KC-XX-YTREE-TPP01RevB, the tree shall be pruned to provide clearance from the dwelling along with selective pruning of the tree crown to reduce the potential for future limb loss.
REASON:- To ensure the protection of those trees which should be retained in the interests of visual amenity.
- 14 No development shall take place until a Construction Traffic Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the construction of the development shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved Plan. The Construction Management Plan 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.
- 15 Notwithstanding the details indicated on the submitted drawings, no on-site works above slab level shall commence until a detailed scheme for the offsite highway improvement works, to include lighting of the access and signage in the form of pedestrians in the road / triangular warning signs between Broadhall Way and the access to the site have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority.

- REASON:-** To ensure the provision of adequate cycle parking that meets the needs of occupiers of the proposed development and in the interests of encouraging the use of sustainable modes of transport in accordance with Policies 1, 5 and 8 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).
- 16 No development shall take place until a plan for cycle parking should be submitted in accordance with (Cycle Infrastructure Design' DfT Local Transport Note 1/20 (July 2020) and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Prior to first occupation the approved scheme shall be fully implemented and thereafter retained for this purpose.
REASON:- To ensure the provision of adequate cycle parking that meets the needs of occupiers of the proposed development and in the interests of encouraging the use of sustainable modes of transport in accordance with Policies 1, 5 and 8 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).
- 17 No above ground works shall take place until a scheme for the provision of adequate water supplies and fire hydrants, necessary for firefighting purposes at the site, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be occupied until the scheme has been implemented in accordance with the approved details.
REASON:- To ensure adequate water infrastructure provision is made on site for the local fire service to discharge its statutory firefighting duties
- 18 No development shall take place until a Phase One investigation desk top study should be undertaken. Should anything be identified from this study further investigations will be required and a report produced and submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This investigation and assessment must be undertaken by a competent person, and shall assess any contamination on the site, whether or not it originates on the site. Moreover, it must include:
(i) a survey of the extent, scale and nature of contamination;
(ii) an assessment of the potential risks to:
 - human health,
 - property (existing or proposed) including buildings, crops, livestock, pets, woodland and service lines and pipes,
 - adjoining land,
 - groundwaters and surface waters,
(iii) an appraisal of remedial options, and proposal of the preferred option(s).
REASON:- To prevent harm to human health and pollution of the water environment in accordance with Government policy set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 19 In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified, as required under condition 18, the approved remediation scheme must be carried out in accordance with its terms prior to the commencement of development other than that required to carry out remediation, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Local Planning Authority must be given two weeks written notification of commencement of the remediation scheme works. Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme, a verification report that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out must be produced and is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.
REASON:- To prevent harm to human health and pollution of the water environment in accordance with Government policy set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 20 The dwellings hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the general waste and recycle store associated with the development hereby permitted shall be implemented in accordance with the details as specified in the application submission.
REASON:- To ensure the general waste and recycle store is of a sufficient size to accommodate the number of bins which are required for this development. In addition, to ensure the proposed bin store has an acceptable appearance.

- 21 Prior to the occupation of the dwellings hereby permitted, the development shall include provision for each dwelling to be served by an active electric vehicle charging point.
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).
- 22 Prior to first occupation of the development hereby permitted the car parking spaces as detailed in drawing number 2279-15-RevH shall be surfaced and marked out in accordance with the approved details and shall thereafter be permanently retained and shall only be used for the parking of motor-vehicles only.
REASON:- To ensure there is sufficient off-street parking to serve the development hereby permitted.
- 23 No development shall take place above slab level until details of measures to address adaptation to climate change have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These measures shall then be implemented and permanently maintained in accordance with the approved details.
REASON:- To ensure the development is adaptable to climate change through provision of energy and water efficiency measures.
- 24 No development shall take place above slab level until details of the proposed external lighting strategy has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall thereafter be completed in accordance with the approved details.
REASON:- To ensure a satisfactory appearance for the development and to protect the residential amenity of existing residents.

Pro-active Statement

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

INFORMATIVES

1 Hertfordshire County Council Highways

HCC recommends inclusion of the following highway informatives to ensure that any works within the public highway are carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Highway Act 1980: Storage of materials: The applicant is advised that the storage of materials associated with the construction of this development should be provided within the site on land which is not public highway, and the use of such areas must not interfere with the public highway. If this is not possible, authorisation should be sought from the Highway Authority before construction works commence. Further information is available via the 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.

Obstruction of highway: 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.

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>

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.

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.

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., 4th Floor, Campus West, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, AL8 6BX.

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

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

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

4 Police Crime Prevention Design Service

Prior to construction, it is recommended the applicant 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. The reason for this is 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 Environmental permit

The Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 require a permit to be obtained for any activities which will take place:

- on or within 8 metres of a main river (16 metres if tidal)
- on or within 8 metres of a flood defence structure or culverted main river (16 metres if tidal)
- on or within 16 metres of a sea defence
- involving quarrying or excavation within 16 metres of any main river, flood defence (including a remote defence) or culvert
- in a floodplain more than 8 metres from the river bank, culvert or flood defence structure (16 metres if it's a tidal main river) and you don't already have planning permission

For further guidance please visit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-activities-environmental-permits> or contact our National Customer Contact Centre on 03708 506 506. The applicant should not assume that a permit will automatically be forthcoming once

planning permission has been granted, and we advise them to consult with us at the earliest opportunity.

13. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

1. The application file, forms, plans and supporting documents having the reference number relating to this item.
2. Stevenage Borough Council Supplementary Planning Documents – Parking Provision adopted October 2020, Stevenage Design Guide adopted October 2009, The impact of Development on Biodiversity adopted March 2021.
3. Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031 adopted 2019.
4. Hertfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan 4 adopted May 2018.
5. Responses to consultations with statutory undertakers and other interested parties referred to in this report.
6. Central Government advice contained in the National Planning Policy Framework July 2021 and Planning Policy Guidance March 2014.