

The Meeting: Planning and Development Agenda Item:
Committee

Date: 12 March 2026

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Application Nos: 25/00620/OPM

Location: Land South of A602/Land East of Bragbury End, Stevenage.

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

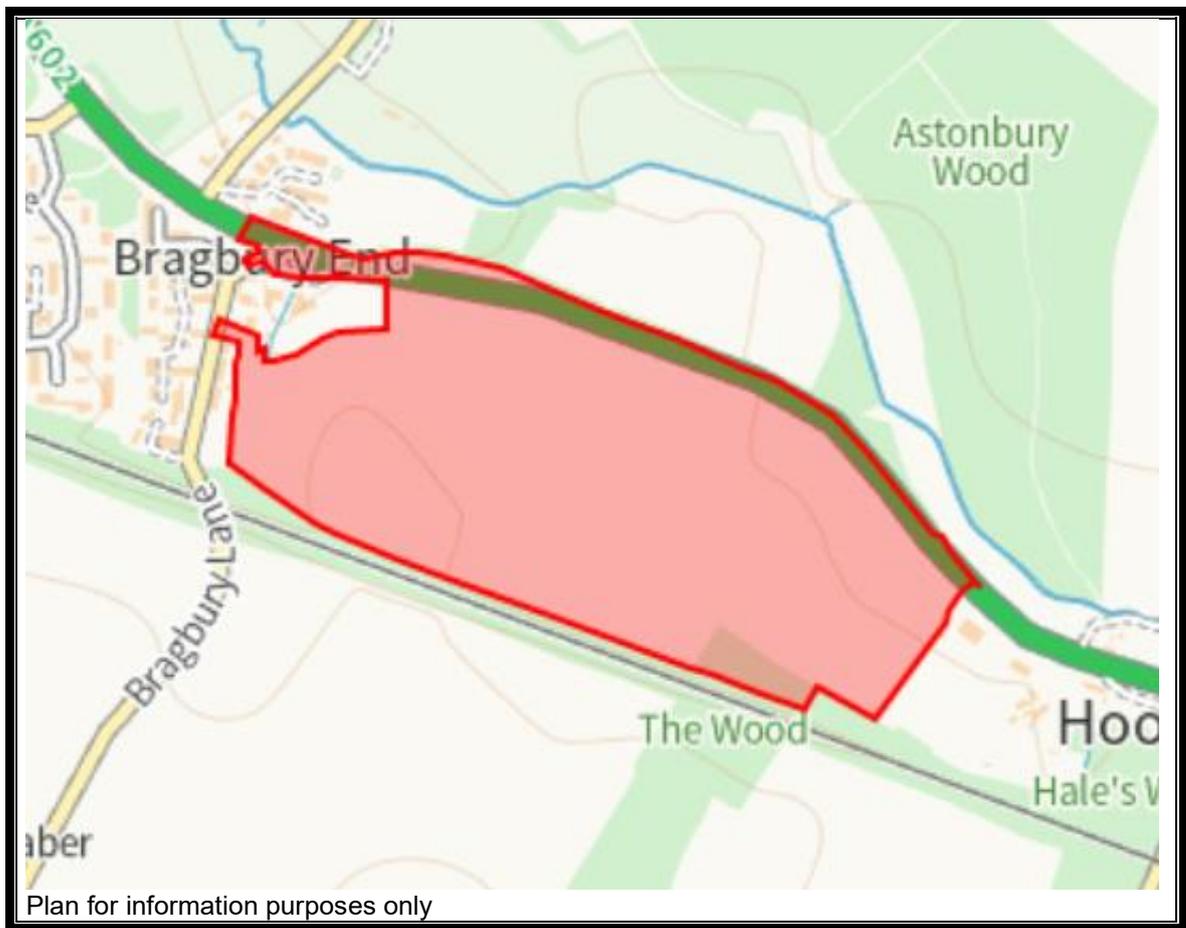
Drawing Nos.

- 23057su1.01C Site Location Plan
- 23057su1.02C Existing Site Plan
- 23057su1.04A Site Location Plan with Full Planning Boundary
- 23057wd2.01J Proposed Sie Plan – Masterplan
- 23057wd2.02D Proposed Sie Plan – Masterplan Lots Allocation
- 23057wd2.03A Proposed Masterplan Part plan 1
- 23057wd2.04A Proposed Masterplan Part plan 2
- 23057wd2.05B Proposed Masterplan Part plan 3
- 23057wd2.06B Proposed Masterplan Part plan 4
- 23057wd2.07A Proposed Masterplan Part plan 5
- 23057wd2.08A Proposed Masterplan with Full Planning Boundary
- 23057wd2.10 Proposed artist impression 1
- 23057wd2.11 Proposed artist impression 2
- 23057wd2.12 Proposed artist impression 3
- 23057wd2.13 Proposed artist impression 4
- 23057wd2.14 Proposed artist impression 5
- 23057wd2.15 Proposed artist impression 6
- 23057wd2.16 Proposed artist impression 7
- 23057wd2.17 Proposed artist impression 8

Applicant: Stevenage Borough Council

Date Valid: 13 August 2025

Recommendation: GRANT OUTLINE AND PLANNING PERMISSION



1. SITE DESCRIPTION

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

2. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

2.1 No known planning history for the site.

3. THE CURRENT APPLICATION

3.1 The submitted application is a hybrid application with the majority of the proposed development being outline with some highway works which are covered by full detailed permission. The proposed development seeks full planning permission for the construction of a main spine road within the development, access points from the A602 and ancillary works. Outline planning permission is sought for up to 500 dwelling units (including affordable housing and self-build plots), a mixed use local centre (Use Class C3, E and F2), public open and amenity space (including children's play), associated landscaping and ecological enhancement works, internal highways, parking, footpaths, cycleways, drainage, utilities, service infrastructure and ancillary works (with some matters reserved).

3.2 The main proposed access to the site would be by a four-arm signalised junction, with left and right turning lanes. A secondary access is proposed to the east of the site to allow bus and emergency vehicle access only. On entering the site, the north/south 'boulevard' would be tree lined and flanked by three storey apartment block buildings, with a neighbourhood centre below. The 'boulevard' would open onto the main spine road heading west and east to provide access to each of the proposed 'lots' of dwellings.

3.3 The proposed 'lots' breakdown the proposed housing into areas which could be phased through the submission of future reserved matters applications. The 'lots' have greater densities per hectare of housing the closer they are to the A602 and neighbourhood centre within the site, with lower densities towards the east and western sides of the site, taking note of the more rural surroundings of the site.

3.4 The Masterplan is landscape-led, utilising the Garden City Principles, with larger and smaller pockets of useable green space throughout the development. A main green recreation area sited at the end of the 'boulevard' creates open vistas in the site, with smaller pocket parks and multiple foot/cycleways around the site increasing connectivity.

3.5 The proposal includes Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), additional landscaping and ecological measures to mitigate the impact of the development. Aside from the new accesses and spine road, all other matters are outline and will be subject to the submission of reserved matters applications. As such, details pertaining to house types, designs, parking, final landscaping, play areas, etc are not specified in this application.

3.6 This application comes before the Planning and Development Committee as the development is a major strategic development submitted by Stevenage Borough Council as the applicant and landowner.

4. PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS

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

4.2 Objections -

- Highways, Traffic congestion and road safety

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

4.3 Petition

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

4.4

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

4.5

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

4.6

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

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

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

Natural grass pitches:

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

3G artificial pitches:

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

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

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

Resulting facility requirements include:

- 1.10 natural grass pitch equivalents
- Associated capital and lifecycle costs
- Additional changing room provision
- 0.06 of a full-size 3G pitch equivalent

On-site provision is not considered necessary, but off-site financial contributions are essential to mitigate the impact of new demand. Contributions should support football facility improvements within a reasonable catchment of the development. Engagement with Hertfordshire FA is recommended to identify suitable local projects that can deliver the required additional capacity.

4.7 These comments are not verbatim. Full comments can be viewed online.

5. CONSULTATIONS

5.1 Hertfordshire County Council Highways Authority

Introduction

5.1.1 The Highway Authority notes the submission of this planning application for Land South of the A602, located in Bragbury End, Stevenage. The Highway Authority has reviewed the Transport Assessment (TA) dated July 2025 in support of the planning application. The Highway Authority note the discussions with the applicant and their consulting team on the Transport Assessment via pre and post application discussions. These discussions centred the sustainability of the site in terms of the proposed walking and cycling links, bus services and the type of access into the site. The submission of a Transport Assessment Addendum (TAA) is also noted, dated October 2025 (revision 2). The TAA deals with a number of post-application matters, including how an interim site access junction (without the northern element of the HO4 allocation), could be promoted.

Site

5.1.2 The development site is accessed from the A602, a Principal Road and a Primary Distributor in the Hertfordshire roads hierarchy. A speed limit of 40 m.p.h. is in force on this section of the A602. There are no rights of way within the site itself; however, there are footpaths 26 and 27 on the northern side of the A602, opposite the site.

Travel by Sustainable Means

Walking

5.1.3 The site is located on the south-eastern periphery of Stevenage, in the Bragbury End area. The site is capable of being connected to the west into the Stevenage footway and cycleway network. However, this notwithstanding, the site is remote from local facilities and amenities. As detailed within Table 3.2 of the Transport Assessment which summarises the walking and cycling distances from the site to local services, it is clear that the site is isolated from the wider Stevenage settlement.

5.1.4 Broadwater Crescent is the closest local shopping area, with a convenience store, public house, take-away outlets and church. However, these facilities are nevertheless located approximately 2.5km from the centre of the site. It is considered that given the site's location, residents would need to travel into Stevenage town centre, be it to access local facilities, amenities and public transport. An appropriate package of mitigation measures in order to make the development sustainable is therefore of key importance for this location.

Bus

5.1.5 The closest pair of bus stops is located to the west of the site, with the bus stops marking The Chequers public house. The bus stops are served principally by the number 390 and 907 bus services. The 390 provides a link between Hertford/Ware and Stevenage with the 907 providing a link between Stevenage and Cheshunt. It is considered that the principal travel requirement will be towards Stevenage where in the morning peak hour, to give one example, there are three weekday services in the peak hour period.

Proposed Mitigation

5.1.6 The Highway Authority consider it fitting that an enhancement and/or diversion into the site is appropriate for this proposed development. It is considered that a figure of £150,000 (index linked) per year, for 5 years to secure the futures of current services 390, 907 and/or the extension of new services introduced into the surrounding area which may be adapted to serve the development. Hertfordshire County Council's Passenger Transport Unit have examined the layout and consider that current routes could be diverted through the development for example. (Current stops, site, site with new stops and route.)

5.1.7 Should planning permission be granted, the applicant should enter into discussions with the Passenger Transport Unit, to include the precise form of the service, timing of the diversion into the site and all necessary infrastructure to facilitate such a movement and collect passengers. Recommendations:

- The cost of an ANPR system for the Bus Gate should be factored into the S106 at £100,000 (index linked) and used if traffic monitoring shows non permitted vehicles are not following the road signage; and
- Bus stops to be placed on both sides of the road with suitable infrastructure, including shelters and real time information boards where required

Cycling

5.1.8 The site is positioned on the edge of the Stevenage urban area, situated well for access into the Broadwater estate and joining with the existing cycle route on the A602 which facilitates access into Stevenage town centre and railway station. Stevenage benefits from excellent cycle connectivity, with routes spanning across the whole town, with connections from the original estates to the Old and New Town Centres and railway station/bus station.

Proposed Mitigation

5.1.9 An enhancement of the existing provision in the site's immediate vicinity and the integration of the site into the network has the potential to encourage trips by sustainable

modes. The Highway Authority welcomes the proposals as set out within the TA which provide cycle links into the site and enhancement around The Chequers public house. The connection into the Three Horseshoes public house is also welcomed and will also provide better connectivity to/from Watton-at-Stone to which the Highway Authority seeks future enhanced links by way of new infrastructure and the LCWIP process.

5.1.10 The works around The Chequers public house should be delivered by planning condition and Section 278 agreement. Given the site’s location, it is the Highway Authority’s view that cycling has the potential to contribute significantly to sustainable travel on the proposed development, being located within a comfortable distance/travel time and broadly level gradient into Stevenage town centre.

5.1.11 The Highway Authority considers that a Strand 2 contribution towards the Stevenage LCWIP Route 4 will present an excellent opportunity to facilitate a good mode share by cycle. As such, there is an opportunity to assist in the promotion of a corridor of mitigation works towards Stevenage town centre.

Trip Generation

5.1.12 Chapter 6 of the TA report and summarised below:

Peak Period	Proposed Development Trip Generation		
	Inbound	Outbound	Two-Way
	Trips	Trips	Trips
AM Peak (0800 to 0900)	63	164	227*
PM Peak (1700 to 1800)	151	68	220*

Table 6.4 – Proposed Development Vehicular Trip Generation *minor rounding error

The Highway Authority is content with the above forecasts. Furthermore, the trip distribution exercise, as set out within the TA report in accordance with local census data is acceptable.

Access

5.1.13 The Highway Authority has entered into discussions with the applicant regarding the proposed access strategy. Ensuring that the proposed access may be accommodated on this section of the network, which in particular experiences peak hour rolling queues is of key importance to the application. A number of different access options were examined with the transport consultant prior to the submission of the planning application.

5.1.14 The Highway Authority’s view is that a centrally located, signalised junction represents the most fitting form of control for access into the site. This form of junction is best suited to accommodate and control the high volumes of traffic on this section of the A602. The access is detailed within the TA as below.

“Primary Access – Signalised Junction

4.2.1 A new four-arm signalised junction is proposed in a central location on the A602. This will serve as the principal vehicular access to the site and also form a key crossing point for pedestrians and cyclists. The proposed layout is shown on Drawing ST3600-703-D

– Means of Access. Key features of the junction design include:

- Three-lane approaches on the A602 (the major road arms)
- Two-lane approaches from the development access arms (the minor road arms)
- Toucan crossing facilities across all four arms
- Advance Stop Lines (ASLs) for cyclists on all approaches”

5.1.15 The Highway Authority has examined the modelling exercise prepared by the consultant in support of the proposed access and has determined that it may be accommodated on the network. The submission of a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit is noted. The Highway Authority consider that based on the findings of the Road Safety Audit that subject to detailed design and a Section 278 agreement, that the access may be delivered satisfactorily.

5.1.16 Given the size of the development site, it is also necessary to introduce an emergency access, as detailed below. This will also have a key function as a bus gate access which will allow bus to avoid peak hour queuing on the A602 and provide a greater level of accessibility for residents of the development site. As stated within the TAA report, the layout is shown on Drawing ST-3600-750-A, Means of Access - Interim Access Option.

5.1.17 The Highway Authority note that the remaining element of the HO4 site allocation, is located immediately to the north of the site, on the opposite side of the A602. The access strategy for the northern site is not yet finalised, although it is the view of the Highway Authority that this site should share a centralised signalised access junction with the southern HO4 site allocation, the latter being the subject of this response. The Highway Authority is content that the full HO4 site allocation can be delivered and accommodated satisfactorily on the adjoining local highway network. The Highway Authority is further content that an interim access solution should only the southern element of the HO4 allocation be promoted can be delivered.

Highway Capacity

5.1.18 The Highway Authority has agreed with the applicant that a comprehensive network of junctions on the A602 are modelled in order to test highway capacity. The site access junction which is to form a signalised arrangement onto the A602 is also included. The Highway Authority notes that the northern element of the HO4 site allocation is yet to come forward as a planning application. As such, the Highway Authority has requested that an interim option where the southern site can be promoted as a standalone site is also tested. This scenario is detailed within the TAA. The TA also examines the highway capacity of the network should the full build out be constructed.

5.1.19 The Highway Authority’s signal unit has also considered in detail the operation of the site access junction. It is considered that the proposed signalised junction to the site is able to operate satisfactorily. The operation of the wider network is considered to work satisfactorily when the development traffic is added. However, contributions towards schemes as detailed within this response such as at the A602/Gresley Way roundabout are considered fitting in order to accommodate the increased level of traffic in this part of Stevenage. Should planning permission be granted, the applicant will be required to liaise with HCC's signals unit.

Contributions

5.1.20 Stevenage Borough Council operates the Community Infrastructure Levy, as detailed by the Local Planning Authority. Separately, HCC’s Guide to Developer Infrastructure Contributions (2021) implements a two-strand approach to planning obligations in order to address the immediate impacts of the new development (first strand), and the cumulative impacts of all development on non-car networks (second strand).

5.1.21 The Highway Authority uses the toolkit in conjunction with the three CIL tests, noted below: i. necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms ii. directly

related to the development; and iii. fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

- 5.1.22 The Highway Authority will seek, wherever possible, to secure highway works via planning condition and s278 agreement.

First strand (works to be undertaken under s278):

- Access works to facilitate the proposed site access and emergency access; and
- Highways works to facilitate the proposed layout in and around The Chequers and Three Horseshoe public houses.

First strand (works to be undertaken under s106):

- 5.1.23 Bus Service Improvements

£150,000 (index linked) per year, for 5 years to secure the futures of current services 390, 907 and/or the extension of new services introduced into the surrounding area which may be adapted to serve the development. Separate ANPR/bus gate contribution also sought.

- 5.1.24 Travel Plan

Approved Travel Plan(s), with individual monitoring fees in accordance with the current HCC Travel Plan guidance published in March 2020. Subsequent to the guidance being issued, the Highway Authority by way of the planning and obligations toolkit has updated the required travel plan evaluation and support contribution figure. Travel Plan Evaluation and Support Contribution” means the sum of £8,862 (index-linked) as hereinafter provided to be paid to the County Council for evaluating administering and monitoring the objectives of the Travel Plan [Note: the Travel Plan Evaluation and Support Contribution is a calculated at a rate of £1,772.40 per year for(a) five years post-full occupation for residential developments or (b) five years post-first occupation for Workplace, Visitor or Educational Schemes]

- 5.1.25 Sustainable Travel Voucher

The Highway Authority seeks a contribution towards a sustainable travel voucher in order to encourage travel by sustainable modes of transport, detailed below. Means a voucher incentive tangible or web hosted for the value of fifty pounds (£50) per flat unit or one hundred pounds (£100) per house unit forming part of the Development (index linked as hereinafter provided) to incentivise the uptake of public transport cycling or walking as appropriate to the Development. As detailed within HCC planning guidance, the Highway Authority will seek to use this sum in a flexible fashion in order to promote travel by sustainable modes.

Second Strand (S106):

- 5.1.26 As per the Hertfordshire County Council Guide to Developer Infrastructure Contributions, first issued 2021, a contribution per dwelling based on forecasted residential development proportion required to meet Active Travel funding gap (cost per dwelling): $\text{£}570,185,769 / 83,530 = \text{£}6,826$. Indexed to March 2024 = £9,861 Based upon the number of homes that are sought for planning permission, the Highway Authority note that a Strand 2 figure of 500 homes x £9,861 is applicable, amounting to £4,930,500 (excluding indexation which would be dated from the planning committee date).

Schemes

- 5.1.27 HCC have identified schemes from the Stevenage LCWIP Route 4 which are considered suitable in planning terms and compliant with the CIL regulations. It is noted that the TA/TAA documentation only sets out limited off-site mitigation, focused on the immediate site extents, connecting the development into the wider Stevenage pedestrian/cycle network.

- 5.1.28 For a development of this size in a location that in planning terms, needs to improve sustainable travel, the application of the full Strand 2 contribution is considered fitting. The Highway Authority as part of the A602 capacity upgrade project (as detailed also in the Stevenage Infrastructure Delivery Plan), seeks a potential scheme at the Gresley Way/A602 junction. Such a scheme would also alleviate the rolling queues on this section of the A602 and would assist in the movement of traffic back to the proposed site access junction. The Highway Authority therefore requests that SBC apply the appropriate portion of the CIL to be allocated to HCC in order to promote the schemes as detailed within this response.
- 5.1.29 Should the Local Planning Authority be minded to grant planning permission, the Highway Authority requests that a fitting level of CIL contributions payable to SBC for highways/transportation matters be attributed to the schemes as discussed within this response. The application of such funding is considered an essential element in order to make this development acceptable in planning terms.

Summary

- 5.1.30 The Highway Authority has reviewed the Transport Assessment (dated July 2025) in support of a residential led development in the Bragbury End area of Stevenage. The Highway Authority has also considered the addendum document dated October 2025 prepared by the transport consultant.
- 5.1.31 The Highway Authority is content with the principle of the development and the junction access strategy. It is noted that the site forms a part of the HO4 allocation, as identified within the Stevenage Borough Council Local Plan. A key element of making the development acceptable in planning terms and compliant with LTP4 is the package of mitigation, including proposed bus service and enhancements to the footway and cycle network.
- 5.1.32 The Highway Authority has also detailed key schemes that may be funded via the CIL charge. In summary, the Highway Authority does not wish to restrict the grant of planning permission, subject to the aforementioned planning conditions and Advisory Notes.

5.2 Hertfordshire County Council Lead Local Flood Authority

Comments dated 6 February 2026

- 5.2.1 We maintain our objection to this planning application in the absence of an acceptable Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Drainage Strategy or relating to:
- Submission of sufficiently detailed technical Information in relation to flood risk and surface water drainage.
 - The development is not in accordance with NPPF, PPG or Stevenage local policies.
- 5.2.2 **Reason** To prevent flooding in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 181, 182 and 187 by ensuring the satisfactory management of local flood risk, surface water flow paths, storage and disposal of surface water from the site in a range of rainfall events and ensuring the SuDS proposed operates as designed for the lifetime of the development.
- 5.2.3 We will consider reviewing this objection if the issues highlighted below are adequately addressed. The LLFA requires the applicant to:
- Submit information regarding the concerns that there is not sufficient room within the development boundary to address flood risk mitigation and also achieved the suggested density of the development. Information provided to support this point that has previously been submitted for a different application should be resubmitted to support this application.
 - In principle approval from Thames Water on the connection to the sewer and discharge rate.

5.2.4 Submission of detailed information for this development to include, but not limited to, the below points will be recommended to be secured by condition once the above points of objection have been addressed:

- Provision of a surface water drainage system that fully addressed the four pillars of SuDS and meets the National Standards for SuDS (2025), including evidence for the proposed runoff destination and including interception management.
- Submission of detailed surface water drainage design calculations for the 100% AEP event, 50% AEP event, 3.3% AEP event, 3.3% AEP event (plus climate change allowance), 1% AEP event and 1% AEP event (plus climate change allowance).
- Apply conservative design settings, including a CV value of 1, in all of the drainage design calculations.
- Detailed surface water drainage layout plan and contributing catchment details.
- Submit details on mitigation measures including freeboard to drainage features that are designed to hold water and freeboard to ground finished floor levels from the maximum design water level or flood level from any source, including from the surface water drainage provision.
- Exceedance flow information for events in excess of the 1% AEP event plus climate change allowance.
- Submit information on how the phasing of the development is occurring and how any temporary measures will be included in relation to the protection of the water environment and any newly built SuDS features.
- Details of the required maintenance (activity and frequency) of any SuDS features and structures and who will be adopting / responsible for undertaking the required maintenance of these features for the lifetime of the development.
- A high-level assessment of how water quantity and water quality will be managed during the construction phase is required. Identifying high level assumptions of a construction management plan, such as the need to discharge to a sewer or watercourse with appropriate pollution measures.

Officer response

5.2.5 At the time of writing this report, the applicant was seeking to address the points raised by the LLFA. If updated comments are received prior to the meeting and/or the drainage strategy is agreed an update will be provided, otherwise it is anticipated Members will agree to delegate powers being granted to the Director of Planning and Regulation to impose any conditions advised on any response provided after the committee meeting. However, it should be noted the LLFA does not object to the principle of the drainage strategy.

5.2.6 A decision will not be issued until the Legal Agreement associated with the development has been signed, which will allow time for updated comments to be received. Therefore, comments will be fully considered prior to a decision being issued. However, if the LLFA continues to raise an objection to this application and their concerns cannot be overcome, then this application will be referred back to the Planning and Development Committee for its decision.

5.3 Environmental Health

5.3.1 I have reviewed the documentation submitted in support of the above application and make the following observations; in the interest of clarity I have presented them as regards the two distinct phases of the development – its construction and its use thereafter.

Construction phase (noise, dust, smoke, etc)

5.3.2 The Air Quality Assessment report authored by Mayer Brown Limited (reference Bragbury End(A)9.1, dated August 2025) concludes, in Section 6, that dust from

construction activity does need to be controlled in order to minimise its harmful impacts as regards this phase of the development. The report recommends a number of mitigation measures in Appendix C.

- 5.3.3 The report recommends, which I endorse, an integrated approach to the control of pollutants during the construction phase and accordingly I suggest the following condition should the Local Planning Authority (LPA) be minded to grant consent to this development:

1(a) Prior to the commencement of the development to which this permission relates (including any demolition or site clearance), a Construction Management Plan (CMP) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plan shall include details of: a) hours of working (including deliveries and waste removal); b) all plant necessary for construction and demolition; c) noise and vibration mitigation measures with particular attention paid to piling, power floating, and vacuum excavation activities where these activities are to be undertaken; d) dust and smoke mitigation measures; e) site lighting and off-site mitigation measures;

1(b) The development shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved CMP at all times.

REASON: In the interests of the amenities of nearby residential occupiers in accordance with Local Plan Policy FP7

- 5.3.4 The Preliminary Risk Assessment (PRA) prepared by WDE Consulting Limited (see below) advises that no site works, including clearance, should take place until the risks associated with unexploded ordnance ('UXO') have been fully explored. Whilst this risk principally relates to health & safety matters, and is therefore the regulatory responsibility of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), I would nonetheless recommend that the LPA considers a condition mandating that this takes place.

End use (environment noise)

- 5.3.5 The Noise impact assessment for a proposed residential development report authored by ACA Acoustics Limited (reference 241113-R001B, dated 18/7/2025) considers transport noise in some depth but does not consider or offer noise mitigation measures as regards the following sources:

- The Chequers public house, a licensed premises, to the northwest of the development site
- Skate park or other recreational facilities
- Plant noise associated with local centre
- Operational noise, e.g. deliveries, associated with local centre.

- 5.3.6 The application contains very limited information on these sources and therefore I am unable to offer detailed advice on their potential impact on residential amenity (as regards both existing residents and also future occupiers of the proposed dwellings). Accordingly, I suggest that the LPA secures more information on the above and reconsults EH&LS before proceeding to determination of the application.

Transport noise

- 5.3.7 The ACA report is a comprehensive document as regards noise from nearby road and rail sources. It assesses that parts of the site have a high risk, both at night and during the day, of environmental noise exposure and therefore comprehensive mitigation measures are needed in order to safeguard the amenity of future residents of the development.

- 5.3.8 The mitigation measures proposed include the appropriate location and orientation of habitable rooms for dwellings with the highest façade noise exposure and also uprated glazing/ventilation arrangements. The details of the final design of the scheme have yet to be finalised and also the interplay between acoustic mitigation measures and the requirements of dwelling cooling and ventilation needs to be carefully considered when arriving at a final specification.
- 5.3.9 Some external amenity spaces are likely to be particularly challenging to mitigate given the elevation of the railway line and proposal for some flats to have balconies. The report proposes a pragmatic approach to these spaces designed ‘.....to achieve the lowest practicable noise levels in amenity spaces and should not be prohibited where there is a slight excess.’ Even with typical mitigation measures, some of these spaces are likely to have noise levels above those set out in BS 8233:2014 and therefore the LPA should have regard to this in its decision making.
- 5.3.10 In light of the above, I believe that the condition, over page, is a means of promoting the objectives of Local Plan Policy FP7 vis-à-vis internal living spaces. I have integrated the proposed mitigation strategy as regards external amenity spaces in the condition but this, for the reasons set out above, is problematic.

1(a) Prior to the construction of any dwelling a written noise impact assessment for the site shall be submitted in writing to, and approved by, the Local Planning Authority. The report shall demonstrate that the layout and construction of dwellings reflects good acoustic design together with details of appropriate mitigation measures, where required, so that internal and external noise levels specified below will not be exceeded: Room type Daytime (07:00 to 23:00) Night time (23:00 to 07:00) Living room 35 dB LAeq, 16hour - Dining room 40 dB LAeq, 16hour - Bedroom 35 dB LAeq, 16hour 30 dB LAeq, 8hour 45dB LAm_{ax} - no more than 10 times per night Where it is necessary to rely on closed windows to achieve the above internal noise levels then an alternative adequate means of ventilation or cooling, meeting the requirements of building regulations approved document F and O, shall be provided that do not materially compromise the performance of the relevant façade sound insulation. Where mechanical ventilation is proposed it should, in normal operation, achieve compliance with NR20 in bedrooms between 23:00 to 07:00 and NR25 in all habitable rooms between 07:00 to 23:00. External amenity spaces provided for the sole use of the occupiers of the dwellings shall be designed to achieve the lowest practicable noise levels and have a target of not exceeding 55dB LAeq, 16hr.

1(b) All agreed mitigation measures shall be implemented, retained, and maintained for the life of the approved use.

REASON: In the interests of the amenities of future residential occupiers in accordance with Local Plan Policy FP7

Air source heat pumps

- 5.3.11 The above report also does not consider the impact of noise arising from external plant attached to dwellings such as Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHPs) which, according to the supporting Design and Access Statement (see page 63) will feature in the development. I believe that the risk to the amenity of residents of the scheme and those currently nearby can be adequately controlled by way of the following condition:

1(a) Construction of the dwellings hereby permitted shall not take place until a written management plan detailing how noise arising from mechanical air ventilation, heating, and cooling plant is to be mitigated has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

1(b) No part of the development shall be occupied until the plant authorised by 1(a) above as regards noise control has been installed and commissioned in strict accordance with the approved management plan.

1(c) All agreed mitigation measures shall be retained and maintained for the life of the approved use.

REASON: In the interests of the amenities of existing and future residential occupiers in accordance with Local Plan Policy FP7

End use (vibration)

- 5.3.12 The ACA report concludes that vibration from the railway line is not a material constraint to development – I agree with this and therefore no mitigation measures are warranted in my opinion.

End use (local air quality)

- 5.3.13 The Mayer Brown Limited report, see above, states that the operation of the development, once constructed, will have only a very limited impact on local air quality. The data contained within the report, and also that from Council monitoring, supports that conclusion and therefore I do not believe that air quality is a material factor as regards this application.

End use (contaminated land)

- 5.3.14 The Preliminary Risk Assessment (PRA) prepared by WDE Consulting Limited (reference 21316R1, Issue A, dated August 2024) considers the previous land uses, inter alia, of the development site and concludes that, with the exception of the onsite reservoir, the development of the site is unlikely to create any significant pollutant linkages. I have no material disagreement with this conclusion but would point out that contamination of ground water is usually a matter for the Environment Agency and so I would encourage the LPA to consult that body, if it hasn't done so already, seeking guidance on the likely impacts of the proposed development on that receptor.
- 5.3.15 As regards the onsite reservoir, the report suggests that further investigation is warranted in connection with a number of potential pollutant linkages including ground water. Under the circumstances I would recommend the following condition:

Prior to any construction works to which this permission relates the results of a phase 2 site investigation together with full written details of any necessary remediation works or controls shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved remediation strategy.

REASON: In the interests of human health.

In the event that any previously unidentified ground contamination is discovered on the site, no further construction work may be carried out in the affected area until full written details of any necessary remediation works or controls has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved remediation strategy.

REASON: In the interests of human health.

Where any development to which this permission relates is required to be carried out in accordance with a remediation strategy approved by the local planning authority, a verification report (setting out the remedial measures actually

undertaken on the site) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to the beneficial occupation of the development.

REASON: In the interests of human health.

End use (external artificial lighting)

- 5.3.16 I note the inclusion within the application pack of two drawings relating to the use of artificial lighting. However, these are restricted to the lighting of roads and streets and therefore they do not set out an approach as regards the illumination of places such as the proposed delivery yard, skate park, etc.
- 5.3.17 I would therefore recommend that the LPA secures more information on the artificial lighting proposals before proceeding with determination of the application. Any assessment of this aspect of the development on residential amenity should ideally have regard to the guidance set out in: The Institute of Lighting Professionals: Guidance Note 1 for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light.

5.4 Active Travel England

Comments dated 2 February 2026

- 5.4.1 Notice is hereby given that Active Travel England's formal recommendation is as follows:
b. Conditional approval: ATE recommends approval of the application, subject to the agreement and implementation of planning conditions and/or obligations as set out in this response.

Background

- 5.4.2 Active Travel England (ATE) welcomes the opportunity to provide an additional comment on the full planning application for the construction of the spine road, site accesses from the A602 and ancillary works. Also considered is the outline planning permission for up to 500 dwelling units (including affordable housing and self-build plots), a mixed use local centre (Use Class C3, E and F2 space, public open and amenity space (including Children's Play), skate park, associated landscaping and ecological enhancement works, internal highways, parking, footpaths, cycleways, drainage, utilities, service infrastructure and ancillary works (With some matters reserved). The application is regarding part of land allocated for housing in the Stevenage Borough Council (SBC) Local Plan, with a site north of the A602 also allocated for housing. ATE provided a Deferral Response for this application on the 12th of September 2025.

Summary

- 5.4.3 ATE has received a Transport Assessment Addendum (TAA) dated December 2025 and has considered this and other updated information and drawings. Upon review of this information ATE can confirm that it is in support of the development subject to the setting of planning conditions to be made at the discretion of the local planning authority (LPA).

Active Travel Assessment (Revised)

Trip Generation, and Travel Plan Revised Rating: PASS - CONTRIBUTION/CONDITION RECOMMENDED

- 5.4.4 ATE notes that the revised TAA has provided a more comprehensive collection/analysis of multi-modal trip generation. This is representative of all hours of the day and informed by all travel purposes. It is considerate of additional of other data sources including developments with a similar context and National Travel Survey (NTS) data which could provide a more in-depth accurate representation of multi-modal movements of all the components of the proposed scheme.
- 5.4.5 ATE welcomes the applicant setting suitably ambitious TP targets with increases of active travel modes from 14.4% to 26.6% and 8.2% to 17% for public transport (Table 3.2, TP., p.15). This approach can then contribute to the production of a comprehensive Travel Plan (TP) which can make provision for relevant surveys, review/monitoring

mechanisms, targets, any mitigations, timescales, phasing programme and on-site management responsibilities. This full TP can be set as conditions of planning permission.

Active Travel Route Audit/Off-site Infrastructure/Access to amenities by Active Travel modes/Access to Public Transport and Internal Active Travel Provision Revised Rating: PASS - CONTRIBUTION/CONDITION RECOMMENDED

5.4.6 ATE notes that the applicant has provided a consideration of the current accessibility by active travel modes via the presentation of a detailed Walking and Cycling Audit in the TAA (p.46) which includes sufficiently detailed experiential analysis including photos. Within this is a reasonable analysis of the site's location and access to local amenities via active travel modes and public transport provision has been duly considered.

5.4.7 ATE is satisfied with the applicant's proposals that will link the proposed development with existing and future footway/cycle networks, and the delivery of Green Corridor along the A602. ATE also welcomes further proposed measures such as controlled pedestrian and cycle crossings for the A602, consideration of public realm improvements and provision to the bus stop as per drawing ref: ST-3600-704-H. In consideration of the above, ATE advises all future drawings/information for the proposed development should confirm precise dimensions of these including materials, lighting, and supporting features such as signage and seating etc. Proposed Active Travel Infrastructure must demonstrate how it is in adherence with all relevant national policy e.g. LTN 1-20 and Inclusive Mobility. These details can be set as planning conditions at the discretion of the LPA.

Site Permeability/ Placemaking Rating (no change): PASS - CONDITION/CONTRIBUTION RECOMMENDED

5.4.8 The proposed development benefits from an overall suitable street hierarchy and a layout with well-located amenity that benefits from such traits as passive surveillance. This can then potentially facilitate active travel modes and in turn support a more ambitious approach to travel plans as espoused in 2.1 above. Further to this, the applicant should provide all details of supporting measures, such as those which can prevent inconsiderate parking. It is also important that the applicant provide detailed technical drawings/crosssections of the entire street hierarchy.

Cycle Parking Revised Rating: CONDITION/CONTRIBUTION RECOMMENDED

5.4.9 ATE recognises that the applicant is willing to provide cycle parking for the proposed development (para 4.8.1, TA p.24) and that this will be in alignment with LTN 1- 20 parking standards. ATE advises that the applicant provides details of the cycle parking for all components of the proposed development, including one space per bedroom for apartment dwellings and also a consideration of temporary cycle parking for visitors. In addition, and also in accordance with LTN 1-20 the applicant should also commit to details of the cycle parking's location, accessibility, parking types and dimensions to ensure that this provision is suitable for all users and that there is suitable supportive amenity. It is vital that these details are embedded into the final designs and in consideration of this stage of the planning process, ATE advises that these can be subsequently agreed upon as conditions of planning permission at the discretion of the local planning authority.

Conclusion

5.4.5 It is requested that these recommendations are considered by the LPA case officer and forwarded to the agent and applicant. ATE supports the setting of planning conditions, informatives and obligations as detailed above

5.5 Hertfordshire County Council Rights of Way

5.5.1 No comments have been received at the time of drafting this report.

5.6 Hertfordshire County Council Growth and Infrastructure

5.6.1 I am writing in respect of planning obligations sought towards non-transport services to minimise the impact of development on Hertfordshire County Council Services for the local community. Based on the information to date for the development of 500 dwellings we would seek financial contributions towards the following projects.

5.6.2 **Secondary Education Contribution** towards new secondary education provision at the former Barnwell East site/ land at Redwing Close and/or provision serving the development (£3,494,866 index linked to BCIS 1Q2024). This is a proportionate request to the aforementioned project. The project is necessary to mitigate the impacts of this development as explored below.

5.6.3 HCC has a statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places are provided. The pupil yield arising from this development for mitigation is 91.42 secondary age pupils and 18.47 post-16 age pupils. This information comes from the Hertfordshire Demographic Model. This data is calculated using the development mix and build trajectory provided above. The financial contribution is a multiplication of the yield outputs above with the DfE scoreboard costs plus 10% for sustainability measures.

5.6.4 There is insufficient existing secondary education surplus in the town to mitigate the impacts of this development. When looking at the current situation there are 1307 pupils on roll at the entry year 2025/26 at the secondary schools in the SBC pupil planning area (data from August 2025 census) and 1336 total numbers of places at the entry year. Therefore, this is clearly insufficient to meet the yield from this development.

5.6.5 In addition to this, the HCC pupil yield forecasts state that there was to be 1298 pupils on roll at entry in the same year. It is worth noting therefore that the forecasts when compared to actuals over the last 3 years have been within 1% accuracy giving HCC confidence on using this data projection.

5.6.6 The schools in the town are all bar one, their own admissions authorities also therefore HCC cannot rely on these schools to increase their admissions number as a solution to mitigation.

5.6.7 This development cannot be considered in isolation, the HCC forecasts only include committed approved development, not further known development in allocations and it is known that significant further growth is set to occur in wider Stevenage with new additional secondary education provision necessary to mitigate this impact from growth. therefore the situation painted by the forecast data will be exacerbated. 12,000 dwellings are proposed across the wider Stevenage area and yet only circa 4,500 dwellings are included in the HCC forecasts.

5.6.8 It is worth noting that whilst the summer 2025 forecast indicates some years with a deficit of places and others with a surplus, we are currently projecting growth beyond the normal year of admission due to pressure from families joining the system mid-year, with there being little available capacity within the existing secondary schools in the town, with some year groups having none or very few vacancies. This request therefore meet the CIL regulation 122 tests set out below

Monitoring Fees –

5.6.9 HCC will charge monitoring fees. These will be based on the number of triggers within each legal agreement with each distinct trigger point attracting a charge of £420 (adjusted for inflation against RPI January 2024). For further information on monitoring fees please see section 5.5 of the Guide to Developer Infrastructure Contributions. HCC

also reserves the right to seek Community Infrastructure Levy contributions towards the provision of infrastructure through the appropriate channels.

- 5.6.10 The CIL Regulations discourage the use of formulae to calculate contributions however, the County Council is not able to adopt a CIL charge itself. Accordingly, in areas where a CIL charge has not been introduced to date, planning obligations in their restricted form are the only route to address the impact of a development. In instances where a development is not large enough to require on site provision but is large enough to generate an impact on a particular service, an evidenced mechanism is needed to form the basis of any planning obligation sought. HCC views the calculations and figures set out within the Guide to Developer Infrastructure Contributions as an appropriate methodology for the obligations sought in this instance.
- 5.6.11 The county council methodology provides the certainty of identified contribution figures based on either a known or estimated dwelling mix, the latter of which might be agreed with the local planning authority based on expected types and tenures set out as part of the local plan evidence base. This ensures the contributions are appropriate to the development and thereby meet the third test of Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (amended 2019): “fairly and reasonably relates in scale and kind to the development”.
- 5.6.12 **OUTLINE ONLY:** Outline applications will require the ability for an applicant to recalculate contributions at the point of a reserved matters application and as such a calculation Table will be provided as part of the S106 drafting process. This approach provides the certainty of identified contribution figures with the flexibility for an applicant/developer to amend the dwelling mix at a later stage and the financial contribution to be calculated accordingly.
- 5.6.13 Please note that current service information for the local area may change over time and projects to improve capacity may evolve. This may potentially mean a contribution towards other services could be required at the time any application is received in respect of this site.

Justification

- 5.6.14 The above figures have been calculated using the amounts and approach set out within the Guide to Developer Infrastructure Contributions (Hertfordshire County Council's requirements) document, which was approved by Hertfordshire County Council's Cabinet 12 July 2021 and is available via the following link: [Planning obligations and developer infrastructure contributions | Hertfordshire County Council](#)
- 5.6.15 In respect of Regulation 122 of the CIL Regulations 2010 (amended 2019), the planning obligations sought from this proposal are:
- (i) **Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.** Recognition that contributions should be made to mitigate the impact of development are set out in planning related policy documents. The NPPF states “Local planning authorities should consider whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through the use of conditions or planning obligations.” Conditions cannot be used cover the payment of financial contributions to mitigate the impact of a development The NPPG states “No payment of money or other consideration can be positively required when granting planning permission.” The development plan background supports the provision of planning contributions. The provision of community facilities is a matter that is relevant to planning. The contributions sought will ensure that additional needs brought on by the development are met.

- (ii) **Directly related to the development.** The occupiers of new residential developments will have an additional impact upon local services. The financial contributions sought towards the above services are based on the size, type and tenure of the individual dwellings comprising this development following consultation with the Service providers and will only be used towards services and facilities serving the locality of the proposed development and therefore, for the benefit of the development's occupants.
- (iii) **Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.** The above financial contributions have been calculated according to the size, type and tenure of each individual dwelling comprising the proposed development (based on the person yield).

5.7 Hertfordshire County Council Minerals and Waste

Minerals

- 5.7.1 In relation to minerals, the majority of the site falls within the 'Sand and Gravel Belt' as identified in Hertfordshire County Council's adopted Minerals Local Plan 2002 – 2016. The Sand and Gravel Belt is a geological area that spans across the southern part of the county and contains the most concentrated deposits of sand and gravel throughout Hertfordshire. British Geological Survey (BGS) data also identifies areas of potential superficial sand/gravel deposits at the application site.
- 5.7.2 The Minerals Planning Authority identifies the entirety of the Sand and Gravel Belt together with the identified resource blocks, as Mineral Consultation Areas. Planning applications submitted to the District and Borough Councils for nonminerals development that fall within a Mineral Consultation Area (other than applications which meet the 'excluded development' criteria), may not be determined until the county council has been given the opportunity to comment on whether the proposal would unacceptably sterilise mineral resources.
- 5.7.3 In accordance with paragraph 225 of the NPPF (Dec 2024) development proposals in Mineral Safeguarding Areas that might constrain potential future use for mineral working should not normally be permitted. After reviewing the application, the Minerals Planning Authority does not consider that the proposal would have the potential to unacceptably sterilise mineral resources. It is not necessary to investigate the potential for the prior extraction of mineral resources at this site.
- 5.7.4 Whilst prior extraction is not necessary, there may still be opportunities to utilise sand and gravel resources that are found during site preparation works, should any deposits be uncovered that are of a suitable quality. Opportunistic extraction refers to cases where preparation of a site for built development, such as excavating the foundations and footings or landscaping works, may result in suitable material being uncovered that could be extracted and processed for use on site as part of the development.
- 5.7.5 The Minerals Planning Authority would like to encourage the opportunistic extraction and subsequent use of sand and gravel deposits within developments wherever possible. Opportunistic use of minerals will reduce the need to import sand and gravel to the site and make sustainable use of these valuable resources.

Waste

- 5.7.6 Government policy seeks to ensure that all planning authorities take responsibility for waste management. This is reflected in the County Council's adopted waste Development Plan Documents (DPDs). In particular, these documents seek to promote the sustainable management of waste in the county and encourage Local Planning Authorities to have regard to the potential for minimising waste generated by development.

- 5.7.7 The National Planning Policy for Waste (October 2014) sets out the following: ‘When determining planning applications for non-waste development, local planning authorities should, to the extent appropriate to their responsibilities, ensure that:
- a) the likely impact of proposed, non- waste related development on existing waste management facilities, and on sites and areas allocated for waste management, is acceptable and does not prejudice the implementation of the waste hierarchy and/or the efficient operation of such facilities;
 - b) new, non-waste development makes sufficient provision for waste management and promotes good design to secure the integration of waste management facilities with the rest of the development and, in less developed areas, with the local landscape. This includes providing adequate storage facilities at residential premises, for example by ensuring that there is sufficient and discrete provision for bins, to facilitate a high quality, comprehensive and frequent household collection service;
 - c) the handling of waste arising from the construction and operation of development maximises reuse/recovery opportunities, and minimises off-site disposal.’
- 5.7.8 The supporting documents to this application make no reference to the adopted Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD (2012). The policies in the adopted DPD (2012) that relate to this proposal, and which must be considered by the Local Planning Authority in determining the application, include Policy 1: Strategy for the Provision for Waste Management Facilities (namely the penultimate paragraph of the policy) and Policy 12: Sustainable Design, Construction and Demolition. Many of the policy requirements can be met through the imposition of planning conditions.
- 5.7.9 The Waste Planning Authority would expect to see a SWMP prepared to support this application. The SWMP must be prepared and agreed in consultation with the Waste Planning Authority prior to commencement of the project. The SWMP must be implemented throughout the duration of the project, from initial site preparation works to final completion of the construction phase.
- 5.7.10 As a SWMP has not been produced at the planning application stage, the Waste Planning Authority request the following pre-commencement condition be attached to any approved planning application.

5.8 Hertfordshire County Council Ecology

- 5.8.1 No comments have been received at the time of drafting this report.

5.9 Hertfordshire County Council Archaeology

- 5.9.1 Albion Archaeology consulted this office on behalf of the applicant prior to a planning application being submitted (2/24/00484PRE). We advised the following:

“The applicant has submitted an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (DBA), although it was not produced in consultation with, nor recommended by, this office. The DBA does not provide any information regarding the size of the site, but it appears to be approximately 23.5 hectares. In Hertfordshire we normally expect any areas exceeding 1 hectare to contain some heritage assets.

The DBA states that no previous archaeological investigations have taken place at the site (para 4.4), yet nevertheless concludes that the site has a moderate potential to contain heritage assets from the Roman, medieval and post-medieval periods (6.2.1). It goes on to suggest that archaeological planning conditions could be placed on any planning consent to develop the site. It says, “Measures to mitigate the impact of the development on potential buried archaeological remains could entail design measures to minimise the impact of groundworks, archaeological mitigation works where impacts are unavoidable, or a combination of both”. However, in the absence of any

archaeological information to inform either the Masterplan or construction plans it is not clear how this could be judged, nor how the significance of any heritage assets with archaeological interest might be assessed or any harm understood.

The National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 207 states:

“In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.”

Therefore, in the absence of any archaeological information about a relatively large site, should we be consulted regarding development proposals we would be unable to advise the Local Planning Authority.

Examples of information which might enable us to advise the LPA could include the results of a trial trench evaluation of the site, the array being informed by an initial programme of geophysical survey.”

- 5.9.2 This advice has been ignored and an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (Albion Archaeology) and Geophysical Survey (Sumo) submitted with this planning application. The Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment concludes “As a rule, desk-based assessments cannot be used as a predictive tool for the precise location and characterisation of subsurface archaeological deposits.” (paragraph 6.2.4). This supports our advice given above.
- 5.9.3 Notwithstanding the above, should you be minded to grant consent anyway, we advise the following - A programme of archaeological investigations should identify and incorporate appropriate preservation of archaeological remains in situ and no dig areas into the scheme as well as informing appropriate mitigation of the development and recording of any archaeological remains.
- 5.9.4 I believe that the proposed development is such that it should be regarded as having the potential to have an impact on heritage assets of archaeological interest, and I recommend that the following provisions be made, should you be minded to grant consent:
1. the archaeological field evaluation of the proposed development area, prior to development commencing;
 2. such appropriate mitigation measures indicated as necessary by that evaluation. These may include:
 - a. the preservation of any remains in situ, if warranted,
 - b. appropriate archaeological excavation of any remains before any development commences on the site, with provisions for subsequent analysis and publication of results, www.hertfordshire.gov.uk
 - c. archaeological monitoring of the groundworks of the development (also including a contingency for the preservation or further investigation of any remains then encountered),
 - d. such other provisions as may be necessary to protect the archaeological interests of the site;
 3. the analysis of the results of the archaeological work with provision for the subsequent production of a report and an archive, and the publication of the results;

4. such other provisions as may be necessary to protect the archaeological interests of the site;

5.9.5 I believe that these recommendations are both reasonable and necessary to provide properly for the likely archaeological implications of this development proposal. I further believe that these recommendations closely follow the policies included within Policy 16 (para. 211, etc.) of the National Planning Policy Framework, and relevant guidance contained in the National Planning Practice Guidance, and in the Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (Historic England, 2015).

5.9.6 In this case three appropriately worded conditions on any planning consent would be sufficient to provide for the level of investigation that this proposal warrants. I suggest the following wording:

A No demolition/development shall take place/commence until an Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. The scheme shall include an assessment of archaeological significance and research questions; and:

1. The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording
2. The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording, preservation in situ of heritage assets and no dig areas as required by the evaluation
3. The programme for post investigation assessment
4. Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording
5. Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation
6. Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation
7. Provision to be made for public engagement and interpretation
8. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation.

B The demolition/development shall take place/commence in accordance with the programme of archaeological works set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition **(A)**

C The development shall not be occupied/used until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition **(A)** and the provision made for analysis and publication where appropriate.

5.9.7 If planning consent is granted, I will be able to provide detailed advice concerning the requirements for the investigations, and to provide information on professionally accredited archaeological contractors who may be able to carry out the necessary work.

5.10 UKPN

5.10.1 We note there are overhead cables on the site running within close proximity to the proposed development. Prior to commencement of work accurate records should be obtained from our Plan Provision Department at UK Power Networks, Fore Hamlet, Ipswich, IP3 8AA. In the instance of overhead cables within the vicinity, all works should be undertaken in line with GS6 guidelines as published by the HSE

5.10.2 Should any diversion works be necessary because of the development then enquiries should be made to our Customer Connections department. The address is UK Power Networks, Metropolitan house, Darkes Lane, Potters Bar, Herts, EN6 1AG. You can also

find support and application forms on our website [Moving electricity supplies or equipment | UK Power Networks](#)

5.11 Sport England

5.11.1 An objection is made to the proposals for community sports facility provision to meet the needs of the proposed development in its current form due to the lack of confirmed proposals. This position would be reviewed if it was proposed that appropriate financial contributions would be made towards off-site indoor and outdoor sports facility provision, secured through a planning obligation or CIL, as set out in this response.

5.11.2 Advisory comments are made on how the proposals have considered Sport England's Active Design guidance and a planning condition is requested requiring details to be submitted and approved which demonstrate how Active Design principles have been considered in the design and layout of reserved matters applications.

Community Sports Facility Provision

Introduction

5.11.3 This is a hybrid application for a residential led development of up to 500 dwellings on land to the south of the A602 which has been identified in the adopted Stevenage Borough Local Plan for the development of a new neighbourhood in Policy HO4. It is estimated that the population generated by the development would be up to 1,200 based on a typical dwelling occupancy ratio of 2.4 persons per dwelling. This additional population will generate additional demand for sports facilities. If this demand is not adequately met then it will place additional pressure on existing sports facilities, thereby exacerbating existing deficiencies in facility provision. In accordance with the NPPF, Sport England seeks to ensure that the development meets any new community sports facility needs arising as a result of the development. The application makes provision for informal parkland, a pump track, children's play areas, a nature park and other informal open spaces within the development but no on-site provision for formal outdoor sport or indoor sport facilities is proposed. In this context, I would wish to make the following comments on the community sports provision aspects of the application:

Evidence Base and Policy Context

5.11.4 The evidence base for community sport and local planning policy context can be summarised as follows:

- The adopted Stevenage Borough Local Plan (2011-2031) includes policy HC8 which supports residential developments where on-site sports facility provision or a commuted sum is made in accordance with the standards in the Council's Sports Facilities Assessment & Strategy.
- Stevenage Borough Council's emerging Playing Pitch Strategy and Built Facilities Strategy (2025) which are now at an advanced stage provide an assessment of current and future community sports facility needs to support the delivery of the local plan and development management. The assessment identified a range of quantitative and/or qualitative deficiencies for both indoor and outdoor sports facilities and identified priorities for addressing these needs. While needs have been identified for new facilities, there is an emphasis in the local plan and the emerging strategies on prioritising enhancements to existing facilities in order to meet both current and future needs.

5.11.5 In view of the local planning policy and evidence base context, it is considered that in accordance with Government policy in paragraph 103 of the NPPF, a robust local basis exists for justifying the provision of outdoor and indoor community sports facility provision to be made by this development proposal.

Outdoor Sports Provision

- 5.11.6 No on-site proposals are made for dedicated outdoor sports facility provision with the focus being on open space provision for informal recreation and children's play. In view of the constraints associated with providing suitable outdoor sports provision such as playing pitches on this site and the level of demand generated (see Playing Pitch Calculator outputs below) it is considered that off-site provision would be appropriate on this occasion in the form of financial contributions being secured towards the provision/enhancement of projects in the local area. It is unclear whether off-site sports facility provision will be secured through CIL or a planning obligation at this stage.
- 5.11.7 If provision is to be secured through a planning obligation, to assist the Council, an estimate of the demand generated for outdoor sports provision can be provided by Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator <https://www.sportengland.org/howwe-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport/playing-pitch-calculator> strategic planning tool. Team data from Stevenage Borough Council's emerging Playing Pitch Strategy can be applied to the Playing Pitch Calculator which can then assess the demand generated in pitch equivalents (and the associated costs of delivery) by the population generated in a new residential development. I have used the latest version of the calculator (including the latest team data for Stevenage) for estimating the demand generated by a new population in Stevenage of 1,200 and I append the outputs which provides the full data. Consideration should be given by the Council to using the figures from the Playing Pitch Calculator (and the Sports Facility Calculator for tennis courts) for informing the level of a financial contribution if provision is to be secured through a planning obligation.
- 5.11.8 The Council is therefore requested to confirm whether outdoor sports facility provision will be secured through CIL or a planning obligation and if an obligation is secured then an appropriate financial contribution should be sought that would be used towards off-site outdoor sports facilities informed by the priorities in the Playing Pitch Strategy for meeting the additional needs generated by the development.

Indoor Sports Provision

- 5.11.9 As indoor sports facilities are strategic facilities that serve large populations and as the population generated by the proposed development in isolation would not be sufficient to justify the provision of a conventional facility on-site (see appended Sports Facility Calculator figures), it is considered that off-site provision in the form of CIL or a planning obligation towards the provision or improvement of off-site facilities would be the most suitable form of provision on this occasion.
- 5.11.10 Sport England's Sports Facility Calculator (SFC) can help to provide an indication of the likely demand that will be generated by a development for certain facility types. The appended SFC outputs provide detail of the estimated demand and capital costs of meeting this demand. Consideration should be given by the Council to using the figures from the Sports Facility Calculator as a starting point for informing the level of a financial contribution if provision is to be secured through a planning obligation.
- 5.11.11 The Council is therefore requested to confirm whether indoor sports facility provision will be secured through CIL or a planning obligation and if an obligation is secured then an appropriate financial contribution should be sought that would be used towards off-site indoor sports facilities for meeting the additional needs generated by the development.

Conclusion

- 5.11.12 As there are no confirmed proposals at this stage for meeting the development's formal outdoor or indoor sports facility needs, an objection is made to the planning application in its current form. However, I would be willing to withdraw this objection in due course if it is confirmed that such provision will be secured through CIL or appropriate financial contributions, secured through a planning obligation. The advice set out above should be used to inform the scale of the contributions

Active Design

- 5.11.13 Sport England, supported by Active Travel England and OHID, has produced 'Active Design', a guide to planning new developments that create the right environment to help people get more active. The guidance sets out ten key principles for ensuring new developments incorporate opportunities for people to take part in sport and physical activity. The Active Design principles are aimed at contributing towards the Government's desire for the planning system to promote healthy communities through good urban design which is consistent with paragraph 96 of the NPPF. Sport England commends the use of the guidance in the master planning process for new residential developments.
- 5.11.14 I can confirm that the masterplan for the development was prepared in consultation with Sport England at the pre-application stage and that the applicant has sought to incorporate the Active Design principles as far as possible and has made amendments to the masterplan in response to Sport England's advice. As set out in the Design & Access Statement, the masterplan and design code have been organised around principles which include Active Design. In particular, the proposal would offer the following aspects which would encourage physical activity:
- Central Park: The park would provide a multi-functional open space in a central and accessible location within the development that could be used by children and young people for play (pump track and LEAP) and informal recreation. The open space in the middle of the park could also be used for small community events.
 - Nature Park, Pocket Parks and SuDS: All of these spaces which are distributed across the site would provide secondary opportunities for informal play and recreation as they are publicly accessible and linked to the proposed footpath network e.g. a network of footpaths supported by seating are proposed around the Nature Park and SuDS to encourage people to walk around them.
 - Footpaths/Cycleways: Footpaths and cycleways have been integrated into the development so that they are close to people's homes and connect into the existing footpath/cycleway network along the A602. As well as encouraging good active travel access within and outside the development, by providing footpaths around the periphery of the development as well as through the centre this will provide the opportunity for circular walks/runs within the development.
 - Signage and Wayfinding: It is encouraging that a wayfinding strategy has been incorporated into the Design Code to signpost residents to the facilities within the development. Case studies of waymarking to encourage physical activity are on our website such as the Kidlington and Gosford Zoo Trails.
- 5.11.15 The masterplan proposals are therefore welcomed and this application is considered to be a good practice example of applying the Active Design principles. As the majority of the planning application is in outline form it would be inappropriate to provide detailed comments at this stage because the proposed masterplan is conceptual. The Active Design guidance includes a checklist that can be applied to developments and it is recommended that the checklist is used in the preparation of subsequent reserved matters planning applications if the application is permitted to ensure that opportunities for encouraging active lifestyles have been fully explored in the detailed planning and design of the development.
- 5.11.16 It is therefore requested that a planning condition be imposed requiring the submission and approval of details to demonstrate how the reserved matters applications have considered Active Design principles. Sport England would welcome discussions with the applicant in due course to provide further advice on how Active Design can be considered in the detailed proposals. A suggested planning condition is as follows:

“For each parcel/phase of development for which Outline permission is granted, no development in relation to that parcel/phase shall commence until details have been submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority to demonstrate how Active Design principles have been met. Reason: To promote healthy lifestyles through physical activity and to accord with Development Plan policy. Informative: Consideration should be given to using the Active Design checklist in Sport England’s Active Design Guidance to assess reserved matters planning applications”.

5.12 Police Crime Prevention Officer

5.12.1 Thank you for asking me to comment on the proposal to build up to five hundred new dwellings on land at Bragbury End. I have studied the documentation on the council planning site and have the following comments to make.

5.12.2 I have no concerns regarding this proposal. However, I would ask that the applicants engage with Hertfordshire Constabulary’s Crime Prevention Design Service with a view to seeking to achieve accreditation to the Police preferred minimum security standard that is Secured by Design (SBD). The reason for this is that SBD has been proven to reduce the risk of burglary by over eighty percent.

5.12.3 In addition to the above SBD has also been shown by Professor Ken Pease to reduce the potential carbon footprint of the estate over its lifetime. His paper the Carbon Cost of Crime and its Implications, which he wrote in 2009, shows that a burglary can have a carbon generation of two-point five metric tonnes. This isn’t just the investigation it also involves the replacement of the stolen goods and can even include the fact that the residents tend to move as they no longer feel safe in their existing property.

5.12.4 As SBD can reduce this risk by over eighty percent this will result in a massive potential saving in carbon generation compared to non-SBD accredited estates. With this in mind I would request that an Informative is added to any grant of planning permission to encourage the applicants to seek accreditation to SBD. The wording could take the following form –

Prior to construction the applicant will contact the Hertfordshire Constabulary CPDS with a view to seeking to achieve accreditation to the Police preferred minimum security standard that is Secured by Design. Reason: To ensure that the development is compliant with both National and Local Planning Policies, in addition, this will also demonstrate the discharge of obligations under Approved Document Q Security of Building Regulations.

5.12.5 Given the above comments the Police will support this application

5.13 NHS

5.13.1 No comments have been received at the time of drafting this report

5.14 Stevenage Borough Council Planning Policy

5.14.1 No comments have been received at the time of drafting this report

5.15 Stevenage Borough Council Estates

5.15.1 No comments have been received at the time of drafting this report

5.16 Ramblers Association

5.16 No comments have been received at the time of drafting this report

5.17 Stevenage Borough Council Tree Manager

- 5.17.1 In principle I do not have an objection to the proposed development. I have two main concerns: Firstly, the impact of the development onto Woodland W1. This includes:
- impact onto the tree roots (RPA) caused by the installation of the proposed footpath and road on the northern and western sides.
 - Impact of the exiting woodland onto the proposed line of properties on its northern boundary (natural light due to location, encroachment and continuous growth of the woodland edge)
 - impact of the shade created by existing woodland W1 onto the ability of the newly proposed trees, in its vicinity, to establish.

Secondly, the AIA mentions T11 and T12 being significantly affected by the development. I would like to learn more about the way in which these trees would be affected and what mitigations are put in place to reduce this.

- 5.17.2 Further to the additional information submitted to address these concerns I am happy with the approach and welcome the recommendation that, at the detailed design stage of the application, a comprehensive shading assessment is undertaken and that trees along the woodland edge are accurately plotted on an updated topographical survey. This will provide a more precise understanding of shading patterns cast by the woodland and identify any plots that may benefit from minor reorientation to achieve an acceptable level of daylight and sunlight.

5.18 Stevenage Borough Council Parks and Amenities

- 5.18.1 We request confirmation concerning the specific areas that are designated for maintenance by Stevenage Direct Services (SDS), as well as those areas that will be overseen and preserved by any other entity, such as a Management Company.
- 5.18.2 SDS hasn't previously maintained this area. As a result, any areas expected to be maintained by SDS will need the necessary funding to sustain this in the long term. We can calculate the required funds using a commuted sum calculation that spans 20+ years. However, for SDS to perform this calculation, we need full details on landscaping, including area calculations.
- 5.18.3 Currently, the submitted details are minimal, so it's not possible to comment fully on the proposed landscaping. As a result, we can only provide general comments. If we receive detailed information on the hard and soft landscaping, we'll be able to offer more specific feedback.
- 5.18.4 We have concerns regarding the significant amounts of planting that are being proposed. We're particularly worried about the quantity of hedge, shrub, and herbaceous planting, as well as the resources needed to maintain this in the future if SDS is responsible. For areas SDS is expected to maintain, we specify reducing the amount of shrubs and hedge planting to minimise the burden. There's already an initiative underway to rationalise extensive shrub planting across the town, which will improve maintenance efficiency.
- 5.18.5 There is a reference to proposed planters; however, based on experience, planters are susceptible to drying out and necessitate periodic irrigation, which SDS will not be able to provide. Consequently, this aspect requires further deliberation to eliminate the need for irrigation.
- 5.18.6 We have concerns regarding the proposed planting in and around parking spaces. Based on our experience, planting around parking bays and car parks can lead to

issues with maintenance access, increased vulnerability to damage, and reduced visibility. Accordingly, we request that shrub and grass planting in these areas be omitted.

- 5.18.7 The proposed 12-month defect/establishment period for planting is considered insufficient to allow establishment; it may be necessary to extend this to a minimum of 2-3 years.
- 5.18.8 It is essential to ensure appropriate safeguarding of open spaces against unauthorised vehicle access.
- 5.18.9 Any planted beds that are directly adjacent to a hard surface must be designed to prevent soil and mulch from being washed onto the surrounding surfaces.
- 5.18.10 We note that there are proposals for a number of meadow areas. Meadows require careful consideration regarding access for maintenance purposes. An essential aspect of their upkeep involves collecting the arisings after cutting to reduce nutrient levels in the soil. This task is challenging to accomplish beneath trees, on banks, and in similar locations. Therefore, a judicious choice of species should be made to favour cutting without the necessity of collection in areas where access for collection machinery is not possible. We recommend consulting Emorsgate for advice on a suitable species selection.
- 5.18.11 We have concerns regarding the proposed 'barefoot course' within the nature park. While we advocate providing a connection with nature, we are concerned about safety, inspections and its maintenance.
- 5.18.12 SuDS Features (Swales, ponds, etc.):
- Please consult the Engineers regarding the design and maintenance of the proposed SuDS features and their associated infrastructure, as they possess the necessary expertise in this matter.
 - Stevenage Direct Services shall not be responsible for undertaking any additional maintenance requirements concerning the SuDS, beyond the occasional grass cut and/or pruning.
 - All areas shall be easily accessible for maintenance, and we also require details on the proposed gradients to ensure suitability for mechanical access.
- 5.18.13 Certain areas designated for a nature park currently function as a Flood Storage Reservoir, with historical records indicating past flooding events. It is advisable to seek specific guidance from the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) regarding the suitability and potential impacts on flooding. The developer is responsible for ensuring that flood risks are appropriately mitigated and for implementing measures to prevent pollution from entering Stevenage Brook and the River Beane.

Play

- 5.18.14 We note that numerous play elements are proposed across the site and should be rationalised.
- 5.18.15 We do not endorse the installation of equipped 'LAP' spaces, as these have been phased out within Stevenage. Instead, these should be replaced with 'playscapes' or 'play landscapes'—carefully landscaped areas that promote natural, imaginative, and exploratory play, without the need for inspections. This could include gentle mounding, boulders, sensory planting, tree planting, and more.
- 5.18.16 The details of the play elements should be conditioned and approved by SDS. Generally, all proposed equipped play areas (LEAP/Primary Sites) must be durable, mainly constructed from metal, installed according to the necessary standards (BS EN

1176 & 1177), include appropriate rubber wet pour surfacing, and be accessible and inclusive.

5.18.17 We require details of the proposed skate park/MUGA. The skate park/ wheeled sports facility shall be constructed from concrete and, in accordance with BS EN 14974 (BS EN 15312 for MUGA), be free-draining and designed to be as inclusive as possible. We highly recommend consulting with the local community on the design of this element.

5.18.18 Consideration should be given to methods to prevent children from running into the road in the kick-around area.

Planting Selection:

5.18.19 Generally, the current proposed plant selection is quite acceptable. We require further details on plant choices as soon as they become available. Bulbs are not included in the preliminary planting plan. Consideration should be given to suitable naturalising bulb planting (not larger *Narcissus spp.*) to provide a burst of colour while avoiding additional maintenance challenges.

Trees:

5.18.20 Please refer to the Arboriculture and Conservation Manager for comments, impacts and recommendations in respect of trees.

5.18.21 Orchards: We acknowledge the proposals for several orchard/orchard trees within this scheme, which raise concerns regarding their maintenance and care. Fruiting trees necessitate specialised knowledge and skills for proper upkeep, and it is currently beyond the capacity of SDS to perform such maintenance. Therefore, we recommend either omitting these trees or significantly limiting their number.

5.18.22 It is positive to see that *Tilia cordata 'greenspire'* is being proposed as a species that resists aphid secretion issues. *Rosaceae* trees are proposed in the tree-lined streets, but we require further details as to what species are being proposed to determine if they are suitable.

Material and Furniture Selection:

5.18.23 All hard surface areas must be suitable and accessible for mechanical sweeping. Self-binding gravel is proposed for open spaces, which may cause maintenance difficulties. Asphalt is preferred to lessen future maintenance and upkeep challenges, enhance durability, and also prevent weeds and washout.

5.18.24 While recognising the necessity for permeable surfacing, it is advised to refrain from utilising block paving, as it can lead to complications related to weed proliferation and management. Permeable asphalt is the preferred alternative.

5.18.25 Bins are to be standardised with the ones that are used townwide. Please contact us for more information. The use of wooden benches/furniture should be avoided as much as possible. Preference is to be given to metal/concrete for durability and resilience purposes.

5.18.26 The EIA highlights a significant impact of the development on local wildlife and habitats, alongside a series of mitigations and recommendations that need to be implemented. Our Ecology Officer will provide further advice and comments on this aspect, and we acknowledge the intention to achieve the Biodiversity Net Gain requirements.

5.19 Thames Water

Waste Comments

- 5.19.1 With the information provided, Thames Water has been unable to determine the Foul water infrastructure needs of this application. Thames Water has contacted the developer in an attempt to obtain this information and agree a position for FOUL WATER drainage, but have been unable to do so in the time available and as such, Thames Water request that the following condition be added to any planning permission.

No development shall be occupied until confirmation has been provided that either: - 1. Foul water capacity exists off site to serve the development, or 2. A development and infrastructure phasing plan has been agreed with the Local Authority in consultation with Thames Water. Where a development and infrastructure phasing plan is agreed, no occupation shall take place other than in accordance with the agreed development and infrastructure phasing plan, or 3. All Foul water network upgrades required to accommodate the additional flows from the development have been completed.

Reason - Network reinforcement works may be required to accommodate the proposed development. Any reinforcement works identified will be necessary in order to avoid sewage flooding and/or potential pollution incidents.

- 5.19.2 Should the Local Planning Authority consider the above recommendation inappropriate or are unable to include it in the decision notice, it is important that the Local Planning Authority liaises with Thames Water Development Planning Department prior to the planning application approval.

Surface Water

- 5.19.3 Thames Water would advise that with regard to the surface water network capacity, we would not have any objection to the above planning application, based on the information provided.
- 5.19.4 As you are redeveloping a site, there may be public sewers crossing or close to your development. If you discover a sewer, it's important that you minimize the risk of damage. We'll need to check that your development doesn't limit repair or maintenance activities or inhibit the services we provide in any other way. The applicant is advised to read our guide working near or diverting our pipes.
- 5.19.5 With regard to surface water drainage, Thames Water would advise that if the developer follows the sequential approach to the disposal of surface water we would have no objection. Management of surface water from new developments should follow guidance under sections 167, 168 & 169 in the National Planning Policy Framework. Where the developer proposes to discharge to a public sewer, prior approval from Thames Water Developer Services will be required.
- 5.19.6 Supplementary Comments: No foul drainage strategy document have been provided that clearly shows the foul proposed connection point, confirmation whether foul flows will discharge by gravity or pumped and proposed foul discharge rate.

Comments provided to applicant at pre-application

- 5.19.7 Thank you for providing information on your proposed greenfield development of 500 houses. Foul water to discharge via pumped at 17.36 l/s into manhole ref. TL27211101 on a 975mm foul sewer. Surface water to discharge via gravity at 2.5 l/s into TL26208950, and via gravity at 5.5 l/s into TL26219150 on a 450mm surface water sewer.

5.19.8 We have completed the assessment of the foul water flows and surface water run-off based on the information submitted in your application with the purpose of assessing sewerage capacity within the existing Thames Water sewer network.

Foul Water

5.19.9 If your proposals progress in line with the details you've provided, we're pleased to confirm that there will be sufficient sewerage capacity in the adjacent foul water sewer network to serve your development.

Surface Water

5.19.10 If the surface water hierarchy has been followed, and if the flows are restricted to your proposed rates, then Thames Water would not have any objections to the proposal.

5.19.11 In accordance with the Building Act 2000 Clause H3.3, positive connection of surface water to a public sewer will only be consented when it can be demonstrated that the hierarchy of disposal methods have been examined and proven to be impracticable. Before we can consider your surface water needs, you'll need written approval from the lead local flood authority that you have followed the sequential approach to the disposal of surface water and considered all practical means.

5.19.12 The disposal hierarchy being:

- 1) rainwater use as a resource (for example rainwater harvesting, blue roofs for irrigation)
- 2) rainwater infiltration to ground at or close to source
- 3) rainwater attenuation in green infrastructure features for gradual release (for example green roofs, rain gardens)
- 4) rainwater discharge direct to a watercourse (unless not appropriate)
- 5) controlled rainwater discharge to a surface water sewer or drain
- 6) controlled rainwater discharge to a combined sewer.

Where connection to the public sewerage network is required to manage surface water flows, we will accept these flows at a discharge rate in line with CIRIA's best practice guide on SuDS or that stated within the sites planning approval.

5.20 Affinity Water

Water quality

5.20.1 We have reviewed the planning application documents and we can confirm that the site is not located within an Environment Agency defined groundwater Source Protection Zone (SPZ) or close to our abstractions. The construction works and operation of the proposed development site should be done in accordance with the relevant British Standards and Best Management Practices, thereby significantly reducing the groundwater pollution risk. It should be noted that the construction works may exacerbate any existing pollution. If any pollution is found at the site then the appropriate monitoring and remediation methods will need to be undertaken.

5.20.2 For any works involving excavations below the chalk groundwater table (for example, piling or the implementation of a geothermal open/closed loop system), a ground investigation should first be carried out to identify appropriate techniques and to avoid displacing any shallow contamination to a greater depth, which could impact the chalk aquifer. For further information we refer you to CIRIA Publication C532 "Control of water pollution from construction - guidance for consultants and contractors".

Water efficiency

5.20.3 Being within a water stressed area, we expect that the development includes water efficient fixtures and fittings. Measures such as rainwater harvesting and grey water recycling help the environment by reducing pressure for abstractions. They also minimise potable water use by reducing the amount of potable water used for washing,

cleaning and watering gardens. This in turn reduces the carbon emissions associated with treating this water to a standard suitable for drinking and will help in our efforts to get emissions down in the borough.

Infrastructure connections and diversions

- 5.20.4 There are potentially water mains running through or near to part of proposed development site. If the development goes ahead as proposed, the applicant/developer will need to get in contact with our Developer Services Team to discuss asset protection or diversionary measures.
- 5.20.5 Due to its location, Affinity Water will supply drinking water to the development in the event that it is constructed. Should planning permission be granted, the applicant is also advised to contact Developer Services as soon as possible regarding supply matters due to the increased demand for water in the area resulting from this development.

5.21 Network Rail

- 5.21.1 Following assessment of the details provided to support the above application, Network Rail has no objection in principle to the development but below are some requirements which must be met.

Works in Proximity to the Operational Railway Environment

Development Construction Phase and Asset Protection

- 5.21.2 Due to the proximity of the proposed development to the operational railway boundary, it will be imperative that the developer liaise with our Asset Protection Team (contact details below) prior to any work taking place on site to ensure that the development can be undertaken safely and without impact to operational railway safety. Details to be discussed and agreed may include construction methodology, earthworks and excavations, use of crane, plant and machinery, drainage and boundary treatments. It may be necessary for the developer to enter into a Basic Asset Protection Agreement (BAPA) with Network Rail to ensure the safety of the operational railway during these works. We would also like to advise that where any damage, injury or delay to the rail network is caused by construction works or future maintenance (related to the application site), the applicant or developer will incur full liability. This could also include police investigation as it is a criminal offence to endanger the railway or obstruct the passage of rail traffic. It should also be noted that any damage that requires a line closure or repairs can result in costs which could exceed hundreds of thousands of pounds.

Drainage

- 5.21.3 It is imperative that drainage associated with the site does not impact on or cause damage to adjacent railway assets. Surface water must flow away from the railway, there must be no ponding of water adjacent to the boundary and any attenuation scheme within 30m of the railway boundary must be approved by Network Rail in advance. There must be no connection to existing railway drainage assets without prior agreement with Network Rail. We expect a condition regarding the disposal of surface water to be included as part of any consent.

Boundary Treatments, Landscaping and Lighting

Vehicle Incursion Measures

- 5.21.4 An Armco or similar barrier should be located in positions where vehicles may be in a position to drive into or roll onto the railway or damage the lineside fencing. Network Rail's existing fencing / wall must not be removed or damaged. Given the considerable number of vehicle movements likely provision should be made at each turning area/roadway/car parking area adjacent to the railway. This is in accord with the new

guidance for road/rail vehicle incursion NR/LV/CIV/00012 following on from DfT advice issued in 2003, now updated to include risk of incursion from private land/roadways.

- 5.21.5 Given the nature of the proposals and location of turning areas/car parking, we would expect that a condition securing the design and installation of suitable vehicle incursion measures by the developer is included in any consent. This is for the safety, operational needs and integrity of the railway.

Landscaping

- 5.21.6 It is imperative that planting and landscaping schemes near the railway boundary do not impact on operational railway safety. Where trees and shrubs are to be planted adjacent to boundary, they should be positioned at a minimum distance greater than their height at maturity from the boundary. Certain broad leaf deciduous species should not be planted adjacent to the railway boundary. Any hedge planted adjacent to the railway boundary for screening purposes should be placed so that when fully grown it does not damage the fencing, provide a means of scaling it, or prevent Network Rail from maintaining its boundary fencing. Below is a list of species that are acceptable and unacceptable for planting in proximity to the railway boundary;

Acceptable:

Birch (Betula), Crab Apple (Malus Sylvestris), Field Maple (Acer Campestre), Bird Cherry (Prunus Padus), Wild Pear (Pyrus Communis), Fir Trees – Pines (Pinus), Hawthorn (Cretaeagus), Mountain Ash – Whitebeams (Sorbus), False Acacia (Robinia), Willow Shrubs (Shrubby Salix), Thuja Plicatata “Zebrina”

Not Acceptable:

Acer (Acer pseudoplatanus), Aspen – Poplar (Populus), Small-leaved Lime (Tilia Cordata), Sycamore – Norway Maple (Acer), Horse Chestnut (Aesculus Hippocastanum), Sweet Chestnut (Castanea Sativa), Ash (Fraxinus excelsior), Black poplar (Populus nigra var, betulifolia), Lombardy Poplar (Populus nigra var, italica), Large-leaved lime (Tilia platyphyllos), Common lime (Tilia x europea)

Landscaping detail should be submitted to the Local Planning Authority and approved in conjunction with Network Rail.

Lighting

- 5.21.7 Where lighting is to be erected adjacent to the operational railway, the potential for train drivers to be dazzled must be eliminated. In addition, the location and colour of lights must not give rise to the potential for confusion with the signalling arrangements on the railway. Detail of any external lighting should be provided to the Local Planning Authority to be approved in conjunction with Network Rail.

Additional Requirements

Railway Noise Mitigation

- 5.21.8 The Developer should be aware that any development for residential or noise sensitive use adjacent to an operational railway may result in neighbour issues arising. Consequently, every endeavour should be made by the developer to provide adequate soundproofing for each dwelling. Please note that in a worst-case scenario there could be trains running 24 hours a day and the soundproofing should take this into account. Reason for above conditions: The safety, operational needs and integrity of the railway.

5.22 Stevenage Borough Council CCTV

- 5.22.1 No comments have been received at the time of drafting this report

5.23 Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue

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

5.24 East of England Ambulance Service

5.24.1 Thank you for consulting East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust (EEAST) on the above planning application. This letter outlines the impact on emergency ambulance healthcare infrastructure arising from the application and is in addition to any request from Hertfordshire & West Essex ICS for primary care, acute, mental health and community services.

5.24.2 This application for 500 dwellings could generate another 1,100 residents and will generate an anticipated additional 253 calls per annum on already constrained ambulance services. This is an increase of 15.1% per annum compared to existing activity, postcode area SG28 indicates 1,674 incidents per annum between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025.

5.24.3 This development, should the application be successful, will affect ambulance Stevenage Hub which respond to emergency incidents within the local area as well as impact on the regional call centres.

5.24.4 The table below shows the ambulance stations which respond to incidents for the development location. It provides the travel times in rush hour traffic to the development location (Reference ShapeAtlas) (*NB this is a standard reference point and does not mean ambulances come from these locations in order to respond to calls nor does it consider the ambulance will be travelling under blue light conditions).

Station	Travel Time(mins) to*	Year	Built GIAm2 Development
Stevenage Hub	10	2005	5,867m2 (including PTS services)

5.24.5 Modern purpose-built Hubs are ideally located close to a hospital with a GIA of 2,200m2 to deliver a high performing, sufficient space for circa 34 Dual Staffed Ambulances and 4 Rapid Response Vehicles, offices, Make Ready Centre, Vehicle Workshop, parking for staff vehicles/bicycles, health and wellbeing garden, good power supply to enable charging of electric ambulance/rapid response vehicles. Make Ready services are defined under the Lord Carter Report (2018) and mandated by Quality Care Commission (CQC), services should be delivered from a Hub.

5.24.6 Ambulances start and finish shifts from the local Hub and transfer to Ambulance Response Posts and Stations which are tactically located to meet mandated response times and can be up to 45 minutes travel time from the Hub. Response Posts/Stations provide rest facilities and parking for ambulances whilst the crew are on a break or whilst crews wait to respond to a 999 incident from one of the Regional Call Centres.

5.24.7 In order to meet the additional population growth at the development location EEAST requires mitigation which is sought through a s106 agreement.

5.24.8 Table 1 Capital Cost calculation of additional emergency ambulance health services arising from the development proposal

No Dwellings	Infrastructure Cost*	Total
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500	£340	£170,000
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* EEASTs baseline infrastructure cost* calculation of £340 is based on 2.2 persons per dwelling and adjusted pro-rata depending on the expect number of persons per dwelling.

5.24.9 Calculation is based per person using EEAST population (6.1m)/number of incidents in 2024/25

- (1.4m) to give a per person incident rate
- $6.1m/1.4m = 0.23$ incidents per person per annum

5.24.10 EEAST Capital Infrastructure Costs is based on occupancy of 2.2 persons per dwelling, adjusted pro-rata

- Estates build per m2 (£213.50)
- Cost of emergency ambulance vehicles (£126.50)

5.24.11 The capital required to create additional ambulance services to support the population arising from the proposed development is calculated to be £170,000 and are for the impact of this development only and will be used to support: - Expansion and installation of EV charging of existing Stevenage Ambulance Hub to meet the increased local demand arising from this housing development.

Defibrillators

5.24.12 EEAST would request the Council ensure via a s106 contribution sufficient defibrillators are provided for the new community and this should include installation, servicing and maintenance for 10 years (cost circa £5,000 per EEAST recommended defibrillator). These need to be located where there is electrical power and sufficient footfall to provide benefits to the new community. Research indicates 800 meters is the maximum distance to fetch a defibrillator. The s106 could be allocated either to the local parish council or to EEAST.

5.24.13 EEAST, as with all NHS Trusts, is allocated an annual capital spend limit (CDEL), which is generally used to support maintenance backlog/and replacement of existing fleet vehicles and essential onboard capital medical equipment, both of which have a maximum lifespan of 5 years before being replaced. S106/CIL funding is outside of CDEL which are in place for each Trust and provide additional financial resources for EEAST to absorb the additional patient demand generated by this development on emergency ambulance health services. The request for capital funding is distinct from revenue income from NHS England.

5.25 Stevenage Borough Council Waste Services

5.25.1 No comments have been received at the time of drafting this report.

5.26 East Hertfordshire District Council

5.26.1 No comments have been received at the time of drafting this report.

5.27 Environment Agency

5.27.1 We have no objection to the proposed development. We note the presence of a flood storage reservoir to the west of the site. Although this is not an Environment Agency asset, we would recommend that this is safeguarded so that it's able to fulfil its intended purpose and function.

5.28 BEAMS

- 5.28.1 The application site comprises an area of farm land / grass land at the southern end of Stevenage adjacent to and just west of Bragbury End. The tree lined A602 forms the north boundary of the site whilst the railway line forms the southern boundary, the eastern boundary abuts the Three Horseshoes public house and land to the rear. The land level gently rises from north to south.
- 5.28.2 The application has been accompanied by a Heritage Statement to accord with NPPF para. 207. A detailed Design Code has also been submitted.
- 5.28.3 There are a cluster of grade II listed buildings in the Bragbury End area, including the Chequers PH, Bragbury House and Bragbury End Farm and barn. There are some 19th century 'buildings of local importance' along Bragbury Lane and on the corner of Aston Lane / A602. Bragbury End is a historic settlement on the route from Watton-at-Stone to Stevenage and currently lies on the southern edge of the town with a verdant and semi-rural feel to it. The Heritage Statement provides further information upon the historic development of this settlement (now part of Stevenage town).
- 5.28.4 The area will be urbanised through the construction of new development and all that is associated with it, including the creation of a new road network / road widening as part of accessing the site. This is considered harmful to the wider setting of the listed buildings in Bragbury End.
- 5.28.5 The retention of an area of open space to the west end of the application site (between the rear gardens of Bragbury Lane fronting properties and lot 7) will provide some separation from the site, this is welcomed.
- 5.28.6 BEAMS broadly agrees with the findings of the Heritage Statement. The setting of The Chequers PH (closest to the site) will be adversely impacted but any harm is considered to be 'less than substantial'. The scale of development upon the part of the site closest to the listed building, also noting the topography of the site will need careful consideration as will changes to the road network / signage. The retention of the tree screening to the rear of The Chequers PH will be key in reducing impact upon the immediate setting of this designated heritage asset but should not be relied on.
- 5.28.7 Bragbury End Farmhouse and barn lie on the west side of Bragbury Lane and new / 20th century housing forms much of its immediate setting. No changes seem to be proposed along Bragbury Lane itself so the scheme is considered to preserve the immediate setting of Bragbury End Farmhouse, any harm to its significance will be very low to neutral.
- 5.28.8 Bragbury House is a small country house, now converted to flats - it is set back from the A602 and new development has been built to the rear. From the information submitted the immediate setting and significance of this listed building will be maintained but its wider setting, through changes to the road network / additional signage etc may be adversely impacted.
- 5.28.9 The proposal will result in 'less than substantial' harm to the significance of designated heritage assets at Bragbury End, particularly the Chequers PH and NPPF para. 215 would be engaged in the decision making process.

5.29 Hertfordshire and Middlesex Wildlife Trust

- 5.29.1 The Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT) objects to this planning application for the following reasons:
- The loss of habitat on-site is a significant negative effect on biodiversity and is not sufficiently compensated for by proposals for habitat retention and creation.

- Damage to the adjacent Astonbury Wood Local Wildlife Site by recreational disturbance.

Loss of habitat on-site

- 5.29.2 According to the EcIA Impact Assessment (EcIA, para. 5.3.5), the loss of habitats is a significant negative effect at local scale. We note efforts in the Design and Access Statement to retain existing habitat, such as hedgerows, and to create new green infrastructure such as the central park and the nature park at the western end of the site. However, this should not distract from the fact that, overall, there is a loss of biodiversity on the site. This is evidenced by the biodiversity net gain assessment which shows that there is a loss of -10.89 habitat units on the site, a biodiversity net gain of -14.69%. Hedgerows see a marginal net gain (+1.82%) and watercourses a more significant percentage loss (-59.55%), although this is small in absolute terms due to the loss of one of the ditches (para. 5.11.2).
- 5.29.3 The EcIA proposes to achieve the statutory requirement for at least 10% biodiversity net gain through a financial contribution to a biodiversity offsetting scheme, involving the provision of medium (or higher) distinctiveness grassland due to the loss of other neutral grassland units and other broadleaved woodland (para. 5.11.4).
- 5.29.4 Our expectation is that on a site of this scale, biodiversity net gain should be provided on-site. As stated in both the NPPF and Local Plan Policy SP12, compensation is a last resort; proposals which do not provide on-site biodiversity net gain have not thoroughly followed the mitigation hierarchy of avoid, then mitigate, and compensate as a last resort.
- 5.29.5 We note that the site is allocated in Local Plan Policy HO4 for 400 dwellings, compared to 'up to 500 dwelling units' in this planning application. Development at the lower number would allow the retention of more habitat on site and might give further opportunities for habitat enhancement. One option would be not to develop the eastern-most parcel of land ('Agricultural Land B' in the Design and Access Statement, p14) and reserve it for habitat enhancement to help achieve biodiversity net gain on site. This would also help to alleviate the problem identified in the second part of our objection.

Damage to Astonbury Wood Local Wildlife Site by recreational disturbance

- 5.29.6 Astonbury Wood is an ancient woodland, predominantly Oak Hornbeam coppice with a Bluebell understory. It is recognised nationally for fungi with 750 species. It is designated as a Local Wildlife Site for semi-natural woodland supporting a diverse and well-developed structure with a varied woodland ground flora. It is also a HMWT nature reserve, suitable for quiet enjoyment of the countryside. Paths are narrow and there is limited visitor infrastructure.
- 5.29.7 Astonbury Wood LWS is one of a number of LWS identified by the EcIA in the vicinity of the application site; indeed, almost all the wood is within 500m of the application site. The EcIA recognises that there is potential for there to be impacts on air and water quality during the construction phase, affecting both the wood and Stevenage Brook. It suggests suitable mitigation by means of a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP, EcIA para. 5.2.4). We support this proposal, which should be conditioned in any planning permission.
- 5.29.8 However, the EcIA completely fails to recognise the potential impact of increased recreational use of the wood. The proposal will result in potentially over a thousand people living within a very short distance of the wood; the southern entrance to the wood is less than 200m from the application site. Despite the provision of green infrastructure on site, it is a near-certainty that residents will be attracted to the wood, including for dog-walking. This impact will be exacerbated by the development of the site north of the A602, which lies even closer to the wood.

5.29.9 Guidance by Natural England and Defra states that indirect effects of development can cause the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees by a number of means, including:

- Increasing the amount of dust, light, water, air and soil pollution
- Increasing disturbance to wildlife, such as noise from additional people and traffic
- Increasing damage to habitat, for example trampling of plants and erosion of soil by people accessing the woodland or tree root protection areas
- Increasing damaging activities like fly-tipping and the impacts of domestic pets

5.29.10 With the exception of the first bullet point, none of these issues have been considered by the EclA. Given the likely impact on Astonbury Wood, the applicant should consider possible mitigation measures. Reducing the scale of the development by reserving the eastern-most part of the site for biodiversity net gain, as suggested above, is a possible mitigation measure. HMWT would also be happy to discuss with Stevenage Borough Council potential improvements to the reserve infrastructure which might also help to mitigate the impact of increased recreational use. For example, the provision of fencing to exclude people and their pets from recently-coppiced areas, in accordance with the site's management plan.

Local plan policy

5.29.11 Stevenage Local Plan Policy SP12 states:

'...We will

d. Mitigate, or, as a last resort, compensate for the loss of green infrastructure or assets of biodiversity importance resulting from development; and

e. Only grant planning permission if an adequate assessment of priority habitats and species has been undertaken. Any identified impacts on these habitats and/or species will need to be avoided, mitigated or compensated.'

5.29.12 This application falls short because of the loss of or damage to assets of biodiversity importance resulting from development, both on and off site, and because of an inadequate assessment of priority habitats and species.

5.29.13 Policy NH2 is also relevant. Although Astonbury Wood LWS is not listed because it lies in East Herts, its close vicinity to the application site means the policy should be applied to it: 'Planning permission will be granted where proposals:

a. Would not result in substantive loss or deterioration of a Wildlife Site; and

b. Reasonably contribute towards the maintenance or enhancement of Wildlife Sites in the vicinity of the application site.'

5.30 National Grid Plant

5.30.1 No comments have been received at the time of drafting this report

5.31 Hertfordshire County Council Public Health Service

Air quality

5.31.1 The effects of air pollution on health have been intensively studied in recent years. The results of these studies showed that air pollution harms human health and particularly is harmful for those who are already vulnerable because of their age as children and older people or existing health problems. Ambient air pollution has been associated with a multitude of health effects, including mortality, respiratory and cardiovascular hospitalisations, changes in lung function and asthma attacks.⁵ Whilst it is better to reduce air pollution at source than mitigate the consequences, every new development will have an impact on air quality, usually by increasing emissions from buildings or from traffic generation. The links between poor air quality, human health, and the environment are well documented and is classed by Public Health England as a major public health risk alongside cancer, heart disease and obesity.

- 5.31.2 Public Health advises that the developer should consider placement of sensitive receptors to air pollution. This includes careful location of any affordable dwelling contribution in areas likely to have low concentrations of air pollutants and noise.
- 5.31.3 I defer to the Stevenage Environmental Health team to ensure that development will not create air quality problems. In particular, I seek reassurance that this development will not contribute to a worsening of local air quality that may lead to poor health outcomes (through exposure) for the existing community living in the vicinity, or for new and vulnerable populations (such as the elderly or young children).
- 5.31.4 The Planning Authority may wish to consider the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) 2017 Guidance on Outdoor Air Pollution, as well as the 2019 Quality Standard (QS181) which covers road-traffic-related air pollution and its impact on health. The Quality Standard describes high-quality actions in priority areas for improvement, with Quality Statement 2 focussed on planning applications.
- 5.31.5 The Royal College of Physicians (2025) 'A Breath of Fresh Air, Responding to the Health Challenges of Modern Air Pollution' 6 provides updated evidence on the impact poor air quality has on health and provides recommendations to reduce air pollution to prevent illness. The report recommends a Health in All Policies approach to the build environment and delivery of local services in urban and rural areas to maximise health gain. The report also recommends National and local governments need to deliver improvements in the provision of public transport to reduce emissions from personal vehicle travel and ensure that the infrastructure needed for increased active travel is in place, with the goal of achieving 50% of urban journeys being made on foot or by bike by 2030.
- Indoor air quality
- 5.31.6 Exposure to poor indoor air quality can impact negatively on health⁷. The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) have recently published guidance on indoor air quality (NICE guideline NG149).
- Creating access for all
- 5.31.7 To meet the needs of an ageing population and individuals with physical disabilities and limiting illnesses, it is recommended to give consideration to the accessibility across the development. This includes: footpath surfaces and colour schemes (particularly for people with dementia) and street furniture design (i.e. seating suitable for older adults). We recommend adopting a Healthy Streets approach to improve social, economic, and environmental sustainability through how public spaces are designed and managed.
- Adoption of active travel from new occupants
- 5.31.8 We recommend there is appropriate signage for pedestrian/cycle routes towards key local destinations (including the bus and train stations) and rights of way which includes journey times. To encourage the adoption of new active travel behaviours, this needs to be in place prior to first occupation when individuals are more susceptible to change. The planning authority may wish to consider this by way of a condition.
- Active design
- 5.31.9 Sport England, with support from Active Travel England and OHID, has produced 'Active Design' a guide to planning new developments that create the right environment to help people get more active. The guidance sets out ten key principles for ensuring developments incorporate opportunities for people to take part in sport and physical activity. The Active Design principles are aimed at contributing towards the Government's desire for the planning system to promote healthy communities through good urban design which is consistent with paragraphs 96 and 129 of the NPPF. Sport

England commends the use of the guidance in the master planning process for new residential developments.

- 5.31.10 In particular, the checklist in the Active Design guidance should be used for informing the design and consideration of how the checklist has been considered should be included in a planning application e.g. as part of the Health Impact Assessment or Design and Access Statement. For outline planning applications in particular, the planning authority may wish to consider this by way of a condition to request details to be submitted and approved which demonstrate how promoting physical activity has been considered in the design and layout of the development. A standard condition can be provided upon request.

Community sports facilities

- 5.31.11 Consideration should be given to the content of Sport England's response to the planning application. General planning guidance and advice can be found on Sport England's website Sport England Planning Guidance.

- 5.31.12 If the proposal involves the provision of a new sports facility, then consideration should be given to the recommendations and priorities set out in any approved Playing Pitch Strategy or Built Sports Facility Strategy that the local authority may have in place. In addition, to ensure they are fit for purpose, such facilities should be designed in accordance with design guidance notes produced by Sport England, or the relevant sport National Governing Body (NGB). These notes cover: artificial lighting, accessible facilities, clubhouses, swimming pools, combined leisure provision, outdoor surfaces (including both artificial sports surfaces and natural turf), sports halls and cost guidance. The following link also contains details of sport specific guidance produced by NGBs Design Guidance Notes.

- 5.31.13 Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator Playing Pitch Calculator and Sports Facility Calculator Sports Facility Calculator tools can be used to estimate the additional demand for key community sports facilities from a new population and convert that demand into sport facility requirements with indicative costs that can be used as starting point for securing developer contributions. Sport England can provide further advice upon request.

Affordable housing

- 5.31.14 Having a good quality home is important to our health and wellbeing and ensuring accessibility to affordable housing is a priority across the County. It is important that the development provides its affordable housing in a way which is integrated and avoids demarcation. It should also have equal access to the green space provided.

Provision of healthy, affordable food

- 5.31.15 The environment in which we live, work and play has a considerable influence on our food choices. 10 Easy access to affordable, healthy food choices can help to support a balanced diet and prevent unhealthy weight in the population. 11 We seek to encourage affordable, healthy food choices and a balance in the range of food outlets occupying retail spaces to enable individuals to make healthy choices, whilst promoting local commercial diversity. We look to the local planning authority to consider licensing and planning restrictions for food outlets to provide a balance of food choices available and to ensure that hot food takeaways are not within walking distance of schools or other places where children congregate, in accordance with paragraph 97 of the NPPF.

Contributions towards modal shift and active recreation

- 5.31.16 We recommend the planning authority considers seeking contributions by way of a planning condition towards local schemes to encourage modal shift towards active and sustainable travel.

Charging points for electric vehicles

- 5.31.17 To encourage the use of cleaner vehicles, electric charging points should be provided for all new residential and non-residential buildings with associated parking.

Car club

- 5.31.18 We would like to see the developer making a contribution to setting up a car club.

Safe crossing points beyond site perimeter

- 5.31.19 To encourage residents to use active travel, a key indicator will be perceptions of safety. Safe crossing points will encourage behaviour change for residents to use active travel in favour of car usage.

Health Impact Assessment

- 5.31.20 Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is a recognised tool that can assist development applications demonstrate both the positives of the proposal as well as identifying any unintended consequences. Robust assessments of the health implications of development proposals consider how different populations will be positively and negatively impacted by the development; HIA can draw out these inequalities in relation to the impact of a development on existing local communities and how the development may influence the health and wellbeing of its new residents. It is also important to consider the cumulative impact of neighbouring developments on new and existing communities which can be taken into account when undertaking an HIA.

- 5.31.21 In November 2019, Herts County Council adopted a HIA Position Statement which sets out the process for carrying out a HIA. It also sets out the recommended frameworks to use for each stage of the HIA process. This includes guidance on the quality assurance framework that will be used to assess how well an HIA has been undertaken.

- 5.31.22 The HIA Position Statement does not specify a particular methodology to use for the appraisal stage - this is to be determined by the developer. However, we recommend developers familiarise themselves with the "Wales Health Impact Assessment Support Unit (WHIASU) Quality Assurance Review Framework for HIA" to ensure the framework chosen to undertake the HIA meets the requirements of a high quality HIA. Hertfordshire Public Health will be quality assessing HIAs (using the WHIASU Quality Assurance Review Framework) submitted with planning applications either as standalone assessments or as part of Environmental Impact Assessments.

- 5.31.23 Given the scale of the proposed development, Public Health will require the developer to undertake a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) to assess the potential positive and negative health impacts of this development. In doing so, the applicant would be demonstrating how it is meeting the various requirements of the NPPF, chapter 8.

- 5.31.24 In the absence of an agreed national set of guidelines on HIA, and appreciating there are different methodologies, our expectation is that an HIA must:

- consult Public Health and the planning authority on its scope.
- have robustly considered health inequalities and demonstrate an understanding of how health inequalities apply in the context of the development proposal.
- have clearly and appropriately identified vulnerable populations as part of the HIA process (see Population Group Checklist9 for example).
- have utilised relevant local health profiles and other appropriate community data, preferably down to ward level where possible.
- be robust in its consideration of the wider determinants of health and can demonstrate understanding of what these are in the context of the development proposal and wider communities.
- be balanced in its findings.

- 5.31.25 To ensure the completeness and quality of the Health Impact Assessment: (a) the developer must ensure that the Health Impact Assessment is prepared by competent experts; and (b) the Health Impact Assessment must be accompanied by a statement from the developer outlining the relevant expertise or qualifications of such experts.
- 5.31.26 For a development of this size, we would be expecting a rapid HIA to be undertaken. The applicant should consider how much more work this would entail set against the benefits of demonstrating to the local planning authority how the proposal is positively planned and how it will offer opportunities to the existing and new communities.
- 5.31.27 The development proposals represent significant change to the built environment which, whilst intended as positive, may have unintended negative impacts on health that an HIA may highlight. There are a range of guidance and resources that can be used to inform HIA development to ensure it is robust, balanced, evidence-driven and puts health at the heart of planning. See Table 1 of the recent Public Health England publication on HIA.
- 5.31.28 We request that Public Health is consulted at the scoping stage of the HIA via HealthyPlaces@hertfordshire.gov.uk to help ensure the HIA focusses on the wider determinants of health and health inequalities. We are happy to discuss baseline information, data and intelligence that the HIA will need to utilise.

6 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

6.1 National Planning Policy Framework

- 6.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans can provide for housing and other development in a sustainable manner. The latest version of the NPPF was published in December 2024 (with further minor amendments in February 2025).
- 6.1.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF must be taken into account in preparing the development plan and is a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 6.1.3 The NPPF should be read as a whole (including its footnotes and annexes).

6.2 Planning Practice Guidance

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

6.3 National Design Guide

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

6.4 The Development Plan

- 6.4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the development plan unless

material considerations indicate otherwise. For Stevenage, the development plan comprises the following documents:

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

6.5 Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031

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

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

Policy SP1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development:

Policy SP2: Sustainable development in Stevenage:

Policy SP5: Infrastructure:

Policy SP6: Sustainable transport:

Policy SP8: Good design:

Policy SP9: Healthy communities:

Policy SP11: Climate change, flooding, and pollution:

Policy SP12: Green infrastructure and the natural environment:

Policy SP13: The historic environment:

Policy IT4: Transport assessments and travel plans:

Policy IT5: Parking and access:

Policy IT6: Sustainable transport:

Policy IT7: New and improved links for pedestrians and cyclists:

Policy HO4: South east of Stevenage:

Policy HO7: Affordable housing targets:

Policy HO8: Affordable housing tenure, mix and design:

Policy HO9: House types and sizes:

Policy HO10: Sheltered and supported housing

Policy HO11: Accessible and adaptable housing:

Policy HC8: Sports facilities in new developments:

Policy GD1: High quality design:

Policy FP1: Climate change:

Policy FP3: Flood risk in Flood Zones 2 and 3:

Policy FP4: Flood storage reservoirs and functional floodplains:

Policy FP7: Pollution:

Policy FP8: Pollution sensitive uses:

Policy NH3: Green corridors:

Policy NH5: Trees and woodland:

Policy NH7: Open space standards:

Policy NH09: Areas of archaeological significance.

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

1. the application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provide a strong reason for refusing the development; or
2. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole,

having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.

6.6 Local Plan Review and Update

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

6.6.2 In response to the review, the council has proposed a partial update of the local plan. Paragraph 49 of the NPPF states that Local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:

a) the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);

b) the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and

c) the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to this Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).

6.6.3 At the time of writing, the partial update has undergone examination by the Secretary of State and the Council is out to consultation on the main modifications proposed following examination. The partial update is at an advanced stage of preparation and the council considers the emerging policies within it to have a high degree of consistency with the NPPF. Where relevant, the weight to be given to emerging policies will be set out in the assessment section of this report.

6.7 Other Material Considerations

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

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

6.7.2 Planning decisions must also reflect relevant international obligations and statutory requirements

7 APPRAISAL

7.1.1 The main considerations in the assessment of the application are:

- Land use policy
- Housing provision
- Affordable housing and financial contributions
- Layout, character and appearance
- Environment and amenities
- Parking
- Connectivity
- Highway safety
- Biodiversity and ecology

- Trees and landscaping
- Flooding/drainage
- Sustainable construction and climate change
- Heritage assets
- Archaeology
- Human rights and equalities.

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

7.2 Land Use Considerations

7.2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024) states that significant weight should be placed on both the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

7.2.2 The site is allocated in the Stevenage Local Plan 2011-2031 (2019) under housing allocation HO4: South East of Stevenage which sets out the provision of up to 550 dwellings on the parcel of land in question and also the parcel of land to the north of the A602. Both areas fall under the single allocation and should see the provision of requirements in the policy delivered over the two sites. Local Plan Partial Review update. Given the Inspector did not raise this policy update in the Examination in Public as requiring any modifications, the LPA are applying significant weight to this updated policy. This is discussed in more detail later in the report.

7.2.3 Given the southern site is the larger of the two and the plans show a proposed local centre, it is presumed that most of the non-residential requirements will be within the application site. This includes (but is not limited to) –

- At least 5% aspirational homes;
- 1% of plots made available for self-build purposes;
- At least 30% affordable housing;
- Provision for supported or sheltered housing;
- Local facilities, including a GP surgery;

It is of note here that the Local Plan Partial Review updated Policy HO4 to require a 40% affordable housing provision.

7.2.4 As well as these points, the allocation in general requires (specific to southern site) –

- Satisfactory vehicular access to both sites from a single point of access off the A602, in line with Highways Authority requirements;
- Designed to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport;
- Existing Public Rights of Way are incorporated, where possible;
- A full archaeological assessment is undertaken;
- A full flood risk assessment is undertaken;
- The proposals seek to preserve or enhance the setting of adjacent listed buildings;
- The schemes incorporate a network of green infrastructure, with an emphasis on high quality landscaping within and around the development to reduce the impact of the development on the surrounding greenfield / Green Belt land.

7.2.5 Policy HO9 of the local plan states that there is a structural imbalance in the existing housing stock (albeit in a limited manner) whereby there is a lack of smaller properties

and larger aspirational homes in the borough. The lack of housing mix is exacerbated by changes in demographics leading to an increase in the number of single person households and couples needing homes. Due to growth requirements for the town, there is a need to provide a substantial number of additional homes in Stevenage. Higher density development is set out as a key requirement of national guidance and where appropriate, densities will need to be raised in order to meet these targets for new homes.

- 7.2.6 As part of the pre-application process for the site a Design Review Panel (DRP) was held with an external independent consultancy. The panel picked up on several points but one being that the site lent itself to higher densities. The indicative number of dwellings proposed at 500 is over the specified 400 dwellings for the southern parcel specifically. It was also noted in the DRP report that higher rise buildings may be appropriate to seek a higher density. However, given the semi-rural nature of the site located on the south eastern cusp of the Borough, officers disagreed, and apart from possible three storey buildings in the proposed 'local centre' area of the plan, typical two storey height dwellings are deemed most appropriate for the site.
- 7.2.7 The provision of up to 500 dwellings, to include a variety of flats and houses, with 2, 3, 4 and 5 bedrooms, along with affordable housing, sheltered/supported housing, a local centre, GP surgery, play area and green spaces is considered acceptable in principle.
- 7.2.8 Since November 2018, housing delivery has been measured against the Housing Delivery Test (HDT) as set out by the Government planning policy and guidance. The results of the HDT dictate whether a local planning authority should be subject to consequences to help increase their housing delivery. Where an authority's HDT score is less than 95%, the authority should prepare an action plan to assess the causes of under delivery and identify actions to increase delivery in future years. Where an authority's HDT score is less than 85% of its housing requirement, the Council must incorporate a 20% buffer into its housing supply calculations in line with paragraph 79 of the NPPF. Based on the latest published figures for the Council (2023) the LPA's HDT figure is 38%.
- 7.2.9 Based on the Council's ED1 Housing Technical Paper (June 2025) Stevenage Borough Council's 5 year land supply identifies that the Council can demonstrate a Housing Supply of **5.49 years** over the next five years based on the draft plan to meet future demand. using the *Liverpool* methodology (spreads the delivery of historic undersupply of housing equally across the remainder of the Local Plan period) and guidance from the NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance. The 5-year land supply includes a 20% buffer.
- 7.2.10 The Council has also issued a Housing Delivery Action Plan May 2024. This provides an overview of housing delivery, analysis of barriers to delivery and actions necessary to increase the delivery of housing in the future. The action points specified in the Plan will be monitored on an annual basis to ensure delivery can be increased in order to meet the Council's target of 7,600 new homes over the Local Plan period.
- 7.2.11 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF (2024) states that where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless: (i) the application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or (ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF (2024) taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.

- 7.2.12 The Council's policies relating to housing are considered out of date pursuant to paragraph 11(d), based on its HDT score. The 'tilted balance' in paragraph 11 does not displace s.38(6) of the 2004 Act, however, the NPPF and accordingly paragraph 11(d) are material considerations. Consequently, unless either of the criteria set out at criteria (i) or (ii), as noted above are satisfied, planning permission should be granted.
- 7.2.13 Whilst the site is an allocated strategic housing site in the Local Plan, given the increase in numbers proposed, the above position has significant weight on the proposals as they stand in terms of numbers and acceptability. Subject to the proposals being compliant on other considerations or being judged on balance to outweigh any negative impacts, the principle of housing delivery on this allocated site is acceptable pursuant to the Local Plan and the NPPF.
- 7.2.14 Policy TC11 of the Local Plan relates to New Convenience Retail Provision, and states that new convenience retail floorspace provision, of an appropriate scale and in an appropriate accessible location, will be made in the new neighbourhoods as Stevenage West, North of Stevenage and South-East Stevenage. It further advises that a neighbourhood centre will be permitted in the South-East of Stevenage development of the order of 500 sqm with a convenience store and other related small-scale Use Class A1 (Now Class E as reflected in the Local Plan Partial Update) shops, sufficient to meet the day-to-day needs of the residents of the new neighbourhood.
- 7.2.15 The proposed Masterplan and associated supporting documents clearly outline the provision of a neighbourhood centre within the denser flatted area of the site, adjacent to and visible from the A602. The neighbourhood centre would provide both commercial/retail units and a GP surgery in accordance with Policy HO4. Whilst the specific footprint of commercial space is not confirmed, given the built form will come forward as part of any reserved matters applications submitted, the allowance for provision to be policy compliant with TC11 is acceptable in principle.
- 7.2.16 As mentioned above the main site policy allocation requires the provision of a GP surgery on site. Within the Healthy Communities section of the Local Plan, Policy HC5 for new health, social and community facilities does not allocate specific sites for this purpose beyond Ridlins End. However, the policy justification covers GP provision and a need to provide new surgeries where provision is stretched. The policy allocation clearly outlines a need for a new GP surgery, and provision secured in the local centre would meet the relevant policy requirements in this respect.
- 7.2.17 Policy HC8 of the local plan also relates to healthy communities and seeks major development to provide for outdoor sports facilities either on site or by way of an in-lieu financial contribution towards improvements to existing or provision of new facilities elsewhere in the Borough. Sport England have made comment on the application advising that due to the size of the site, and relative constraints provision of outdoor facilities on-site to meet borough needs is not appropriate in this case. As such financial contributions should be made.
- 7.2.18 By using Sport England's sports calculator contributions towards grass and artificial pitches and changing facilities, and other facilities such as the swimming pool, sports hall and tennis would all require a financial contribution, discussed more in the next section of this report. In terms of policy compliance, securing these contributions makes the application acceptable in policy terms. Furthermore, it is of note that the site does provide recreational spaces for non-formal sport and recreation such as kickabout football and running. This is discussed more later in the report.
- 7.2.19 Further to the above, the housing allocation policy also requires supported/sheltered housing on site. Policy HO10 of the Local Plan for sheltered and supported housing states that planning permission will be granted where:

- a) The site is well served by passenger transport;
- b) There is good access to local services and facilities such as neighbourhood centres;
- c) Appropriate levels of amenity space and car parking for residents, visitors and staff are provided; and
- d) The proposal is appropriate to its locality.

On large developments in excess of 200 units, an element of sheltered and / or supported accommodation within use Class C3 should be provided where practicable and consistent with the above criteria as part of the general housing mix requirements of Policy HO9.

- 7.2.20 As an outline application, details of these elements of the development, the neighbourhood centre, GP surgery, and supported / sheltered housing are limited. However, the supporting documentation submitted makes note of the policy and the retail and other stipulations required. Sufficient space is shown on the Masterplan to accommodate these elements of the Policies noted above. Therefore, subject to the imposition of suitable and reasonable conditions to ensure these key features of the development come forward, the proposals are considered to be policy compliant in this regard.

7.3 Affordable Housing, Planning Obligations and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

Affordable Housing

- 7.3.1 Policy HO7 of the adopted Local Plan (2019) stipulates that planning permission would be granted for residential development which would maximise affordable housing provision. Taking this into consideration, there is a requirement to provide 30% of new homes to be affordable on sites that are not considered previously developed. A reduced provision of 25% is acceptable in policy on previously developed sites. However, with respect to Policy HO4 the Local Plan update sees an increase in the requirement of affordable housing on site to 40%.
- 7.3.2 As mentioned above, Paragraph 49 of the NPPF advises that Local Authorities may give weight to emerging plans and their policies according to -
- a) the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);
 - b) the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and
 - c) the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to this Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).
- 7.3.3 Given the updated policy has gone through EiP it is therefore at an advanced stage and the weight given significant. The Inspector did not highlight Policy HO4 as requiring modification during the EiP and there are no unresolved objections to the policy. Furthermore, the emerging policy is considered to be consistent with the NPPF. The weight to be applied to the emerging policy is therefore considered to be significant and the requirement of the emerging policy seeking to secure 40% affordable housing is material and upheld by the LPA for this development proposal.
- 7.3.4 In respect of the current application there would be a requirement to provide 200 affordable units on site to meet the required 40% provision. In terms of the tenure, mix

and design of the affordable housing, Policy HO8 states that planning permission will be granted where those dwellings:

- a) are provided by the developer on site with at least 70% of the units being for rent and the remainder consisting of other tenures which is to be agreed with the Council’s Housing team;
- b) meets the requirements of Policy HO9 (House types and sizes);
- c) are physically indistinguishable from other types of homes and are distributed across the site to avoid over-concentration in particular; and
- d) will remain at an affordable price for future eligible households.

7.3.5 Paragraph 66 of the NPPF also advises on affordable housing tenure and mix, stating ‘where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed, planning policies and decisions should expect that the mix of affordable housing required meets identified local needs, across Social Rent, other affordable housing for rent and affordable home ownership tenures.’

7.3.6 In regard to affordable housing delivery, the Council’s five-year land supply includes the provision of a number of affordable housing units. The Housing Technical paper (2024) advises that that the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2023 concluded the current unmet need for affordable housing totals 1,612 households. This is made up of households in Stevenage that are currently living in unsuitable housing and are unable to afford their own housing.

7.3.7 Of these households, 802 currently occupy affordable housing that does not meet the household’s current needs. There is, therefore, a current need from 810 households in Stevenage that currently need affordable housing and do not currently occupy affordable housing. In addition, the SHMA assessment concludes there is an additional 110 households annually needing affordable housing in Stevenage. A further 312 households have then been identified as households that can afford market rents but aspire to home ownership. The Council’s most recently published affordable housing need is therefore represented below –

Figure 4: Overall need for Affordable Housing 2022-31 in Stevenage by property size

Stevenage	Affordable Housing Need Households unable to afford	Affordable Housing Need Households aspiring to home ownership	Affordable Housing (Households)
1 bedroom	94	103	197
2 bedrooms	442	125	567
3 bedrooms	993	84	1,077
4+ bedrooms	272	-	272
TOTAL HOUSING NEED	1,802	312	2,114

7.3.8 This is also reflected in the appeal decision letter for Land West of Lytton Way appeal with respect to the under delivery of affordable homes whereby the inspector states (para. 87) and quote

“I have been referred to other schemes which have been granted planning permission or it has been resolved that planning permission should be granted. In these schemes, for one reason or another, affordable housing provision has been lower than the expected policy figure of 20%. Indeed 52 homes would equate to over 17% of the affordable housing that has been delivered thus far in the Local Plan period. In these circumstances

of poor delivery of affordable homes and with sizeable unmet need for such housing, I give the provision of affordable housing significant weight”.

- 7.3.9 Paragraph 58 of the NPPF states that planning obligations must only be sought where they meet all the following tests, as contained in Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2010.
- a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
 - b) directly related to the development; and
 - c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
- 7.3.10 Paragraph 59 of the NPPF states where up-to-date policies have set out the contributions expected from development, planning applications that comply with them should be assumed to be viable. Where the viability of a development is questioned, it is up to the applicant to demonstrate whether particular circumstances justify the need for a viability assessment at the application stage. The application has been accompanied by a Viability Assessment (VA). It is for the LPA to determine the weight in which to give the assessment when considering whether the plan and viability evidence underpinning it is up to date, and any change in circumstances since the plan was brought into force.
- 7.3.11 To be policy compliant, the development would need to provide 40% affordable housing provision based on the updated HO4 policy which now carries significant weight following examination of the Local Plan update by an Inspector, with modifications as required being agreed. Policy HO4 did not require modifications and therefore, this policy carries substantial weight in its updated wording by the Inspector. A 40% provision would amount to 200 dwellings. The submitted VA assumes that the development cannot provide any affordable housing within the development.
- 7.3.12 The LPA have had the VA independently appraised by property regeneration consultants Aspinall Verdi (AV) to assess whether the assumptions made are correct, and whether any affordable housing can be provided on site. This appraisal has included numerous negotiations and discussions to try and reach an agreeable position.
- 7.3.13 The VA shows four scenarios for calculating affordable housing provision, 40% affordable housing provision, 25% provision, 10% provision and 0% affordable provision with 100% private sales. All four scenarios have an outcome that suggests the scheme is unviable, as shown in the table below.

Table ES1.1 - Applicant's Appraisal Outcomes

GDV	40% Affordable	25% Affordable	10% Affordable	100% Private
RLV	£5,920,189	£7,708,301	£8,376,036	£8,728,093
BLV	£9,639,000	£9,639,000	£9,639,000	£9,639,000
Variance	-£8,032,107	-£2,495,714	-£1,262,964	-£910,907

Source: Beacon Partnership LLP, 2026.

- 7.3.14 On review of the VA, where AV are in agreement with the applicant's position, they have assumed their cost and value inputs. However, where there is disagreement, they have adopted their own assumptions and advised the LPA as to why they have done so. The outcomes of AV's appraisals differ from the applicants due to changes in the market sale GDV, construction costs, S106 contributions and CIL.
- 7.3.15 AV have tested the same four scenarios. The outcomes of these appraisals are below and show that despite favourable adjustments by AV to the GDV, external works and

S106 contributions, compared to the applicant's assessment, the scheme remains unviable in all scenarios.

Table ES1.3 – AspinallVerdi Appraisal Outcomes

Scenario	S1 – 40% AH	S2 – 25% AH	S3 – 10% AH	S4 – 0% AH
RLV	£5,024,472	£9,279,473	£9,074,423	£8,925,084
BLV	£9,639,000	£9,639,000	£9,639,000	£9,639,000
Variance	-£4,614,528	-£359,527	-£564,577	-£713,916

Source: AVL, 2026.

- 7.3.16 It is of note that further to the submission of the applicant's VA (Feb 2026) the LPA have given further consideration to all other S106 financial contribution requests. These are discussed in more detail in Section 7.4 of this report, but for the purposes of viability, the LPA do not agree that requests made by the local highway authority and the East of England Ambulance Service meet the tests in Reg 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations and thus will not be seeking these costs are covered by the applicant as part of this development.
- 7.3.17 Ahead of the applicant having sight of AV's final response to the Council, an addendum to the VA has been provided to take account of the LPA's position on S106 financial contributions. The addendum seeks to advise that the monies previously accounted for highways and the ambulance service within the VA, but are no longer required, could be secured for affordable housing provision as a financial contribution in-lieu for off-site provision.
- 7.3.18 Some aspects of AV's review will still require review by the applicant, and a further full review of the addendum will be required by the LPA. However, in principle the LPA deem that with appropriate review mechanisms as part of the S106 agreement, some level of affordable housing could be provided, although this would not be policy compliant.
- 7.3.19 Based on the applicant's figures in the addendum, AV have advised the LPA that a possible 24% provision (approximate) or 120 units (86no. affordable or social rent and 36no. shared ownership) could be forthcoming on site. However, this will be subject to a final review of the VA numbers where there are small discrepancies between the applicant and AV.
- 7.3.20 Officers are content that a provision can be made and that whilst this is not a policy compliant (40%) provision, the application has gone through the viability process as laid out in the NPPF. The provision of review mechanisms will ensure that the LPA can clawback possible further provision, especially at reserved matters stage when more detailed costs are known for calculations. The LPA would emphasise here that any provision that is deemed viable on further assessment should be provided on site in accordance with adopted policy unless sufficient justification is forthcoming on an offsite contribution.
- 7.3.21 This stance is upheld through Policy HO8 of the Local Plan which states that where affordable housing is secured through Policy HO7, planning permission will be granted where those dwellings:
- a. **Are provided by the developer on site** with at least 70% of the units being for rent and the remainder consisting of other tenures to be agreed with the Council's Housing team;
 - b. Meet the requirements of Policy HO9;

- c. Are physically indistinguishable from other types of homes and are distributed across the site to avoid over-concentration in any particular area; and
- d. Will remain at an affordable price for future eligible households.

Exceptions to criterion a. will only be considered where it would result in the delivery of new affordable housing within a similar timescale and

- i. It would be demonstrably preferable for planning or management reasons to secure land, off-site provision or a financial contribution; or
- ii. The proposed affordable housing units respond to a specific, identified need that justifies a departure from the normal tenure requirements.

- 7.3.22 Furthermore, Paragraph 64 of the NPPF discusses affordable housing provision and states that 'where a need for affordable housing is identified, planning policies should specify the type of affordable housing required (including the minimum proportion of Social Rent homes required), and **expect it to be met on-site** unless:
- a) off-site provision or an appropriate financial contribution in lieu can be robustly justified; and
 - b) the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities.'
- 7.3.23 In the VA addendum provided by the applicant it is suggested that an off-site contribution in-lieu could be secured, with the applicant advising it would be their preference to accelerate affordable provision at other sites within Stevenage which benefit from a closer proximity to key infrastructure and better existing transport links. Given the potential timeframes to facilitate the required highways works, the Strategic Housing Team view the capturing of an off-site payment a likely better outcome for Affordable Housing need in the town.
- 7.3.24 At this stage insufficient justification has been presented and no forthcoming sites for this provision have been identified that the LPA could secure through the legal agreement process. As set out above in Paragraph 7.3.20, on-site provision is the LPA's preference in line with national and local policy but will consider alternatives if sufficient justification is provided.
- 7.3.25 In line with the NPPF and NPPG guidance, the LPA must determine the weight in which to give the assessment when considering whether the plan and viability evidence underpinning it is up to date, and any change in circumstances since the plan was brought into force. As part of the Local Plan update, which will see Policy HO4 updated seeking 40% affordable housing on site, a Viability Assessment was undertaken to establish whether any new evidence established from the Local Plan adoption in 2019 has evolved and whether the evidence underpinning the plan is still relevant.
- 7.3.26 This VA established certain parameters for costs of developing the site, based on market evidence and recent built developments in the Borough. The VA concluded the following - *The third strategic site (Policy HO4) is shown to be marginal, generating a positive residual land value but one that is lower than the BLV assumed in the testing. This is the sole strategic site in the middle-value zone, which may explain why viability is reduced.*
- 7.3.27 The VA produced to inform the Local Plan update also concluded that the following adjustments are required for HO4 to become viable with 30% affordable housing and all fixed policy costs:
- BLV reduced to £100,000 per acre (net);
 - 10% reduction to base build costs;
 - 8% increase to market sales values.
- 7.3.28 The VA therefore informs the LPA that viability of the site was deemed marginal at the time of assessing up to date evidence for the purposes of the Local Plan update process.

Notwithstanding this, the update did propose an increase of affordable housing on site from 30% to 40% and with the VA evidence this was found sound by the Inspector assigned to the Council's Examination in Public (EiP) as no modifications were sought over this policy update. The LPA can therefore give significant weight to the content of the updated policy wording.

- 7.3.29 In conclusion of the assessment of affordable housing and viability, provision of 24% affordable housing on site has been demonstrated and this is considered acceptable given the viability assessments and appraisals undertaken on the matter. However, at this time insufficient evidence has been provided for the LPA to agree to an off-site provision. However, the applicant would be justified to follow this up before the signing of the S106 agreement, or through the submission of a Deed of Variation application.

Planning Obligations and CIL

- 7.3.30 The Council is a CIL Charging Authority and under recent amendments to CIL Regulations, is required to publish an Infrastructure Funding Statement which states what the Council's spending priorities for its CIL receipts are. The PPG also states that authorities can choose to pool funding from different routes to fund the same infrastructure provided that authorities set out in infrastructure funding statements which infrastructure they expect to fund through the levy (Paragraph 166).
- 7.3.31 This means that whilst the Council may already be intending to spend CIL receipts on a particular item of infrastructure, they may also request S106 contributions towards the same project. However, in line with Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended), each developer contribution within a S106 agreement must meet the following three tests:
- a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
 - b) directly related to the development; and
 - c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
- 7.3.32 The Developers Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (2025) (SPD) advises that strategic sites allocated in the Local Plan have a large number of policy requirements as identified by stakeholders during Local Plan production and agreed through the Local Plan Examination process. The vast majority of these requirements should be provided on-site as part of the development so their delivery will be contained in submitted plans and conditioned by the planning permission.
- 7.3.33 It further explains that some of the requirements will need to be secured as a developer contribution by S106 due to the nature of how they are provided for. This includes, for example, education contributions. HCC, the local education authority, requires land to be provided and financial contributions to be made towards the build costs and this would be inappropriate through a planning condition so must be included in a S106. Statutory consultees, such as the County Council or Highways England, are able to secure developer contributions where necessary to mitigate an impact of a proposed development to make the proposal acceptable in planning terms.
- 7.3.34 As a starting point for strategic sites, and likely for large windfall sites, it is expected that the Council will seek to secure developer contributions towards the following, non-exhaustive, list of infrastructure/services in addition to collecting a CIL charge:
- Affordable Housing
 - Education
 - NHS GP provision
 - Passenger transport
 - Travel plans
 - Electric Car Clubs

- Cycle Hire Scheme

7.3.35 Further to the table shown above in 7.3.19, these and other financial contributions are required in line with the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (2025). The Council would like to ensure that a key direct benefit of promoting future growth is safeguarded for its residents. Consequently, developers of major development will sign a S106 agreement with the Council to:

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

7.3.36 Should the developer be unable to fulfill these obligations the developer must provide a Local Employment Strategy which shows –

- an estimate of how many construction jobs their scheme will create, how many jobs should therefore be filled with Stevenage residents,
- how many apprenticeships positions should therefore be filled with Stevenage residents or students,
- how they will target local residents/students for these positions, how they will record and report the employment, and
- the potential in-lieu payments required to be paid to the Council for non-compliance with the targets.

7.3.37 If the report shows that local recruitment targets have not been met by the developer or contractor, payments in lieu should be made to the Council in line with the following:

- £4,000 per number of targeted jobs not filled by Stevenage residents,
- £2,000 per number of targeted apprenticeships not filled by Stevenage residents or students, and
- £500 per apprenticeship position as an administrative fee towards the brokerage system to fill apprenticeship positions.
- If a major development could not provide suitable apprenticeship opportunities due to the quick construction of the development project, and the resultant lack of suitable opportunity to provide apprenticeships, they should pay a lesser fee of £1,000 per number of targeted apprenticeships not created rather than the £2,000 fee.

7.3.38 These targets do not add a requirement for additional jobs that would add a financial burden to the developer or contractor. The targets merely add a requirement that a portion of the jobs will be targeted to local residents. The in-lieu payments do not add a significant financial burden to the developer or contractor and will only be required if the developer or contractor does not meet the employment targets.

7.3.39 The Developer Contributions SPD (2025) also introduces a new financial contribution requirement to pay towards cycle hire in the Borough following the successful introduction of 'Beryl' bikes. Only applied to residential development, the SPD requires a contribution of £25,000 for developments of 200+ dwellings. Furthermore, the SPD has a requirement for fees to be paid to cover the monitoring of legal agreements. This cover requesting payments, ensuring transfer and/or expenditure of money and keeping/publishing records of contributions in line with regulations. The Council will seek 5% of the value of the contributions being monitored with a minimum of £1000 and a cap of £50,000. This is considered a fair cost that will reflect the value of the S106 agreement and will not affect the viability of a scheme.

7.3.40 Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) as highways authority have requested several strand 1 contributions to cover the proposed access and highway works as shown on

the proposed drawings, bus service improvements of £150,000 (index linked) per year, for a period of 5 years to secure the futures of current services 390, 907 and/or the extension of new services introduced into the surrounding area which may be adapted to serve the new development, as well as a separate ANPR/bus gate contribution.

- 7.3.41 Furthermore, monitoring fees for the proposed Travel Plan will be required in line with HCC Toolkit to a sum of £8,862 (index linked) to cover the standard five years monitoring. To support the Travel Plan proposed a request for sums towards a sustainable travel voucher in order to encourage travel by sustainable modes of transport at a rate of £50 per flat and £100 per dwelling (index linked as hereinafter provided). This would enable HCC to promote travel by sustainable modes incentivising an uptake of public transport and cycling or walking to the development.
- 7.3.42 In addition to strand 1 contributions which the LPA deem acceptable, strand 2 contributions are sought to mitigate the impacts of the development and to meet an Active Travel funding gap (cost per dwelling) of £9,861 (indexed to March 2024 and equated from £570,185,769 / 83,530 = £6,826). This would equate to a total contribution for Active Travel of £4,930,500 for the development.
- 7.3.43 The HCC Highways response identifies key schemes for which the funds would go towards. The main of these is route 4 in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (2019) (LCWIP). Route 4 relates to the connections from South East Stevenage to Central Stevenage. Ref. 4.1 and 4.2 relate directly to the HO4 housing site.

Route 4			
RST Criterion	Issue/Opportunity	Opportunity for improvement	Ref
Connectivity Safety	Connection into new housing site	Extension of segregated route from Bragbury Lane into the South East Stevenage development	4.1
		Cycling priority junction accessing development both north and south	4.2

- 7.3.44 These connections are shown on the proposed Masterplan, with works proposed from Bragbury Lane, past The Chequers and along the A602 where a new foot/cycleway would be brought into the site frontage and stepped away from the existing footpath edge. The connections would continue into the new signalised junction and then easterly to the existing bus stop footway on the southern side of the A602 near The Three Horseshoes public house.
- 7.3.45 Further connection improvements along route 4 would in addition to points ref. 4.1 and 4.2, be covered by S106 contributions. The LCWIP are designed to assist travel by sustainable modes and provide much needed improvements on this corridor. It is highway officers' opinion that there is a clear case for these additional route 4 connections given the congested A602, helping to facilitate a high-quality route from the site to the key destinations in Stevenage, and that these are relevant in planning terms. Any car trips that can be taken off the network given the local conditions has merit.
- 7.3.46 The applicant does not agree to the financial contribution sought by HCC for the strand 2 contributions. Strand 2 relates to mitigation works that address the wider cumulative impact of developments for which the development itself is not solely responsible for but

does derive a benefit from. Whilst the applicant does not dispute there is a need to support and finance highway improvements, the financial contribution which has been sought does not accord with Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) 2010 (as amended). For reference, Regulation 122 states:-

A planning obligation may only constitute a reason for granting planning permission for the development if the obligation is –

- (a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;*
- (b) directly related to the development; and*
- (c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.*

- 7.3.47 Having reviewed the request for a sustainable transport contribution, officers' do not consider that it meets the statutory tests set out in Regulation 122 shown above. In terms of point (a) for a contribution to be "necessary", the development must be unacceptable without it. In this case, request towards bus service provision is being sought and upheld, with the scheme itself designed to accommodate a new or existing bus service into the development, along with a Travel Plan and Sustainable Travel Vouchers to promote non-car modal shift.
- 7.3.48 The main element of the contributions being requested which are not considered justified relate to the Active Travel funding gap. This identifies Route 4 in the LCWIP which seeks to improve connections between the site allocated and the Town Centre. As discussed above these connections are being provided as part of the site's Masterplan providing for shared-use route connections and linkages into the existing active travel network.
- 7.3.49 The remaining elements of Route 4 relate to improvement works along the cycleway heading north towards the Town. Whilst it is acknowledged that additional investment could enhance the network, this is not the same as the development causing an unacceptable impact or relying on new transport infrastructure to function acceptably.
- 7.3.50 The County Council make reference to a recent development in East Herts District which contributed towards Route 4 of the LCWIP, however, unlike the Hazel Park scheme, this site does not rely on major off-site cycling infrastructure to secure basic network connectivity or deliver modal shift. The development is therefore not dependent on comprehensive upgrading of Route 4 to be made acceptable. As such, the contribution is not necessary under Reg122(2)(a).
- 7.3.51 Turning then to point (b), the proposed active travel investments for Route 4 of the LCWIP beyond ref 4.1 and 4.2 shown in table at Paragraph 7.3.37 would not be directly related to the development. The requested upgrades relate to strategic improvements identified in the LCWIP, forming part of wider network enhancement across the settlement. While the development will generate additional cycle movements, the scheme already provides the infrastructure needed to connect future residents to the existing network. The wholesale upgrading of an established strategic route goes beyond addressing site-specific impacts and instead serves a wider catchment. The contribution therefore lacks a sufficiently direct relationship to this development under Reg122(2)(b).
- 7.3.52 Lastly, point (c) relates to being fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind. Given the site's expected CIL yield of approximately £4 million, and the strategic nature of the Route 4 improvements, requiring this development alone to fund the upgrade is disproportionate. The works sought would deliver benefits far beyond the site's own users and would not reasonably reflect the scale of impact generated. The request is therefore not proportionate, contrary to Reg122(2)(c).
- 7.3.53 Hertfordshire County Council Growth and Infrastructure Team have assessed the proposal on behalf of the County Council as the education authority and based on the

provision of 500 dwellings is requesting a total of £3,494,866 towards new secondary education provision at the former Barnwell East site, on the basis that CIL receipts would not be sufficient to provide for these facilities. The applicant has contested this figure challenging the underlying methodology and approach adopted by HCC. On the basis of the information provided officers agree that HCC's request for education contributions is justified having regard to the CIL regulations, in particular that it is necessary to provide for new education infrastructure to serve residents of new development in the borough, including the application site. As such, it is recommended that a contribution be secured as part of a section 106 agreement. It is noted that the final contribution could be adjusted based on more precise information on the final housing mix proposed, any amendments to yield assumptions and the status of other education upgrades. These will be resolved prior to the S106 agreement being signed. Furthermore, monitoring fees for each trigger within the legal agreement will attract a charge of £340 (adjusted for inflation against RPI July 2021) per trigger point.

- 7.3.54 East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust (EEAST) have made comment on the application and note the additional 500 dwellings could generate another 1,100 residents and will generate an anticipated additional 253 calls per annum on already constrained ambulance services. Their consultee response identifies that this is an increase of 15.1% per annum compared to existing activity, postcode SG28 indicates 1,674 incidents per annum between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025.
- 7.3.55 If approved this development would affect Stevenage Hub which respond to emergency incidents within the local area as well as impact on the regional call centres. The East of England Ambulance Service NHS are therefore requesting a financial contribution of £170,000 towards the expansion and installation of EV charging of existing Stevenage Ambulance Hub to meet increased local demand arising from this housing development.
- 7.3.56 It is noteworthy that a recent appeal decision, Richborough Estates vs Buckingham Council – North Area (Aylesbury), found that in respect of S106 contributions sought by the NHS, these must be for a defined, identified infrastructure project for primary health care, and whose amount was calculated on a methodology that considered the number of homes for which planning permission was sought. Where this has happened, the request was lawful under CIL regulations.
- 7.3.57 In this case, the request for monies to go towards EV charging bays at the ambulance hub, whilst calculated considering the number of houses, is not for primary health care as identified in Richborough Estates vs Buckingham Council. The LPA therefore consider that the request is not Reg 122 compliant under the CIL regulations, and it cannot be legitimately asked for.
- 7.3.58 The ambulance service comments do also seek a contribution through the S106 for sufficient provision of defibrillators for the new community, and this should include installation, servicing and maintenance for 10 years. The cost is circa £5,000 per EEAST recommended defibrillator. These need to be located where there is electrical power and sufficient footfall to provide benefits to the new community. Research indicates that 800m is the maximum distance to fetch a defibrillator. Officers' agree that at least one should be provided in the new local centre. This would be within 800m of the main recreational green space at the opposite end of the proposed 'boulevard' entrance and neighbourhood centre.
- 7.3.59 No response has been received by the NHS in respect of GP provision or critical care at the time of drafting this report. However, the policy allocation seeks provision of a GP surgery on site, and the application submission documents do refer to provision of a surgery in the proposed neighbourhood centre. The LPA would seek to secure this through the S106 as a formality.

7.3.60 In addition to this, using the NHS’s own formula for GP provision the LPA has assumed a possible financial contribution of approximately £646,000, should a response from the NHS be received prior to a decision being issued and a contribution being sought instead of onsite provision. The LPA would be steered in this regard by comments from the NHS in respect of provision demand, as non-provision would be contrary to the policy allocation.

7.3.61 In regards on-site sports provision, which is a requirement of the Local Plan, this site is not of a sufficient size to accommodate such facilities, and this has been confirmed by Sport England. However, the site is of sufficient size and with significant dwelling numbers to generate a sufficient demand to be able to justify financial contributions in line with Sport England calculations. These calculations have been simplified into the below table –

Outdoor grass pitch (capital cost + lifecycle cost)	£126,753
Outdoor 3G pitch (capital cost + lifecycle cost)	£95,285
Outdoor changing room	£280,451
Swimming pools	£289,657
Sports hall	£244,586
Tennis court (outdoor)	£18,841
Bowls centre	£7,681
Total	£773,803

7.3.62 The submitted application does not confirm whether such contributions are to be secured, and Sport England have therefore raised an objection, as no on-site provision is made and no off-site contributions are suggested. Notwithstanding this, as part of the VA submitted in support of the application, the calculations clearly show payment of financial contributions requested at the time of the report being instructed. These include Sport England, NHS and education. As such, the applicant can viably pay the outdoor and sports provision contributions sought by Sport England in line with their toolkit.

7.3.63 Looking at the overall management and maintenance of the development, the legal agreement will look secure the provision of a Management Company. This is to ensure areas such as the drainage system, landscaping, highways (including lighting) are appropriately maintained and that the development remains to be of a high standard.

7.3.64 It is recommended that the wording of the s106 agreement to secure the above contributions be delegated to the Director for Planning and Regulation in consultation with the Chair of the Planning and Development Committee. In the event that any of the above contributions are ultimately not secured (e.g. in the event that they are subsequently considered not to be CIL Reg 122 compliant), the application would be referred back to the committee to consider afresh.

7.4 Community Infrastructure Levy

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

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

7.4.2 CIL is a non-negotiable charge. The exact charge will be determined by the Council's CIL officer after an application has been granted in accordance with the CIL Charging Schedule and the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended). Opportunities for relief or exemption from the CIL charge exist and will be taken into account in the calculation of the final CIL charge.

7.4.3 CIL replaces the need for S106 agreements to specify financial and/or land contributions for non-site-specific infrastructure projects. This allows infrastructure to be planned on a borough-wide scale rather than on a site-by-site basis as mitigation against the impacts of individual proposals. A CIL Form 1: Additional Information has been submitted along with the application. The development would be CIL liable for residential and commercial net floorspace. The total is not known at this time and will be subject to assessment by the Council's CIL officer.

7.5 Layout, Character and Appearance

National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance

7.5.1 Chapter 12 Achieving well-designed places of the NPPF (2024) stipulates that the creation of high quality, sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process. Where development is not well designed, permission should be refused.

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

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

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

- the layout;

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

Development Plan

- 7.5.4 Whilst the policies contained in the Local Plan have limited weight, Policy SP8 generally reflects the requirements of the NPPF in that it requires new development to achieve the highest standards of design and sustainability. In addition, Policy GD1 generally requires all forms of development to meet a high standard of design which includes form of built development, elevational treatment and materials along with how the development would integrate with the urban fabric, its relationship between buildings, landscape design and relevant aspects of sustainable design.
- 7.5.5 In the emerging local plan partial review and update, criterion (e) of Policy GD1 is updated to refer to “unacceptable” adverse impacts. The intention behind the change is to make clear that in some circumstances, an adverse impact might still fall within acceptable bounds and that this is a matter of judgement for the decision maker. Policy GD2 is a new policy emerging from the local plan partial review and update. It states that proposals which demonstrate they have been designed to achieve a rating of excellent or higher against a relevant BREEAM standard and/or to achieve the BRE Home Quality Mark will be strongly supported. Having regard to paragraph 49 of the NPPF, this emerging version of the policy is afforded moderate weight in the assessment of the application.
- 7.5.6 This part of the application has been assessed against the key policy criteria on good design, as well as how the scheme meets the four key objectives in the National Design Guide on what is considered as a well-designed place. However, it is emphasised that the application is in outline stage only with respect to all matters except the access and main roads hierarchy. Therefore, consideration of detailed matters such as design, scale, massing and visual appearance will be dealt with through the submission of reserved matters applications should members be minded to grant permission. Information submitted in support of the application is indicative only but can set a good picture of how the development is envisioned to come forward.

Layout

- 7.5.7 The indicative site layout shows a main vehicular access point off the A602 entering the site fairly centrally with a tree lined ‘boulevard’ leading to a circular spine road (covered by the full planning permission element of the application). Secondary roads extend off this spine road, and to the east the road extends to a bus only entry/exit road joining the A602. The layout includes much improved pedestrian and cycling links to the existing network which finishes just north of the Bragbury Lane junction. In particular the proposals would see an improved and extended foot/cycleway link from Bragbury Lane across the front of the layby at The Chequers Pub, across the front of the site and to existing footway connections by the Three Horseshoes Pub in the far southeastern corner of the site.
- 7.5.8 The main access junction is proposed as a four arm signalised junction with The proposed access arrangements off the A602 would see the construction of a new four-arm signalised junction centrally along the site’s boundary with the A602. This would serve as the principal vehicular access to the site and also form a key crossing point for pedestrians and cyclists. The junction would have segregated left in (heading east) and right in (heading west) lanes off the A602, as well as left and right turn lanes exiting the development. To the south east of the site, on the northeastern boundary a secondary

access is proposed to allow bus access into the site, as well as emergency vehicle access.

- 7.5.9 The junction has been designed and laid out to provide access to the application site as well as the northern parcel of land which forms part of the HO4 policy allocation. However, as the northern parcel is not as far along in its preparations of coming forward for housing in line with the Policy, an interim proposal for a three-arm signalised junction is considered acceptable. In terms of its layout, it is functionally acceptable. Visually, the introduction of the junction along this stretch of the A602 will drastically change its character, making the road wider to accommodate the segregated lanes.
- 7.5.10 However, the junction has been positioned to create the least harm to existing tree belts (including to the north, although the impact of any tree removal on land within the ownership of the northern parcel of lands red line is not considered as part of this application and would be subject to its own application. That being said, the principle is considered acceptable currently.
- 7.5.11 The proposed development would see extensive planting along the new development frontage which would compensate for the extent of the works required to be undertaken to provide the new junction and development access. The new frontage would also provide a green buffer between the vehicular highway and the proposed foot/cycleway connections shown on the masterplan.
- 7.5.12 These connections are further strengthened by the creation of new foot/cycleways around the site, and links to key desire lines in and out of the site, in particular additional access points by The Chequers Pub and pedestrian links to Bragbury End. The road network proposed also allows for a bus service provision within the development.
- 7.5.13 Aspirations at the time of allocation in the Local Plan saw the site being landscape-led utilising the 'Garden City' model with the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) Garden City principles integrated, with generous green spaces and landscaping. By virtue of the size of the site, a Garden City clearly isn't a possibility, but certainly principles of this movement can be taken forward.
- 7.5.14 These principles work based on a site/development being accessible for all, vibrant and inclusive, landscape-led and climate resilient, designed to marry town and country, local employment, genuinely affordable, nurtured, visionary and collaborative, and equitable.
- 7.5.15 The indicative layout shows a high level of green spaces for various uses, as well as landscaping including woodland, meadows and cultivated grass areas for recreation. The housing areas have been broken down in to 'lot' areas, and the overall provision would include aspirational homes and self-build plots. The provision of affordable housing is a policy requirement at 40% but this is covered in more detail above in this report. The 'lot' areas show good separations between houses, as well as policy compliant gardens and indicative car parking spaces to meet the current car parking standards as contained in the Council's adopted supplementary planning document (SPD).
- 7.5.16 The proposed density ratio for each 'lot' would see a reduction in house numbers per hectare as the built development extends into the site to take account of the neighbouring landscape and built form. Fewer houses closer to Bragbury End and the borough boundary with East Herts to the southeast is welcomed.
- 7.5.17 The provision of SuDS features including swales throughout the site is also welcomed and can provide good, alternative types of open space and opportunities for further footpath walks throughout and around the site, as well as areas to provide seating and landscaping. In conclusion, the layout is considered to be acceptable in its outline form.

Character Areas

- 7.5.18 The application proposes six main 'Character Areas' in the submitted Design Code. As the predominance of the application is for outline consent, details of the exact dwelling design, style and layout do not form part of the application, and details would be assessed and considered under the submission of reserved matters application should outline permission be granted.



- 7.5.19 The Design Code submitted in support of the application explains the Character Areas as merging 'to create a seamless transition from the heart of the village to the surrounding countryside'. Starting with a denser development in area A which includes the new local centre, and which leads to the main area D with recreational and green spaces, and then less dense traditional two storey homes on the wider character areas B, C, E and F. The Design Code then continues by stating that 'movement through the village is further enhanced by a site-wide palette of street furnishing, wayfinding and planting that provide a common visual thread throughout the development.'

- 7.5.20 Each character area seeks to provide a prescriptive set of design guidelines to outline the scale and character of each area looking at the –
- Street Character: Route Hierarchy and Connectivity
 - Landscape Character: Diversity and Hierarchy of Space
 - Built Character: Identity and Arrangement.

Once in place these will serve to inform the content of any reserved matters submission when final details can be considered.

Character Area A

- 7.5.21 This Character Area is the main entrance to the site off the A602 and provides the main vehicular access. The Design Code states 'The Avenue heralds the entrance to the Village with 3-storey apartment buildings and a tree-lined thoroughfare. It is a dense character area reflecting the bustling nature of the community hub. The areas around the building should be designed with great care to ensure privacy of the residents, whilst

maintaining a visual link throughout the Avenue. Below is a breakdown of the key areas addressed in the Design Code to show the transition of each area through the site.

Summary of Key Features:

3	Street typology A, B, C, D	Bus route, Cycle route
4	Landscape character A, B	Place making, Public Art
5	Building typology A, B	Density: 65 to 80 dwellings/hectares
6	Material palette A	Vibrant and welcoming buildings

Character Area B

7.5.22 Located between a wildflower SuDS basin to the north of the site and the existing mature hedgerow which separates the main field and the eastern part of the site, the area fronts the A602 so is important for visual interest into the site, especially around the infrastructure of the SuDS basin. The density here is lower with buildings that provide a transitional role from the local centre to rural.

Summary of Key Features:

3	Street typology C, D, G, K, L	Bus route, Cycle route
4	Landscape character B, C, E, J	Existing hedgerow & wildflower SuDS basin
5	Building typology B, D, E, G	Density: 20 to 26 dwellings/hectares
6	Material palette A, C	Transitional buildings

Character Area C

7.5.23 This Character Area forms the most easterly parcel on the site, beyond the existing hedgerow and up to the boundary with The Three Horseshoes to the southeastern corner of the site and the Borough boundary. This area has been designed to form a transition of the site into the countryside beyond, bounded by natural barriers. Traditional semi-detached, two storey homes would overlook landscape features to form a low-density area of the site.

Summary of Key Features:

3	Street typology F, G, H, I, K	Bus route, Cycle route
4	Landscape character C, D, F, I, J	Existing woodland/hedgerows & SuDS basin
5	Building typology C, D, E, F, G	Density: 25 to 30 dwellings/hectares
6	Material palette C	Rural setting, woodland and edge of site

Character Area D

7.5.24 Forming the largest of the Character Areas, area D is the land encompassed in the circular spine road route and provides the main recreational park and green spaces in the development. These would include a series of footpaths to aid running and dog walking, as well as ensuring high quality outdoor spaces for all. Whilst housing numbers appear lower per hectare, the houses (a mixture of three storey fronting the green park land, and two storeys beyond) are focused to the rear of the green open spaces and so as a result will be more densely laid out.

Summary of Key Features:

3	Street typology C, D, E, G, H, I, J, L	Bus route, Cycle route
4	Landscape character B, D, E, F, G, J	Central Park
5	Building typology C, D, E, G	Density: 22 dwellings/hectares
6	Material palette B	Wildlife corridor and formal parkland

Character Area E

7.5.25 Located on the western side of the site, Character Area E is the closest to the existing settlement of Bragbury End and benefits from a more rural setting with detached and semi-detached dwellings. The area abuts and has views over the wildlife area proposed to the far west, with pedestrian links out to Bragbury Lane, and a wildflower SuDS basin to the north. The existing natural field barrier is retained where possible to the east, providing a green break between this area and the more urban layouts of those areas closer to the local centre. Important central views to the main park area in area D are also shown.

Summary of Key Features:

3	Street typology K	Bus route, Cycle route
4	Landscape character C, F, G,H, J	Nature Park & existing hedgerows
5	Building typology D, E, F, G	Density: 25 to 35 dwellings/hectares
6	Material palette D	Natural park and edge of site

Character Area F

7.5.22 This is the last Character Area which forms the northern pocket of the development. The houses would sit behind the existing mature tree belt to the front of the site, with the improved foot and cycleway connections across the site frontage immediately to the north. Properties would provide an active frontage onto the A602 to the north. A wildflower SuDS basin is proposed in the northwest corner.

Summary of Key Features:

3	Street typology G	Bus route, Cycle route
4	Landscape character C, D, E,F, G, J	Existing hedgerow & wildflower SuDS basin
5	Building typology D, E, F, G	Density: 20 to 26 dwellings/hectares
6	Material palette C	Active frontage and transition buildings

Housing Typologies / Appearance

7.5.23 The proposed Design Code outlines the general housing hierarchy for the development to aid the submission of any future reserved matters applications. The document identifies the following general rules for across the development –

- Street junctions should be addressed by a corner house or a decorative feature on the house/apartment’s blocks.
- Elevations and gable walls without apertures are prohibited at road junctions.

- Houses should be parallel to the street.
- Building setbacks are defined in Section 3 Street Typologies.
- All dormers facing a primary street are to be a flat roof dormer unless noted otherwise: elsewhere all dormers are to be gable-fronted or hipped.
- Plots adjacent to Landscape Lanes and Pocket Parks are to have a minimum 1.8m high brick wall shared boundary with the pocket park or lane.

7.5.24 Seven housing typologies are proposed, with typology G relating specifically to self-built plots/bespoke design dwellings. Typologies A-F relate to the prescribed housing that will form the reserved matters applications should consent be granted. The house types follow through the Character Areas and lots with 3 storey flats and houses in the local and central areas and then spreading out into the wider areas of the development with 2.5 and 2 storey dwellings. These ideologies address the relationship of the house types and massing in relation to the A602, proposed neighbourhood centre, existing neighbouring properties and existing wider character of the area.

7.5.25 In respect of the self-built plots specifically, the Design Guide advises that the design of these plots should abide by the general rules of the designated Character Area within which it is located, with the houses proposed to be detached. This approach has been utilised on other large developments in the Borough such as Land to the North of Stevenage. The suggestions in the Design Guide do allow for these plots to have self-expression and individuality but also places emphasis on ensuring the development is not unbalanced by the introduction of singularly different housing types that would fail to ensure the high quality of design for the development as a wider whole.

7.5.26 The Design Code highlights certain design aspects that should be employed across the development depending on the Character Area, etc. These include pitched, gable roofs, dormer windows, aperture detailing, porches, window and door symmetry and placement, materials and features such as balconies, and brick recessing for detail.

7.5.27 These points, as well as the general design concepts expressed in terms of density, massing, scale and form are all considered acceptable in principle. The Design Code clearly draws upon character areas across Stevenage and is in accordance with the principles of Good Design as highlighted at the beginning of this section of the report. The development has been designed to respond to site constraints and the overall Masterplan seeks to deliver a development that is legible in terms of its own identity, across the site through its character areas, but through its association with nearby built form and the wider town.

Conclusion

7.5.28 Overall, it is considered the indicative supporting information and proposed Design Code would ensure the further details for submission in any reserved matters application would lend itself to a high-quality development. The layout and proposed Character Areas have taken account of the site constraints and wider setting to an acceptable standard. The proposed development is therefore, considered acceptable in accordance with the policies on design in the adopted Local Plan (2019), the Design Guide SPD (2025), the NPPF (2024) and PPG.

7.6 Impact on the Environment and Neighbouring Occupiers

National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance

7.6.1 Paragraph 135 of the NPPF (2024) sets out that planning decision should ensure create places with a high standard of amenity for existing and future residents. Paragraph 124 of the National Design Guide states that “*Good design promotes quality of life for the occupants and users of buildings. This includes function – buildings should be easy to*

use. It also includes comfort, safety, security, amenity, privacy, accessibility and adaptability". Paragraph 126 of the National Design Guide also emphasises that "well-designed homes and communal areas within buildings provide a good standard and quality of internal space. This includes room sizes, floor-to-ceiling heights, internal and external storage, sunlight, daylight and ventilation. The quality of internal space needs careful consideration in higher density developments, particularly for family accommodation, where access, privacy, daylight and external amenity space are also important".

Development Plan

- 7.6.2 Policies SP8 and GD1 of the Local Plan (2019) which generally reflect the good design principles outlined in the NPPF and National Design Guide, require that development does not adversely impact the amenities of neighbouring occupiers. In the emerging Local Plan review and partial update, criterion (e) of policy GD1 is updated to refer to "unacceptable" adverse impacts. The intention behind the change is to make clear that in some circumstances, an adverse impact might still fall within acceptable bounds and that this is a matter of judgement for the decision maker.
- 7.6.3 The emerging policy carries significant weight under paragraph 49 of the NPPF with no modifications sought by the Inspector in respect of this Policy at the recent EiP for the Local Plan Update and Review. Furthermore, there have been no objections to or challenges related to the proposed changes to this Policy's part of the update and review process.
- 7.6.4 Policy FP5 of the Local Plan requires development proposals to consider contamination and be supported by an appropriate preliminary risk assessment (PRA), demonstrating that any necessary remediation and subsequent development poses no risk to the population, environment or groundwater bodies.
- 7.6.5 Policy FP7 requires all development proposals to minimise, and where possible, reduce air, water, light, and noise pollution. Planning permission will be granted when it can be demonstrated that the development will not have unacceptable impacts on general amenity and the tranquillity of the wider area.
- 7.6.6 Construction activities, both on and off site by their nature can be noisy and intrusive for neighbouring occupiers, particularly in terms of noise, vibration, air quality (dust), smoke, odour and light. Other possible matters can also cause nuisance including construction vehicle parking or movements, or damage to neighbouring properties, services and facilities.
- 7.6.7 Noise and vibration can arise in particular from piling operations, groundworks and excavations, and plant or machinery and their associated use. Early morning deliveries can also give rise to disturbance if not properly controlled and managed. Dust from site operations can also be an issue, particularly during periods of sustained dry weather.
- 7.6.8 The nearest residential properties are contained to the west of the site along Bragbury Lane and Bragbury Close. The site abuts the two pubs The Chequers to the west and The Three Horses to the east, and to the north west on the opposite side of the A602 is the Sacombe Mews residential development.

Noise Pollution

- 7.6.9 The application is accompanied by a Noise Impact Assessment by ACA Acoustics Limited. The assessment process was carried out in two sequential stages: Stage 1 – an initial noise risk assessment of the proposed development site, and Stage 2 – a systematic consideration of four key elements 1. Demonstrating a "Good Acoustic

Design Process”; 2. Observing internal “Noise Level Guidelines”; 3. Undertaking an “External Amenity Area Noise Assessment”; and 4. Consideration of “Other Relevant Issues”.

- 7.6.10 The NIA has looked only at existing noise sources at the site, namely the A602 and the railway line to the south. The Environmental Health Officer who has provided comment on the application has noted that no data has been presented, or mitigation measures proposed against noise from sources associated with the new development once built, including the proposed local centre operations and any associated plant in this area.
- 7.6.11 In respect of potential new noise sources and their impact on proposed dwellings on site, the relationship of dwellings in flats above a local centre with retail and other uses is fairly standard given the hierarchy of neighbourhood centres in Stevenage. As such, whilst no specific information has been provided at outline stage, it is considered acceptable to impose conditions to ensure appropriate Noise Assessments are carried out in advance of and in conjunction with any reserved matters applications, to ensure noise levels are acceptable in these circumstances.
- 7.6.12 Turning then again to the existing noise sources, the NIA clearly shows the A602 as the biggest noise source, stating that during the day the proposed houses and flats facing the A602 would be subject to noise levels of LAeq 73 db, with houses near the railway line being subject to LAeq 53 db. No vibration from the railway use has been identified as an issue in the report and this is upheld by the Environmental Health Team.
- 7.6.13 The NIA proposes mitigation measures to ensure an acceptable acoustic level in the proposed houses. This includes the orientation of habitable rooms to the rear of houses/flats, so that windows relating to kitchens, bathrooms, hallways and dining rooms are located on facades that face the road. For those facing the railway line, with lower levels it is proposed to have any bedrooms on facades not facing the line. It is also identified in the NIA that it is anticipated that an acoustic ventilation scheme will be necessary so that residents can achieve background ventilation without necessarily needing to open windows. Consideration of the materials used in the house building process, as well as glazing levels and insulation will also have some impact on noise levels experienced.
- 7.6.14 On assessment of the NIA by the Environmental Health team it is recommended that conditions be imposed to ensure each of the matters addressed is sufficiently covered and secured by further details being approved and the development being carried out in accordance with the mitigation measures set out in the NIA.

Contamination

- 7.6.15 The application has been submitted with a Preliminary Risk Assessment (PRA) by WDE Consulting Limited (reference 21316R1, Issue A, dated August 2024) which considers the previous land uses, inter alia, of the development site and concludes that, with the exception of the onsite reservoir, the development of the site is unlikely to create any significant pollutant linkages.
- 7.6.16 The Environment Agency have raised no objections to the proposals in respect of water contamination but have advised the reservoir to remain available for its function. This is also upheld by the Council’s Environmental Health Team who advise conditions be imposed for further investigation in case possible pollutant links to ground water.

Light Pollution

- 7.6.17 Details of proposed lighting along the roads and streets has been provided in support of the application. However, no details pertaining to areas such as the delivery yard, skate

park, etc have been submitted. Given the application is at outline stage and further details can come forward later without affecting a recommendation, it is considered reasonable that these details can be adequately secured by the imposition of conditions.

Air Quality

- 7.6.18 An Air Quality Assessment by Mayer Brown Limited has been submitted in support of the application, which states that the operation of the development once constructed, will only have a very limited impact on local air quality. Based on the data contained in the report and that available from Council monitoring supports this conclusion. The Council's Environmental Health Team have confirmed that air quality is not a material factor as regards to this application.

Privacy, Overbearing Impact and Daylight

- 7.6.19 In respect of the impact of the development on existing neighbouring properties, the locations of the proposed dwellings based on the Masterplan would put the development more than sufficient distance away from existing properties such that amenity levels for neighbouring properties are not adversely affected.
- 7.6.20 The consideration of the impact of the development on the amenities of homeowners do not just relate to existing neighbours, however. The guidance provided in the Council's Design Guide SPD should also be applied to the new houses proposed. In this respect, as an outline application officers' should be confident that the indicative layout shows an ability to provide sufficient separation distances between houses, a layout appropriate to prevent loss of light and overbearing impact, as well as the potential to allow alterations to a property without significantly reducing or removing those mitigation measures against harm to occupier amenities.
- 7.6.21 It is considered that the information shown on the Masterplan, as well as that provided in the Design and Access Statement and the Design Code is sufficient to recommend approval of the outline permission and be confident the site can come forward with reserved matters applications which show policy compliance in terms of the above amenity values.

Construction Impacts

- 7.6.22 The disruptive effect of demolition and construction work is a material consideration. Some disruption is inevitable, insofar as vehicle movements and noisy work would be necessary to complete the development. However, the impacts can be mitigated, for example by employing dust suppression techniques, limiting the hours when deliveries can be made, and limiting the hours when work can be carried out.
- 7.6.23 The Air Quality Assessment submitted makes reference to the control of pollutants during the construction phase. Several mitigation measures have been proposed in Appendix C of the report. To this end, it is recommended that a construction management plan be secured by condition. Subject to this condition, it is considered that the impacts of construction could be mitigated to an acceptable degree.

Conclusions on Environment and Neighbouring Occupiers

- 7.6.24 Having regard to the above, it is concluded that the proposed development would not in principle result in any fundamentally unacceptable impacts on the environment and the Masterplan shows the layout and siting of the proposed dwellings would ensure acceptable living conditions for existing neighbouring and future occupiers. The application has been assessed by the Environmental Health Team and conditions

suggested where necessary. In these respects, the proposal is considered to accord with Policies FP5, FP7 and GD1 of the Local Plan.

7.7 Parking

National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance

- 7.7.1 Chapter 9 'Promoting Sustainable Transport' of the NPPF (2024) sets out a requirement to consider transport issues, which includes parking, at the earliest stages of a development proposal. Paragraph 116 of the NPPF (2024) states "*Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios*".
- 7.7.2 Taking this into consideration, paragraph 117 of the NPPF (2024) stipulates that applications for development should:
- a) give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second – so far as possible – to facilitating access to high quality public transport, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use;
 - b) address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport;
 - c) create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards;
 - d) allow for the efficient delivery of goods, and access by service and emergency vehicles; and
 - e) be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations.

Development Plan

- 7.7.3 Policy IT5 of the Local Plan requires development proposals to comply with the parking standards set out in the Council's Parking SPD (2025) and has not been updated by the Local Plan (LP) Review. Policy SP6 Sustainable Transport has been reordered to reflect the priority of sustainable transport consistent with NPPF under the LP Review and the amended policy carries significant weight. This policy requires, amongst other things, for developments to demonstrate they are in a sustainable location and will promote active travel by non-car modes of transport by providing appropriate cycle parking and prioritise public transport.
- 7.7.4 Looking firstly at the provision of housing on the site as the main car parking catalyst, the adopted SPD provides the below table to advise on parking space requirements for houses and flats, including sheltered and supported housing respectively –

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

- 7.7.5 In addition to the above, the SPD requires the provision of visitor parking at 0.25 spaces per dwelling/unit, as well as one disabled persons' space per wheelchair user dwelling. As an outline application, only the principle of up to 500 dwellings is sought, with no defined breakdown of bedroom numbers in houses and flats, although indicative numbers are provided. The proposed Masterplan with 'lots' indicates dwelling numbers in those respective 'lots', with a total of 479 dwellings shown. The Design and Access Statement and the Transport Assessment both identify that sufficient car parking can be provided (including visitor spaces) on site based on the above standards. The site does not fall within an accessibility zone and thus full provision should be provided.
- 7.7.6 The Masterplan does show parking areas to the fronts of houses with some properties having garages. Parking areas at the local centre are also shown. Whilst confirmation of an exact number of spaces is not provided and cannot be calculated, Officers are content that adequate parking can come forward as part of any reserved matters application to meet the current standards for residential purposes.
- 7.7.7 Turning then to the commercial aspect that would be required on site, the proposed neighbourhood centre would provide circa 500 sqm of convenience store and other small-scale shops sufficient to meet day-to-day needs of future residents, in accordance with Policy TC11. In addition, it is anticipated that a new GP surgery would also be located in this area.
- 7.7.8 The SPD breaks down non-residential provision with Use Class E(a) Retail requiring 1 space per 30 sqm for floorspace up to 500 sqm. This would equate to approximately 17 spaces required for the commercial aspect of the proposal. In terms of the GP surgery 1 space per employee and 3 spaces per consulting room are required. At this time it is not clear how big the surgery could be and how many staff or rooms it would have/require.
- 7.7.9 The Masterplan shows a parking area separate from others at the local centre that is assumed to be specific to the commercial aspect of the centre, rather than residential. This is considered sufficient at this time to suggest compliance can be provided, but that detailed layout and total provision is subject to the submission of reserved matters applications.
- 7.7.10 It is also of note that five percent of the total number of parking spaces should be set aside for the parking of powered two-wheelers. This standard applies to all development within the proposal. Again, the specific provision on site for this requirement is not confirmed but it is digressed from the Masterplan that this requirement could be met.

- 7.7.11 In respect of cycle parking, for residential properties the SPD requires 1 long term space per bedroom where the property does not have a garage. For the local centre spaces will be required both long and short term based on the square meterage of each unit. This is not known at this stage, but it considered that sufficient provision can be accommodated as part of a reserved matters submission.
- 7.7.12 Having regard to the above, the development is considered to be able to provide the required level of car and cycle parking. In this respect, the proposal accords with Policy IT5 of the Local Plan.

7.8 Highway Safety

- 7.8.1 Policy IT4 of the Local Plan has been amended under the LP Review by substituting the word “adverse” with “unacceptable” to align with the NPPF and to the travel plan threshold to align with HCC Highways policy. The amended policy carries significant weight. It states that planning permission will be granted where development will not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety. The application is accompanied by a Transport Assessment and a Travel Plan.

Access

- 7.8.2 The proposed access arrangements off the A602 would see the construction of a new four-arm signalised junction centrally along the site’s boundary with the A602. This would serve as the principal vehicular access to the site and also form a key crossing point for pedestrians and cyclists. The junction would have segregated left in (heading east) and right in (heading west) lanes off the A602, as well as left and right turn lanes exiting the development. To the south east of the site, on the northeastern boundary a secondary access is proposed to allow bus access into the site, as well as emergency vehicle access. The main and secondary accesses, all related highway works, and the creation of the main spine road have been submitted as a full permission and thus a detailed assessment has been carried out.
- 7.8.3 It is noted that Policy HO4 specifies the site being accessed via a new roundabout to be constructed towards the western end of the site, whereby access to the northern site within the policy allocation would also be provided. However, given the extent of the existing mature tree bank along the northern boundary of the site, towards the western half of the frontage, effort has been made to retain and protect this green screen where possible. This itself is also a requirement of the policy.
- 7.8.4 The provision of a signalised junction will prioritise pedestrians and cyclists, and will have less impact on tree belt, as well as visual impact on The Chequers pub and Bragbury Farmhouse, both Grade II Listed buildings.
- 7.8.5 The applicant’s highways consultants have engaged in pre-application discussions with the local highway authority. The modelling exercise prepared by the consultant in support of the proposed access has been examined by highways officers and it has been determined that it may be accommodated on the network.
- 7.8.6 A Stage 1 Road Safety Audit has been submitted in support of the application. Based on the findings of the Road Safety Audit, the local highways authority has advised that subject to a detailed design and Section 278 agreement, the access may be delivered satisfactorily.
- 7.8.7 The inclusion of the northern site as part of the Local Plan policy allocation is noted and the local highway authority have expressed that whilst the access strategy for the northern site is not yet finalised, its view is that the northern site should share the centralised signalised junction with the southern HO4 site allocation.

- 7.8.8 Consequently, the local highway authority is content that the full HO4 site allocation can be delivered and accommodated satisfactorily on the adjoining local highway network. The highway authority is further content that an interim access solution should only the southern element of the HO4 allocation be promoted can be delivered.

Highway Capacity

- 7.8.9 The Transport Assessment submitted in support of the application includes the modelling of a comprehensive network of junctions on the A602 to test highway capacity, as agreed by the local highway's authority. This modelling also includes the proposed site access junction.
- 7.8.10 Given the northern part of the HO4 allocation has not yet come forward the highways authority also requested an interim junction option, where only the southern site is accessed and can be promoted as a standalone site to be tested, as part of the modelling. The Transport Assessment details both the interim option and the capacity of the network should the full build out of both the northern and southern allocations be constructed.
- 7.8.11 Based on the information provided in the Transport Assessment, the highways authority, including the authority's signal unit has determined that the proposed signalised junction to the site is able to operate satisfactorily. Furthermore, the operation of the wider network is also considered to work satisfactorily when the development traffic is added.
- 7.8.12 However, the local highways authority has made it clear that financial contributions towards schemes as detailed in their response such as the A602/Gresley Way roundabout are considered fitting in order to accommodate the increased level of traffic in this part of Stevenage.

Connectivity

- 7.8.13 Following pre-application advice, the proposals have focused on providing good connectivity routes through and around the site, and further on to existing connections along the A602 both east and west, on to Bragbury Lane and existing cycleway networks along Broadhall Way further west of the site.
- 7.8.14 The re-modelled frontage of the site allows for a segregated foot/cycleway to be set back from the main highway and greatly increases access along the A602 to the site and signalised junction, which in turn would allow access to the northern site as and when it comes forward. Further to comments made by Sport England and Active Travel England (ATE), the development has included connections throughout the site that allow for leisure and recreation (a 3 or 5km run route included) and paths around infrastructure such as SuDS on site, making them more than a functional drainage system.
- 7.8.15 The application has further been supported by the submission of an addendum to the transport Assessment following an initial objection from Active Travel England. Through dialogue with ATE the addendum provided additional information relating to modal shift and a Walking and Cycling Audit. This audit has adequately demonstrated that the site's location and access to local amenities via active travel modes and improved connectivity has been duly considered.

7.9 Biodiversity and Ecology

- 7.9.1 The Environment Act received royal ascent in 2021. Within the legislation is the requirement for proposals to bring about a positive net gain in biodiversity. The regulations make a 10% net gain a statutory requirement (with a standard condition).

The requirement and the ways in which this gain is measured apply to planning applications for major development submitted after the regulations came into force on 12 February 2024. The NPPF and accompanying PPG require the Council to achieve measurable net gains in biodiversity at development sites across the Borough unless they are exempt. Policy SP12 of the Local Plan requires the protection of assets of ecological and biodiversity value. This policy has not been amended by the Local Plan Review and carries significant weight.

7.9.2 The application is supported by an Ecological Impact Assessment. As part of the assessment a desk study was carried out to identify:

- Internationally protected sites within the potential zone of influence of the site (minimum of 7km);
- Nationally protected sites within 5km of the site; and
- Non-statutory designated sites and records of protected or priority species within 2km of the site (central OS national grid reference TL 27253 20899).

Furthermore, a 2km search radius for species and non-statutory designated sites was considered justified by the consultants of the assessment, due to the size of the site and scale of the development works being undertaken. It is thought highly unlikely that species or non-statutory sites outside this search zone would be affected by the project. A larger search radius was applied for internationally and nationally designated sites as these sites are protected to a higher level and can often be more sensitive to disturbance. These search distances were also based on industry standard guidance.

7.9.3 Secondary to this a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) which included a survey of the habitats on site utilising the standard UK Habitat Classification system. Opportunities for or evidence of protected and priority species were also identified as part of the PEA. Where potential impacts on features of ecological interest are identified, the PEA was extended to include an assessment of impact by way of the submitted Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA).

7.9.4 The function of the EclA was to identify, quantify and evaluate the potential effects of the proposed development on designated sites, notable/protected habitats and species. The EclA was informed by the desk study, PEA and survey work and undertaken with reference to best practice guidelines (CIEEM, 2019) whereby:

- the scope of the EclA was informed by a desk study and initial site survey;
- importance of ecological features within the site was established and ecological importance identified with reference to known criteria and geographic context where appropriate and available;
- assessment of potential impacts of the proposed development was made with reference to their significance and geographic context (except for breeding birds and dormouse due to incomplete surveys); and
- avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures were identified and recommended as appropriate.

7.9.5 The EclA provides detailed information on surveys relating to bats, great crested newts, badgers, breeding birds, door mice and other reptiles. The assessment concludes that in order to enhance the local area for wildlife ecological features and contribute towards biodiversity net gain, the proposals include the following:

- Native planting and wildlife-friendly planting as recommended in R3;
- Bat boxes and roosting features as recommended in R6;
- Bird boxes will be incorporated as recommended in R8;
- Creation of reptile hibernacula as recommended in R11; and
- Inclusion of hedgehog highways and gaps in boundary fencing and residential fences throughout the scheme

- 7.9.6 The application has been assessed by Hertfordshire and Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT), who have raised objections to the proposals. These relate to loss of biodiversity on site and the proposal for off-site net gain of biodiversity units and potential damage to Astonbury Wood Local Wildlife Site. The objection regarding biodiversity will be covered shortly. In respect of the impact on the nearby local woods, HMWT state that the EclA completely fails to recognise the potential impact of increased recreational use of the wood.
- 7.9.7 HMWT advise that Astonbury Wood is an ancient woodland of predominantly Oak Hornbeam coppice with a Bluebell understory. The woodland, located in the borough of East Hertfordshire District Council is designated as a Local Wildlife Site (LWS) for semi-rural woodland supporting a diverse and well-developed structure with a varied woodland ground flora.
- 7.9.8 Astonbury Wood LWS is one of a number of LWS identified by the EclA in the vicinity of the application site; with almost all the wood being within 500m of the application site. The EclA recognises that there is potential for there to be impacts on air and water quality during the construction phase, affecting both the wood and Stevenage Brook. It suggests suitable mitigation by means of a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP, EclA para. 5.2.4) and this is supported by HMWT.
- 7.9.9 However, HMWT suggest that the EicA fails to consider the impact of the possible number of occupants of the northern and southern parcels on the woodland, given its proximity. It is therefore recommended by HMWT that the applicant consider possible mitigation measures.
- 7.9.10 In respect of biodiversity, the application has been supported by the submission of the statutory biodiversity metric tool to establish existing and proposed habitat credits on the site and determine whether a 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG) can be delivered on site, which is the LPA's preference. The metric identifies that the site has a baseline value of 74.17 habitat units, 9.05 hedgerow units and 0.94 watercourse units. The proposals will result in the delivery of 63.28 habitat units (resulting in -10.89 habitat units, equivalent to -14.69%) and 9.21 hedgerow units (resulting in +0.16 hedgerow units, equivalent to +1.82%) on the site. Due to the loss of one of the ditches, the baseline watercourse units of 0.94 will have a post development value of 0.38 (resulting in -0.56 watercourse units, equivalent to a loss of - 59.55%).
- 7.9.11 The EclA concludes on the BNG that, given the context, size and location of the site, financial contribution to a biodiversity offsetting scheme would be the most appropriate mechanism to achieving a net gain in biodiversity as a result of the proposals. Although HMWT disagree with this assumption.
- 7.9.12 A biodiversity offset of 18.31 habitat units, 0.74 hedgerow units and 0.66 watercourse units are required off-site to achieve the mandatory +10% Biodiversity Net Gain for the site overall. The EclA also concludes that to satisfy the metric trading rules, these offsite units should comprise medium (or higher) distinctiveness grassland due to loss of other neutral grassland units and other broadleaved woodland.
- 7.9.13 Whilst on-site BNG uplift would be preferable, as HMWT have advised also, the proposals are in line with the national requirements and having regard to the above ecology measures proposed, it is considered that the proposed development would have an acceptable impact on ecology and biodiversity. In this respect, the proposal accords with Policy SP12 of the Local Plan.

7.10 Green Spaces, Landscaping and Trees

- 7.10.1 Policy NH3 of the Local Plan relates to Green Corridors. It identifies key routes within the Borough as Green Corridors, protected as a means of linking and connecting to the town's open spaces as well as facilitating movement by pedestrians and cyclists. They can differ in character and perform different roles. They can promote the movement of people by more sustainable forms of transport but also provide routes and networks to enable the diversification and sustenance of biodiversity.
- 7.10.2 Bragbury Lane is identified as an Ancient Lane within the policy, and Broadhall Way a Structurally Important Route. These two areas sit in close proximity of the site, and so the proposed development could have implications regarding their function and character. The Policy advises that planning permission will be granted where proposals:
- Would not have a substantive adverse effect upon a Green Corridor;
 - Retain and sensitively integrate any Green Corridor which must be crossed or incorporated into the site layout;
 - Provide replacement planting, preferably using locally native species, where hedgerow removal is unavoidable; and
 - Reasonably contribute towards the improvement of Green Corridors in the vicinity of the application site.
- 7.10.3 In respect of Bragbury Lane, the red line plan does include a small section of land which fronts the Ancient Lane, but it does not propose any alterations to the frontage. Paragraph 14.19 of the Local Plan specifically mentions the Ancient Lanes and their respective hedgerows needing protection from future development as they cannot be replaced. As the proposals do not affect this the Ancient Lane is considered preserved.
- 7.10.4 The Structurally Important Routes are major highways within the built-up area of Stevenage that include significant areas within and alongside the highway that provide open space, landscaping and/or cycleways. They are primarily for human movement and are particularly conducive to cycling because of the segregated routes. Broadhall Way runs from the north western corner of the site northwards towards the town centre. There is a very clear segregated cycleway along the western side of the main road, with grass expanses on each side at times, and a significant number of mature trees lining the road, and on landscaped banks, screening the built form within Broadwater to the west, and similar green spaces screening the smaller residential parcels along parts of its eastern edge.
- 7.10.5 The proposed works would see extensive works along the site frontage to provide the required cycleway link from Bragbury Lane to the south-east corner of the site. Currently the existing narrow footpath to the front of the site runs immediately parallel of the vehicular highway, which is a busy main road into the town, with no set-back or segregation. The proposed Masterplan would see a new widened foot/cycleway with additional green landscaping, creating a greater separation from cars using the A602.
- 7.10.6 The existing tree belt along the frontage of the site at the north western corner is to be retained and will further add to the Green Corridor of this stretch of the road. Given there will be extensive works to provide the access junction slightly to the east, the proposed additional landscaping and segregated cycleway in this area is considered positive and goes a fair way to mitigate against the visual impact of developing the land.
- 7.10.7 Policy NH5 of the Local Plan (2019) states that development proposals will be expected to protect and retain individual trees within the development site and should include new planting where appropriate.
- 7.10.8 The existing landscape of the site is predominantly agricultural fields of grassland with surrounding established hedges and tree belts. The western side of the site is densely

overgrown, with established field barriers, but significant self-seeded trees, nettles and brambles. To the southeast of the site is an established woodland that falls within the red line boundary. The southern boundary abuts the railway line where there is established planting although much of these falls within the ownership and jurisdiction of the railway network.

7.10.9 The proposals would see the retention of the much of the existing tree belts and hedgerows, including the existing field barrier hedgerows. The development proposals propose the complete removal of a nine trees, one group of trees, and the partial removal of six groups of trees and two hedges. The below table taken from the submitted Arboricultural Report show the extent of the tree removals in their respective tree category.

Table 2: Summary of Trees to be removed

Removal	Tree Category				Total
	A	B	C	U	
Number of Trees	0	1	6	2	9
Number of Groups (in full)	0	1	0	0	1
Number of Groups (in part)	0	2	4	0	6
Number of Hedges (in full)	0	0	0	0	0
Number of Hedges (in part)	0	0	2	0	2
Total	0	4	12	2	18

7.10.10 For those trees and groups of trees being retained the Report outlines necessary root protection areas (RPA) and identifies particular methods of excavation where development might impinge on these RPAs. Furthermore, tree protection measures for all required tree retention on site is also outlined. The Council's Tree Manager has assessed the application and has no standing objections.

7.10.11 Policy NH7 of the Local Plan seeks to ensure developments provide on-site open spaces, that these are useable and coherent areas of an appropriate size and that arrangements are made to ensure the long-term maintenance of the open space. The proposed Masterplan, Design and Access Statement and Design Code all highlight the provision of green spaces within the site. Most notably is the 'Central Park' shown on the Masterplan, which provides a large green space for informal sport and social gatherings, with the idea that small fetes or similar could be held here within the community.

7.10.12 The space is a good size and also offers up a small tree lined area with footpaths, as well as a Locally Equipped Area of Play (LEAP) and pump track (a continuous circuit of dirt, asphalt or concrete featuring rollers (mounds) and banked turns (berms) designed for wheeled sports). Beyond this area there are several other useable but smaller spaces which provide green space or 'pocket parks' around the development. Further to the west of the site, where the ground levels change substantially to slope towards the 'reservoir' area along the back of Bragbury Lane, the external space offers footpaths and green spaces to be enjoyed, although these provide more for biodiversity on site.

7.10.13 Furthermore, in terms of general landscaping, the Masterplan highlights the use and presence of tree-lined streets, dry basins with reed bed planting, landscaped lanes, meadows, a nature park, existing woodland and existing hedgerows across the site.



7.10.14 The details provided in the Design Code emphasis the ideology of the development being landscape-led, and the type and siting of the various green spaces have taken into account comments provided by Sport England during the pre-application phase, as well as ideas that came about from the Design Review Panel undertaken at pre-app. The spaces are considered to bring the scheme together to create a community whilst addressing physical constraints/topologies on site.

7.10.15 In terms of more specific landscaping, trees and planting contained within the main Boulevard and spine road are considered as part of the full planning permission of this application. These details are considered acceptable, with no further comments from Highways or the Council's Green Spaces team in this regard. The planting will ensure the main entrance roads are tree lined and create attractive entryway into the development.



7.10.16 The remaining development proposals are at outline stage only and thus further planting details are not specified, with the Masterplan showing an indicative landscaping scheme. Notwithstanding, the Design and Access Statement and Design Code both provide sufficient information to outline the objectives for landscaping across the development. The Design Code, much like with the built form, provides Landscape Character areas for across the development, focusing on key principles for each area, including native and specimen tree planting, pollinator friendly planting palettes, species rich meadow areas and parklands.

7.10.17 The Council's Green Spaces team have provided comment, and these are largely positive. Comments pertaining to further detail around adoption of spaces, maintenance of and by whom, as well as finer details of landscaping around parking areas etc can all be appropriately dealt with during the reserved matters process. Although for clarity it is not envisaged that SBC will adopt any of the open spaces within the development, with a Management Company proposed, and to be secured through the S106 process.

7.10.18 It is considered the overall landscaping and tree strategy would create an attractive landscaped setting for the proposed buildings, with clear biodiversity and visual amenity benefits in accordance with policies SP12 and NH5 of the Local Plan (2019).

7.11 Flood Risk and Drainage

Development Plan

7.11.1 Policy FP2 of the Local Plan requires applications for major development in Flood Zone 1 to be accompanied by an appropriate flood risk assessment. The Policy also requires that the use of SuDS is maximised on site so as not to increase flood risk and to reduce flood risk wherever possible.

7.11.2 In the emerging local plan review and partial update, flood risk and drainage policies are significantly revised. Existing policy FP1 is replaced by a new sustainable drainage policy, which places an emphasis on the use of the most sustainable SuDS features and methods of surface water discharge. Meanwhile, existing policies FP2 and FP3 are combined into a new, more comprehensive flood risk policy, which largely reflects national flood risk policies but also seeks to protect watercourses and flood defences. Having regard to paragraph 49 of the NPPF, these emerging policies carry significant weight in the assessment of the application.

7.11.3 Drainage strategies should adhere to the Sustainable Drainage Strategy (SuDS) hierarchy provided in the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2 (2019). The hierarchy identifies that living roofs and walls are the most-sustainable SuDS features, followed by ponds and basins, infiltration devices and permeable surfaces. Tanked and piped systems are identified as the least sustainable, providing no pollution reduction nor biodiversity benefit.

Existing Drainage

7.11.4 The application has been accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA). The FRA reviews the drainage and flood risk issues associated with the proposed development and sets out how surface water run-off would be accommodated. The report states that the application site is located within Flood Zone 1, with a very small strip in the north eastern corner of the site being Zone 2, and that based on the 'flood risk vulnerability classification' contained within the Planning Practice Guidance table 2 the development would be 'Less Vulnerable' and so the residential use is appropriate for the site.

7.11.5 The Report advises that the nearest EA designated Main River to the site is Stevenage Brook, located approximately 45m north of the site at its closest point, and that further watercourses are present at both the northwestern and eastern ends of the site. The northwestern stream runs through the site, and the eastern watercourse is located approximately 180m from the site. The site is currently underlain by silty, sandy, gravelly clay.

7.11.6 Assessments of the sites infiltration characteristics of the ground have been undertaken. The Report states that because of the underlying soil make-up, infiltration via traditional soakaways is not feasible as a means of discharging surface water.

7.11.7 To the northwest of the site is an existing shallow basin which is fed by overland runoff from higher areas of the site into low-lying meadow land via an upstream pipe and headwall. The FRA advises that the outgoing ditch flows to the north, via a large gridded manhole structure, and then runs past the western side of The Chequers public house into a headwall to the northwest of the building. From here it runs via a 300mm diameter culvert under the A602 and on to an outfall headwall at Stevenage Brook. The existing basin appears to form part of the Bragbury End Flood Storage Reservoir (FSR).

7.11.8 Identified in the 2016 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, undertaken on behalf of the Council to help inform the Local Plan process, Bragbury End FSR is located within the site, to the west, behind existing properties off Bragbury Lane. It is a small on-line FSR constructed in 1975/76 to cater for residential development in the southeast corner of the Borough.

7.11.9 There are no surface water sewers within the area, however there is a public foul water sewer to the north of the site, adjacent Stevenage Brook. There is also a further public foul water sewer to the west, originating from the residential development to the west of Bragbury Lane. This sewer connects to a trunk foul sewer adjacent the south side of Stevenage Brook, which runs along the A602 and Stevenage Brook.

Flood Mitigation

7.11.10 Located in Flood Zone 1, with a small encroachment of Zone 2 along part of the northern boundary, the site would not be considered at risk of flooding from fluvial sources.

7.11.11 The surface water flood map shows there is a very low to low risk of flooding on site, apart from the lowest ground levels to the west of the site where the existing reservoir area is located which is a high-risk area. This is linked with a high-risk surface water flow path running through this western side. Beyond this there are two low-risk surface water flow paths to the north-east of the site which follow natural topography of the land.

7.11.12 The presence of overland flow paths has been taken into consideration in the design of proposed drainage on site. On-site drainage systems have been designed to accommodate runoff volume from a 1 in 100 year storm plus 40% climate change rainfall event, to minimise overland flows except during storms above this event.

7.11.13 In terms of groundwater flooding, there is no evidence from the SFRA and British Geological Survey (BGS) Groundwater Susceptibility data for Bragbury Lane that suggests groundwater flooding has occurred on site historically. The site is located in an area at no risk of groundwater flooding, although mapping details are not specific enough to advise there is no risk, although the risk is considered minimal overall.

Surface Water Drainage

7.11.14 The Planning Practice Guidance states that types of sustainable drainage system to consider will depend on the proposed development and its location, as well as any planning policies and guidance that apply locally. It continues that preference should be given to multi-functional SuDS, and to solutions that discharge surface water according to the following hierarchy –

1. Into the ground (infiltration);
2. To a surface water body;
3. To a surface water sewer, highway drain, or another drainage system;
4. To a combined sewer.

7.11.15 Based on the ground investigations carried out, infiltration at the site is not possible. The nearest watercourse has been identified as Stevenage Brook, located approximately 45m north of the site at its closest point. The FRA advises that a gravity-based Concept SuDS Plan and Drainage Strategy has been prepared to identify potential SuDS features which are considered feasible across the site and to demonstrate a proposed layout of flow control and attenuation features to enable a positive discharge to the Stevenage Brook via existing ditch/pipe networks.

7.11.16 The areas identified have been broken down into five areas as below –

- Area A: this has an area of 1.2ha. It is proposed that surface water storage would be via a pond/wetland with an outfall to the public sewer.
- Area B: this has an area of 2.5ha. This system will discharge to a pond/wetland which will discharge into the public surface water sewer at Thames Water manhole 9150.
- Area C: this has an area of 7.3ha. It is proposed that a pond/wetland would be used within the north-east of the site which will discharge into the existing outfall from the ditch network, which ultimately discharges into Stevenage Brook.
- Area D: this has an area of 0.5ha. It is proposed that this area would drain via permeable pavement which would discharge into Stevenage Brook.
- Area E: this has an area of 2.5ha. It is proposed that a pond/wetland would be used within the north-east of the site which would discharge into Stevenage Brook

7.11.17 The FRA states that the proposed SuDS features will provide sufficient storage to avoid flooding during the 1 in 100-year storm event plus 40% allowance for climate change.

7.11.18 At the time of writing this report the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) have raised objections to the proposals due to lack of information for certain areas of the proposals. The applicant is aware of these and further information in line with that requested is being collated. Any decision made on the application will not be issued until the Legal Agreement associated with the development has been signed, which will allow time for the objection to be removed. Therefore, further comments will be fully considered prior to a decision being issued. However, if the LLFA continues to raise an objection to this

application and their concerns cannot be overcome, then this application will be referred back to the Planning and Development Committee for its decision.

7.12 Sustainable Construction and Climate Change

Development Plan

7.12.1 Policy FP1 of the adopted Local Plan (2019) stipulates that planning permission will be granted for development that can incorporate measures to address adaptation to climate change. New developments will be encouraged to include measures such as:

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

7.12.2 Under the Local Plan review, Policy FP1 has been revised to cover sustainable drainage and Policy SP1: climate change is the new relevant policy in this regard. The fundamental objective of Policy SP1 remains the same as previous policy FP1, however, it sets out in more detail the objectives to adapting to climate change. This policy requires, amongst other things the off-setting of emissions targets if not met on site, water usage targets, rainwater harvesting, grey water recycling, use of sustainable materials and practices on site, ultra-low and zero carbon combined heat and power systems and urban greening (green roofs and walls).

7.12.3 The Council's Design Guide SPD (2025) sets out additional requirements with respect to climate change. The guide states that all developments are required to make efforts to minimise energy usage and to incorporate methods of using renewable energy, including:-

- reducing energy demand
- using passive environmental systems, e.g. natural ventilation
- daylighting and passive solar gains
- using high levels of insulation and air tightness in the fabric of the building
- specifying energy efficient services, controls and appliances
- implementing water recycling and the provision of water butts
- using renewable energy
- using low/zero carbon technologies to provide as much of the energy load as is technically and economically feasible, minimising use of fossil fuels; and
- using efficient fossil fuel technologies, such as Combined Heat and Power and condensing boilers.

Sustainability and Energy Strategies

7.12.4 The submitted Design and Access Statement highlights how the development is proposed to adhere to adopted climate change policies. However, it is noted that the final design is subject to the submission of reserved matters applications as the housing design and details is only at outline at this stage.

7.12.5 The proposals state at least 40% of dwellings being designed to M4(2) Building Regulations standards. Solar panels would be included on roofs and Air Source Heat Pumps are proposed for all heating and water. The development is proposed to be a Fabric First approach to achieve Building Regulations standards as a minimum, with high levels of thermal insulation and water efficiency measures incorporated.

7.12.6 The development will also look to ensure overheating in dwellings, as a result of climate change, is avoided by reducing opening sizes on south facing elevations. Further analysis of thermal comfort is suggested on detailed applications through the undertaking of the CIBSE TM59 (modelling overheating risk for residential buildings) overheating assessment.

7.12.7 Given the above, and subject to conditions securing the measures identified to address adaptation to climate change, the development would exceed the requirements of the existing policy FP1, with the emerging policies carrying moderate weight.

7.13 Impact on Heritage Assets

Planning Act and Case Law

7.13.1 The *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* imposes several 'statutory duties' for decision-makers, all of which are applicable to the proposed development:

- "Section 16(2): In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority or the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses".
- "Section 66(1): In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses".
- "Section 72: In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area".

7.13.2 Case law (South Lakeland, 1992) has determined that 'preserve' means 'to do no harm'. However, if harm is identified, the NPPF provides a means of weighing either 'substantial harm' or 'less than substantial harm' to the significance of a designated heritage asset against the public benefits of the proposal.

7.13.3 In doing so, case law has emphasised the need to give "considerable importance and weight" to preserving listed buildings or the character and appearance of conservation areas (Barnwell Manor, Case No: C1/2013/0843). However, the presumption 'to preserve' is not irrebuttable and "can be outweighed by material considerations powerful enough to do so" (Forge Field (Case Nos: CO/735/2013; CO/16932/2013) and a decision maker that has followed the process set out in the NPPF, in respect to weighing harm and benefits, can reasonably be expected to have complied with the 'statutory duties' of the 1990 Act (Mordue, Case No. C1/2015/1067).

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

7.13.4 Paragraph 203 of the NPPF (2024) states that 'in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

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

- 7.13.5 As established through case law, if there is *any* harm to designated heritage assets, great weight must be given to it. Paragraph 212, it stipulates that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss, or less than substantial harm to its significance. Paragraph 200 sets out that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.
- 7.13.6 Paragraph 214 sets out that where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss.
- 7.13.7 Paragraph 215 sets out that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use. In undertaking this balance, considerable importance and weight must be attached to the less than substantial harm.
- 7.13.8 Paragraph 217 sets out that Local Planning Authorities should not permit the loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred. With respect to paragraph 218, this sets out that Local Planning Authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.
- 7.13.9 In considering public benefits, the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (2019) (Reference ID: 18a-020-20190723) sets out that the National Planning Policy Framework requires any harm to designated heritage assets to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Public benefits may follow from many developments and could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental objectives as described in paragraph 8 of the NPPF. For reference, paragraph 8 of the NPPF states that “Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):
- a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
 - b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and
 - c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy”.

7.13.10 The planning practice guidance goes on to state that public benefits should flow from the development. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and not just private benefit. However, benefits do not always have to be accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits, for example, works to a listed building which secure its future as a designated heritage asset could be a public benefit. Consequently, while a range of benefits that help deliver sustainable communities could be relevant, the PPG provides examples of heritage based public benefits, as follows:

- Sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting;
- Reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset;
- Securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long term conservation.

Development Plan

7.13.11 Turning to the adopted Local Plan, Policy SP13 relates to the historic environment. This states that the council will preserve and enhance the most important area and characteristics of Stevenage. The policy goes on to state that the Council will:-

- a. Have carried out Heritage Impact Assessments for development sites within, or adjacent to, conservation areas. Site specific mitigation measures have been incorporated to minimise the impacts of development.
- b. Will use national guidance and legislation to review, designate and determine planning applications affecting heritage assets.
- c. Will protect areas of archaeological importance and other relevant heritage assets by applying the detailed policies set in this plan.

7.13.13 Finally, Policy NH10 Conservation Areas states that development proposals within, or affecting a conservation area should have regard to the guidance provided by the relevant Conservation Area Management Plan Supplementary Planning Document.

Impact on Heritage Assets

7.13.14 The site is in close proximity to several listed buildings, The Chequers public house (Grade II listed), Bragbury End Farmhouse (Grade II listed) off Bragbury Lane and Bragbury House (Grade II Listed) the large manor house located off the modern Sacombe Mews development to the northwest of the site and A602. There are some 19th century 'buildings of local importance' along Bragbury Lane and on the corner of Aston Lane / A602. Bragbury End is a historic settlement on the route from Watton-at-Stone to Stevenage and currently lies on the southern edge of the town with a verdant and semi-rural feel to it. The area is not a designated Conservation Area, but there is an area of Archaeological interest as identified in the Local Plan.

7.13.15 The application has been supported by the submission of a Heritage Statement which identifies the local Heritage Assets which would be impacted by the development and advises a level of harm. The Councils Listed Building and Conservation Consultants BEAMS have commented on the application also. They have advised that the area will be urbanised through the construction of new development and all that is associated with it, including the creation of a new road network / road widening as part of accessing the site. This is considered harmful to the wider setting of the listed buildings in Bragbury End.

7.13.16 BEAMS broadly agrees with the findings of the Heritage Statement. The setting of The Chequers PH (closest to the site) will be adversely impacted but any harm is considered to be 'less than substantial' and at the lower end of the scale. The scale of development upon the part of the site closest to the listed building, also noting the topography of the site will need careful consideration as will changes to the road network / signage. The

retention of the tree screening to the rear of The Chequers PH will be key in reducing impact upon the immediate setting of this designated heritage asset but should not be relied on.

- 7.13.17 Bragbury End Farmhouse and barn lie on the west side of Bragbury Lane and new / 20th century housing forms much of its immediate setting. No changes are proposed along Bragbury Lane itself so the scheme is considered to preserve the immediate setting of Bragbury End Farmhouse, any harm to its significance will be very low to neutral.
- 7.13.18 Bragbury House, known simply as Bragbury in the Historic England listings is an 18th Century Country House, enlarged in the early 19th Century and again more recently. The building has been converted to flats and the grounds of the property have been extensively developed with the construction of the Sacombe Mews development, providing detached and terraced dwellings to the rear of the building. The asset is separated from the application site by the A602, The Chequers public house to the south and the extensive tree belt to the northwestern corner of the site. From the information submitted the immediate setting and significance of this listed building will be maintained but its wider setting, through changes to the road network / additional signage etc may be adversely impacted.
- 7.13.19 The proposal will result in 'less than substantial' harm to the significance of designated heritage assets at Bragbury End, particularly the Chequers PH and NPPF para. 215 would be engaged in the decision-making process. Additionally, Sections 66(1) and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, decision makers must give *considerable importance and weight* to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their settings. Case law (*Barnwell Manor, Forge Field, Mordue*) reaffirms that any harm, even if minor, triggers this heightened statutory duty.
- 7.13.20 Having applied these statutory and policy tests, officers conclude that although the scheme gives rise to a low level of less than substantial harm to the setting of the Heritage Assets, this harm carries considerable weight in the overall planning balance.
- 7.13.21 Considering then the public benefits that would be derived from the development in this case, the proposal delivers a range of significant public benefits, which are material to the heritage balance under NPPF paragraph 215. These include strategic housing delivery, with delivery of 0 to 500 new homes on an allocated strategic site (HO4), responding directly to acute local housing needs and the Council's HDT position.
- 7.13.22 Affordable housing delivery, either on site or through a contribution in-lieu for provision at a different SBC site, and whilst not a policy compliant level due to viability issues, some level of affordable housing provision is of benefit, recognising the substantial unmet need in the Borough.
- 7.13.23 Social infrastructure, with the provision of land/use for a neighbourhood centre, including community facilities and GP surgery provision. Contributions towards education, sports facilities, biodiversity net gain, and sustainable transport, addressing infrastructure needs generated by the development.
- 7.13.24 The proposal delivers a range of significant public economic benefits which are material to the heritage balance under NPPF paragraph 215. These include construction employment, supply-chain investment and commitments to local employment and apprenticeships through the S106.
- 7.13.25 Environmental Enhancements would be provided through the delivery of a landscaped masterplan, including green infrastructure, SuDS, biodiversity improvements and off-site BNG contributions where necessary.

- 7.13.26 Sustainable Transport Improvements include bus service contributions, active travel measures, new pedestrian/cycle links and a signalised junction improving safety and connectivity for the wider area.
- 7.13.27 Applying the statutory duties, case law and NPPF requirements, officers conclude that the proposals result in less than substantial harm (lower end) to the setting of the identified Heritage Assets, there are substantial public benefits—including significant housing delivery, affordable housing, community facilities, infrastructure improvements, sustainable transport upgrades, and high-quality landscape and ecological enhancements, which carry very significant weight, and when weighed in the planning balance, these public benefits are considered to clearly outweigh the identified heritage harm.
- 7.13.28 Accordingly, the proposal is judged to comply with the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the NPPF (2024) and the relevant policies of the Stevenage Local Plan, when read as a whole.

7.14 Archaeology

- 7.14.1 Policy NH09 identifies areas of archaeological significance in the Borough, with Bragbury End being identified under the allocation NH9/12. The Policy states that where a development proposal affects an area of archaeological significance or has the potential to affect important archaeological remains on adjoining sites, developers will be required to submit the results of an archaeological field evaluation.
- 7.14.2 The Local Plan Proposals Map identifies the policy designation of NH09 covering the far western edge of the site as it connects with Bragbury Lane. Some of the reservoir area in the western end of the site, and within the lowest ground level area here falls within the map designation. However, the rest of the site does not form part of the policy designation.
- 7.14.3 The Heritage Statement submitted in support of the application, produced by Albion Archaeology, was unable to survey the designated area of the site due to its topography and level of landscaping, shrubbery on site, The area is very overgrown with brambles, self-seeded saplings and other shrubs.
- 7.14.4 Despite the mainly flat arable fields being outside the area of archaeological interest, the area was surveyed for the purposes of archaeology. The Heritage Statement advises that if archaeological remains are present these could be affected by the development. However, using information on the site's archaeological background and on undertaking a geophysical survey of the land, the likelihood for potential heritage assets on the site has been assessed as: *low* for the prehistoric and Anglo-Saxon periods; *low to moderate* for the Roman, medieval and post-medieval periods; and *negligible* for the modern period.
- 7.14.5 Hertfordshire County Council Archaeology Team have reviewed the submitted information, and whilst disappointed that pre-application advice provided to the applicant was ignored, they do advise that if the LPA are minded to approve permission they advise that a programme of archaeological investigations should identify and incorporate appropriate preservation of archaeological remains in situ and no dig areas into the scheme as well as informing appropriate mitigation of the development and recording of any archaeological remains.
- 7.14.6 Furthermore, the proposed development is such that it should be regarded as having the potential to have an impact on heritage assets of archaeological interest. Consequently, conditions are advised to be imposed to sufficiently provide for the level of investigation that the proposal is considered to warrant.

7.15 Other Matters
Human Rights and Equalities

Human Rights Act 1998

7.15.1 In assessing this application, the Local Planning Authority has had due regard to the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998, including the rights contained within the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). Particular consideration has been given to: - Article 1 of the First Protocol – protection of property; and - Article 8 – the right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence.

7.15.2 Having carefully considered the impacts of the development, including matters relating to residential amenity, noise, privacy, access, and the environmental effects identified elsewhere in this report, it is not considered that the proposal would result in any unlawful interference with any individual's Convention rights. Any impacts arising from the development are assessed to be proportionate, justified and capable of being mitigated through planning conditions and obligations. Accordingly, the Council is satisfied that a fair balance has been struck between the rights of individuals and the wider public interest in delivering a strategic site allocated for housing.

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (Section 149, Equality Act 2010)

7.15.3 In exercising its functions, including determining planning applications, the Council must have due regard to the need to: 1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, 2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, and 3. Foster good relations between those groups.

7.15.4 The protected characteristics under the Equality Act are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.

7.15.6 In consideration of Equalities in the Proposed Development, the Council has rigorously considered the potential equality implications of the proposal, taking into account the nature of the development, representations received, and the protected characteristics identified above. The following matters are of particular relevance:

- The proposal includes dwellings designed to Building Regulations M4(2) standards, improving accessibility and adaptability for disabled and older residents.
- A policy compliant level of disabled parking can be accommodated on site, with further detailed layouts to be secured at Reserved Matters stage.
- The design code and masterplan demonstrate the ability to provide inclusive and accessible open spaces, including play areas capable of incorporating inclusive equipment.
- The proposed local centre and community infrastructure will increase access to local services for all groups, including those with reduced mobility.
- No evidence has been submitted to suggest that the development would disproportionately disadvantage any group with a protected characteristic.

7.15.7 As this is an outline planning application, full details of level thresholds, accessible routes, inclusive landscaping, and disabled parking provision will be finalised and assessed at the Reserved Matters stage to ensure full compliance with PSED and relevant policy requirements.

Conclusion on Equalities

7.15.8 Based on the information provided and the assessment undertaken, the proposed development is not considered to give rise to any material or disproportionate adverse impacts on persons with protected characteristics. The Council is satisfied that due regard has been given to its obligations under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, and

that the development, subject to conditions and obligations, advances equality of opportunity and promotes inclusive access as far as reasonably practicable for a scheme of this nature.

Waste and Recycling

- 7.15.9 The Design Guide (2025) states that provision should be made within new developments for the storage and collection of waste from a site. The Council's standards per dwelling as set out below and that new Government Legislation "Simpler Recycling" is pushing for increased recycling rates:
- General waste – 90lt
 - Paper/card – 30lt
 - Plastics/cans – 30lt
 - Glass – 12.5lt
 - Food – 23lt
- 7.15.10 Whilst the application is in outline form whereby details with respect to waste and recycling storage will be submitted as part of any future reserved matters application, the Council as LPA considers the development will be able to accommodate the requisite requirements based on the details submitted as part of the outline application.

8 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the construction of a new signalised junction on the A602, ancillary highway works, including improved foot/cycleway connections by The Chequers public house, a second bus and emergency vehicles access to the east of the site, and provision of the main spine road to allow access to the proposed 'lots' on site. The details proposed have been found to be acceptable by the local highway authority subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions. The access would enable the site to come forward and provides better connectivity routes in this southeastern area of the Borough.
- 8.2 Outline permission is sought for up to 500 dwelling units (including affordable housing and self-build plots), a mixed use local centre (Use Class C3, E and F2 space, public open and amenity space (including Children's Play), associated landscaping and ecological enhancement works, internal highways, parking, footpaths, cycleways, drainage, utilities, service infrastructure and ancillary works (With some matters reserved). The site is allocated in the local plan and thus the principle of housing is acceptable.
- 8.3 The proposed Masterplan, Design and Access Statement and Design Code thoroughly convey how the site has been designed and its process, along with how it should come forward as part of any reserved matters applications and any phased development. The proposals have good consideration of the sites location within the Borough and its surrounding area, and other matters such as layout, character and appearance are also well conveyed.
- 8.4 The scheme is well landscape-led, with a good mix of small and larger green spaces, for visual amenity and recreation, including a 'village green' type area, play spaces and wildlife areas, with good connectivity links around these areas. Matters relating to climate change, drainage and ecology, whilst to be covered in more detail at reserved matters stage are all well-articulated in the application, such that the proposed end result can be visualised, with proposals being policy compliant in principle based on the information provided.

- 8.5 Located close to three Grade II listed buildings, a Heritage Statement has been submitted, and officers are content that the harm ranges from neutral to less than substantial at the lower end of the scale.
- 8.6 The proposals would secure financial contributions and other matters through the S106 process, affordable housing, including highways contributions, education contributions, sports and outdoor facilities contributions, Travel plan monitoring, bus service contributions, sustainable travel vouchers, local employment, defibrillator provision and cycle hire contributions, as mitigation for any harm created.
- 8.7 Having regard to the above, the proposal is considered to accord with the development plan when read as a whole. In the absence of any other material considerations which indicate that permission should be refused, it is recommended that planning permission be granted.

9 RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 That planning permission be GRANTED subject to conditions and subject to planning obligations to secure/provide contributions towards:
- Affordable housing (24% on-site provision)
 - Viability review mechanisms with appropriate clawback clauses
 - Secondary education contribution of £
 - Bus service provision contribution of £
 - An appropriate trigger for S278 off-site highway works
 - Travel Plan evaluation and support fee of £
 - Sustainable travel vouchers
 - Cycle hire contribution of £25,000 and relevant infrastructure as required
 - Outdoor and indoor sports provision totalling £
 - Local Employment and Apprenticeships
 - Management company for administration of all common and public areas, including SuDS
 - Maintenance and management bonds
 - Monitoring fees for SBC and HCC
 - Secure neighbourhood centre on site
 - Secure GP surgery or financial contribution in-lieu towards GP provision
 - Possible delivery of a temporary shop at the neighbourhood centre
 - Provision of a defibrillator on site within the neighbourhood centre
 - BNG management and maintenance report/plan
 - Possible car club provision
- 9.2 The detail of the planning obligations would be delegated to the Director of Planning and Regulation in liaison with the Council's appointed solicitor, along with the recommendations of the Lead Local Flood Authority.
- 9.2 Authority would be given to the Assistant Director of Planning and Regulation in consultation with the Chair of Planning Committee, to amend or add to the suggested draft obligations and conditions set out in this report, prior to the decision notice being issued, where such amendments or additions would be legally sound and most effectively deliver the development that the Planning Committee has resolved to approve. These suggested conditions are as follows:

Conditions

To be confirmed and provided in an addendum report ahead of the committee meeting.

Pro-active Statement

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

INFORMATIVES

To be confirmed and provided in an addendum report ahead of the committee meeting.

10 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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