

PLANNING COMMITTEE - (17 July 2025)

PRELIMINARY REPORT

24/2073/OUT - Outline Application: Development of up to 600 residential dwellings (Use Class C3(a)), construction of a 5-bedroom property for childrens social care and supported living (Use Class C3(b)). Two vehicular access points from Little Green Lane and further pedestrian / cycleway accesses. A one form entry primary school (Use Class F1(a)) (plus expansion land for a two form entry primary school). A mixed use local centre including provision for NHS health and social care services (Use Class E(e)), community building (Use Class F2), retail and cafe provision (Use Class E(a-c)), car parking and associated infrastructure. A country park, areas for play and recreation, allotments, community orchard and landscaping with associated infrastructure including sustainable urban drainage systems. (Layout, scale, appearance and landscape as reserved matters) at LAND TO NORTH OF LITTLE GREEN LANE, CROXLEY GREEN, WD3 3SP

Parish: Sarratt Parish Council/Croxley Green Parish Council¹

Ward: Chorleywood North & Sarratt / Durrants²

Expiry of Statutory Period: 31.07.2025 (Agreed Extension)

Case Officer: Claire Westwood

Development type: Large Scale Major Dwellings

Recommendation:

- (1) That Members agree for officers to arrange a site visit prior to this application being presented to Planning Committee for a decision.
- (2) That the Committee notes the report, and is invited to make general comments with regard to the material planning issues raised by the application.

NOTE: A decision will NOT be made on this application at this time. The application will be returned to a future committee meeting for determination.

Reason(s) for consideration by the Committee:

1. Called in by Members of the Planning Committee for the following reasons: 1) Highways; 2) Impact on Green Belt; 3) Impact on other local services/utilities; and 4) Flooding.
2. Called in by Sarratt Parish Council for the reasons set out at 9.24 below (if officers are minded to approve).
3. Called in by Croxley Green Parish Council for the reasons set out at 9.4 below (if officers are minded to approve).

To view all documents forming part of this application please go to the following website:

[24/2073/OUT | Outline Application: Development of up to 600 residential dwellings \(Use Class C3\(a\)\), construction of a 5-bedroom property for childrens social care and supported living \(Use Class C3\(b\)\). Two vehicular access points from Little Green Lane and further pedestrian / cycleway accesses. A one form entry primary school \(Use Class F1\(a\)\) \(plus expansion land for a two form entry primary school\). A mixed use local centre including provision for NHS health and social care services \(Use Class E\(e\)\), community building \(Use Class F2\), retail and cafe provision \(Use Class E\(a-c\)\), car parking and associated infrastructure. A country park, areas for play and recreation, allotments, community orchard and landscaping with associated](#)

¹ The majority of the site falls within Sarratt Parish area, however, the access points fall within Croxley Green Parish area. Both Sarratt and Croxley Green Parish Councils were consulted.

² The majority of the site falls within Chorleywood North and Sarratt ward, however, the access points fall within Durrants ward.

1 Relevant Planning History

- 1.1 24/1220/EIA - EIA Screening Request: Up to 600 new residential dwellings (Use Class C3), 1FE Primary School plus expansion land, mixed use local centre including Doctor's surgery, open and green space and associated infrastructure. Determined. Not EIA development.

2 Description of Application Site

- 2.1 The site has an area of approximately 40 hectares. It is a greenfield site predominantly used for agriculture, with existing woodland comprising approximately 7% of the site area. Little Green Lane borders the site to the south, with the existing residential streets of Croxley Green and existing Little Green Junior School beyond this. To the north and east of the site is Rousebarn Lane, a predominantly single track route which runs between the site and Whippendell Woods. To the west of the site is woodland and agricultural fields. A public footpath (Sarratt 017) runs through the site between Rousebarn Lane to the east and Dell Wood to the west.
- 2.2 The site is located to the northern edge of Croxley Green, and falls within Sarratt Parish area. The centre of Croxley Green is located approximately 2km to the south with Watford approximately 4km to the east.
- 2.3 The site is less than 2km from Croxley Station (Metropolitan Line) which provides regular services to central London via Northwood and Harrow. The closest bus links are on Baldwins Lane to the south. Junction 18 of the M25 is approximately 6km from the site.
- 2.4 In terms of site constraints, the site is situated wholly within the Metropolitan Green Belt. There are Ancient Woodlands adjoining (Dell Wood and Long Newlands Spring) the site to the west and north-west and within the site (Green Lane Wood). These are also Local Wildlife Sites. Public footpath (Sarratt 017) runs through the site.
- 2.5 Whippendell Wood SSSI is sited to the east and north-east, separated by Rousebarn Lane. Cassiobury Park (Registered Park Grade II, NHLE 1000219) is also sited to the east. Durrants House (Listed Building Grade II, NHLE 1403581) is directly opposite the site boundary on Little Green Lane. It is a Tudor/Jacobean revival-style country house built in 1866-7. The Croxley Green Conservation Area is to the west, south-west of the site – the site does not adjoin the conservation area boundary. The site is wholly within Flood Zone 1 as defined by the UK's Environment Agency. Flood Zone 1 signifies areas with the lowest probability of flooding (less than a 0.1% annual probability of river or sea flooding, equating to less than 1 in 1000 chance).

3 Description of Proposed Development

- 3.1 This application seeks outline planning permission for the; 'Development of up to 600 residential dwellings (Use Class C3(a)), construction of a 5-bedroom property for childrens social care and supported living (Use Class C3(b)). Two vehicular access points from Little Green Lane and further pedestrian / cycleway accesses. A one form entry primary school (Use Class F1(a)) (plus expansion land for a two form entry primary school). A mixed use local centre including provision for NHS health and social care services (Use Class E(e)), community building (Use Class F2), retail and cafe provision (Use Class E(a-c)), car parking and associated infrastructure. A country park, areas for play and recreation, allotments, community orchard and landscaping with associated infrastructure including sustainable urban drainage systems'.
- 3.2 This application has been submitted in Outline with the matter of Access submitted for approval, and matters of Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale reserved for later

consideration. Access is defined in the Development Management Procedure Order as meaning 'the accessibility to and within the site, for vehicles, cycles and pedestrians in terms of the positioning and treatment of access and circulation routes and how these fit into the surrounding access network'.

- 3.3 The detailed application drawings 001 Rev C (Proposed Site Access Durrants Drive) and 002 Rev C (Proposed Site Access Links Way) show the position of the two proposed points of vehicular access to the site across Little Green Lane from Durrants Drive and Links Way.
- 3.4 The application is accompanied by a Land Use Parameters Plan (ref. P24-1200_DE_0015 Sheet 1 Rev C) which demonstrates how the different components of the scheme can be incorporated. The Parameters Plan identifies areas for residential development; open space; mixed use local centre; 1FE primary school; and school expansion land. The Land Use Parameters Plan also illustrates indicative areas for access to the site and within the site. In the event that Outline planning permission was granted, a condition would require that subsequent Reserved Matters accord with the Land Use Parameters Plan.
- 3.5 The application is accompanied by an illustrative masterplan (page 57 of Design and Access Statement) which accords with the Land Use Parameters Plan and demonstrates how the site could be developed, with open space and sustainable drainage to the east and built development to the south and west with a series of roads and walking/cycling routes. It is important to note that the masterplan is submitted for illustrative purposes only to demonstrate how the site could be developed at the quantum proposed.
- 3.6 A Design Code has been submitted with the application. The purpose of the Design Code is to provide a series of clear instructions/rules to inform subsequent Reserved Matters applications.
- 3.7 The application was accompanied by the following plans/reports:
- Application Form
 - Land Use Parameters Plan (P24-1200_DE_0015 Sheet 1 Rev C)
 - Location Plan (P24-1200_DE_001)
 - Proposed Site Access Links Way (T24544.001 Rev C)
 - Proposed Site Access Durrants Drive (T24544.002 Rev C)
 - Affordable Housing Statement (Tetlow King Planning, December 2024, M24/0511-01.RPT)
 - Agricultural Land Classification and Soil Resources Report (Reading Agricultural Consultants, July 2024)
 - Air Quality Assessment (BWB, December 2024, 233574-01-AQA)
 - Biodiversity Calculation Metric
 - Biodiversity Checklist
 - Design and Access Statement and Design Code (Richborough, January 2025, Rev A)
 - Ecological and Biodiversity Impact Assessment (RammSanderson, December 2024, RSE_8239_R1_V4_EclA)
 - Education Report (EFM, December 2024)
 - Energy Statement (Greengage, December 2024)
 - Flood Risk Assessment (BWB, December 2024, 233574_FRA)
 - Health Impact Assessment (RPS, December 2024, 1.0)
 - Heritage Statement (Pegasus Group, December 2024, P24-1200)
 - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (iceni, December 2024)
 - Local Centre Capacity Statement (Lambert Smith Hampton, December 2024)
 - Noise Impact Assessment (BWB, December 2024, 233574_002)
 - Phase 1 GEO-Environmental Assessment (BWB, December 2024, 233574)
 - Planning Statement (RPS, December 2024)

- Preliminary Arboricultural Impact Assessment (Tyler Grange, December 2024, 11702_R02_NC RevD)
- Sports and Leisure Strategy (Sports Planning Consultants, December 2024)
- Statement of Community Involvement (Catus Group, December 2024)
- Sustainability Statement (Greengage, December 2024)
- Sustainable Drainage Strategy (BWB, December 2024, 233574-SDS)
- Transport Assessment (hub, January 2025, Rev A)
- Travel Plan (hub, December 2024)
- TRDC 5 Year Housing Land Supply Assessment (Emery Planning, December 2024, 24-305)
- Utilities Statement (BWB, December 2024, 233574)

3.8 Amendments/additional information include:

- Response to TRDC Heritage Officer comments (Pegasus Group 27/03/25 received 28/03/25).
- Response to Lead Local Flood Authority comments (BWB Ref. 233574-BWB-ZZ-XX-T-W-0005_LLFA received 07/05/25).
- Response to Sport England comments (RPS 22/05/25).
- Green Belt Addendum Assessment (Iceni, March 2025)

4 Consultation

A summary is provided below, with the full comments set out in **Appendix 1 at Section 9**.

Active Travel England:	9.1	Deferral, further information requested
Affinity Water	9.2	No objection
British Pipeline Agency	9.3	No comments on application
Croxley Green Parish Council	9.4	Objection
Forestry Commission	9.5	No objection subject to condition(s)
HCC Footpath Section	9.6	No response received (see Hertfordshire Highways)
HCC Growth and Infrastructure Unit	9.7	No objection, contributions requested
HCC Healthy Places	9.8	No response received.
HCC Lead Local Flood Authority	9.9	No objection subject to condition(s)
HCC Waste and Minerals Team	9.10	No objection subject to condition(s)
HCC Water Officer	9.11	No response received.
Hertfordshire Archaeology	9.12	No objection subject to condition(s)
Hertfordshire and West Essex ICB	9.13	No objection, contributions requested
Hertfordshire Constabulary	9.14	No response received.
Hertfordshire Ecology	9.15	No objection subject to condition(s)
Hertfordshire Highways	9.16	Objection – insufficient information
London Underground Limited	9.17	No comments on application
National Grid	9.18	No response received.
National Highways	9.19	Holding Objection
National Planning Casework Unit	9.20	No response received.
Natural England	9.21	No objection subject to condition(s)
NHS England	9.22	No response received.

Ramblers	9.23	No response received.
Sarratt Parish Council	9.24	Objection
Sport England	9.25	No objection subject to condition(s) and S106 contribution(s)
Thames Water	9.26	No objection subject to condition(s)
Transport for London	9.27	Objection – further information required
TRDC Environmental Health (Residential)	9.28	No objection subject to condition(s)
TRDC Environmental Protection	9.29	Advisory comments regarding resources required
TRDC Heritage Officer	9.30	Objection (less than substantial harm)
TRDC Housing Officer	9.31	No objection
TRDC Tree and Landscape Officer	9.32	No objection (subject to suitable compensation/mitigation)
TRDC Leisure Development Officer	9.33	No objection subject to condition(s)
TRDC Planning Policy Team	9.34	Advisory comments re. policy framework
Watford Borough Council	9.35	No response received.
Watford Environmental Health (Commercial)	9.36	No objection subject to condition(s)
Woodland Trust	9.37	Objection

4.1 Public/Neighbour Consultation

4.1.1 Number consulted: 2143

4.1.2 No of responses received: 706 representations (**702 objections** including from Croxley Green Residents Association, CPRE – Campaign to Protect Rural England, Governing Bodies of local primary schools; and Little Green Junior School and **4 supporting comments**).

4.1.3 Site Notice(s): x 5 Displayed 23/01/25 Expired 13/02/25

4.1.4 Press Notice: Published 24/01/25 Expired 14/02/25

4.1.5 Summary of Responses:

4.1.5.1 Objections:

The site is prime agricultural land and is used for agriculture.
Loss of farmland reduces capability to produce own food sources.

Object to destruction of Green Belt.

Green Belt should be protected.

The Green Belt is crucial in preventing the encroachment of Croxley Green into Chandlers Cross, Sarratt and beyond.

There would be extensive harm to the openness of green belt land.

The Green Belt is inherently connected to the ecology of the whole area including SSSI and Ancient Woodland.

The Very Special Circumstances required by the NPPF have not been demonstrated.

This area is not Grey Belt.

The proposal would undermine the purpose of restricting sprawl of large built-up areas. The site plays a significant contribution in this regard and the proposal would undermine this purpose.

Would result in urban sprawl.

The Green Belt stage 2 review undertaken by LUC in October 2019 states release of the site for development would have a significant impact on preventing urban sprawl and encroachment onto the countryside.

600 new residences would fundamentally alter the character of an area / village.

Overdevelopment.

High density development does not relate to Croxley Green.

Inappropriate to build a new town on this area.

Four storey buildings out of character.

Design is out of keeping.

Visual impact.

Impact on landscape

Heritage and conservation – the site is near listed buildings and conservation areas which must be protected.

Regularly used for running, walking and enjoying the countryside.

Negative impact on local community.

Negative impact on physical and mental wellbeing.

Fails to address need for sporting facilities in Croxley Green.

Impact on quality of life.

Highways safety concerns, particularly for school children.

Access roads are unsuitable for the expected traffic from a development of this scale.

Access roads are narrow and heavily parked.

It is more appropriate for such a large residential area to be served from a Type 2 or Type 1 road rather than residential roads proposed.

Baldwins Lane is already solid in rush hour, this will be exacerbated.

The traffic challenges make this development unviable and unsafe.

The traffic congestion will increase dramatically in all areas.

Hertfordshire Highways object.

National Highways object.

No credible plans for improved transport links.

Parking is already limited in the area.

Impact of overflow parking on local streets.

Lack of sustainable transport options / reliance on cars over public transport.

Poor public transport links.

Proposed bus service would not be sufficient mitigation.

Existing roads in disrepair.

Concerns regarding access for emergency services.

The potential cycle lane would reduce the parking for current residents on an already narrow road.

Destroy valuable green space.

Negative impact on protected species in the area.

The application fails to sufficiently address mitigations for the dormice, badgers, bats, muntjac, foxes

and protected bird species like skylarks, swifts and red kites that are on the land.

Development will impact biodiversity and ecology of ancient woodland and SSSI including hedgerow removal and damage to root systems and drainage.

Damaging loss of habitat, and foraging grounds for a wide range of species.

Significant environmental impact.

Unclear how 10% BNG will be achieved.

Major impact on flora and fauna.

Impact on River Chess, protected chalk stream.

Impact on SSSI.

Impact on Local Wildlife Sites.
Disappointed to see ancient trees cut down.
Swift bricks should be included.

No need for additional primary school / struggling to fill others.
Data suggests falling demand linked to falling birth rate.
Will add pressure on waste and water treatment and many other services.
Medical centre should be in central Croxley, not this site.
Local infrastructure is already struggling, this will be exacerbated.
Will the community services offered actually get built? Will the school be built?
Inadequate drainage.
Impact on water pressure.
Connection to utilities will put further strain on existing.
Pressure on local schools.
No local benefit.
Country Park could attract large numbers of visitors and no parking has been proposed.
If the scheme goes ahead then it would be important that Country Park is maintained

Impact of construction over an extended period including high volumes of dust.
Environmental risks to both natural and human ecology generated both during and at the completion.
Noise pollution.
Light pollution.
Air quality.

Increased hard surfaces will worsen flooding on Rousebarn Lane.
Heavy flooding including surface water.
No clear sustainable drainage plan.

Will not provide affordable housing as evidenced by other new builds.
There is already considerable new housing provision recently completed, under construction or with planning permission.
Alternative solutions for housing such as unused office buildings in better locations.
Brownfield sites should be prioritised.
Recognise need for housing but this is not the right location.
Killingdown Farm development should be the limit for the area.
This development fails to deliver genuinely affordable housing.

Misleading information within application.
Have application documents / reports been diligently reviewed.
Houses on nearby sites are not sold.
Contrary to policy.
Although Three Rivers lacks 5-year housing supply, speculative developments should not bypass planning process.
Approving could set precedent.
Likely extension of development in future into proposed green spaces.
Driven by developer greed.
Violation of human rights.
Croxley is being overdeveloped, no one is considering cumulative impacts.
Lacks sustainable building practices or commitments to renewable energy.
Not allocated in draft local plan

4.1.5.2 Support:

Much needed new homes in desirable location.
Need for housing is overwhelming.

Includes provision of new primary school and other community uses / facilities and space for play and recreation.
The village has always grown so has already changed character.
Doctors surgery may be required.
Traffic is never as bad as feared.
It is large but will create modern vibrant district.
In absence of other suitable land need to look at Green Belt.
Things have changed since Green Belt introduced.
The alternative is tower blocks.
Proposal includes screening and protection to woodland.
I believe that better education provision would be served by building a 3 or 4 form infant school on the site.

5 Reason for Delay

- 5.1 The application has been extended beyond its original statutory determination period in order to enable the applicant to work with those statutory consultees who have raised technical objections.

6 Relevant Planning Policy, Guidance and Legislation

6.1 Legislation

Planning applications are required to be determined in accordance with the statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise as set out within S38(6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and S70 of Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

S66(1) of Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires LPAs to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses when considering whether to grant planning permission.

Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023

The Localism Act received Royal Assent on 15 November 2011. The Growth and Infrastructure Act achieved Royal Assent on 25 April 2013.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the Habitat Regulations 1994 may also be relevant.

The Environment Act 2021

6.2 National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance

In December 2024 the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was updated and may be read along with the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) as relevant government planning guidance. As is recognised in the NPPF, planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF and NPPG are 'material considerations' relevant to planning decision making. The NPPF is equally clear that "existing [development plan] policies should not be considered out-of-date simply because they were adopted or made prior to the publication of this Framework. Due weight should be given to them, according to their degree of consistency with this Framework" (NPPF Annex 1: 225).

A number of NPPF chapters are relevant to the consideration of this application, with the most important being:

- 2 – Achieving sustainable development
- 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
- 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities
- 9 – Promoting sustainable transport
- 12 – Achieving well-designed and beautiful places
- 13 – Protecting Green Belt land
- 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

6.3 The Three Rivers Local Development Plan

The planning merits of the application have been assessed against the policies of the development plan, namely, the Local Plan, including the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011), the Development Management Policies Local Development Document (adopted July 2013), the Site Allocations Local Development Document (adopted November 2014) as well as government guidance. The policies of Three Rivers District Council reflect the content of the NPPF.

The Core Strategy was adopted on 17 October 2011 having been through a full public participation process and Examination in Public. Relevant policies include Policies CP1 (Overarching Policy on Sustainable Development), CP2 (Housing Supply), CP3 (Housing Mix and Density), CP4 (Affordable Housing), CP6 (Employment and Economic Development), CP7 (Town Centres and Shopping), CP8 (Infrastructure and Planning Obligations), CP9 (Green Infrastructure), CP10 (Transport and Travel), CP11 (Green Belt) and CP12 (Design of Development).

The Development Management Policies Local Development Document (DMLDD) was adopted on 26 July 2013 after the Inspector concluded that it was sound following Examination in Public which took place in March 2013. Relevant policies include DM1 (Residential Design and Layout), DM2 (Green Belt), DM3 (Historic Built Environment), DM4 (Carbon Dioxide Emissions and On Site Renewable Energy), DM6 (Biodiversity, Trees, Woodland and Landscaping), DM7 (Landscape Character), DM8 (Flood Risk and Water Resources), DM9 (Contamination and Pollution), DM10 (Waste Management), DM11 (Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities and Children's Play Space), DM12 (Community, Leisure and Cultural Facilities), DM13 (Parking), Appendix 2 (Design Criteria) and Appendix 5 (Parking Standards).

Croxley Green Neighbourhood Plan (2018). As previously noted, the majority of the application site falls within Sarratt Parish area. It is only the two access points proposed from Little Green Lane that fall within the Croxley Green Neighbourhood Plan area and that can be assessed against the Neighbourhood Plan. Policy H03 (Connections to existing footpaths and cycle ways in new developments) advises that all new development should connect into the existing networks and improve their connectivity.

Hertfordshire County Council's adopted Minerals Local Plan 2002 – 2016.

The Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2011–2026

The Waste Site Allocations Development Plan Document 2011–2026

6.4 Other

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (adopted February 2015).

7 Planning Analysis

7.1 Principle of Development – Impact on the Green Belt

- 7.1.1 The application site is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt. Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) sets out that the Council will maintain the general extent of the Green Belt in the District and will encourage appropriate positive use of the Green Belt and measures to improve environmental quality. There will be a presumption against inappropriate development that would not preserve the openness of the Green Belt, or which would conflict with the purpose of including land within it.
- 7.1.2 Policy DM2 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013) notes that “as set out in the NPPF, the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt is inappropriate with certain exceptions, some of which are set out below”. Relevant to this current application is a) New Buildings, which states “Within the Green Belt, except in very special circumstances, approval will not be given for new buildings other than those specified in national policy and other relevant guidance”. Policy DM2 was adopted prior to the publication of the current NPPF. However, it was adopted after the publication of the original 2012 NPPF, and the Green Belt policies in the NPPF in relation to inappropriate development are not materially different between the two. On that basis, it is considered that Policy DM2 is in accordance with the NPPF and may be afforded full weight. The NPPF is considered to contain national policy and therefore relevant guidance and a relevant material consideration.
- 7.1.3 Paragraph 142 of the NPPF states “the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence”. Paragraph 143 states that Green Belt serves five purposes:
- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 - b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
 - c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 - e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 7.1.4 Paragraph 145 states that “Once established, there is no requirement for Green Belt boundaries to be reviewed or changed when plans are being prepared or updated. Authorities may choose to review and alter Green Belt boundaries where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, in which case proposals for changes should be made only through the plan-making process”. This application does not seek to alter Green Belt boundaries. It proposes development within the Metropolitan Green Belt.
- 7.1.5 Paragraph 151 states that “Once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use, such as looking for opportunities to provide access...”
- 7.1.6 Paragraph 153 states that “Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances”. Paragraph 153 states “When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. ‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations”.
- 7.1.7 Paragraph 154 states “A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are as follows:

- a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;
- b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
- c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;
- d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
- e) limited infilling in villages;
- f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites);
- g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land (including a material change of use to residential or mixed used including residential), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt;
- h) Other forms of development provided that they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:
 - i) mineral extraction;
 - ii) engineering operations;
 - iii) local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;
 - iv) the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction;
 - v) material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, of for cemeteries and burial grounds; and
 - vi) development, including buildings, brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

7.1.8 This application, submitted in outline form with only details of access provided at this time, proposes the 'Development of up to 600 residential dwellings (Use Class C3(a)), construction of a 5-bedroom property for childrens social care and supported living (Use Class C3(b)). Two vehicular access points from Little Green Lane and further pedestrian / cycleway accesses. A one form entry primary school (Use Class F1(a)) (plus expansion land for a two form entry primary school). A mixed use local centre including provision for NHS health and social care services (Use Class E(e)), community building (Use Class F2), retail and cafe provision (Use Class E(a-c)), car parking and associated infrastructure. A country park, areas for play and recreation, allotments, community orchard and landscaping with associated infrastructure including sustainable urban drainage systems'.

7.1.9 In respect of paragraph 154, the proposed development does not fall into any of the categories a, c, d, e, f, or g. As regards category b, the development includes a country park and areas for play and recreation that may not be inappropriate as long as they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. As regards category h, whilst the proposed development involves considerable engineering operations and a material change of use, these are primarily associated with and contingent upon the construction of buildings and roads to form the development and not to be undertaken for any other purpose. To be considered appropriate, such operations must preserve the openness of the Green Belt and not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

7.1.10 Whilst the development as a whole would not comply with paragraph 154, it is also necessary to consider the development in relation to paragraph 155 of the NPPF which relates to 'grey belt'. This states that 'the development of homes, commercial and other development in the Green Belt should not be regarded as inappropriate where all of the following apply:

- a) The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan;
- b) There is demonstrable unmet need for the type of the development proposed;
- c) The development would be in a sustainable location with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of this frameworks;
- d) Where applicable the development meets the 'Golden Rules' requirements set out in paragraphs 156-157.

7.1.11 In considering whether the site would constitute Grey Belt land, reference must be had to Annexe 2 which defines Grey Belt as follows:

'For the purposes of plan- making and decision making, 'grey belt' is defined as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b) or (d) in paragraph 143. Grey Belt excludes land where the application of the policies relating to the areas of assets in footnote 7 (other than Green Belt) would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development'.

7.1.12 The site is 'any other land' as it is not 'previously developed land'. For it to be considered Grey Belt it needs to not strongly contribute to any of the purposes (a), (b) or (d) in paragraph 143 of the NPPF. These are:

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns;*

7.1.13 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) provides guidance in respect of consideration of the above matters.

7.1.14 The applicant has submitted a Planning Statement and Green Belt Addendum Assessment (Iceni, March 2025) which concludes that in their opinion the development complies with paragraph 155 ('grey belt') of the NPPF and is therefore not inappropriate.

7.1.15 If the development does not comply with paragraph 155 ('grey belt') of the NPPF it would be inappropriate by definition. There would also be actual harm to openness.

7.1.16 The benefits of the case as put forward by the applicant to support their case for Very Special Circumstances (in the event that LPA conclude that the development does not comply with paragraph 155 of the NPPF) are outlined at section 7.21 below.

7.1.17 As noted above, paragraph 153 of the NPPF states that "Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations". Accordingly, in the event that development does not comply with paragraph 155 ('grey belt') before establishing whether a case for very special circumstances exists or not, it will be necessary to assess the planning merits of the proposed development to understand whether it would give rise to 'any other harm' to interests of acknowledged planning importance.

7.2 Impact on the character and appearance of the locality

7.2.1 Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) seeks to promote buildings of a high enduring design quality that respect local distinctiveness and Policy CP12 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) relates to design and states that in seeking a high standard of design the Council will expect development proposals to 'have regard to the local context and conserve or enhance the character, amenities and quality of an area'. Development should make efficient use of land but should also respect the 'distinctiveness of the surrounding area in terms of density, character, layout and spacing, amenity, scale,

height, massing and use of materials'; 'have regard to the local context and conserve or enhance the character, amenities and quality of an area' and 'incorporate visually attractive frontages to adjoining streets and public spaces'.

- 7.2.2 This application is submitted in outline, with only matters of access for detailed consideration. The application is accompanied by a Land Use Parameters Plan (ref. P24-1200_DE_0015 Sheet 1 Rev C) which demonstrates how the different components of the scheme can be incorporated. The Parameters Plan identifies areas for residential development; open space; mixed use local centre; 1FE primary school; and school expansion land. The Land Use Parameters Plan also illustrates indicative areas for access to the site and within the site. In the event that Outline planning permission was granted, a condition would require that subsequent Reserved Matters accord with the Land Use Parameters Plan.
- 7.2.3 The application is also accompanied by an illustrative masterplan (page 57 of Design and Access Statement) which accords with the Land Use Parameters Plan and demonstrates how the site could be developed, with open space and sustainable drainage to the east and built development to the south and west with a series of roads and walking/cycling routes. It is important to note that the masterplan is submitted for illustrative purposes only to demonstrate how the site could be developed at the quantum proposed.
- 7.2.4 A Design Code has been submitted with the application. The purpose of the Design Code is to provide a series of clear instructions/rules to inform subsequent Reserved Matters applications. In the event of a grant of Outline planning permission, compliance with the Design Code would be secured via appropriately worded condition(s).
- 7.2.5 The indicative Building Heights Plan (page 70 of Design and Access Statement) indicates development up to 4 storeys in height. Development to the south adjacent to Little Green Lane would be up to 2.5 storeys, with the majority of the development site up to 3 storeys in height. The higher 4 storey element would be limited to a small central section framing the green corridor. To the east the development would be up to 2 storeys in height, responding to its siting adjacent to Green Lane Wood.
- 7.2.6 The character of the site itself would change as a result of the proposed development, with the existing open arable land lost and replaced by a new residential development with associated open space and infrastructure. The submitted Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) judges the effect on the landscape character of the site to be adverse due to the loss of open land, however, this does not mean that the resultant development would be unattractive or inappropriate.
- 7.2.7 The LVIA concludes that the effects on the immediate surroundings of the site will be limited as a result of the careful design, and due to the existing dense vegetation which bounds the site to the north, east and west. The submitted Planning Statement sets out that transitional character areas are proposed within the development through the incorporation of areas of open space within the site between the built development and the woodland beyond, and that these areas and associated planting within them will further minimise effects on the immediate surrounding landscape. The Planning Statement notes that the clear southern edge to the development also limits the effects on the wider landscape, with the woodland physically and visually separating the development from the countryside beyond. Little Green Lane to the south also provides a further strong boundary line.

7.3 Housing Mix

- 7.3.1 Policy CP3 sets out that the Council will require housing proposals to take into account the range of housing needs as identified by the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and subsequent updates. The need set out in the Core Strategy is 30% one-bedroom units, 35% two-bedroom units, 34% three-bedroom units and 1% four bedroom and larger units. However, the most recent version of the Local Housing Needs Assessment (LNHA) was

finalised in 2024 and is the most recent update to the SHMA. The recommended mix for Three Rivers in terms of market housing, affordable home ownership and social/affordable rented housing identified in the LNHA is shown below:

	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4+ bed
Market Housing	4%	21%	42%	32%
Affordable Home Ownership	19%	39%	30%	13%
Social / Affordable Rented Housing	20%	32%	35%	12%

7.3.2 The housing mix is not a matter being determined at outline stage.

7.4 Affordable Housing

7.4.1 Core Strategy Policy CP4 states that in order to increase the provision of affordable homes in the district and meet local housing need, the council will seek an overall provision of around 45% of all new housing as affordable housing, incorporating a mix of tenures. All new development resulting in a net gain of one or more dwellings will be expected to contribute to the provision of affordable housing. As a guide, 70% of affordable housing would be social rented and 30% intermediate.

7.4.2 For a major planning application such as this, it would be expected that all affordable housing is provided on site. This is reflected in Policy CP4 and the Affordable Housing SPD.

7.4.3 On 24 May 2021 the Government published a Written Ministerial Statement to set out plans for the delivery of First Homes. Following this, TRDC set out a Policy Position Statement on First Homes. First Homes are a specific kind of discounted market sale housing which must be discounted by a minimum of 30% against the market value, sold to a person meeting First Homes criteria and have a restriction to ensure this. Given the First Homes guidance, TRDC have been requiring 25% of affordable housing to be First Homes, 70% to be social rented and 5% to be intermediate. However, within paragraph 6 of the NPPF (2024), reference to the Written Ministerial Statement on Affordable Homes (24th May 2021), which contained policy on First Homes, has been removed and the prescriptive requirement that 10% of the total number of homes to be available for affordable home ownership as set out in former paragraph 66 has been deleted.

7.4.4 The application proposes to deliver 50% of the dwellings as affordable units, with the remaining 50% being provided as open market dwellings. The affordable housing must be secured at the outline stage.

7.4.5 The affordable housing would comprise 300 dwellings, with 70% Social Rent, 25% First Homes and 5% Shared Ownership.

7.4.6 The application also proposes the construction of a 5-bedroom property for children's social care and supported living (Use Class C3(b)). HCC welcome and supports the inclusion of a children's home on the site, their full comments are at 9.7 below.

7.5 The Local Centre & Community Facilities

7.5.1 In addition to the residential element (up to 600 dwellings), the application proposes construction of a 5-bedroom property for children's social care and supported living (Use Class C3(b)); a one form entry primary school (Use Class F1(a)) (plus expansion land for a two form entry primary school); a mixed use local centre including provision for NHS health and social care services (Use Class E(e)), community building (Use Class F2), retail and cafe provision (Use Class E(a-c)); a country park, areas for play and recreation, allotments and community orchard.

- 7.5.2 Supporting documents submitted with the application include Education Report (EFM, December 2024); Health Impact Assessment (RPS, December 2024, 1.0); Local Centre Capacity Statement (Lambert Smith Hampton, December 2024); Planning Statement (RPS, December 2024); and Sports and Leisure Strategy (Sports Planning Consultants, December 2024).
- 7.5.3 As noted above, HCC welcome and supports the inclusion of a children's home on the site.
- 7.5.4 In relation to the primary school, HCC note that when they responded in 2018 to Three Rivers District Council Regulation 18 local plan consultation, their response set out that primary school sites may need to be identified in all settlements to meet pupil yield from new housing developments, depending on the number of sites and level of growth chosen. They acknowledge that the applicant has proposed a new 1FE (up to 2FE land) primary school on-site to accommodate the needs arising from their scheme. They therefore seek a financial contribution towards the delivery of a new 1FE (up to 2FE land) primary school in the area and/or provision serving the development.
- 7.5.5 The application includes provision for NHS health and social care services (Use Class E(e)). The Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care Board (ICB) are supportive of the principle of the delivery of a new medical centre at this location, however, in the event that the ICB cannot support the delivery in this location (for viability, affordability and deliverability reasons), the ICB will seek a financial contribution as set out in their comments at 9.13 below.
- 7.5.6 The Local Centre Capacity Statement concludes that the proposed local centre seeks to meet the needs that arise from the proposed development and the wider local area. It indicates that the commercial anchor of the local centre would be a convenience store and that the Capacity Statement has addressed the appropriate scale for such a store to demonstrate that it is a viable commercial proposition, but would not compete with existing services within Croxley Green.
- 7.5.7 Following the receipt of additional information during the application, Sport England have raised no objection (subject to conditions S106 agreement). In relation to community sports provision Sport England request financial contributions being secured through a section 106 agreement towards off-site outdoor and indoor sports facility provision. They also request a minimum specification for the community hall building being secured through a section 106 agreement and a planning condition being imposed to address the design and implementation of the NewGen Active Track.
- 7.6 Impact of proposal on heritage assets
- 7.6.1 Strategic Objective S10 of the Core Strategy is "To conserve and enhance the historic environment by resisting the loss of, or damage to, heritage assets including important buildings". Core Strategy Policy CP12 states that "in seeking a high standard of design, the Council will expect all development proposals to conserve and enhance natural and heritage assets".
- 7.6.2 Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states:
- "In considering whether to grant planning permission or permission in principle 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."
- 7.6.3 Paragraph 208 of the NPPF advises that:

“Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.”

7.6.4 Paragraphs 212 and 213 of the NPPF state 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.”

“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.”

7.6.5 Paragraph 215 of the NPPF advises 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...”

7.6.6 The NPPG advises that public benefits may follow from many developments and could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental objectives as described in the NPPF. Public benefits should flow from the proposed development. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and not just be a private benefit. However, benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits, for example, works to a listed private dwelling which secure its future as a designated heritage asset could be a public benefit.

7.6.7 Policy DM3 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013) refers to the historic built environment and notes that when assessing applications for development, there will be a presumption in favour of the retention and enhancement of heritage assets. Applications will only be supported where they sustain, conserve and where appropriate enhance the significance, character and setting of the asset itself and the surrounding historic environment.

7.6.8 The application is accompanied by a Heritage Assessment (HA) which identified Durrants House (Listed Building Grade II) and Cassiobury Park (Registered Park Grade II) as heritage assets which could be affected by the proposals through change within their settings. The Council’s Heritage Officer agrees with these identifications.

7.6.9 The submitted HA states that the development has been designed to minimise harm to the significance of Durrants House and Cassiobury Park through changes to their settings and taking into account retained views to and from the rear of Durrants House and the retained buffer of open space in the areas adjacent to Cassiobury Park, concludes that the scale of the effect is assessed as being less than substantial harm at the lower end of the spectrum in relation to Durrants House and at the lowest end for Cassiobury Park.

7.6.10 In relation to Durrants House, the Conservation Officer agrees that the proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the setting of Durrants House. They consider the level of harm would be low – mid level. Whilst they consider that the degree of harm could be mitigated to some extent, due to the scale of the proposal and change in land use and character they do not consider that the harm could be removed. In relation to Cassiobury

Park the Conservation Officer agrees that the proposal would result in less than substantial harm at the lowest end of the spectrum as a result of the substantial landscaped buffer.

- 7.6.11 Following the receipt of comments from the Conservation Officer the applicant provided a response (Pegasus Group 27/03/25 received 28/03/25). This has been reviewed by the Conservation Officer but does not alter their comments set out in full at 9.30 below.
- 7.6.12 As noted above, the NPPF advises 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. 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, irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

Archaeological Considerations

- 7.6.13 Policy DM3 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013) advises that where an application site includes, or is considered to have the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, it must be accompanied by an appropriate desk-based assessment. The submitted HA considers archaeological interest.
- 7.6.14 The Historic Environment Advisor has reviewed the submitted details. They note that no heritage assets of archaeological interest are known from within the proposed development site, however, as noted in the HA, there is an underlying potential for prehistoric activity, which would be of regional significance. The site has not been subject to significant development or other disturbance and as a result, it is likely that if any archaeological remains are present on the remainder of the site, they are well preserved. The Historic Environment Advisor concludes that given the size and scope of the proposed development, it should be regarded as having the potential to have an impact on heritage assets of archaeological interest, and therefore they recommend archaeological field evaluation of the proposed development area, via trial trenching, prior to development commencing. They consider that appropriately worded conditions on any planning consent would be sufficient to provide for the level of investigation that this proposal warrants and have provided suggested wording.

7.7 Highways & Transport Impacts

- 7.7.1 Core Strategy Policy CP10 relates to Traffic and Travel, and states that Development proposals will be expected to contribute to the delivery of transport and travel measures identified as necessary for the development, either on-site as part of the development or through contributions to off-site provision as appropriate. Provision for interchange and access by public transport, walking and cycling will be regarded as particularly important. The policy explains that all development should be designed and located to minimise the impacts of travel by motor vehicle on the District. Clearly the development subject of this application is specifically designed to cater for travel by motor vehicle.
- 7.7.2 Policy CP10 states that Development will need to demonstrate that it provides a safe and adequate means of access, is appropriate in scale to the existing transport infrastructure and where necessary infrastructure can be improved. It is necessary for the impact of the proposal on transport to be fully assessed through a comprehensive Transport Assessment.
- 7.7.3 The NPPF at paragraph 115 sets out that in assessing specific applications for development it should be ensured that

- a) sustainable transport modes are prioritised taking account of the vision for the site, the type of development and its location;*
- b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users;*

c) the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code; and
d) any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.

7.7.4 Paragraph 116 states that “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 would be severe”.

7.7.5 Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) advises that in ensuring all development contributes to the sustainability of the District, it is necessary to take into account the need to reduce the need to travel by locating development in accessible locations and promoting a range of sustainable transport modes.

7.7.6 Policy CP10 (Transport and Travel) of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) advises that all development should be designed and located to minimise the impacts of travel by motor vehicle on the District. Development will need to demonstrate that:

- i) It provides a safe and adequate means of access*
- j) It is appropriate in scale to the existing infrastructure...*
- k) It is integrated with the wider network of transport routes...*
- l) It makes adequate provision for all users...*
- m) It includes where appropriate, provision for public transport either within the scheme or through contributions*
- n) The impact of the proposal on transport has been fully assessed...*
- o) The proposal is accompanied by a draft Green Travel Plan*

7.7.7 This application includes a number of highways works and as explained above, whilst the application is submitted in Outline form, matters of access are for full consideration as part of the application. The impact of the proposed highway works are to be assessed by Hertfordshire County Council as the Local Highway Authority, and National Highways as the Highway Authority for the strategic road network. Active Travel England are also a statutory consultee considering how active travel is incorporated into the development. Similarly Transport for London have been consulted on the application.

7.7.8 Highway infrastructure works proposed include: Two proposed points of vehicular access to the site across Little Green Lane from Durrants Drive and Links Way; Footpath and cycleway connections throughout the scheme; and retention of the existing public right of way (017) and incorporation into the scheme.

Hertfordshire County Council – the Local Highway Authority (HCCHA)

7.7.9 HCCHA have raised an objection to the application at this stage advising that there is insufficient information supplied to enable them to reach a recommendation. The applicant’s Transport Consultant has met with HCCHA to discuss their comments and a response / additional information is currently being prepared. HCCHA will be reconsulted upon receipt.

National Highways – the Highway Authority (NH)

7.7.10 NH is interested whether there would be any adverse safety implications or material increase in queues and delays on the strategic road network (SRN) as a result of the proposed development, in this case on the M25 J18 and 19, and the M1 J5.

7.7.11 NH provided an initial holding objection, requesting that further information be provided. The applicant’s Transport Consultant has met with NH and NH note in their second response they have had confirmation from the applicant’s consultants that their requirements for

further information can be supplied and further assessment work undertaken if necessary. NH will be reconsulted upon receipt.

Active Travel England (ATE)

- 7.7.12 ATE has reviewed the application against the criteria in the updated planning assessment toolkit, national planning policy, and active travel design guidance. They note that the proposals demonstrate strong potential to support active travel, with the site being sustainably located and offering opportunities to access surrounding services and amenities via active modes. However, they consider that certain aspects require further consideration and therefore ATE have requested additional information and analysis to address these matters. A response / additional information is being prepared by the applicant and ATE will be reconsulted upon receipt.

Transport for London (TfL)

- 7.7.13 TfL have commented that as part of the Transport Assessment (TA), the applicant should consider the potential impacts of the proposed development on TfL services and infrastructure including Croyley station. Whilst TfL welcome the fact that the applicant is willing to make an appropriate contribution to the proposed station access improvements at Croyley station, they consider that a full station capacity assessment is required to be submitted to inform this. A response / additional information is being prepared by the applicant and TfL will be reconsulted upon receipt.

7.8 Vehicle Parking

- 7.8.1 Development Management Policy DM13 requires development to make provision for parking in accordance with the parking standards and zone based reductions set out in Appendix 5.
- 7.8.2 As previously noted, this application is submitted in outline with matters of access for consideration. The site's layout would be considered at a later date as a reserved matter and it is expected that the proposed car parking layout and provision would be dealt with at that time. Having regard to the number of dwellings proposed on site, it is acknowledged that a significant number of car parking spaces would be required in addition to car parking for the new school and local centre.
- 7.8.3 The Transport Assessment states that car parking at dwellings outside the local centre will be provided in accordance with the residential car parking standards in the current local plan.
- 7.8.4 The Transport Assessment suggests that 126 car parking space would be proposed at the local centre, 24 for the 62 flats and 102 for the community uses which represents a shortfall of 83 spaces against current local plan standards.
- 7.8.5 It is acknowledged that a package of sustainable transport initiatives is proposed, primarily focussing on encouraging alternatives to private car use to maximise the need for extensive new traffic infrastructure. It is proposed to bring a bus service into the site, available to both existing and new residents. Other proposals include consideration of inclusion of Beryl Bike scheme.

7.9 Impact on residential amenity

- 7.9.1 Paragraph 135 (f) of the NPPF advises that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

- 7.9.2 Policy CP12 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) states that the Council will expect development proposals to protect residential amenities. Design Guidelines for residential development are set out in Appendix 2 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013).
- 7.9.3 The application is submitted in outline, with matters of access for consideration. However, the application is accompanied by an illustrative masterplan which suggests a form of development where a buffer would be maintained between the development and the closest existing properties to the opposite side of Little Green Lane, however, impact on neighbouring amenity would be fully assessed at reserved matters stage. The impact on the amenity of future occupiers would also be assessed.
- 7.10 Pollution – Air Quality
- 7.10.1 Paragraph 187 of the NPPF advises that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by amongst other considerations:
- (e) Preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans;
- 7.10.2 The NPPG provides guidance as to when air quality would be relevant to a planning decision. In summary, it states that when deciding whether air quality is relevant to a planning application, considerations could include whether the development would, amongst other considerations:
- Significantly affect traffic in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development site or further afield.
 - Introduce new point sources of air pollution e.g. furnaces.
 - Give rise to potentially unacceptable impact (such as dust) during construction for nearby sensitive locations.
- 7.10.3 In relation to air quality, Policy DM9 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013) advises that development will not be permitted where it would:
- Have an adverse impact on air pollution levels, particularly where it would adversely affect air quality in an Air Quality Management Area and/or
 - Be subject to unacceptable levels of air pollutants or disturbance from existing pollutant sources.
- 7.10.4 The application is accompanied by an Air Quality Assessment (BWB, December 2024, 233574-01-AQA) which has been review by the Environmental Protection Officer (EPO). They note that a construction phase dust assessment was undertaken to evaluate the potential impact of construction activities (including construction vehicles on public highways up to 250m from the site entrances) on local air quality. The assessment indicates that with the implementation of the recommended mitigation measures, the residual impacts from the construction phase will be not significant. The EPO notes that an operational phase road traffic emissions assessment was also undertaken to consider the impact of development generated road traffic at identified existing receptor locations. This concludes that the development is not predicted to result in any new exceedances of the air quality objectives and that the impacts of the development are considered to be negligible at all modelled receptor locations.
- 7.10.5 The EPO raises no objection subject to conditions as the impact of the proposed development on local air quality is not considered to be significant.

7.11 Pollution – Noise and Vibration

7.11.1 Paragraph 187 of the NPPF advises that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by amongst other considerations:

(e) Preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans;

7.11.2 Policy DM9 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013) sets out that planning permission will not be granted for development has an unacceptable adverse impact on the indoor and outdoor acoustic environment of existing or planned development, has an unacceptable adverse impact on countryside areas of tranquillity which are important for wildlife and countryside recreation.

7.11.3 The application is accompanied by a Noise Impact Assessment (BWB, December 2024, 233574_002). Environmental Health (EHO) have reviewed the submitted report and consider the main impacts associated with the application to be: (1) Increased traffic flows resulting in higher noise levels. The EHO notes that this has been considered within the report and the impact on existing residents has been deemed insignificant. The EHO does not have grounds to consider this to be inaccurate; (2) Noise associated with the school; and (3) Noise associated with the community centre and café. The EHO raises no objections to the application on noise grounds subject to the inclusion of relevant planning conditions.

7.12 Pollution – Light

7.12.1 Policy DM9 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013) sets out that development proposals which include external lighting should ensure that proposed lighting schemes are the minimum required for public safety and security, that there is no unacceptable impact on neighbouring or nearby properties or the surrounding countryside or wildlife.

7.12.2 As the application is in Outline, full details of lighting would be required at Reserved Matters stage or via condition if appropriate.

7.13 Pollution – Land Contamination

7.13.1 Policy DM9 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013) states that the Council will only grant planning permission for development on, or near to, former landfill sites or on land which is suspected to be contaminated where the Council is satisfied that there will be no threat to the health of future users or occupiers of the site or neighbouring land, and there will be no adverse impact on the quality of local ground water or surface water quality.

7.13.2 The application is accompanied by a Phase 1 GEO-Environmental Assessment (BWB, December 2024, 233574) which has been reviewed by the Environmental Protection Officer (EPO). They note that the preliminary risk assessment undertaken has identified a number of plausible contaminant linkages that require further investigation. As such, an assessment of the potential risks associated with the site is considered necessary and the EPO therefore recommends the standard contaminated land condition be attached in the event that planning permission were to be granted.

7.14 Impact on Wildlife, Biodiversity and Agriculture

7.14.1 Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 requires Local Planning Authorities to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. This is further emphasised by regulation 3(4) of the Habitat Regulations 1994 which state that Councils

must have regard to the strict protection for certain species required by the EC Habitats Directive.

- 7.14.2 Paragraph 187 of the NPPF advises that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;

d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs.

- 7.14.3 Footnote 62 states “Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of a higher quality”.

- 7.14.4 Paragraph 192 of the NPPF advises that in order to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should: b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

- 7.14.5 Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) advises that; “all development in Three Rivers will contribute to the sustainability of the District. This means taking into account the need to” (amongst other things) (f) “protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment from inappropriate development and improve the diversity of wildlife and habitats”. Policy CP9 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) advises that; “The Council will seek a net gain in the quality and quantity of Green Infrastructure, through the protection and enhancement of assets and provision of new green spaces”.

- 7.14.6 Policy DM6 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013) advises that development should result in no net loss of biodiversity value across the District as a whole.

- 7.14.7 The applicant has submitted an Agricultural Land Classification and Soil Resources Report (Reading Agricultural Consultants, July 2024) which concludes the land is Grade 3B land which is not considered best and most versatile land.

- 7.14.8 In respect of biodiversity, the submission includes Biodiversity Calculation Metric; Biodiversity Checklist; and Ecological and Biodiversity Impact Assessment (RammSanderson, December 2024, RSE_8239_R1_V4_EclA).

- 7.14.9 Biodiversity Net Gain calculations detail that the development would result in a 34.41% increase in habitat units and 42.54% increase in hedgerow units. This net gain is owed to the creation of other neutral grassland, modified grassland, mixed scrub, allotments, bioswale, shrubs, vegetated gardens, and urban trees. Herts Ecology have reviewed the proposed BNG, they note that the country park proposals have not fully maximised opportunities for ecological enhancements. Whilst they do not consider this to be a constraint at this stage, they note that the BNG proposals should be revisited to maximise potential for biodiversity. Herts Ecology have advised that sufficient information has been provided to determine the application and achieving the gains would be secured by the mandatory condition, S106, and alongside a requirement to provide a habitat management and monitoring plan.

- 7.14.10 In respect of protected species, Herts Ecology have reviewed the submitted reports and do not consider that protected species would represent a fundamental ecological constraint to the proposals. Mitigation measures are proposed and these could be secured by planning

condition. Initial concerns were raised regarding nesting birds, with Herts Ecology suggesting that further surveys should be carried out prior to determination. The applicants' ecologist responded noting that as construction would not be taking place for some time, they considered that it would be premature to undertake the surveys at this time as it is vital that the red kite surveys are as current as possible to accurately inform mitigation measures. Herts Ecology have reviewed their position and have confirmed that completing pre-commencement red kite surveys will be sufficient. The results of the survey can be included in the Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP), along with any mitigation outlined by the ecologist.

- 7.14.11 In relation to habitats, Herts Ecology note that no areas of ancient woodland will be lost to the development, and that no existing trees or groups of trees on site will require removal. They note that a 30m buffer has been implemented from the areas of built development to Green Lane Wood Local Wildlife Site. In relation to Whippendale Wood Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Herts Ecology do not consider there will be any adverse impacts on this important habitat, similarly to the adjacent Dell Wood, Jacotts Hill/West Herts Golf Course, and Merlin's Wood and Newland's Spring. Herts Ecology do request appropriate condition(s) to ensure that no indirect impacts occur on the above important habitats.

7.15 Landscaping and Impact on trees including Ancient Woodland and SSSI

- 7.15.1 As previously noted, this application is submitted in outline with landscaping a reserved matter. Nevertheless, the application has been submitted with an illustrative landscape strategy.
- 7.15.2 Development Management Policy DM6 notes that proposals for new development should be submitted with landscaping proposals which seek to retain trees and other important landscape and nature conservation features. Development proposals on sites which contain existing trees and hedgerows will be expected to retain as many trees and hedgerows as possible. It also notes that planning permission will be refused for any development resulting in the loss or deterioration to protected woodland, protected trees, and hedgerows unless conditions can be imposed to secure their protection. It states that where the felling of a tree or hedgerow is permitted, a replacement tree or hedge of an appropriate species, size and in a suitable location will be required.
- 7.15.3 The NPPF sets out at paragraph 193c) that "development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists".
- 7.15.4 There are Ancient Woodlands adjoining (Dell Wood and Long Newlands Spring) the site to the west and north-west and within the site (Green Lane Wood). Whippendell Wood SSSI is sited to the east and north-east, separated by Rousebarn Lane.
- 7.15.5 In addition to the illustrative landscape strategy, the application is accompanied by a Preliminary Arboricultural Impact Assessment (Tyler Grange, December 2024, 11702_R02_NC RevD). The site is predominantly an agricultural field bounded by hedgerows and trees that are proposed to be supplemented with new planting. Two small sections of hedge (adjacent to Little Green Lane) are proposed to be removed to facilitate access to the site, however, no trees, woodland or groups of trees require removal to facilitate the development proposals.
- 7.15.6 Natural England (NE) is a non-departmental public body whose statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations. NE have reviewed the application and raise no objections subject to appropriate mitigation being secured. NE considers that without appropriate mitigation the application would damage or destroy the interest features for which Whippendell Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest have been notified. In order to mitigate

these adverse effects and make the development acceptable, NE advise that the following options should be secured: Provision of 24ha green space/country park with secured management plan/maintenance for the lifetime of the development; Minimum 30m buffer zone around ancient woodland within and adjacent to the proposed development; An ancient woodland recreational management plan; Information packs for residents on sensitive use of local habitats/protected sites; and a Construction Environment Management Plan for both construction and operational measures. They consider that these mitigation measures can be secured via an appropriate planning condition or obligation attached to any planning.

- 7.15.7 The Woodland Trust (woodland conservation charity) have reviewed the submitted application and have raised an objection on the basis of concerns regarding the deterioration of Woodland Trust sites and ancient woodlands. They raise particular concerns in relation to two sites adjacent to the development - Dell Wood ancient woodland and Newland's Spring (part ancient woodland). The Woodland Trust object on the basis that the feasibility of mitigating deterioration of ancient woodland has not been demonstrated. They suggest that the applicant should submit additional information to demonstrate that effective mitigation could be provided. The applicant has met with the Woodland Trust and TRDC Tree and Landscape Officer to discuss the proposal and appropriate management.
- 7.15.8 The Forestry Commission (Government's forestry experts) have also reviewed and provided comments on the application. In relation to the Ancient Woodland Buffer they note that the Standing Advice refers to a minimum 15m buffer and that the application proposes a 30m buffer. Whilst the buffer may be sufficient to avoid direct impacts, indirect soil damage and disturbance would still be expected. They would encourage considering a mix of habitat types to create a graded edge from the existing woodland including new woodland, scrub and species rich grassland with effective management that maximises biodiversity value. They also note the inclusion of amenity public open space and footpaths within the Ancient woodland buffer, and suggest that these may be better located outside of the buffer, with the buffer itself managed as a semi natural habitat less attractive to be used as public open space. In relation to habitat fragmentation and connectivity the Forestry Commission suggest there is opportunity for increased woodland planting to improve connectivity. The planting of new trees is supported, however, the species and provenance of new trees needs to be considered to ensure resilience. Plans should also be in place to ensure long term management and maintenance. The Forestry Commission request, in the event of a grant of planning permission, that full details of any woodland protection measures, a woodland management plan, a planting plan including species selection and lighting strategy to avoid illuminating all woodlands on site and adjacent to it, be provided at the reserved matters stage.
- 7.15.9 TRDCs Tree and Landscape Officer has visited the site and reviewed the submitted details. They note that the outline plans indicate that there will be no direct impacts on trees and woodland on the site. With no trees needing to be felled or pruned, and no loss of irreplaceable habitats. In addition, no development is proposed to take place within the root protection areas of retained trees. Although some short sections of existing hedgerow would need to be removed. Whilst they consider there to be no direct impacts on trees and woodlands, they note the high potential for indirect impacts. They consider the increase in population would inevitably lead to additional recreational pressures on the trees and woodland, such as the compaction of soils around important trees; the trampling of ground flora in woodland areas; erosion and widening of footpaths through woodland areas; and the disturbance of wildlife, through activities such as dog walking. To prevent any long-term deterioration of these irreplaceable habitats a suitable compensation and mitigation strategy would be required. The Landscape Officer notes that the plans indicate that buffer zones between the housing areas, and the woodlands and trees, would be created, comprising of a Country Park, formal areas of green space, and allotment sites. Whilst they consider that these will provide some mitigation, over the long term, managing visitor access and

pressure to the surrounding woodland and being able to deal with antisocial behaviour issues will be key to preventing the deterioration of the trees and woodlands.

7.16 Energy Use

- 7.16.1 Paragraph 161 of the NPPF states that “The planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure”.
- 7.16.2 Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy requires the submission of an Energy and Sustainability Statement demonstrating the extent to which sustainability principles have been incorporated into the location, design, construction and future use of proposals and the expected carbon emissions.
- 7.16.3 Policy DM4 of the DMLDD requires applicants to demonstrate that development will produce 5% less carbon dioxide emissions than Building Regulations Part L (2013) requirements having regard to feasibility and viability. This may be achieved through a combination of energy efficiency measures, incorporation of on-site low carbon and renewable technologies, connection to a local, decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply. The policy states that from 2016, applicants will be required to demonstrate that new residential development will be zero carbon. However, the Government has announced that it is not pursuing zero carbon and the standard remains that development should produce 5% less carbon dioxide emissions than Building Regulations Part L (2013) requirements having regard to feasibility and viability.
- 7.16.4 The application is accompanied by an Energy Statement (Greengage, December 2024). This sets out that the proposed development is predicted to exceed Part L 2021 carbon emission reduction requirements. As this application does not seek approval for the appearance or layout of the proposed buildings, it is anticipated that any future Reserved Matters submission would provide full details of the energy efficiency of the proposed buildings and demonstrate their ability to comply with Policy DM4.

7.17 Flood Risk and Drainage

- 7.17.1 Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) requires all development in Three Rivers to contribute to the sustainability of the District, by minimising flood risk through the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems. Policy DM8 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013) refers to Flood Risk and Water Resources, and states that development will only be permitted where it would not be subject to unacceptable risk of flooding. It also states that Development in all areas should include Sustainable Drainage Systems to reduce surface water runoff.
- 7.17.2 The site is wholly within Flood Zone 1 as defined by the UK's Environment Agency. Flood Zone 1 signifies areas with the lowest probability of flooding (less than a 0.1% annual probability of river or sea flooding, equating to less than 1 in 1000 chance).
- 7.17.3 The application has been accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) (BWB, December 2024, 233574_FRA) and Sustainable Drainage Strategy (BWB, December 2024, 233574-SDS).
- 7.17.4 The submitted FRA and Sustainable Drainage Strategy have been reviewed by the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA). The LLFA requested additional be provided following their initial review. This has subsequently been provided and the LLFA have since advised that the submitted details are in accordance with the NPPF and local planning policy and they therefore raise no objection subject to conditions.

- 7.17.5 In relation to water quality, Affinity Water (AW) have advised that the proposed development site is not located within an Environment Agency defined Source Protection Zone. AW raise no objection but note that construction works should be in accordance with the relevant British Standards and Best Management Practices to minimise groundwater pollution risk. In relation to water efficiency, AW note that the site is within a water stressed area such they would expect it to include water efficient fixtures and fittings and measures such as rainwater harvesting. Whilst this level of detail would not be secured at Outline stage, it is noted that the submission (Sustainability Statement (Greengage, December 2024)) has considered water efficiency and refers to the integration of water efficient fixtures and fittings; rainwater harvesting; flow control devices; leak detection and irrigation.
- 7.17.6 Thames Water (TW) have confirmed that they have identified an inability of the existing foul water network infrastructure to accommodate the needs for the development proposal and require a condition be attached to any planning permission that does not allow the occupation of the development until all foul water network upgrades are completed or a phasing plan agreed. TW have confirmed that they have identified an inability of the existing sewage treatment works infrastructure to accommodate the needs of the development proposal and require a condition be attached to any planning permission that does not allow the occupation of the development until all sewage works upgrades required to accommodate the additional flows from the development have been completed, or a development and infrastructure phasing plan has been agreed.
- 7.18 Refuse and Recycling
- 7.18.1 Policy DM10 (Waste Management) of the DMLDD advises that the Council will ensure that there is adequate provision for the storage and recycling of waste and that these facilities are fully integrated into design proposals. New developments will only be supported where:
- i) The siting or design of waste/recycling areas would not result in any adverse impact to residential or work place amenity
 - ii) Waste/recycling areas can be easily accessed (and moved) by occupiers and by local authority/private waste providers
 - iii) There would be no obstruction of pedestrian, cyclists or driver site lines
- 7.18.2 The County Council's adopted waste planning documents reflect Government policy which seeks to ensure that all planning authorities taken responsibility for waste management. This includes ensuring that 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 ensuring that the handling of waste arising from the construction and operation of development maximises reuse/recovery opportunities, and minimises off-site disposal.
- 7.18.3 HCC would therefore require a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP) to be submitted which should aim to reduce the amount of waste produced on site.
- 7.18.4 In relation to minerals, the site falls entirely within the 'Sand and Gravel Belt' as identified in HCC's 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.
- 7.18.5 The county council, as the Minerals Planning Authority, encourage the opportunistic use of these deposits within the developments, should they be found when creating the foundations/footings. Opportunistic use of minerals will reduce the need to transport sand and gravel to the site and make sustainable use of these valuable resources.
- 7.18.6 In respect of domestic and commercial waste, it is considered that further details regarding the storage and management of waste on site would be considered at the reserved matters stage.

7.19 Infrastructure Contributions

- 7.19.1 Policy CP8 of the Core Strategy requires development to make adequate contribution to infrastructure and services. The Three Rivers Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule sets out that the charge per sq.m of residential development in this area is £180 (plus indexation).
- 7.19.2 The below summarises the contributions requested at this time, however, it is important to note that the report is preliminary only at this stage and therefore the below may be subject to change once a recommendation is finalised.
- 7.19.3 As set out above, the applicant is providing additional information in response to initial comments from Transport for London (TfL). Whilst further information is required by TfL, they have indicated that contributions towards station access improvements at Croxley Green Station would be required to mitigate the impacts in terms of the additional demand at the station.
- 7.19.4 As set out above, the applicant is providing additional information in response to an initial objection from Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority. In the event that the objection is overcome it is anticipated that Hertfordshire County Council as Local Highway Authority will require contributions and highways works to be secured. Further details will be provided once received.
- 7.19.5 Hertfordshire County Council as Education Authority note that the applicant has proposed a new 1FE (up to 2FE land) primary school on-site to accommodate the needs arising from their scheme. Therefore, the contribution sought towards the delivery of a new 1FE (up to 2FE land) primary school in the area and/or provision serving the development would be (£5,335,853 index linked to BCIS 1Q2022). They have also calculated that contributions are required towards Secondary Education (£4,534,908 index linked to BCIS 1Q2022), Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Contribution towards new Severe Learning Difficulty (SLD) special school places and/or provision serving the development (£498,652 index linked to BCIS 1Q2022), and associated monitoring fee. HCC welcomes and supports the inclusion of a children's home on the site.
- 7.19.6 Hertfordshire County Council also seek a contribution (£35,316 index linked to BCIS 3Q2022) towards increasing capacity at Waterdale Transfer Station and/or provision serving the development, and associated monitoring fee.
- 7.19.7 The application includes provision for NHS health and social care services (Use Class E(e)). The Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care Board (ICB) are supportive of the principle of the delivery of a new medical centre at this location, however, in the event that the ICB cannot support the delivery in this location (for viability, affordability and deliverability reasons), the ICB will seek a financial contribution as set out in their comments at 9.13 below.
- 7.19.8 Sport England request financial contributions towards off-site outdoor and indoor sports facility provision as set out at 9.25 below.
- 7.19.9 The significant Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) would be secured via a S106 Agreement, there would also be associated monitoring fee in association with 30 year monitoring period.

7.20 Referral to Secretary of State

- 7.20.1 The Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2024 requires Local Planning Authorities to consult the Secretary of State before granting planning permission for certain types of development. These include inappropriate developments in the Green Belt that by reason of their scale or nature or location would have a significant impact on the openness of the Green Belt. In the event that it is concluded that the development subject of this application is acceptable although contrary to the Development Plan, or that

very special circumstances exist which are considered to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt by inappropriateness and any other harm, it would be necessary for the LPA to consult the Secretary of State prior to a decision being issued. The purpose of the Direction is to give the Secretary of State an opportunity to consider using the power to call in an application under section 77 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. If a planning application is called in, the decision on whether or not to grant planning permission will be taken by the Secretary of State.

7.21 Benefits of the Scheme

- 7.21.1 The applicant has suggested that the development complies with paragraph 155 ('grey belt') of the NPPF and is therefore not inappropriate, however, the following benefits of the scheme as put forward by the applicant within their Planning Statement are to support their case for Very Special Circumstances (in the event that LPA conclude that the development does not comply with paragraph 155 of the NPPF) and public benefits (heritage harm). These benefits as presented by the applicant are summarised below and presented for information with no weighting being given by the LPA at this time:

Social Benefits

- Provision of Housing – The Council cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply as required by the NPPF. The proposed development would deliver 600 dwellings of a range of unit sizes, providing an opportunity for a mix of housing types and sizes to meet different needs. The proposed quantum of development represents a deliverable and meaningful contribution towards meeting the very substantial shortfall.
- Provision of Affordable Housing – As a direct consequence of the identified significant shortfall in housing delivery there is a significant shortage of affordable housing. The proposed development would deliver up to 300 affordable homes (50% provision) which exceeds the policy requirement and constitutes a very substantial contribution to affordable housing need.
- Custom and Self Building Housing – The application proposes a 2% provision of dwellings to be built as custom and self-build dwellings.
- Supported Living for Vulnerable Children – Following pre-application discussions with the Local Education Authority the application includes a 5 bedroom property to be built for children's social care.
- A New 1FE Primary School with expansion land for 2FE – The proposed development includes provision of land for a new one form entry primary school in partnership with HCC with capacity for future expansion land if required. The education statement submitted with the application addresses how the school will be available to both new and existing children in the area.
- Provision for NHS health and social care services – The development includes dedicated space within the local centre specifically for new NHS health and social care services.
- Provision of Local Centre (Retail, Café and Community Building) – The proposed development provides floorspace for a community hub and local centre facilities to meet the needs of the existing community of Croxley Green in addition to those of future residents.
- Provision of Sports Facilities and Play – The proposed development will deliver a range of multifunctional green spaces, providing opportunities for children's play, recreation paths and biodiversity enhancement. Equipped play areas are incorporated into the scheme with other informal open spaces around the site designed to allow for informal play and exploration. A site-specific Sports Need Assessment has been prepared and supports the application.

Environmental Benefits

- Locational Sustainability – Growth at Key Centre – The Core Strategy sets out the overall spatial strategy for the district for the period up to 2026. Whilst the site is located in Sarratt Parish, it would represent an urban extension of Croxley Green which is identified as one of six 'Key Centres' within the Council's settlement hierarchy. The overall strategy for the Key Centres is delivery of 60% of the district's housing requirement. The development is located at one of the most sustainable settlements in the district. Future residents would be able and likely to walk or cycle to services in Croxley Green and access essential shops, services, secondary schools and employment. They would also have access to the public transport network
- Low Carbon Development – Through a range of measures including sustainable design and construction, the development will seek to maximise energy efficiency in order to reduce energy consumption and achieve high levels of sustainability. The proposals will include air source heat pumps to all new homes and will reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 78kg per year which demonstrates a 37% reduction, significantly exceeding the Council's target of 5%.
- Electric Vehicle Charging – The applicant is proposing to include electric charging ports as part of measures to enhance the sustainability of the proposal.
- New High Quality Public Open Space and Country Park – The proposals would retain the public right of way across the site, maintaining an east to west connection. The extent and quality of green infrastructure and publicly accessible open space proposed (approximately 60%) would be significantly in excess of the 10% policy requirement. The current site is privately owned with limited public access restricted to one public right of way.
- Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) – The development would result in a 34.41% increase in habitat units and 42.54% increase in hedgerow units.
- Quality of Design – The development will promote a safe, accessible, and healthy environment creating a sense of place by complementing the local character and pattern of the surroundings. Whilst the application is in Outline, a significant package of detail is provided regarding the ultimate design and layout of the proposals via a Design Code.

Economic Benefits

- Delivery of Sustainable and Active Travel Options and a New Bus Service – A package of sustainable transport initiatives is proposed, primarily focussing on encouraging alternatives to private car use to maximise the need for extensive new traffic infrastructure. It is proposed to bring a bus service into the site, available to both existing and new residents. Other proposals include consideration of inclusion of Beryl Bike scheme.
- Job Creation – The proposed development will contribute to the provision of employment in the local area through the generation of construction jobs both on site and in the local supply chain. The construction phase will directly create around 930 FTE jobs.
- Enhanced Retail Spend – The proposed development will generate additional demand and support for the range of services within Croxley Green.
- Increased Revenues – The proposal will generate additional revenue for the local authority through Council Tax generation, forecast to be in the region of £1,207,500 in council tax revenue. The scheme will also attract the New Homes Bonus from central government.

7.21.2 The benefits set out above would need to be considered by the decision maker.

7.22 Tilted Balance and Planning Balances including Very Special Circumstances (Green Belt) and Public Benefits (Heritage)

- 7.22.1 As part of the decision making process, there are various planning balances that must be undertaken by the decision maker. Whilst summarised in the title above, these are also explained in the relevant part of this report (for example, the need to consider very special circumstances is explained in the Green Belt section of this report).
- 7.22.2 In respect of the tilted balance, the Council can only demonstrate a 1.7 year housing land supply. As a result, the policies that are most important for determining the application are deemed to be 'out of date' and the tilted balance at paragraph 11 of the NPPF applies:

For decision-taking this means:

d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

- i. the application of policies in this Framework 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 this Framework 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.

- 7.22.3 In respect of d) i. the NPPF sets out that the policies referred to (that protect areas or assets of particular importance) include those relating to land designated as Green Belt, SSSIs and designated heritage assets. In respect of d) ii. the NPPF sets out that the policies referred to are those in paragraphs 66 and 84 of chapter 5; 91 of chapter 7; 110 and 115 of chapter 9; 129 of chapter 11; and 135 and 139 of chapter 12.
- 7.22.4 As part of the assessment of the proposal, it will be necessary to identify which policies are most important for determining the application, and the weight to be attributed to them notwithstanding that they may be considered out of date. It would then be necessary to undertake an assessment under i or ii above.
- 7.22.5 In respect of the Planning Balance it will be necessary for the decision maker to take account of the material planning considerations to the case, and balance any adverse impacts of the development against the benefits put forward by the applicant (see section above) and any other identified benefits. Any adverse impacts are likely to primarily be identified as part of an assessment of the proposal against the statutory development plan and other material planning considerations. These would need to be weighed against the benefits which may also be identified as part of the assessment.
- 7.22.6 As part of a full assessment of the scheme to be presented at a later date, the full extent of any harm arising from the scheme would be identified, and this would be balanced against the benefits of the scheme to enable a recommendation to be made as to whether planning permission may be granted or not.

7.23 Site Visit

- 7.23.1 It is noted that this development is of a considerable size and scale, impacting a large area of land which is designated as Green Belt. On that basis, and given the case put forward by the applicant in support of their application and the LPA's housing delivery and housing land supply situation, it is recommended that Members agree to a site visit being arranged prior to the application being presented to Committee for a decision, to ensure Members have the opportunity to view the site and understand its topography and how it relates to its surroundings.

8 Recommendation

- 8.1 That Members agree for officers to arrange a site visit prior to this application being presented to Planning Committee for a decision.
- 8.2 There is no recommendation for a decision to be made at this stage in the consideration of the application. Consequently, it is recommended that the Committee notes the report, and is invited to make general comments with regards to the material planning issues raised by the application.

9 Appendix 1 – Consultee Responses

9.1 Active Travel England: [Deferral, further information requested]

9.1.1 Initial comments 11.2.25 [Deferral, further information requested]

1.0 Background

Active Travel England (ATE) welcomes the opportunity to comment on this outline planning application. This is ATE's first involvement with the proposal site; however, it is noted that standing advice was issued in response to a pre-application engagement request, as ATE does not currently provide detailed advice at the pre-application stage.

It is understood that the site is not allocated within the current Local Plan (2011); however, it has been considered as part of evidence gathering for the preparation of a new Local Plan.

2.0 Summary

ATE has reviewed the application against the criteria in the updated planning assessment toolkit, national planning policy, and active travel design guidance.

The proposals demonstrate strong potential to support active travel, with the site being sustainably located and offering opportunities to access surrounding services and amenities via active modes. However, certain aspects require further consideration, leading to a deferral response. ATE requests additional information and analysis to address these matters, detailed below.

3.0 Areas of Concern

1. Trip Generation and Travel Plan Targets

Trip Generation:

Expected trip rates for walking, wheeling, and cycling journeys are not clearly provided in the Transport Assessment (TA) and appear to focus solely on vehicle trips. Trip rates should be provided for active modes as all-day trips rather than being restricted to peak hours. The trip generation for active modes should consider all onsite uses, not just residential elements.

Travel Plan:

The Travel Plan lacks targets for active modes and instead relies on 2011 Census Journey to Work (JTW) data to establish a baseline modal split, intending to update this with surveys post-occupation. This approach is disappointing, given the site's high potential for active travel. Reliance on outdated census data results in a less ambitious starting point. Recognising the limitations of the 2021 Census, adopting a vision-led approach and incorporating alternative data sources, such as the National Travel Survey, could help establish robust, forward-looking targets in line with the updated NPPF.

2. Active Travel Route Audit

Section 4.0 of the TA assesses the distances to local facilities and opportunities for sustainable and active travel. While it identifies several destinations accessible on foot or by cycle, it does not include maps to illustrate key routes. The assessment provides photographs and commentary on walking routes but lacks a cycling audit, unlike the walking audit.

While the walking audit identifies some areas for improvement, a more critical evaluation is required, considering:

- National Design Guide
- Inclusive Mobility Guidance
- The five core design principles of LTN 1/20, which apply to both cycling and walking routes

The Watford and Three Rivers Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), attached in Appendix A of the TA, applies similar principles. It would be beneficial for the applicant to provide a comparable level of assessment with maps.

3. Accessibility

Walking and Cycling – Access to Services:

The development site is well located for accessing services, as confirmed in Table 3 – Distance to Local Facilities of the TA. However, when assessing accessibility, it is essential to evaluate the quality of routes. As noted, the route audit should be expanded to cover a broader range of facilities. While proposed commercial and educational facilities will improve accessibility, residents will likely need access beyond the site boundary.

Access to Public Transport:

Public transport journeys typically start and end with active travel. Ideally, developments should be within:

- 400m of a high-frequency bus stop
- 800m of a rail station

The TA states the nearest bus stop is 750m away at Durrants Drive/Baldwins Lane. The nearest underground station (Croxley) is 1.8km away, and the closest National Rail station is a 15-17 minute cycle ride, making it inaccessible by foot to most users.

While the site is generally well served by public transport, the distance to the nearest bus stop exceeds the recommended standard. The proposed new bus service within the site could improve access, but further details on funding, frequency, routes, and operating hours are needed.

4. Off-Site Infrastructure Improvements

Access Arrangements:

Two vehicular accesses via Links Way and Durrants Drive are proposed. While these allow logical, direct routes into the site, improvements are needed to facilitate east-west pedestrian and cycle connections along Little Green Lane in terms of materials and crossings. The Design and Access Statement (DAS) illustration (p.146) suggests this, but the detailed drawings do not reflect it.

Further Improvements:

- New Pedestrian & Cycle Links:
 - o A shared footway/cycleway connecting the site to Croxley Danes School and Baldwins Lane.
 - o Pedestrian/cycle priority at junctions along this route.

While the principle of off-carriageway walking and cycling infrastructure is welcome, ATE does not generally support shared-use paths unless they meet limited exceptions in LTN 1/20. The proposed route interacts with driveways, creating potential conflicts with both vehicles and pedestrians and ultimately amounts to conversion of a footpath. Moreover, it appears pavement parking is prevalent along this route, however no detail on how this will be managed is provided. Alternative measures should be considered, including managing pavement parking, enhancing placemaking and introducing traffic calming which reduces conflicts, to ensure this route is attractive to all users.

- Upgrades to Public Rights of Way (PRoW):
 - o Footpath 17 improvements towards West Hertfordshire Golf Course.
 - o Enhancements to PRoWs 63 and 18 to improve connectivity.
- Cycle Route Integration with LCWIP:
 - o Contributions to the cycleway along The Green.
 - o Cycle priority improvements along the A412 corridor towards Watford.

Discussions with the PRoW and Highway Authority are needed to determine appropriate contributions. It is considered that there is a significant opportunity to benefit from the proximity of the site to existing PRoW network.

5. Permeability and Placemaking

The proposals are currently in outline form, which typically limits the level of detail available for comment on permeability and placemaking. However, the submitted road layouts provide an opportunity to influence design at this stage.

Permeability

Detailed comments on internal permeability will be provided at an appropriate time. It is disappointing that the submitted Land Use Parameter Plan only reserves land for vehicular access.

The DAS includes an Indicative Pedestrian and Movement Strategy, but it is concerning that while this plan identifies several potential access/egress points for cyclists and pedestrians, it does not seek to secure them. While it is recognised that the layout is not fixed, it is crucial to guarantee a minimum number of dedicated access points for cyclists and pedestrians. Additional opportunities to secure links include:

- Southwest corner – to create a dedicated link to Little Green Junior School.
- Southeastern corner – to facilitate a link to Rousebarn Lane and onward to Croxley Danes School.
- Northeastern corner – to connect towards footpaths 017 and 031 leading to Watford.

The boundary along Little Green Lane should remain open to prevent disconnection from the built-up area to the south. Walking and cycling links into the site should be abundant to ensure the development remains integrated, especially given the number of proposed services on-site and paying regard to NPPF 96a.

Shared Use

It is understood that the Boulevard will feature a 3m-wide foot/cycleway. As previously discussed, ATE does not support shared-use facilities, particularly in residential areas where pedestrian flows are high. While it is acknowledged that vehicle traffic will generally be low-speed and low-volume, shared-use paths can lead to conflicts between cyclists and pedestrians.

Consideration should be given to:

- Providing segregated facilities on both sides of the highway; and/or
- Enhancing placemaking by reducing carriageway widths.
- Restricting on-street parking to create a safer and more accessible environment for active travel.

These measures would help prioritise safe and inclusive movement throughout the development.

6. Cycle Parking

- It is understood that cycle parking provision will comply with local standards. Thought should also be given LTN 1/20 standards. Parking should be as convenient as car parking with unobstructed access to secure facilities provided by the developer.
- The need for further cycle parking provision should be explored at Croyley Underground Station.
- The expansion of Beryl Bikes is welcomed.

4.0 Next Steps

ATE acknowledges the strong potential of this development to support active travel but requests further information and amendments to trip generation analysis, infrastructure design, permeability, and public transport integration before providing full support.

ATE requests that the Local Planning Authority share this response with the applicant's agent. Additional details and amendments in line with the above comments would be welcomed, with a view to providing further feedback and appropriate wording for conditions as required.

9.2 Affinity Water: [No objection]

Thank you for notification of the above planning application. Planning applications are referred to us where our input on issues relating to water quality or quantity may be required.

Water quality

We have reviewed the planning application documents and we can confirm that the site is **not located** within an Environment Agency defined groundwater Source Protection Zone (SPZ) or close to our abstractions.

The construction works and operation of the proposed development site should be done in accordance with the relevant British Standards and Best Management Practices, thereby significantly reducing the groundwater pollution risk. It should be noted that the construction works may exacerbate any existing pollution. If any pollution is found at the site then the appropriate monitoring and remediation methods will need to be undertaken.

For any works involving excavations below the chalk groundwater table (for example, piling or the implementation of a geothermal open/closed loop system), a ground investigation should first be carried out to identify appropriate techniques and to avoid displacing any shallow contamination to a greater depth, which could impact the chalk aquifer.

For further information we refer you to CIRIA Publication C532 "Control of water pollution from construction - guidance for consultants and contractors".

Water efficiency

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.

We currently offer a discount to the infrastructure charge for each new development where evidence of a water efficiency design to a standard of 110litres (or less) per person per day is expected. The discount value for the charging period 2023/24 is £258. For more information visit Water efficiency credits (affinitywater.co.uk).

Infrastructure connections and diversions

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. This can be done through the My Developments Portal (<https://affinitywater.custhelp.com/>) or aw_developerservices@custhelp.com.

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.

To apply for a new or upgraded connection, please contact our Developer Services Team by going through their My Developments Portal (<https://affinitywater.custhelp.com/>) or aw_developerservices@custhelp.com. The Team also handle C3 and C4 requests to cost potential water mains diversions. If a water mains plan is required, this can also be obtained by emailing maps@affinitywater.co.uk. Please note that charges may apply.

9.3 British Pipeline Agency: [No comments on application]

Having reviewed the information provided, the BPA pipeline(s) is not affected by these proposals, and therefore BPA does not wish to make any comments on this application.

However, if any details of the works or location should change, please advise us of the amendments and we will again review this application.

Whilst we try to ensure the information we provided is accurate, the information is provided Without Prejudice and we accept no liability for claims arising from any inaccuracy, omissions or errors contained herein.

9.4 Croxley Green Parish Council: [Objection]

Introduction

We object to the application for the following reasons:

The site is open farmland and part of the protected green belt currently enjoyed by thousands of residents. It can be seen from all the roads and footpaths adjoining and approaching it. The loss of amenity resulting from its removal would affect the well being of all those who currently enjoy it. It is not and does not meet the test of grey belt.

The proposed design, layout and density are out of keeping with the existing patterns in the environs. Insufficient parking is provided.

Existing services: sewerage, water supply and electricity supply are not adequate to support the proposed development.

Traffic in the area will be adversely affected by the proposed development, and a sustainable transport plan has not been demonstrated.

Green Belt, Planning & Heritage

Green Belt Protection – The land is currently protected Green Belt. It should not be developed unless there are exceptional circumstances, which have not been demonstrated. This is not “Grey Belt”.

This land is not previously developed, so it falls into the category of ‘other land.’ It is required for the purposes of a, b and d in NPPF (page 73), therefore it is not Grey Belt.

The Croxley Green Neighbourhood Plan (CGNP, adopted 2018) identifies the extent of the Green Belt surrounding Croxley Green and its importance to residents.

For example, in CGNP at 2.1.3:

“Croxley Green is surrounded by countryside and greenery – fields, woodlands and marshy floodplain, mostly designated as Green Belt. Some of these areas lie within the parish, but most of them lie in adjoining parishes, to the south, west and north. These green areas provide a physical and visual buffer and help define the exclusive “village” feeling as well as being highly valued by the majority of residents. The main characteristic is of two storey houses set in residential roads many with glimpses of the open countryside which lies on all sides.”

TRDC commissioned a strategic analysis of the Green Belt in August 2017. It concluded that the Green Belt fulfils its purpose.

A further study in 2019 ranked 152 parcels of land on a 7-point scale of very high, high, moderate-high, moderate, low-moderate, low and very low. This proposal site was ranked as moderate-high harm. Logically the sites identified as being moderate to very low harm should be brought forward first.

As a result of the recently revised NPPF, TRDC has to undertake a new Green Belt Review.

Therefore, this application is premature and a decision should be deferred until Three Rivers District Council has completed its review.

Neighbourhood plan: This application should be revised to take account of the Croxley Green Neighbourhood Plan

Heritage Statement: The development of the site will adversely affect the prospect of listed Durrants House and its iconic tower when viewed from footpath 17. A corridor between 4 storey buildings along the proposed ‘Durrants View’ will severely restrict the view of Durrants House. The development will not preserve the setting.

Density, Design and topography

Density of Housing: The proposed density is markedly tighter than the existing adjacent housing, Front gardens of 2m (cf 5m nearby in Croxley), back gardens of 10m (cf 20m nearby in Croxley).

Design code: This advocates three storey buildings across most of the site, with many four storey buildings. This is out of character with the adjacent housing in Croxley Green. The code shows inappropriate examples of buildings taken from central London as design examples. Four storey Georgian buildings for example.

Topography: The whole assessment of the site seems to ignore topography. Parts of the site are comparatively level, others are quite steeply sloped. The site is visible from a number of directions, the proposed built form should be 3D modelled to show the visual impact.

Well being, sports & environment

Protected species such as skylarks will be affected as noted by the applicant. The applicant also states that they have not carried out a study to find out which protected species exist across the site. Surely that must be done before an application is made.

Street trees and road noise. The proposed new cycle way along Links Way requires the inappropriate removal of many street trees. This will destroy existing residents' green amenities, which with the stated 5dB increase in road noise from traffic will reduce their quality of life.

Sports facilities: The report states that football and cricket fields in particular are under increasing strain. It also identifies significant overuse of grass pitches, with rising youth and female participation creating "urgent demand". No new pitch or court sports facilities are proposed. The expectation is that residents travel elsewhere in the area to participate in sports, creating additional car journeys.

Community Facilities: Falling school rolls and Hertfordshire County Councils five years projections suggest there is no need for a new school. The space allocated for a doctor's surgery is not large enough to take the expanded facility that is required, nor is there sufficient parking provided. There are already 8 halls available for community use in Croxley, so the need for a new one is not demonstrated. There are two local shopping centres within 15 minutes walk of the site, so the viability of two new retail units is not proved.

Infrastructure

Foul drainage: The sewerage system is at capacity and cannot take any further discharge from this proposed site. As Thames Water asserted in their consultee comment, the development should not be approved until it is confirmed that the system's capacity can be suitably enlarged.

Drainage strategy: This says that the new roads themselves will take the excess surface water, presumably becoming a river over the road. We have seen instances in nearby Millside Grange where the unadopted roads have not been built to sufficient standards and gullies are raised not allowing water to escape into them.

Net Zero: There is no overall assessment of the energy demands associated with creating the buildings on site, the embedded carbon, or the energy requirements for the life of the buildings, to demonstrate how the proposed development will comply with net zero targets.

Transport, Roads & Parking

The Transport Assessment and Travel Plan does not consider the impact of construction traffic (or of providing for workers on site) or heavy vehicle movements on local roads. Baldwins Lane is already showing signs of structural deterioration and may require extensive reconstruction if it is used as part of the site access route for construction vehicles. The transport assessment fails to take account of the development of Breakspeare School or the proposed redevelopment of Croxley House as a nursery.

The network analysis is deficient in only considering local network effects and impacts outside Croxley Green but not the impact on the main road network within Croxley Green.

The Transport Assessment contains inaccuracies and errors. The obvious ones give no confidence that the more technical parts are correct or appropriate.

We note that Highways England recommend refusal based on the information provided to date.

The Travel Plan is not sustainable. The site is a significant distance on foot from local facilities and public transport.

We note that Active Travel England can not support the proposal for these reasons.

The outline proposal is to bring a bus route to the site, but there is no evidence about the practicability in terms of diverting local services, the quality of local services, existing patronage, or the desired destinations from the new development.

Parking: The 2021 census shows that residents near the proposed site had approximately 170 vehicles (cars and vans) per 100 addresses. The local area is currently highly dependent on cars and vans for travel and transport. The proposed parking provision is inadequate. The 'centre' has too few spaces. The residential areas have too few spaces. One only has to look at Durrants estate and Millside Grange to see that cars are parked on pavements because there is nowhere else to park.

Therefore, the sustainability aspects of the travel plan and the transport assessment lack the substance required to be credible.

Conclusion

There have been over 650 objections from the local community to this proposal. It is clear there is strong resistance on planning grounds.

The site is open farmland and part of the protected green belt currently enjoyed by thousands of residents. It is not and does not meet the test of grey belt.

Traffic in the area will be adversely affected by the proposed development, and a sustainable transport plan has not been demonstrated.

Existing services: sewerage, water supply and electricity supply are not adequate to support the proposed development.

The proposed design, layout and density are out of keeping with the existing patterns in the area. Insufficient parking is provided.

There is no need for the proposed new school, NHS facility, community hall or retail units.

We therefore confirm our objection to the application.

If the officer is minded to approve, we request 'call in.'

9.5 Forestry Commission: [No objection subject to condition(s)]

9.5.1 Initial comments 11.2.25 [No objection subject to condition(s)]

We have been notified of this application and would like to submit comments.

As the Government's forestry experts, we endeavour to provide as much relevant information to enable the project to reduce any impact on irreplaceable habitat such as Ancient semi natural Woodland as well as other woodland. We are particularly concerned

about any impact on Ancient Semi natural Woodland and will expect to see careful consideration of any impact when assessing the site.

The site is directly adjacent to Dell Wood and Long Newland's Spring Ancient Semi Natural Woodlands, with Green Lane Ancient Semi Natural Woodland within the site.

Ancient Woodland:

Ancient woodlands are an irreplaceable habitat. They have great value because they have a long history of woodland cover, being continuously wooded since at least 1600AD with many features remaining undisturbed.

Decisions should be made in line with paragraph 193 (c) of the National Planning Policy Framework (Dec 2024), which states:

“Development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists”

As Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees are irreplaceable, you should not consider proposed compensation measures as part of your assessment of the merits of the development proposal.

We particularly refer you to further technical information set out in Natural England and Forestry Commission's [Standing Advice on Ancient Woodland](#) – plus supporting [Assessment Guide](#) and [“Keepers of Time” – Ancient and Native Woodland and Trees Policy in England](#).

The Joint NE/FC Standing Advice states that both the direct and indirect effects of development should be considered for both the construction and operational phases of the proposed development.

Not just including the potential for actual construction to impact on soils, trees and tree roots. But also the potential for effects when the residential development is in use.

Other impacts to the ancient woodland, for example reducing the resilience of the woodland and making it more vulnerable to change. Increasing the amount of dust, light, air and soil pollution and increasing disturbance to wildlife, also trampling of plants, erosion of soil and noise from additional people, traffic and domestic pets.

Ancient Woodland Buffer:

The Standing Advice also states that proposals should have a buffer zone of **at least** 15m from the boundary of ancient woodlands to avoid root damage which can result in loss or deterioration of the woodland. Where assessment shows impacts are likely to extend beyond this distance, you're likely to need a larger buffer zone. For example, the effect of air pollution from development that can result from a significant increase in traffic.

Whilst we note plans for a 30m buffer for the ancient woodlands, and plans for thorny shrub planting in the buffer zone, the application may still have the potential to cause deterioration to the ancient woodland. Although the buffer may be sufficient to avoid direct soil compaction during construction, indirect soil damage and disturbance would still be expected due to the extent of the proposed development. Impacts from machinery, movement of the workforce and from new residents would be expected to cause a deterioration.

We would encourage considering a mix of habitat types to create a graded edge from the existing woodland including new woodland, scrub and species rich grassland with effective management that maximises biodiversity value. We also note the inclusion of amenity public open space and footpaths within the Ancient woodland buffer, these may be better located outside of the buffer, with the buffer itself managed as a semi natural habitat less attractive to be used as public open space.

Priority Habitat:

Both Dell Wood and Green Lane Wood are also listed as mixed deciduous woodlands on the National Forest Inventory and the Priority Habitat Inventory (England).

They were recognized under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan as being the most threatened, requiring conservation action. The UK Biodiversity Action Plan has now been superseded but this priority status remains under the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006. (NERC) Sect 40 “Duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity” and Sect 41 – “List of habitats and species of principle importance in England”.

Paragraph 187b of the NPPF states:

“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural environment recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.”

Habitat Fragmentation and Connectivity:

Fragmentation is one of the greatest threats to mixed deciduous woodland and especially ancient woodland. Woodlands can suffer loss or deterioration from nearby development through damage to soils, roots and vegetation and changes to drainage and air pollution from an increase in traffic and dust, particularly during the construction phase of a development.

The proposed development will not improve habitat connectivity between Dell Wood, Long Newland’s Spring and Green Lane Wood. In fact, it could sever it completely. With Green Lane Wood becoming completely isolated in its landscape. While managed grassland and play areas are to be provided, there is a greater opportunity to provide habitat connectivity between Green Lane Wood and Dell Wood in particular.

With current plans, there would be very limited movement of species (flora and fauna) between habitat areas and therefore the species quality and diversity in the smaller, isolated woodland would likely decline and would be unlikely to improve (especially without appropriate management) and would further impact the woodland’s resilience to future threats including climate change. The measures taken by the application to offset the proposal do not appear to take account for habitat connectivity or continuity.

Whilst we understand that all trees and woodlands on site will be retained, there is an opportunity for increased woodland planting between the two woodlands to improve connectivity across the whole landscape.

Hedgerows, individual trees and woodlands within a development site should be considered in terms of their overall connectivity between woodlands affected by the development. Perhaps with the creation of some larger woodland blocks and hedgerow/hedgerow trees between the existing woodland blocks on site, to link them and ensure maximum gains to increase habitat connectivity, to make woodlands more resilient and to benefit biodiversity across the whole site

Canopy Cover and Woodland Management:

With the Government aspiration to increase tree and canopy cover to 16.5% of land area in England by 2050, The Forestry Commission is seeking to ensure that tree planting is a consideration in every development not just as compensation for loss.

The species and provenance of new trees and woodland needs to be considered to ensure a resilient treescape which can cope with the full implications of a changing climate. The biosecurity of all planting stock also needs to be considered to avoid the introduction of pests and diseases, particularly in areas near ancient woodlands.

Plans should also be in place to ensure the long term management and maintenance of new and existing woodland, including deer management and would recommend the creation of a UK Forestry Standard compliant management plan, access also needs to be considered for future management.

Active management of woodlands, especially ancient woodlands, is essential for a host of reasons but crucially to create and maintain the valuable biodiversity element of these habitats. This diversity leads to greater resilience and productivity along with environmental benefits. The diversity and benefit of woodlands will be lost over time if they are neglected. These interventions are also crucial in the face of climate change where active management is needed to help woodlands adapt.

If the Local Authority is minded to approve this application, we would recommend that full details of any woodland protection measures, a woodland management plan, a planting plan including species selection and lighting strategy to avoid illuminating all woodlands on site and adjacent to it, be provided at the reserved matters stage.

We hope these comments have been useful to you. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

9.5.2 Further comments 10.06.25 following notification of increased separation between SuDS and woodland:

Thank you for contacting us regarding changes to the application. While any separation between the suds and the woodland is to be welcomed, we have rather more concerns regarding the potential increase in recreational pressures on the ancient woodlands within and adjacent to the site. The minimum suggested buffer mentioned in the Natural England/Forestry Commission Standing advice is more suited to a single dwelling, rather than a large development of up to 600 dwellings. With the associated direct and indirect impacts of both development, traffic, people and domestic pets.

Larger planted buffers, better connectivity between woodlands, provision of alternative recreational space and appropriate woodland management may go some way to mitigate these effects. However an assessment of the impacts of the development on the woodland habitats as a whole should be undertaken before appropriate mitigation can be proposed.

It is however worth noting that The Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2024 (published January 2024) requires local planning authorities in England to consult the Secretary of State before granting planning permission for certain types of development, including development that affects ancient woodland: [The Town and Country Planning \(Consultation\) \(England\) Direction 2024 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/town-and-country-planning-consultation-england-direction-2024)

Strategic tree planning can also be used to assist with minimising flood risk on some sites and should also be a consideration.

9.6 HCC Footpath Section: No response received.

9.7 HCC Growth and Infrastructure Unit: [No objection, contributions requested]

Thank you for your recent consultation. I am writing regarding the additional planning obligations that are sought for this outline planning application. HCC acknowledges that the site falls within the district council's CIL charging area. However, to mitigate the impact of the proposed development of 600 dwellings on education provisions (primary education, secondary education and SEND education) and waste facilities, it is essential that appropriate mitigation measures be secured through a Section 106 legal agreement.

HOUSES		
Number of Bedrooms	A) Open Market & Shared Ownership	B) Affordable Rent
1		
2	15	8
3	153	59
4+	56	8
Total	224	75

FLATS		
Number of Bedrooms	A) Open Market & Shared Ownership	B) Affordable Rent
1	51	46
2	115	89
3		
4+		
Total	166	135

Trajectory						
Year	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
Units	50	100	150	150	150	

PLEASE NOTE: If the tenure or mix of dwellings changes, please notify us immediately as this may alter the contributions sought.

Children's Homes

HCC welcomes and supports the inclusion of a children's home on the site. We look forward to engaging with the applicant regarding the appropriate location and design as plans progress. Additionally, we anticipate starting discussions related to the potential operation of the home and any necessary land or building transfers, as deemed appropriate.

Primary Education Contribution

In 2018, HCC responded to Three Rivers District Council Regulation 18 local plan consultation. In paragraph 17.4, our response set out that primary school sites may need to be identified in all settlements to meet pupil yield from new housing developments, depending on the number of sites and level of growth chosen. We acknowledge that the applicant has proposed a new 1FE (up to 2FE land) primary school on-site to accommodate the needs arising from their scheme. Therefore, the contribution sought towards the delivery of a new 1FE (up to 2FE land) primary school in the area and/or provision serving the development would be (£5,335,853 index linked to BCIS 1Q2022).

Secondary Education Contribution towards the expansion of a Secondary School in the area and/or provision serving the development (£4,534,908 index linked to BCIS 1Q2022).

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Contribution towards new Severe Learning Difficulty (SLD) special school places (WEST) and/or provision serving the development (£498,652 index linked to BCIS 1Q2022).

Waste Service Transfer Station Contribution towards increasing capacity at Waterdale Transfer Station and/or provision serving the development (£35,316 index linked to BCIS 3Q2022).

Monitoring Fees – 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 £340 (adjusted for inflation against RPI July 2021). For further information on monitoring fees please see section 5.5 of the Guide to Developer Infrastructure Contributions.

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.

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”.

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.

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

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:

[HCC Guide to Developer Infrastructure Contributions](#)

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).

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

Consult the Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service Water Officer directly at water@hertfordshire.gov.uk, who may request the provision of fire hydrants through a planning condition.

I would be grateful if you would keep me informed about the progress of this application so that either instruction for a planning obligation can be given promptly if your authority is minded to grant consent or, in the event of an appeal, information can be submitted in support of the requested financial contributions and provisions. Should you require any further information please contact the Growth & Infrastructure Unit.

9.8 HCC Healthy Places: No response received.

9.9 HCC Lead Local Flood Authority: [No objection subject to conditions]

9.9.1 Initial comments 7.2.25 [Objection]

Thank you for your consultation on the above site, received on 21 January 2025. We have reviewed the application as submitted and wish to make the following comments.

This is an Outline Application for up to 600 residential dwellings, a social care / assisted living facility and a medical centre.

We are concerned that calculations have not been provided for all rainfall return periods up to and including the 1% AEP plus appropriate climate change allowance event. This should include the correct parameters (FEH2013 / FEH22, CV value of 1, 10% urban creep and correct climate change allowance on the 3.33% AEP and 1% AEP events). Additionally, we are concerned that the level of detail on the masterplan drawing is not sufficient. Currently, the swales do not appear to connect into the drainage system and there is no outfall (infiltration rate) for the basin.

We **object** to this planning application in the absence of an acceptable Drainage Strategy relating to:

- The proposed SuDS are likely to increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.
- The development is not in accordance with NPPF, PPG or local policies.
 - Three Rivers SFRA Level 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.

We will consider reviewing this objection if the issues highlighted on the accompanying Planning Application Technical Response document are adequately addressed.

Informative

Both FEH13 and FEH22 are currently accepted to support drainage modelling calculations. For the avoidance of doubt the use of FSR and FEH1999 data has been superseded and therefore, use in rainfall simulations are not accepted.

Please note if, you the Local Planning Authority review the application and decide to grant planning permission, notify the us (the Lead Local Flood Authority), by email at FRMConsultations@hertfordshire.gov.uk.

9.9.2 Further comments 15.5.25 [No objection subject to conditions]

Thank you for your consultation on the above site, received on 06 May 2025. We have reviewed the application as submitted and wish to make the following comments.

This is an Outline Application for up to 600 residential dwellings, a social care / assisted living facility and a medical centre.

We have reviewed the updated documentation as submitted (Response to the LLFA – prepared by BWB, 08 April 2025, REF 233574-BWB-ZZ-XX-T-W-0005_LLFA) and have the following comments to make.

The applicant has provided a Flood Risk Addendum and additional information, as listed in the Annex). These are to account for the local flood risk issues and surface water drainage at this location. Following a review of the submitted documents, the details are in accordance with NPPF and local planning policy Three Rivers SFRA Level 2.

We have **no objection subject to conditions being attached to any consent** if this application is approved. We suggest the following wording.

Condition 1:

Prior to or in conjunction with the submission of each reserved matters application, in accordance with the submitted FRA (Flood Risk Assessment, prepared by BWB, 17 December 2024, REF 233574-BWB-ZZ-XX-T-W-0002_FRA REV P04) and Drainage Strategy (Sustainable Drainage Statement, prepared by BWB, 11 December 2024, REF 233574-BWB-ZZ -XX-T-W-0001_ SDS REV P01), detailed designs of a surface water drainage scheme incorporating the following measures shall be submitted to and agreed with the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme will be implemented prior to the first occupation of the development. The scheme shall address the following matters:

- i. Detailed infiltration testing in accordance with BRE Digest 365 (or equivalent) along the length and proposed depth of the proposed infiltration feature/s.

or

- i. If infiltration is proven to be unfavourable, then Greenfield runoff rates for the site shall be agreed with the Lead Local Flood Authority. The post development runoff rates will be attenuated to the equivalent Greenfield rate for all rainfall events up to and including the 1% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP). The discharge location for surface water runoff will be confirmed to connect with the wider watercourse network.
- ii. Provision of surface water attenuation storage, sized and designed to accommodate the volume of water generated in all rainfall events up to and including the critical storm duration for the 3.33% AEP (1 in 30 year) and 1% AEP (1 in 100) rainfall events (both including allowances for climate change).
- iii. Detailed designs, modelling calculations and plans of the of the drainage conveyance network in the:
 - 3.33% AEP (1 in 30 year) critical rainfall event plus climate change to show no flooding outside the drainage features on any part of the site.
 - 1% AEP (1 in 100 year) critical rainfall plus climate change event to show, if any, the depth, volume and storage location of any flooding outside the drainage features, ensuring that flooding does not occur in any part of a building or any utility plant susceptible to water (e.g. pumping station or electricity substation) within the development. It will also show that no runoff during this event will leave the site uncontrolled.
- iv. The design of the infiltration basin will incorporate an emergency spillway and any drainage structures include appropriate freeboard allowances. Plans to be submitted showing the routes for the management of exceedance surface water flow routes that minimise the risk to people and property during rainfall events in excess of 1% AEP (1 in 100) rainfall event plus climate change allowance.
- v. Details of how all surface water management features to be designed in accordance with The SuDS Manual (CIRIA C753, 2015), including appropriate treatment stages for water quality prior to discharge.
- vi. A maintenance and management plan detailing the activities required and details of who will adopt and maintain the all the surface water drainage features for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To prevent flooding in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 181,182 and 187 by ensuring the satisfactory management of local sources of flooding 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.

Condition 2:

Prior to or in conjunction with the submission of each Reserved Matters application a detailed Site SuDS Phase plan which aligns with the site phasing plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This SuDS Phasing plan shall ensure that each phase does not exceed the agreed discharge rates for that phase and that source control measures are installed within each phase to adequately address the phases own surface water runoff. The plan shall ensure that each SuDS component is adequately protected throughout the development of the scheme. The plan shall show all exceedance routes throughout the site clearance and construction of the scheme ensuring flood risk is not increased elsewhere or to the site itself and that the site remains safe for all exceedance event flow routes for the lifetime of the development during rainfall (i.e. greater than design events or during blockage) and how property on and off site will be protected.

Reason: To ensure that the development achieves a high standard of sustainability and ensure the flood risk is adequately addressed for each new dwelling and not increased in accordance with NPPF and Policies of Three Rivers District Council.

Condition 3:

Construction shall not begin until a detailed construction phase surface water management plan for the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall subsequently be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the construction of the site does not result in any flooding both on and off site and that all Surface water Drainage features are adequately protected.

Condition 4:

Prior to first use of each phase of the development a detailed verification report, (appended with substantiating evidence demonstrating the approved construction details and specifications have been implemented in accordance with the surface water drainage scheme), has been submitted to and approved (in writing) by the Local Planning Authority.

The verification report shall include a full set of “as built” drawings plus photographs of excavations (including soil profiles/horizons), any installation of any surface water drainage structures and control mechanisms.

Reason: To ensure that the development achieves a high standard of sustainability and ensure the flood risk is adequately addressed for each new dwelling and not increased in accordance with NPPF and Policies of Three Rivers District Council.

9.10 HCC Waste and Minerals Team: [No objection subject to condition(s)]

Minerals

In relation to minerals, the site falls entirely 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 potential superficial sand/gravel deposits in the west of the application site.

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 non-minerals 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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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:

- 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;
- 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;
- the handling of waste arising from the construction and operation of development maximises reuse/recovery opportunities, and minimises off-site disposal.'

Section 7.35 of Planning Statement makes reference to the 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.

As a general point, built development should have regard to the overall infrastructure required to support it, including where appropriate a sufficient number of waste storage areas that should be integrated accordingly and facilitate the separate storage of recyclable wastes.

Waste Policy 12: Sustainable Design, Construction and Demolition requires all relevant construction projects to be supported by a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP). Section D of the 'Three Rivers District Council Adopted Screening Opinion' for 24/1220/EIA included within the Planning Statement makes reference to the production of a SWMP as part of the planning application, which the county council encourages.

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.

By preparing a SWMP prior to commencement, early decisions can be made relating to the management of waste arisings and building supplies made from recycled and secondary materials can be sourced, to help alleviate the demand for primary materials such as virgin sand and gravel. Early planning for waste arisings will help to establish what types of containers/skips are required for the project and when segregation would be best implemented for various waste streams. It will also help in determining the costs of removing waste from the site.

As a minimum, the SWMP should include the following:

Project and People

- Identification of the client
- Identification of the Principal Contractor
- Identification of the person who drafted the SWMP
- Location of the site
- An estimated cost of the project
- Declaration that the client and contractor will comply with the requirements of Duty of care that materials will be handled efficiently and waste managed appropriately (Section 34 of Environmental Protection Act 1990 and Environmental Protection (Duty of Care) Regs 1991)

Estimating Waste

- A description of the types of waste that are expected to arise on site (recorded through the use of 6-digit European Waste Catalogue codes) and an estimated quantity for each of the types (in tonnes)
- Waste management actions for each waste type (i.e., will the waste be re-used or recycled (on-site or off-site?), recovered or disposed of)

Space for Later Recordings

- Space for the recording of actual figures against the estimated figures
- Space for the recording and identification of those responsible for removing the waste from site and details of the sites they will be taking it to
- Space to record explanations for any deviations from what has been set out in the SWMP, including explanations for differences in actual waste arisings compared to the estimates

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:

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

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

9.11 HCC Water Officer: No response received.

9.12 Hertfordshire Archaeology: [No objection subject to conditions]

No heritage assets of archaeological interest are known from within the proposed development site. However, as noted in the Heritage Assessment report submitted with the planning application, there is an underlying potential for prehistoric activity, which would be of regional significance. The site has not been subject to significant development or other disturbance, and according to the same Heritage Assessment, cartographic evidence shows the development site has remained largely untouched since at least 1766. As a result, it is likely that if any archaeological remains are present on the remainder of the site, they are well preserved.

A Geophysical Survey carried out in September of 2024 revealed a number of anomalies within the site. Although none of these anomalies could be confidently identified as archaeological in origin, there were anomalies where archaeological origin could not be ruled out either. In particular, a group of anomalies were identified in Area 2, which form rectangular patters that may relate to buildings or other structures. Given that maps from the post-medieval period show no indication of buildings within the site, these anomalies could potentially date to the a much earlier period, if found to be archaeological in nature.

Therefore, I believe that given the size and scope of the proposed development, 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, via trial trenching, 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,
 - 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;

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. 218, 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).

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 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. 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.

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.

I hope that you will be able to accommodate the above recommendations.

9.13 Hertfordshire and West Essex ICB: [No objection, on site provision or contributions requested]

Thank you for consulting the Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care Board (HWE ICB) on the above-mentioned planning application.

Please accept this letter as the HWE ICB's position on primary healthcare capacity and need arising from this planning application and the health financial contribution sought if TRDC is minded to grant planning permission.

The HWE ICB became a statutory body on 1 July 2022 and is the health commissioner responsible for delivering joined up health and social health care to a population of c1.5m. in Hertfordshire and west Essex.

The HWE ICB works in partnership with health providers, local authorities, and other organisations to:

- improve the general health and wellbeing of Hertfordshire and west Essex residents and improve health care services in the area.

- tackle the inequalities which affect people's physical and mental health, such as their ability to get the health services they need, and the quality of those services help tackle health and wider inequalities.
- get the most out of local health and care services and make sure that they are good value for money.
- help the NHS support social and economic development in Hertfordshire and west Essex.

A strategic aim of the NHS HWE ICB is the improvement of primary, community and mental health care outside of hospitals. To achieve this, the NHS commissions a number of services from general practices in addition to their "core" activity. On the ground this means more joined up care, for example, primary and community healthcare hubs with co-ordinated multidisciplinary professionals/ teams. Therefore, a doctors' general practitioners' surgery may also include an ancillary pharmacy and ancillary facilities for treatments provided by general practitioners, nurses and other healthcare professionals to provide care to residents.

Primary Care Networks (PCNs)

Within the HWE ICB there are 35 PCNs across the 14 localities, each covering a population of between circa 27,000 and 68,000 patients. PCNs are expected to deliver services at scale for its registered population whilst working collaboratively with acute, community, voluntary and social care services to ensure an integrated approach to patient care.

Patients are at liberty to choose which GP practice to register with, providing they live within the practice boundary. However, most patients choose to register with the surgery closest and/or most easily accessible to their home for the following reasons: walking distance, quickest journey time, accessibility by public transport, parking provision.

Despite premises constraints GP Practices are not allowed to close their lists to new registrations without consultation with, and permission from the HWE ICB. Even when surgeries are significantly constrained, the NHS will seek to avoid a situation where a patient is denied access to their nearest GP surgery, with patient lists only closed in exceptional circumstances.

The HWE ICB keeps up to date PCN patient lists and closely monitors the current and future capacity of GP surgeries against Local Plan allocations/ housing trajectories.

The HWE ICB also ranks PCNs using existing premises data and known development data. This will identify and rank hotspots across the PCN patch where there is a need to explore projects to increase capacity, for example, by either re-configuring, extending or relocating GP practices to provide sufficient space to increase resources and clinical services to keep patient lists open.

Assessment of impact on existing Healthcare Provision

The HWE ICB has assessed the impact of the proposed development on existing primary health care provision in and around the vicinity of Croxley Green. This scheme is expected to deliver 600 homes, which based on an average occupancy of 2.4 will create circa 1,440 new patients.

These new residents will impact on Grand Union PCN, which is formed of 2 GP practices and has a combined patient list of 26,388 as of 1 January 2025.

In terms of premises need and priority, Grand Union PCN is ranked 4th out of 35 PCNs in the HWE ICB. To illustrate their current capacity, individually as well as collectively - on PCN as well as settlement level please see the table below:

			Settlement level				PCN level		
Surgery Name	Settlement/ Area	PCN	Number of patients capacity/ constraint relative to 18 per m2	Number of patients capacity/ constraint	Total NIA capacity/ shortfall	Capital impact of existing capacity/ shortfall	Number of patients capacity/ constraint	Total NIA capacity/ shortfall	Capital impact of existing shortfall
Bridgewater House Surgeries (Meriden)	North Watford/ Garston	Bridgewater	-825	-9,836	-546	£3,825,224			
Bridgewater House Surgeries (North)		Bridgewater	-1,815						
Garston Medical Centre	Croxley	Grand Union	-7,697	-3,711	-206	£1,443,034	-11,407	-634	£4,436,118
Baldwins Lane Surgery		Grand Union	-152						
New Road Surgery		Grand Union	-3,113						
Church Lane Surgery		Grand Union	-446						
Bridgewater House Surgeries	West Watford	Bridgewater	594	-1,378	-77	£0			
Holywell Surgery		Attenborough	-1,972						

*For the purposes of capacity assessment, we have adopted an alternative calculation to the NHS England "Principles of Best Practice" (referred to below) based on 18 patients per m2, which has regard to national GMS space guidelines but also considers opportunities for economies of scale.

This table demonstrates that both practices – New Road Surgery, including its branch surgeries and Garston Medical Centre - are already constrained and their ability to accept additional patients is limited. The closest practice to the proposed development is New Road Surgery and its branch on Baldwins Lane. Both surgeries are operating out of converted residential buildings which do not meet the needs of the modern General Practice or NHS building guidelines.

In reviewing the PCN data and as explained above, New Road Surgery and its branches will be unable to accommodate the additional patient numbers arising from this development, and indeed potential future housing growth in and around the vicinity of Croxley Green. In reviewing all options, the HWE ICB has concluded that new health infrastructure in the form of on-site provision for a new medical facility will be needed to accommodate additional patient numbers arising from this development.

In the light of the HWE ICB's response to this outline planning application, it would be sensible for the HWE ICB to meet with the Council and the applicant to discuss in more detail the NHS' site and primary and community healthcare requirements, and the draft Heads of Terms.

NHS GP premises and funding

By way of context, GP Practices are independent contractors that deliver NHS services - in most cases through General Medical Services (GMS) contract. In line with their contract, they receive payments for the delivery of GMS services as well as reimbursements of their premises costs.

According to the terms of their GMS contract, GP contractors receive rent from NHS for using their premises (which they either own or lease) to provide NHS services from. In line with NHS Premises Costs Directions 2024, for the premises that the GP's own, NHS pays

Current Market Rent (i.e. fair and reasonable rent as determined by the District Valuer). For leased premises, NHS reimburses the lease rent that they pay to their landlord (also as verified by the District Valuer). In addition, NHS reimburses business rates and water rates.

If new and/or extended surgery buildings are required, these can be funded in various ways:

- NHS capital investment in the building works – GP practice will sign a Grant Agreement and as a result, their rent reimbursement is abated proportionately to reflect the amount of capital invested for a specified time period in line with NHS Premises Costs Directions 2024.
- S106/CIL investment in the building works – as above, treated in the same way as NHS capital investment.
- Capital investment by the practice.
- Capital investment by the landlord/third party developer.

In the latter two cases, where there is no NHS capital investment, yet the NHS receives the benefit of an increased and/or improved building, there is an increase in either the Current Market Rent (GP owned) or the lease rent (leased building) and the NHS commissioner will be liable for that additional revenue consequence. It should be noted that because all GMS contracts are contracts in perpetuity, the NHS will be liable for these costs indefinitely.

Please note, all NHS health infrastructure improvement projects are subject to the HWE ICB's own governance and scrutiny processes and are assessed against viability, affordability, deliverability and the ability to be future proofed for any future housing growth, given that new medical facilities present a significant cost pressure to the NHS.

Therefore, in terms of the HWE ICB's formal commitment to the proposal for a new on-site medical facility at **Land north of Little Green Lane, Croxley Green**, at this stage the following points must be considered:

- All projects are subject to Full Business Case approval by the ICB and NHS England.
- A commercial arrangement has to be agreed between the landowner, developer and end user based on a compliant design specification and demonstrate value for money.
- A project identified and costed in response to the planning application may not meet the objectives of NHS current strategies or could have significantly increased in cost, especially if there has been any significant time lapse from the date of the response to the date of implementation of the planning consent.

In the event the HWE ICB cannot support the delivery of a new medical centre at this location for viability, affordability and deliverability reasons, the HWE ICB will seek a financial contribution as calculated below.

Cost calculation of additional primary care healthcare services arising from the development proposal

The financial contribution for health infrastructure that the HWE ICB is seeking, to mitigate the health impacts from this development has been calculated using a formula based on the number of units proposed and does not take into account any existing deficiencies or shortfalls in Croxley Green and its vicinity, or other development proposals in the area.

The proposed development would deliver 600 dwellings, which based on an average occupancy of 2.4 occupants per dwelling will create circa **1,440 new patient registrations**.

1,440 new patient registrations/2000 = 0.72 of a GP

*GP based on ratio of 2,000 patients per 1 GP and 199m² as set out in the NHS England "Premises Principles of Best Practice Part 1 Procurement & Development"

0.72 x 199 m² = 143.28 m² of additional space required

143.28 m² x £7,000* per m² = £1,002,960 (*Build cost; includes fit out and fees)
£1,002,960 / 600 = £1,671.60 per dwelling (rounded up to £1,672 per dwelling)

Total GMS contribution requested: 600 dwellings x £1,672 per dwelling = £1,003,200
(indexed from the date of the planning permission)

If planning permission is granted, and in the event the HWE ICB cannot support the delivery of a new medical centre at this location for viability, affordability and deliverability reasons, the HWE ICB propose to focus Section 106 monies on the relocation of New Road Surgery which explores options for a new medical facility within the locality to accommodate additional patient numbers arising from this development and future housing growth in and around Croxley Green.

It is also vital to consider the impact of new development, and the additional residents on community and mental healthcare, as occupiers of the development will also access a variety of healthcare. Based on recent cost impact forecasting calculations, the cost impact on community and mental healthcare is as follows:

Mental Health costs:

600 dwellings x £338.92 per dwelling = £203,352

Community Healthcare costs:

600 dwellings x £352.68 per dwelling = £211,608

Section 106 contributions towards these services support for the Croxley Green area will be focused on the proposed integrated Health Hub at Watford Town Hall Quarter, which is planned to include re-provision of the Avenue Clinic (current building is to be demolished). Contributions would be allocated to the Community Services provider Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust and the Mental Health Services provider Hertfordshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.

The HWE ICB therefore requests that these sums are secured through a planning obligation attached to any grant of planning permission.

A trigger point of payment on occupancy of the 1st Dwelling is requested for GMS and community and mental healthcare planning obligations. Please note, the developer contribution figure(s) referred to in this response are a calculation only and that the final payment will be based on the actual dwelling unit mix and the inclusion of indexation.

Subject to securing the healthcare infrastructure and/or the developer contributions, as set out above, to mitigate the health service impacts arising from this development, the HWE ICB does not raise an objection to the proposed development.

The HWE ICB looks forward to working with the Council and the applicant to address the matters raised in this consultation response and would appreciate acknowledgement of receipt of this letter.

9.14 Hertfordshire Constabulary: No response received.

9.15 Hertfordshire Ecology: [No objection subject to conditions]

9.15.1 Initial comments 10.2.25 [Further information prior to determination]

Overall Recommendation:

☒ Further information/amendments required prior to determination.

Summary of Advice:

- Further information required in relation to Schedule 1 birds – Red kite breeding surveys should be undertaken.
- Condition 1 – CEMP.
- Condition 2 – Pre-commencement badger survey.
- Condition 3 – Lighting Design Strategy for bats.
- Condition 4 – Biodiversity Enhancement Plan.
- Condition 5 – Mitigation and Monitoring Plan for Green Lane Wood LWS (irreplaceable habitat).
- BNG sufficient for determination – Significant BNG requiring HMMP Condition (Condition 6).

Supporting documents:

- Ecological Impact Assessment and Biodiversity Impact Assessment (RammSanderson, December 2024).
- Biodiversity Metric.

Comments:

The site is situated in an area of high ecological importance, with multiple Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) adjacent to the site boundaries including Jacotts Hill/West Herts Golf Course, Dell Wood, and Merlin's Wood and Newland's Spring. Whippendell Wood SSSI is also adjacent at the northern boundary. The site itself is dominated by cropland, however an area of ancient woodland is present at the east of the site, which is classified as an irreplaceable habitat. This area of onsite ancient woodland is designated as Green Lane Wood LWS. Other habitats onsite comprise rural trees, native hedgerows with trees, and native hedgerow.

An Ecological Impact Assessment and Biodiversity Impact Assessment document has been submitted (RammSanderson, December 2024) whereby the site was assessed for its potential to host protected/notable species. We have no fundamental objections to the proposals, however the below regarding nesting birds will need addressing prior to determination.

Protected species:

Bats: Walked Bat Transect Surveys and Static Bat Detector Surveys were undertaken across the site between May and September 2024. The site was confirmed to be utilised by nine species of bat – common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, Nathusius pipistrelle, noctule, Leisler's, serotine, Natterer's, brown long-eared, and barbastelle. However, most of the bat activity was owed to common and soprano pipistrelles, and noctules. The bat activity on site was assessed to be of nature conservation importance at the local level.

A Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) for bats was undertaken, with results indicating that eight trees onsite either had potential for individual roosting bats, or multiple roosting bats. It should be noted that the trees within the ancient woodland will also have value for roosting bats, however given the proximity of the woodland to the proposed houses, I do not consider further assessment for these trees is required.

The eight trees with potential for roosting bats are situated in close proximity to the built development, with what looks to be driveways adjacent to the one of the trees identified to have roosting features. No lighting proposals have been included as part of the application.

GCN and reptiles: The site was deemed unsuitable for great crested newts given the lack of ponds in vicinity, and the lack of terrestrial habitat onsite, which I do not dispute. Most of

the site was deemed to be of sub-optimal for reptiles, however the boundary features could provide opportunities for a small number of reptiles. Further surveys were not deemed proportionate.

Badgers: Two single-hole outlier sets were found within the site boundary, along with other signs of badgers such as footprints, latrines, and snuffle holes. A live badger was also identified during the survey. The ecologist has noted that further sett excavation can occur prior to construction, therefore a pre-commencement badger survey is required.

Birds: A total of 22 bird species were recorded within the site, four of which are red listed (greenfinch, mistle thrush, common swift, and skylark). A large portion of birds were assessed to be “possibly breeding”, and this includes red kite which is listed as a schedule 1 species. Schedule 1 birds are afforded additional protection during the nesting period whereby it is an offence to disturb them or their young while they’re nesting, building a nest, in or near a nest that contains their young.

The ecologist has recommended that nesting bird surveys specifically for red kites should be carried out. If breeding is therefore confirmed onsite, further mitigation should be implemented which is listed in s4.10.2 of the ecology report. Given the size of the development and significant disturbance it would cause, **I advise that the nesting bird surveys for red kites should be carried out prior to determination.** The results should then be included in a report, with any appropriate mitigation measures included in the below CEMP to ensure no schedule 1 species are disturbed during the works.

Habitats:

No areas of ancient woodland will be lost to the development, and no existing trees or groups of trees on site will require removal. The EcIA has noted that a 30m buffer has been implemented from the areas of built development to Green Lane Wood LWS.

Given the proximity of the built development to the Whippendale Wood SSSI, I do not consider there will be any adverse impacts on this important habitat, similarly to the adjacent Dell Wood, Jacotts Hill/West Herts Golf Course, and Merlin’s Wood and Newland’s Spring. However, the below Condition will ensure that no indirect impacts occur on the above important habitats.

Biodiversity Net Gain: The baseline habitat units stand at 82.25BU. Given the presence of an irreplaceable habitat onsite, the woodland does not count towards the baseline. No bespoke compensation is required since this woodland is to be retained. The total net unit change for habitats is 28.30BU which equates to a biodiversity net gain of 34.41%. This net gain is owed to the creation of other neutral grassland, modified grassland, mixed scrub, allotments, bioswale, shrubs, vegetated gardens, and urban trees. The landscape plan shows that an orchard will be created, albeit the size of this orchard will be very small. This has not been included in the metric calculation for habitat creation, however since BNG is a pre-commencement matter, this is not a constraint at this stage.

The country park proposals have not fully maximised opportunities for ecological enhancements. All the area north of the bridleway, which itself should be bordered by a hedge on at least its north side, should be a priority for biodiversity and be managed as such. Currently this does not seem to be proposed, although access here is proposed to be limited which is welcome. This area could support areas of wood pasture/parkland creation with some scattered trees. This would provide a better-quality buffer zone of the landscape between the development and the important habitats adjacent to the site. Again, this is not a constraint at this stage, however the BNG proposals should ideally be revisited to maximise potential for biodiversity.

The baseline hedgerow units stand at 14.62BU. The total net change for this group is 4.36BU, which equates to a biodiversity net gain of 42.54%. Some hedgerows will be retained, and further native hedgerows will be created.

I consider the proposed BNG is sufficient to advise determination of the application. The biodiversity gain condition will apply to this application, whereby a biodiversity gain plan will be submitted as part of this condition.

The claims for BNG for this site would be considered as 'significant' net gain. This is because of the creation of medium distinctiveness habitats. In this instance the LPA are advised to secure this significant net gain for the respective habitat units via legal agreement whether through an S106 agreement or conservation covenant.

Conditions

Condition 1: Given the presence of multiple wildlife sites both within the redline boundary, and adjacent, **I advise that a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) should be submitted as a Condition of approval.**

No development shall take place (including demolition, ground works, vegetation clearance) until a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP: Biodiversity) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The CEMP (Biodiversity) shall include the following.

- *Risk assessment of potentially damaging construction activities.*
- *Buffer zones to be implemented to protect onsite and adjacent habitats.*
- *All mitigation recommended in the ecology report (RammSanderson, December 2024) for local wildlife sites and habitats (Section 4 to 4.6 in the report).*
- *Identification of "biodiversity protection zones".*
- *Practical measures (both physical measures and sensitive working practices) to avoid or reduce impacts during construction (may be provided as a set of method statements).*
- *The location and timing of sensitive works to avoid harm to biodiversity features.*
- *The times during construction when specialist ecologists need to be present on site to oversee works.*
- *Responsible persons and lines of communication.*
- *The role and responsibilities on site of an ecological clerk of works (ECoW) or similarly competent person.*
- *Use of protective fences, exclusion barriers and warning signs.*

The CEMP shall also include the mitigation in the ecology report for the protected species listed below:

- *Reptiles (s4.7 of the report).*
- *Bats (s4.8 of the report).*
- *Nesting birds (subsequent to mitigation informed by the red kite breeding surveys).*
- *Badgers (s4.11; iv precautionary work measures).*

The approved CEMP shall be adhered to and implemented throughout the construction period strictly in accordance with the approved details, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Condition 2: Given the known presence of badgers onsite, **a pre-commencement badger survey should be submitted as a Condition of approval.**

A pre-commencement survey for badgers shall be undertaken prior to the commencement of the development. This survey shall determine whether the current outlier setts are still

active and thus require closure, or if any additional setts have been excavated. The results of this badger survey should be submitted to the LPA for approval.

Condition 3: Given the presence of bats making use of the site for foraging and commuting, I advise that a **Lighting Design Strategy for bats should be submitted as a Condition of approval.**

Prior to occupation, a lighting design strategy for bats shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. This should accurately identify the features/areas of interest, describe levels of illumination prior to, during, and post-development, and should be shown in suitable contour plans and charts so that it can be clearly demonstrated that lit areas will not compromise existing use.

Proposed lighting should accord with best practice (Bats and artificial lighting in the UK, (BCT & ILP) and maintained accordingly. No further external lighting should be added unless agreed with the LPA. These proposals should also be accompanied by a statement by an ecologist on how it achieves these goals.

Condition 4: Biodiversity enhancements have been recommended in the ecology report (s4.13). I advise that **these should be incorporated into the development plan and outlined in a Biodiversity Enhancement Plan, secured by Condition.**

A Biodiversity Enhancement Plan shall be submitted to the LPA as a Condition of approval. The Biodiversity Enhancement Plan shall include the following:

- *Installation of one integrated swift brick per dwelling (north facing).*
- *Installation of one integrated bat box per dwelling (south facing).*
- *Bat and bird boxes on retained trees.*
- *Hedgehog highways – one hedgehog hole per garden fence.*

Condition 5: Taking into account the presence of an irreplaceable habitat onsite (Green Lane Wood LWS), I advise that mitigation should be in place to ensure the habitat is maintained in its current condition and to allow for further measures if impacts are shown to be having a negative effect. Since this habitat is being retained and not enhanced, it is not included in the biodiversity metric calculations, therefore monitoring outside of the BNG process should be in place.

To prevent a reduction in the existing condition of Green Lane Wood LWS, a mitigation and monitoring plan shall be submitted as a Condition of approval. This plan shall outline mitigation measures, monitoring methodology and time frame and the bodies responsibilities for its implementation and any remedial action required.

Condition 6: Given that BNG for this site is significant, if the LPA were minded granting permission, a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) should be added as a Condition of approval.

This shall demonstrate how the habitat enhancement and creation, and subsequent target habitat conditions on-site will be created, enhanced, and monitored over 30 years following the completion of the capital works required to create them. It is recommended that the HMMP should be in line with the HMMP template produced by DEFRA. Considerations should also be given within any legal agreement to secure resources to allow adequate monitoring over the 30-year period.

9.15.2 Officer comment: Further comments were received from the applicants' ecologist in relation to red kite surveys. In summary, as construction would not be taking place for some time, they considered that it would be premature to undertake the surveys at this time as it is vital that the red kite surveys are as current as possible to accurately inform mitigation measures.

Therefore they suggested the detail of the pre-commencement survey requirements and associated mitigation measures should be secured by planning condition.

9.15.3 Further comments 27.2.25 [No objection subject to conditions]

As per the recommendation from the ecologist, I can confirm that completing pre-commencement red kite surveys will be sufficient. The results of the survey can be included in the already conditioned CEMP, along with any mitigation outlined by the ecologist.

9.16 Hertfordshire Highways: [Objection – insufficient information]

Recommendation

Notice is given under article 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 that Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority recommends that permission be refused for the following reasons:

There is insufficient information supplied with this application to enable the Highway Authority to reach a recommendation. In the absence of the necessary information, the Highway Authority recommends refusal due to doubt over possible implications for the free and safe flow of public highway users.

Access Comments

Durrants Drive - Little Green Lane junction there is clear evidence of vehicles over-running the grass verge, the proposed design will need to consider this issue in terms of the geometrical design and construction i.e the footway / cycleway will need to have suitable loading capacity for HGV's. Section of Durrants Drive from Dover Way to Little Green Lane more heavily parked due to housing layout and several properties not having driveway provision. This creates a situation with vehicles parking on the footways, traffic movement through this section will be problematic with development traffic creating congestion.

The proposed footpath / cycleway along Canterbury Way as it passes over Little Green Lane will require further design consideration, currently the proposal shows the route crossing the existing road we are assuming that the levels are the same as the existing footway so a raised table would be required at this junction.

Dover Way between the junction of Canterbury Way and Links Way narrower than both Durrants Drive and Links Way noticeable parking occurring on footways. If the road is narrowed to introduce a pedestrian / cycle link this issue will need to be considered. Also, at the junction of Canterbury Way / Dover Way the northern kerblin on the western side of the junction would also need to be realigned with some hatching provided otherwise vehicles travelling in an eastbound direction will be swerving by the junction as they try to avoid the footpath/cycleway build out.

We require a Stage 1 Safety Audit for the access options.

Cycle Route Comments

The proposed shared footway/cycleway will be located along the northeastern side of Canterbury Way, the existing width is approximately 3.0m wide some minor widening works may be required subject to detailed design. This section has the lighting columns set at the back of the footway which assists in providing a continuous width for pedestrians and cyclists, there are two highway trees near to the junction with Dover Way that will need to be removed. The route then joins onto Dover Way this section of the route will be located on northern side, the route will require the widening to provide a shared footway/cycleway. The lighting columns set at the back of the footway however three trees are located in the

footway these will need to be removed. Cyclists will then cross Dover Way near to the junction with Links Way using the proposed raised table and the head along Links Way. This section of the route will be located on the western side of the road, the route will require the widening to provide a shared footway/cycleway. There are telegraph poles and lighting columns located at the front of the existing footway that will obstruct the proposed route once the widening occurs. This infrastructure should be relocated to the back of the footway. Two trees are located along the route these will need to be removed.

We require a Stage 1 Safety Audit for the cycle out options.

TA – General Comments

Traffic Data

Paragraph – 3.14 and 3.15 lists the location of the classified turning counts and 3.16 states that these along with the queuing data are included in Appendix B. Some of the counts are missing and there is no queuing data included for any of the junctions listed. Also, the baseline flows listed as Figures 3.1 to 3.4 in paragraph 3.9 have also not been included. Without this information we are unable to review any of the modelling outputs or check the flow diagrams for baseline and future year scenarios.

Accident Data

Paragraph 3.20 refers to the review of Personal Injury Accidents along the site frontage and in the vicinity of the site with locations identified in Appendix D. It appears that several locations identified on the image in Appendix D have not been referred to in Table 1. An example is along Rousebarn Lane and the link to north of Croxley Danes School where it appears that three slight accidents and one severe accident has occurred. Also, the image shows a fatal accident along Sarratt Road, please explain why these locations have not been included and if other locations have been discounted, please provide a list and an explanation of why. The route along Rousebarn Lane could be well used by both pedestrians and cyclists so we wish to see this area included.

Accessibility by Foot / Walking Audits

This proposed development needs to promote as many options as possible in terms of providing alternative modes of travel beyond site boundary. The new proposed pedestrian / cycle links to the south of the site provides one set of measures. However, as part of this application other routes to the east need further consideration.

indicative active travel image as set out on page 147 of the Design Access Statement Design Code shows internal footpath/cycleways connecting onto footpath Sarratt 017 which connects onto Watford Borough 031 this provides a route through Cassiobury Park to Watford Railway Station this route is approximately 2.8km. It has not been included in the Walking Audit but provides another opportunity of promoting connectivity to the site.

This proposed development needs to promote as many options as possible in terms of providing alternative modes of travel to residents and as such we would be seeking improvements to these routes. The Transport Consultant should firstly audit the route via Sarratt 017 / Watford Borough 031 via Cassiobury Park and identify where improvements could be made and costing provided.

With regards to the alternative route to Watford Station via Rousebarn Lane this route is the shortest route to the railway station, there are opportunities to improve this route. The Transport Consultant should provide a series of measures to enhance this route for both walking and cycling and provide costings.

Accessibility by Bus

Paragraph 4.50 of the Transport Assessment indicates that to enhance the appeal of using public transport from the proposed development, it is proposed to bring a service into the

site to serve Watford and important transport hubs along with major destinations between the site and Watford.

We have noted that there is no information regarding the anticipated service provision, or which existing route will be diverted into the site. Or is the bus route a new service that will serve the destinations described above? Will any additional stops be provided along Durrants Drive to serve this existing residential catchment for this service?

Secondly there is no evidence that any dialogue has taken place with bus operators. The introduction of a bus service into the site, is one of many measures to assist in promoting sustainable travel options for residents, as it is imperative that a bus service is provided and therefore, we will require further evidence that this is supported by the bus operators along with costings for the service. So this can be incorporated into the Section 106 agreement.

Paragraph 4.77 states that bus stops and shelters will be on site along with real time bus information.

Chapter 5 set out details of the development proposals with reference to the site access strategy paragraph 5.4 indicates that existing width of Durrant Drive will be maintained, with buses entering the site from Durrants Drive completing a loop around the primary street network and exiting the site along Durrants Drive. Durrants Drive will have priority over Little Green Lane for motor vehicles, cycles and pedestrians.

Accessibility by Rail

It is noted that as part of this proposed development it will provide a suitable contribution towards the implementation of step-free access at Croxley Underground station. This will need to be finalised so it can be secured via S106 contribution if the application is considered for approval at a later date.

Car Parking

Paragraph 5.10 states that "Sufficient car parking for the site will be provided in accordance with Three Rivers and Hertfordshire County Councils Parking standards to provide on plot parking spaces and secure cycle storage for residents of the development site, and to provide suitable levels of parking for staff at the school and at the local centre". Firstly, Hertfordshire County Council do not have any parking policy this is set by the LPA.

Paragraph 5.14 and 5.15 sets out reduced levels of parking for the local centre. The proposed level of parking is 126 spaces, with the emerging LP requirement listed as requiring 166 spaces, thus a 40-space shortfall is being delivered. Paragraph 5.17 states the following "*The main purpose of the provision of the local centre on the proposal site is to serve the needs of the development. Any such trips to the local centre from the development will predominantly be undertaken by walk or cycle and, therefore, typical parking standards will not apply*". However, a significant proportion of the shortfall relates to the residential element of the scheme, people living in this location are not travelling in from the wider development, so this rational would apply to this land use. If the local centre is going to be viewed as having reduced parking provision, then some form of parking controls will be required so parking is not abused by residents, and it is available to all visitors to the local centre.

It is unclear how the figure of 187 spaces quoted in paragraph 5.22 has been derived and what relevance it has to the parking provision quoted in paragraph 5.14 and 5.15.

Paragraph 5.23 states that "*community parking in Durrants Square (42 spaces) and close to the school (16 spaces), will not be assigned to any particular use. This proposal offers the ability of users to efficiently share parking and therefore minimise the amount of space taken up by parking in the development*". Refer to point above regarding the residential element of the scheme and the risk of overspill parking from this land use into this area.

Traffic Generations

We have reviewed the trip rates, and we have some concerns with the affordable housing trip rate that has been used. We appreciate that TRICS has limited sites available but after further reviewing the selected site it has come to our attention that site EX-03-B-01 has low levels of parking when compared to the other selected sites which is lowering the trips rates

This site should be deselected, and the trip rate calculations and all the supporting information should be updated to reflect the revised flows.

Traffic Impact and Assessment

The following points have been previously mentioned we have repeated them again under this section as they are fundamental to the review of the traffic impacts.

Figures 3.1 and 3.2 are missing so we are unable to review the baseline flows and compare the information to the surveyed data. These figures should also include the PCU conversion factors so we can undertake checks. Subsequently we cannot confirm the future year flows as these use the baseline data as part of calculation process. This issue will also affect our ability to check the traffic matrices in the modelling outputs.

Appendix B includes junction location imagery and the manual classified turning counts, we have noted that some of counts are missing these should be provided.

Queue length survey information has not been included, this is referenced in the TA as some of junction modelling has been calibrated, please provide this information. Queue length surveys should have been undertaken for several days to provide an accurate representation of current levels of queuing.

Junction Modelling

Appendix H - Site Access Junction – Little Green Lane (NE)/ Durrants Drive/ Little Green Lane (SW)

- Minor Arm visibilities have been set to 0m for two of the inputs we would expect any proposed access to provide adequate visibility provision to meet safety audit requirements, as two of the visibility inputs relate to visibility splays passing into the site from the minor arms this can be improved.
- Major Arm carriageway width is incorrectly inputted refer to the proposed junction design that has been submitted as part of this application.
- HGV matrix has all movements at zero baseline traffic data shows HGV's therefore this matrix should be updated.

Appendix I - Little Green Lane (NE) / Links Way / Little Green Lane (SW)

The submitted outputs relate to the junction of Baldwins Lane / Links Way these have been submitted in the wrong appendices.

- The major arm carriageway width has been incorrectly inputted.
- The minor arm has no flare, and the splitter island reduces the minor arm widths.
- HGV matrix has all movements at zero baseline traffic data shows HGV's therefore this matrix should be updated.
- Please provide a drawing showing the geometry measurements, we have concerns in relation to the inputs.
- The interaction of the Winton Drive junction which located 30m east of Links Way has the potential to create additional delays along Baldwin Lane, the road markings along the major arm have been modified so that the Winton Drive has a longer right turn storage capacity at the junction. The assessment should model the junctions as a staggered crossroad and the pedestrian crossing by the school should be included in the assessment, as this will create delays along major road especially in the AM Peak. New traffic survey and pedestrian counts will be required for this updated analysis. to address this point.

Appendix J - Baldwins Lane (W) / Links Way / Baldwins Lane (E)

The submitted outputs relate to the junction of Little Green Lane (NE) / Links Way / Little Green Lane (SW) these have been submitted in the wrong appendices. The following comments relate to the outputs within Appendix J for the junction of Little Green Lane (NE) / Links Way / Little Green Lane (SW)

- Minor Arm visibilities have been set to 0m for three of the inputs we would expect any proposed access to provide adequate visibility provision to meet safety audit requirements, as two of the visibility inputs relate to visibility splays passing into the site from the minor arms this can be improved.
- Major Arm carriageway width incorrectly inputted.
- HGV matrix has all movements at zero baseline traffic data shows HGV's therefore this matrix should be updated.

Appendix K – A412 Watford Road (W) / New Road / A412 Watford Road (E)

- The minor arm lane width of 2.2m is incorrect.
- Please provide a drawing showing the geometry measurements, we have concerns in relation to the inputs
- HGV matrix has all movements at zero baseline traffic data shows HGV's therefore this matrix should be updated.

Appendix L – Winton Drive / A412 Watford Road

- Please confirm the Major Arm carriageway width it is difficult to read the pdf document that has been submitted.
- HGV matrix has all movements at zero baseline traffic data shows HGV's therefore this matrix should be updated.

The modelling for the junction of A412 Watford Road and Winton Approach has been submitted in Appendix L by mistake.

Appendix M – Winton Approach / Watford Road

- Please provide a drawing showing the geometry measurements, we have concerns in relation to the inputs, the mainline carriageway has advisory cycle lanes along so it's unclear how the major arm width has been calculated.
- HGV matrix has all movements at zero baseline traffic data shows HGV's therefore this matrix should be updated.

Appendix N – Manor Way / Baldwins Lane / Repton Way

- Please provide a drawing showing the geometry measurements, we have concerns in relation to the inputs, for example Arm A has a flare of 3.3m it's clear that this arms approach onto the mini roundabout is relatively straight and no radius is provided until after the give way point so it's not possible to have a flare length of over 3m. This would apply to the other arms as well. Also, the distances to the next arm and entry corner kerb line distances raise some concerns.
- HGV matrix has all movements at zero baseline traffic data shows HGV's therefore this matrix should be updated.

Appendix O – A412 Watford Road (E) / Sea Cadets / A412 Watford Road (S) / Baldwins Lane / Car Panet.

- Please provide a drawing showing the geometry measurements, we have concerns in relation to the inputs, for example Arm D has an entry width of 5.4m however this approach has a two-lane entry, the existing lane widths are not 2.7m. Also, google imagery shows parking occurring after the bridge which starves the nearside lane capacity, the geometry input shows arm D as having a flare of 22m it's unclear how this has been calculated and what assumptions are being made to the parking issue. The inscribed circle diameter for Arm E is 32m this also appears to be incorrect.
- HGV matrix has all movements at zero baseline traffic data shows HGV's therefore this matrix should be updated.

Appendix P – A412 Rickmansworth Road / Ascot Round Roundabout

- We have noted that within the TA reference is made to calibration being used for this junction. No information has been provided with the Transport Assessment in relation to queue length surveys.
- Please provide a drawing showing the geometry measurements, the entry width for arm A appears to be less than what has been inputted. Also, the radii for the arms appears to be incorrect.
- HGV matrix has all movements at zero baseline traffic data shows HGV's therefore this matrix should be updated.
- As this roundabout is so close to the Whippendell Road / Ascot Road roundabout they should be assessed as linked roundabouts, due to the lane configurations the modelling should consider lane simulation mode in ARCADY. The results show queues of between 25 - 41 vehicles in future year scenarios this level of queuing would block back onto the Whippendell Road / Ascot Road roundabout which is another reason why modelling the roundabouts as linked junctions may provide a more accurate assessment of the impacts.

Appendix Q – Raven Close / Whippendell Road / Ascot Road

- We have noted that within the TA reference is made to calibration being used for this junction. No information has been provided with the Transport Assessment in relation to queue length surveys.
- Please provide a drawing showing the geometry measurements, we have concerns in relation to the inputs, for example Arm A has the half width as 3.0m this is incorrect as Raven Close is narrower. Also, the flare length for Arm D appears to be incorrect. For Arm E the half width is shown as 10.0m and the entry width as 11.4 with a flare length of 10m, and the entry radius is shown as 25m. These inputted geometries are incorrect.
- HGV matrix has all movements at zero baseline traffic data shows HGV's therefore this matrix should be updated.
- As this roundabout is so close to the A412 Rickmansworth Road / Ascot Round Roundabout they should be assessed as linked roundabouts.
- Along Whippendell Road / Ascot Road there is a Premier Inn and Health Centre along with other land use and bus stops all of which could generate a reasonable level of pedestrian movements. Therefore, the pedestrian crossing facilities should have been surveyed and included in the ARCADY analysis as they could create delays that may result in queuing occurring onto the roundabout due to the close proximity.

Appendix Q – Durrants Drive / Baldwins Lane

- We have noted that within the TA reference is made to calibration being used for this junction. No information has been provided with the Transport Assessment in relation to queue length surveys.
- Please provide a drawing showing the geometry measurements, we have concerns in relation to the inputs, for example Arm C has a flare of 3.4m it's clear that this arms approach onto the mini roundabout is relatively straight and no radius is provided until after the give way point so it's not possible to have a flare length of over 3m. This would apply to the other arms as well. Also, the distances to the next arm and entry corner kerb line distances raises some concerns.
- HGV matrix has all movements at zero baseline traffic data shows HGV's therefore this matrix should be updated.

Design and Access Statement – comments

The indicative pedestrian cycle and movement strategy appears to have some discrepancies between the image and the key, this relates to the green routes where they appear to be described the wrong way around.

The plan shows two potential access/egress for cyclists and pedestrians only onto Little Green Lane these are identified with yellow arrows, the issue with the access located opposite Durant House is the narrowing of the footway on the southern side of Little Green Lane, if pedestrians exit at this location and wish to head towards Lincoln Drive they are

forced to work in the road especially if they have a child's buggy. By adding another connection west of the proposed access point would resolve this issue.

Travel Plan Review

General comments:

There is potential for this site to be sustainable, if adequate infrastructure and services are provided. If the site can be included in the Beryl Bikes scheme with a docking station on site this would help to encourage active travel, and a bus service diversion is proposed but no details given – this is required to make bus use more attractive as current bus stops are well over the recommended 400m away. According to the Travel Plan, contributions have been requested by TfL towards lifts at Croxley Underground station which would improve accessibility of the station for site residents and visitors.

This Travel Plan requires significant amendment in a number of key areas before we can approve, in particular in relation to the inclusion of clearly stated aims and objectives, Travel Plan Co-Ordinator duties and plan management, a wider range of measures, revised targets, monitoring method and travel plan duration.

As the Travel Plan is intended to cover the whole site, which is mixed use, the plan is a Framework Travel Plan. Individual Travel Plans will be required to be produced prior to occupation for land uses on site which meet the criteria set out in Appendix A of our Travel Plan Guidance (www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/travelplans). The primary school will also be required to produce an Education Travel Plan. The individual Travel Plans will be expected to be in general alignment with the Framework Travel Plan but with measures tailored to the land use in question.

Detailed comments are as follows:

Site details/introduction:

- The site location plan is provided as a figure in the appendix only and does not show the boundary of the site – usually a smaller version of the location plan is integrated into the main text at the relevant point which helps understanding of the geographical context and the site given a red line boundary to clearly illustrate its extent (as in the separate Location Plan provided as part of the application but not part of the Travel Plan).

Outcome objectives:

- There should be clearly stated aims and objectives for the Travel Plan in a dedicated section. The Travel Plan objective is not in Section 3 as stated, and whilst paragraph 5.1 comes close to being an objective it is not stated as such, nor are paragraphs 6.1-6.3 which also cover relevant ground, and obviously these paragraphs are not even together. There should be objectives around positive impacts on health/environment and reducing traffic impacts, levels of awareness of the Travel Plan, reducing the need to travel in the first place as well as reduction in single occupancy vehicle use mentioned in 5.1.

Travel Plan Management:

- Travel Plan Co-Ordinator contact details should be provided on appointment along with those of a secondary contact in case of personnel changes. Frequency on site and time allocated to the role should be provided once known and a list of expected duties is required now. These are all indicators for us that the role has been understood and sufficient resource (in terms of both people and funding) will be provided to undertake the role effectively.
- We require a statement of commitment to the robust implementation of the Travel Plan from a suitable member of developers' senior management prior to occupation – this is to demonstrate senior level commitment to the effective implementation of the plan.
- More detail should be given as to how the Travel Plan will be managed. As a Framework Travel Plan, with individual Travel Plans for land uses on site sitting beneath this, the Travel

Plan Co-Ordinator will be required to liaise between representatives of the different land uses and gather feedback on the effectiveness of measures and progress towards the overall objectives and targets within the Framework Plan. A Steering Group or similar which meets regularly and is formed of relevant stakeholders should be considered – this can improve levels of engagement and target initiatives more effectively.

Measures:

- Measures are generally appropriate although given the scale of the site, we would usually expect a wider range. Suitable additional measures include promotion of HCC cycle training, provision of cycle repair equipment, Dr Bike sessions, active travel events, promotion of local cycle hubs/cycling groups, showers/lockers/changing facilities in land uses other than residential, Bicycle User Group, information provision re local walking groups, walking/cycling buddy scheme, promotion of national active travel events, promotion of Intalink website for bus/rail information (<https://www.intalink.org.uk/>).
- Again given the scale of development, provision of a car club car on site should be considered not just promotion of Liftshare and EV charge points. People may be more willing to share with people living close-by that they know.
- There is no detail on car parking provision which can affect the relative attractiveness of sustainable modes of transport, not just total no's but inclusion of car share spaces and provision for electric vehicles.

Targets, monitoring and action plan:

- Targets proposed lack ambition. We seek a minimum 10-15% mode shift for a 5 year plan – this being based on experience of what is realistic and achievable. Whilst single occupancy vehicle use indicated by the Census data is relatively low, this is only for commuting trips and actual baseline figures for the site may well be higher and given the length of travel plan required for the residential element, greater levels of modal shift should be aspired to.
- Travel surveys are proposed, but little detail given as to exactly what this means – for a site of this scale, we require TRICS SAM standard (or equivalent) multi-modal counts as well as questionnaires. This ensures adequate data is obtained, both qualitative and quantitative. This helps give a more complete picture of travel patterns and why people are travelling the way they are which can inform revisions to the Travel Plan after each monitoring period.
- Paragraph 7.12 suggests an annual survey for a period of 3 years – we require annual monitoring until 5 years post full occupation of residential element, for 7 years for the Education Travel Plan and for 5 years from first occupation for commercial land uses with an individual Travel Plan.

Evaluation and Support Fees:

- We require an Evaluation and Support Fee of £1200 per year (for the residential Travel Plan which should be in place until 5 years post full occupation) index linked to RPI from March 2014. Education Travel Plans require a fee of £1500 per year (linked to RPI from March 2020 for 7-year plan) and business/workplace Full Travel Plans a fee of £1200 per year (for a -year plan).

Plan approved? No

9.17 London Underground Limited: [No comments on application]

I can confirm that London Underground/DLR Infrastructure Protection has no comment to make on this planning application.

My colleagues in Spatial Planning will respond separately with comments, if any.

9.18 National Grid: No response received.

9.19 National Highways: [Holding objection]

9.19.1 Initial comments 10.2.25 [Holding objection]

National Highways Ref: NH/25/09637

Referring to the consultation on a planning application dated 21 January 2025 referenced above, in the vicinity of the M25, J18 and 19, the M1 J5 that forms part of the Strategic Road Network, notice is hereby given that National Highways' formal recommendation is that we:

c) recommend that planning permission not be granted for a specified period (see reasons at Annex A);

This represents National Highways' formal recommendation and is copied to the Department for Transport as per the terms of our Licence.

Should the Local Planning Authority propose not to determine the application in accordance with this recommendation they are required to consult the Secretary of State for Transport, as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Development Affecting Trunk Roads) Direction 2018, via transportplanning@dft.gov.uk and may not determine the application until the consultation process is complete.

The Local Planning Authority must also copy any consultation under the 2018 Direction to PlanningSE@nationalhighways.co.uk.

This response and all comments outlined herein are made in respect of planning matters only in National Highways' position as a statutory planning consultee, and does not confer any proprietary rights nor amount to the giving or refusal of consent, assent, approval, or awareness of or by National Highways in or of any other aspects or matters (including, but not limited to, the use of property belonging to National Highways). If anyone wishes for National Highways to consider any aspects which do not relate to planning submissions, they should call our contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Annex A National Highways' assessment of the proposed development

National Highways was appointed by the Secretary of State for Transport as a strategic highway company under the provisions of the Infrastructure Act 2015 and is the highway authority, traffic authority and street authority for the Strategic Road Network (SRN). The SRN is a critical national asset and as such we work to ensure that it operates and is managed in the public interest, both in respect of current activities and needs as well as in providing effective stewardship of its long-term operation and integrity.

National Highways is interested whether there would be any adverse safety implications or material increase in queues and delays on the SRN as a result of the proposed development, in this case on the M25 J18 and 19, and the M1 J5.

Proposed Development

The proposed development includes construction of up to 600 dwellings and a 5-bedroom property for children's social care and supported living. Two vehicular access points from Little Green Lane are proposed, as well as further pedestrian and cycleway access points. A one form entry primary school, plus expansion land for a two form entry primary school are also proposed alongside a mixed use local centre with provision for NHS health and social care services, a community building, retail units and café provision. A country park and areas for play and recreation, allotments, community orchard and landscaping with associated infrastructure including SuDS are also included in the development proposals.

A bus service is also proposed to be secured via s106 contribution to serve the site, and the development will provide a suitable contribution towards the implementation of step-free access at Croxley Underground Station.

We have reviewed the Transport Assessment (TA) provided as part of the planning submission, written by Hub Transport Planning Ltd.

Trip Generation

Table 7 in Section 6 of the TA sets out the total trip generation expected from the residential aspect of the proposed development, including both market and affordable dwellings. The proposed development is expected to generate 254 two-way vehicle trips in the AM peak period, and 267 two-way vehicle trips in the PM peak period. In both periods, this equates to just over 4 additional vehicles per minute. Following an internal replication of the selection parameters provided using TRICS, National Highways are satisfied that the expected trip generation is accurate.

The trip generation provided in the TA does not include any other aspect of the proposed development, including the expected trips generated from the primary school use, or the mixed use local centre with NHS health and social care facilities, retail and café provision, or the country park and outdoor play / recreation areas. Paragraph 6.9 states that it was previously agreed with Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) that the “great majority of movements to/from school will be local in nature and that traffic movements associated with the school will be limited”. Paragraph 6.10 similarly states that “the majority of traffic movements to/from the local centre are likely to be undertaken by those from the development or from residents just to the south of the development, and likely to be undertaken by active travel modes. Therefore, no additional traffic has been added for these development proposals”.

National Highways accept that this is an outline application and the trip impact from the non-residential uses of the proposed development on the SRN are likely to be minor. However, as the anticipated trips from the residential uses alone are already relatively high, we require this additional information to understand the full potential traffic impact of the proposed development, particularly given the proposed country park and play space uses may generate a significant number of external vehicle trips. **We request that the additional information is provided, including the anticipated trips generated from the non-residential uses of the proposed development with internalisation factors applied, and justification for the proposed internalisation factors.**

Trip Distribution and Assignment

Figure 7.5 and Figure 7.6 illustrate the total anticipated traffic flows on the local highway network including the 2030 Future Year Base Flows, committed development traffic flows and the proposed development traffic for the AM and PM peak periods. The impact of the proposed development on the SRN has not been considered as part of the TA despite there being several connections to the SRN from the proposed development site, namely via the M25 J18 and 19, and the M1 J5. Due to the relatively high number of trips predicted to be generated from the proposed development, in addition to the trips generated from committed development in the surrounding area, **National Highways request that the trip distribution/assignment exercise is extended to the nearby SRN junctions and provided for review before further comments are made. This should be presented as turning movements for the sensitive weekday AM and PM peak hours.**

Junction Capacity Assessments

Section 7 of the TA sets out the traffic impacts, growth rates and the outputs of the junction capacity assessments. Junctions with the SRN are not included in these assessments. Due

to the relatively high volume of anticipated vehicle trips from the proposed development, it is possible that further junction capacity assessments may be required to assess the impact on the SRN. This will be determined following the provision of the additional information requested above, including the trip distribution/assignment at the SRN junctions.

Sustainable Transport

We have reviewed the Framework Travel Plan supplied and relevant sections of the TA relating to sustainable transport. Section 4 of the TA (replicated in the Travel Plan) outlines the accessibility of local facilities, i.e. education, retail and health care services, by foot, cycle and public transport, demonstrating that the proposed site is readily accessible by a variety of transport modes that have the potential to reduce reliance on the private car.

The active and sustainable transport proposals set out in Paragraphs 4.72 to 4.90 suggest that new pedestrian and cyclist access routes and links are proposed and there is potential to expand the Beryl cycle hire scheme with a bike station on site. Proposals also include a bus service into the site via Durrants Drive to serve Watford and major destinations between Watford and the proposed site, as well as important transport hubs.

National Highways welcomes sustainable transport measures being the primary means to off-set any severe / significant development impacts on the SRN, although for us to take these measures into account, these would need to be worked up to a position where we can understand the likely mode shift benefits they could provide.

National Highways agree that in principle the measures proposed will help reduce travel demand by private vehicle on the SRN, particularly the proposed provision of a bus service providing connections to important transport hubs and Watford. **The applicant should provide further information regarding the proposed routing and service frequency etc of this bus service for us to review.**

Construction Traffic

National Highways request that a construction traffic impact assessment is carried out and provided for review, to allow us to understand the potential impact of construction HGVs and workforce traffic on our network, particularly during the peak construction period.

A Framework Construction Traffic Management Plan (FCTMP) should also be provided to mitigate any potential impacts identified.

Recommended Non-Approval

Given the above, it is currently not possible to determine whether the application would have an unacceptable impact on the safety, reliability and/or operational efficiency of the SRN (the tests set out in DfT Circular 01/2022 and MHCLG NPPF2024 [particularly paras 115 to 118]). This response details the steps that need to be taken in order to resolve this issue.

In light of the above, National Highways currently recommends that planning permission not be granted (other than a refusal if the Council so wishes) for a period of three months from the date of this response to allow the applicant to resolve the outstanding matters.

This recommendation can be replaced, renewed, or reviewed during the three-month period, or at its end, dependent on progress made with regards to the outstanding matters.'

It is recommended that the application should not be approved until 11 April 2025.

Standing advice to the local planning authority

The Climate Change Committee's 2022 Report to Parliament notes that for the UK to achieve net zero carbon status by 2050, action is needed to support a modal shift away from car travel. The NPPF supports this position, with paragraphs 77 and 110 prescribing that significant development should offer a genuine choice of transport modes, while paragraphs 109 and 115 advise that appropriate opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport should be taken up as part of a vision-led approach.

Moreover, the carbon reduction hierarchy (avoid-switch-improve) as set out in clause 4.3 of PAS2080:2023 promotes approaches and measures to minimise resource consumption and thereby reduce carbon emissions.

These considerations should be weighed alongside any relevant Local Plan policies to ensure that planning decisions are in line with the necessary transition to net zero carbon.

9.19.2 Further comments 07.05.25 [Holding objection maintained]

National Highways Ref: NH/25/09637

Referring to the consultation on a planning application dated 21 January 2025 referenced above, in the vicinity of the M25, J18 and 19, the M1 J5 that forms part of the Strategic Road Network, notice is hereby given that National Highways' formal recommendation is that we:

c) recommend that planning permission not be granted for a specified period (see reasons at Annex A);

This represents National Highways' formal recommendation and is copied to the Department for Transport as per the terms of our Licence.

Should the Local Planning Authority propose not to determine the application in accordance with this recommendation they are required to consult the Secretary of State for Transport, as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Development Affecting Trunk Roads) Direction 2018, via transportplanning@dft.gov.uk and may not determine the application until the consultation process is complete.

The Local Planning Authority must also copy any consultation under the 2018 Direction to PlanningSE@nationalhighways.co.uk.

This response and all comments outlined herein are made in respect of planning matters only in National Highways' position as a statutory planning consultee, and does not confer any proprietary rights nor amount to the giving or refusal of consent, assent, approval, or awareness of or by National Highways in or of any other aspects or matters (including, but not limited to, the use of property belonging to National Highways). If anyone wishes for National Highways to consider any aspects which do not relate to planning submissions, they should call our contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Annex A National Highways' assessment of the proposed development

National Highways was appointed by the Secretary of State for Transport as a strategic highway company under the provisions of the Infrastructure Act 2015 and is the highway authority, traffic authority and street authority for the Strategic Road Network (SRN). The SRN is a critical national asset and as such we work to ensure that it operates and is managed in the public interest, both in respect of current activities and needs as well as in providing effective stewardship of its long-term operation and integrity.

National Highways is interested whether there would be any adverse safety implications or material increase in queues and delays on the SRN as a result of the proposed development, in this case on the M25 J18 and 19, and the M1 J5.

Our previous NHPR response of 7 February stated the following

Proposed Development

The proposed development includes construction of up to 600 dwellings and a 5-bedroom property for children's social care and supported living. Two vehicular access points from Little Green Lane are proposed, as well as further pedestrian and cycleway access points. A one form entry primary school, plus expansion land for a two form entry primary school are also proposed alongside a mixed use local centre with provision for NHS health and social care services, a community building, retail units and café provision. A country park and areas for play and recreation, allotments, community orchard and landscaping with associated infrastructure including SuDS are also included in the development proposals.

A bus service is also proposed to be secured via s106 contribution to serve the site, and the development will provide a suitable contribution towards the implementation of step-free access at Croxley Underground Station.

We have reviewed the Transport Assessment (TA) provided as part of the planning submission, written by Hub Transport Planning Ltd.

Trip Generation

Table 7 in Section 6 of the TA sets out the total trip generation expected from the residential aspect of the proposed development, including both market and affordable dwellings. The proposed development is expected to generate 254 two-way vehicle trips in the AM peak period, and 267 two-way vehicle trips in the PM peak period. In both periods, this equates to just over 4 additional vehicles per minute. Following an internal replication of the selection parameters provided using TRICS, National Highways are satisfied that the expected trip generation is accurate.

The trip generation provided in the TA does not include any other aspect of the proposed development, including the expected trips generated from the primary school use, or the mixed use local centre with NHS health and social care facilities, retail and café provision, or the country park and outdoor play / recreation areas. Paragraph 6.9 states that it was previously agreed with Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) that the "great majority of movements to/from school will be local in nature and that traffic movements associated with the school will be limited". Paragraph 6.10 similarly states that "the majority of traffic movements to/from the local centre are likely to be undertaken by those from the development or from residents just to the south of the development, and likely to be undertaken by active travel modes. Therefore, no additional traffic has been added for these development proposals".

National Highways accept that this is an outline application and the trip impact from the non-residential uses of the proposed development on the SRN are likely to be minor. However, as the anticipated trips from the residential uses alone are already relatively high, we require this additional information to understand the full potential traffic impact of the proposed development, particularly given the proposed country park and play space uses may generate a significant number of external vehicle trips. We request that the additional information is provided, including the anticipated trips generated from the non-residential uses of the proposed development with internalisation factors applied, and justification for the proposed internalisation factors.

Trip Distribution and Assignment

Figure 7.5 and Figure 7.6 illustrate the total anticipated traffic flows on the local highway network including the 2030 Future Year Base Flows, committed development traffic flows and the proposed development traffic for the AM and PM peak periods. The impact of the proposed development on the SRN has not been considered as part of the TA despite there being several connections to the SRN from the proposed development site, namely via the M25 J18 and 19, and the M1 J5. Due to the relatively high number of trips predicted to be generated from the proposed development, in addition to the trips generated from committed development in the surrounding area, National Highways request that the trip distribution/assignment exercise is extended to the nearby SRN junctions and provided for review before further comments are made. This should be presented as turning movements for the sensitive weekday AM and PM peak hours.

Junction Capacity Assessments

Section 7 of the TA sets out the traffic impacts, growth rates and the outputs of the junction capacity assessments. Junctions with the SRN are not included in these assessments. Due to the relatively high volume of anticipated vehicle trips from the proposed development, it is possible that further junction capacity assessments may be required to assess the impact on the SRN. This will be determined following the provision of the additional information requested above, including the trip distribution/assignment at the SRN junctions.

Sustainable Transport

We have reviewed the Framework Travel Plan supplied and relevant sections of the TA relating to sustainable transport. Section 4 of the TA (replicated in the Travel Plan) outlines the accessibility of local facilities, i.e. education, retail and health care services, by foot, cycle and public transport, demonstrating that the proposed site is readily accessible by a variety of transport modes that have the potential to reduce reliance on the private car.

The active and sustainable transport proposals set out in Paragraphs 4.72 to 4.90 suggest that new pedestrian and cyclist access routes and links are proposed and there is potential to expand the Beryl cycle hire scheme with a bike station on site. Proposals also include a bus service into the site via Durrants Drive to serve Watford and major destinations between Watford and the proposed site, as well as important transport hubs.

National Highways welcomes sustainable transport measures being the primary means to off-set any severe / significant development impacts on the SRN, although for us to take these measures into account, these would need to be worked up to a position where we can understand the likely mode shift benefits they could provide.

National Highways agree that in principle the measures proposed will help reduce travel demand by private vehicle on the SRN, particularly the proposed provision of a bus service providing connections to important transport hubs and Watford. The applicant should provide further information regarding the proposed routing and service frequency etc of this bus service for us to review.

Construction Traffic

National Highways request that a construction traffic impact assessment is carried out and provided for review, to allow us to understand the potential impact of construction HGVs and workforce traffic on our network, particularly during the peak construction period.

A Framework Construction Traffic Management Plan (FCTMP) should also be provided to mitigate any potential impacts identified.

Since our previous NHPR we have had confirmation from the applicant's consultants that the above requirements for further information can be supplied and further assessment work undertaken if necessary. A meeting was held on 25th March to discuss requirements.

We are awaiting the further information requested to enable us to determine the application with more certainty in relation to impacts on the SRN.

Recommended Non-Approval

Given the above, it is currently not possible to determine whether the application would have an unacceptable impact on the safety, reliability and/or operational efficiency of the SRN (the tests set out in DfT Circular 01/2022 and MHCLG NPPF2024 [particularly paras 115 to 118]). This response details the steps that need to be taken in order to resolve this issue.

In light of the above, National Highways currently recommends that planning permission not be granted (other than a refusal if the Council so wishes) for a period of three months from the date of this response to allow the applicant to resolve the outstanding matters.

This recommendation can be replaced, renewed, or reviewed during the three-month period, or at its end, dependent on progress made with regards to the outstanding matters.'

It is recommended that the application should not be approved until 7th August 2025.

Standing advice to the local planning authority

The Climate Change Committee's 2022 Report to Parliament notes that for the UK to achieve net zero carbon status by 2050, action is needed to support a modal shift away from car travel. The NPPF supports this position, with paragraphs 77 and 110 prescribing that significant development should offer a genuine choice of transport modes, while paragraphs 109 and 115 advise that appropriate opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport should be taken up as part of a vision-led approach.

Moreover, the carbon reduction hierarchy (avoid-switch-improve) as set out in clause 4.3 of PAS2080:2023 promotes approaches and measures to minimise resource consumption and thereby reduce carbon emissions.

These considerations should be weighed alongside any relevant Local Plan policies to ensure that planning decisions are in line with the necessary transition to net zero carbon.

9.20 National Planning Casework Unit: No response received.

9.21 Natural England: [No objection subject to conditions]

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 22 January 2025 which was received by Natural England on the same date.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

SUMMARY OF NATURAL ENGLAND'S ADVICE

NO OBJECTION - SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATE MITIGATION BEING SECURED

Natural England considers that without appropriate mitigation the application would:

- damage or destroy the interest features for which Whippendell Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest and Croxley Common Moor Site of Special Scientific Interest have been notified.

In order to mitigate these adverse effects and make the development acceptable, the following options should be secured:

- Provision of 24ha green space/country park with secured management plan/maintenance for the lifetime of the development
- Minimum 30m buffer zone around ancient woodland within and adjacent to the proposed development
- An ancient woodland recreational management plan
- Information packs for residents on sensitive use of local habitats/protected sites
- A Construction Environment Management Plan for both construction and operational measures

We advise that an appropriate planning condition or obligation is attached to any planning permission to secure these measures.

A lack of objection does not mean that there are no significant environmental impacts. Natural England advises that all environmental impacts and opportunities are fully considered and relevant local bodies are consulted.

Natural England's further advice on designated sites/landscapes and advice on other natural environment issues is set out below.

Further advice on mitigation

The proposed development falls within the Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) for Whippendell Wood SSSI and Croxley Common Moor SSSI and, without appropriate mitigation, has the potential to impact the sites' interest features. Natural England are satisfied that subject to securing of the below measures, the development will have minimal impact on the above designated sites. We have come to this conclusion after review of the following documents:

- Planning statement MNP-00124.C8622 December 2024
- Ecological Impact Assessment and Biodiversity Impact Assessment RSE_8239_R1_V 4_E cIA December 2024
- Agricultural Land Classification and Soil Resources July 2024
- Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment and Green Belt Assessment I000010_DL100_E December 2024

Protected sites - Open Green space design

Having reviewed the provided landscape mitigation plan Natural England are satisfied that subject to implementation of the open Green Space design set out within the planning statement and illustrative masterplan, adverse impacts on Whippendell Wood SSSI and Croxley Common Moor SSSI can be avoided/mitigated. In order to provide an alternative to these highly sensitive protected sites, it is important that the development delivers, at the appropriate phasing, a suitable scale and quality of Green Space, ideally in accordance of Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework: Principles and Standards, and particularly the ANGst guidelines. Ideally this should include:

- Circular walk of at least 2.3km
- Provision for dogs along SANG guidelines e.g. off lead areas, dog waste bins
- Signage and interpretation of PRoW/paths
- On-site maintenance and management of greenspace/country park secured in perpetuity

Due to the location of the proposed development within the Area of Search for the Chilterns National Landscape we recommend liaising with the Chilterns Conservation Board to inform such designs, ensuring they are sympathetic to the landscape character.

Please note that if your authority is minded to grant planning permission contrary to the advice in this letter, you are required under Section 281 (6) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) to notify Natural England of the permission, the terms on which it is proposed to grant it and how, if at all, your authority has taken account of Natural England's advice. You must also allow a further period of 21 days before the operation can commence.

Protected Landscapes – Chilterns National Landscape

The proposed development is located partly within/ within a proposed area of search which Natural England is considering as a possible boundary variation to the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB, known as National Landscape). Whilst this assessment process does not confer any additional planning protection, the impact of the proposal on the natural beauty of this area may be a material consideration in the determination of the proposal. Natural England considers the Chilterns to be a valued landscape in line with paragraph 180 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Furthermore, paragraph 182 of the NPPF states that development in the settings of AONBs should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise impacts on the designated areas. An assessment of the landscape and visual impacts of the proposal on this area should therefore be undertaken, with opportunities taken to avoid or minimise impacts on the landscape and secure enhancement opportunities. Any development should reflect or enhance the intrinsic character and natural beauty of the area and be in line with relevant development plan policies. In addition, Section 245 (Protected Landscapes) of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 places a duty on relevant authorities to seek to further the statutory purposes of the area in carrying out their functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an AONB.

We expect consultation with the appropriate statutory body, in this case, the Chilterns Conservation Board to inform design and mitigation measures associated with this development.

An extension to an existing AONB is formally designated once a variation Order, made by Natural England, is confirmed by the Defra Secretary of State. Following the issuing of the designation Order by Natural England, but prior to confirmation by the Secretary of State, any area that is subject to a variation Order would carry great weight as a material consideration in planning decisions.

Ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees

The proposed site contains ancient woodland both within and adjacent to the red line boundary. Natural England acknowledges and welcomes provision of the aforementioned Green Infrastructure and a minimum 30m buffer zone for all ancient woodland within the site.

We strongly recommend liaising with the Forestry Commission as the statutory body for woodland habitats to inform a management plan and appropriate mitigation.

The local planning authority should consider any impacts on ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees in line with paragraph 186 of the NPPF. The Natural England Access to Evidence - Ancient woodlands Map can help to identify ancient woodland. Natural England and the Forestry Commission have produced Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) (standing advice) for planning authorities. It should be considered when determining relevant planning applications.

The following should be secured:

- An Ancient woodland recreational management plan
- A minimum 30m buffer around ancient woodland and woodland habitats, with associated root protected zone in design plans.

Other advice

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land or Minerals and Waste reclamation

Local planning authorities are responsible for ensuring that they have sufficient detailed agricultural land classification (ALC) information to apply NPPF policies (Paragraphs 180 and 181). This is the case regardless of whether the proposed development is sufficiently large to consult Natural England. Further information is contained in the Guide to assessing development proposals on agricultural land - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). Find open data - data.gov.uk on Agricultural Land Classification or use the information available on MAGIC (defra.gov.uk).

The Defra Construction Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites (publishing.service.gov.uk) provides guidance on soil protection, and we recommend its use in the design and construction of development, including any planning conditions. For mineral working landfilling, we refer you to Reclaim minerals extraction and landfill sites to agriculture - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk), which provides guidance on soil protection for site restoration and aftercare. The Soils Guidance (quarrying.org) provides detailed guidance on soil handling for mineral sites.

Should the development proceed, we advise that the developer uses an appropriately experienced soil specialist to advise on, and supervise soil handling, including identifying when soils are dry enough to be handled and how to make the best use of soils on site.

Further general advice on consideration of protected species and other natural environment issues is provided at Annex A.

Should the developer wish to discuss the detail of measures to mitigate the effects described above with Natural England, we recommend that they seek advice through our Discretionary Advice Service.

If you have any queries relating to the advice in this letter, please contact me on consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

We would be pleased to provide advice on the discharge of planning conditions or obligations attached to any planning permission to address the issues above.

Should the proposal change, please consult us again.

9.22 NHS England: No response received.

9.23 Ramblers: No response received.

9.24 Sarratt Parish Council: [Objection]

SPC object to this application for the reasons set out below. If the officers are minded to approve this application we request that it is brought into the planning committee.

We recognise this application whilst in Sarratt Parish boundaries, would have a more significant impact on Croxley Green and its residents.

Our primary objection is that this application is overdevelopment on Green Belt land with insufficient case to apply very special circumstances.

The purpose of Green Belt is to prevent urban sprawl by protecting separation between developed areas and to protect rural setting (NPPF Paragraphs 142 & 143). This application in our opinion would go against this policy including impacting the purpose of this land as separation between Croxley Green and Chandlers Cross, as well as providing rural setting to the north of Croxley Green. We reject the applicant's submitted assessment that this plot is classed as 'Grey Belt' as this statement does not correctly consider the full context and does not provide external references or evidence, to substantiate this self-assessed position.

We welcome the applicant adhering to the affordable housing policies with this application, however the housing need (including affordable provision) for Sarratt Parish as outlined in the Housing Needs. Assessment has already been satisfied by recent approved development applications. This and any other applications would exceed the housing need for the Parish.

Sarratt is a rural parish with concerning strains on its transport and services infrastructure. An application of this size is not sustainable in Sarratt Parish.

The neighbouring Croxley Green as a larger settlement has the theoretical potential to provide infrastructure for this size of development. However, the applicants own submitted expert reports identify many existing significant issues with transport infrastructure and services such as sewage capacity. Neither Sarratt Parish nor Croxley Green would be able to accommodate a development of this size which means this is an unsustainable location.

The indicative designs in the application include four story buildings. This height of building is not in keeping with Sarratt Parish buildings and is also not typical in Croxley Green. The effect of this aspect on the views and separation from settlements is a concern.

The need for the additional facilities outlined in this application has not been properly tested. One of these facilities, the NHS health and social care services duplicates provision in another already approved application in Sarratt Parish, so there is no defined need for this provision in this application.

We note the very large number of local public objections submitted on this application so far and also note the significant objections submitted by HCC highways and the local flood authority.

In conclusion we recognise the need for housing at the national, district and local level. SPC has in recent times supported new developments in our Parish where they are in appropriate locations. However, this application is for an unsustainable location on Green Belt land.

9.25 Sport England: [No objection subject to conditions/S106 contributions]

9.25.1 Initial comments 7.2.25 [Objection]

Thank you for consulting Sport England on the above application.

Sport England's Position

Community Sports Provision

Due to the need for more detail to be provided about the proposals for outdoor and indoor community sports provision, 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 the advice in this response is considered and positive proposals are made to address the matters raised through the planning application and/or planning obligation/condition requirements.

Primary School

It is **requested** that any planning permission makes provision for securing a formal community use agreement on the primary school site.

Active Design

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.

Sport England – Non Statutory Role and Policy

The Government, within their Planning Practice Guidance (Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities Section) advises Local Planning Authorities to consult Sport England on a wide range of applications. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space>. This application falls within the scope of the above guidance as it relates to a development of more than 300 dwellings.

Sport England assesses this type of application in line with its planning objectives and with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Sport England's planning objectives are to PROTECT existing facilities, ENHANCE the quality, accessibility and management of existing facilities, and to PROVIDE new facilities to meet demand.

Sport England's Planning for Sport guidance can be found here:

<https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-for-sport-guidance/>

The Proposal and Assessment against Sport England's Objectives and the NPPF

Community Sports Facility Provision

Introduction

The proposal is an outline planning application for a mixed use residential led development of up to 600 dwellings on land to the north of Little Green Lane in Croxley Green. The population of the proposed development is estimated to be 1,380 based on the applicant's estimate set out in paragraph 6.10 of the Sport and Leisure Strategy. This additional population will generate additional demand for sports facilities. If this demand is not adequately met the site may place additional pressure on existing sports facilities, thereby creating or exacerbating 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. In this context, I would wish to make the following comments on the community sports provision aspects of the planning application.

Evidence Base and Policy Context

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

□ Policy DM11 of the adopted Development Management Policies Local Development Document (2013) advises that when granting planning permission for new residential development of 25 or more dwellings, the Council will expect developer contributions to the provision or enhancement of local sports facilities where a need is demonstrated to have arisen from the development concerned and there are inadequate local facilities

□ Three Rivers District Council's Playing Pitch Strategy (2019) identifies deficiencies in outdoor sports provision (especially football pitches, 3G artificial grass pitches and rugby union pitches) and accounts for future population needs.

□ Three Rivers District Council's Leisure Facilities Strategy (2019) covers indoor sports facilities and identifies deficiencies in facilities such as health & fitness and gymnastics centres and accounts for future population needs.

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.

Proposed Sports Facility Provision

The Sport and Leisure Strategy (prepared by Sports Planning Consultants) that has been submitted in support of the application has assessed sports facility needs in detail and the findings and conclusions are considered to be robust. This strategy was prepared in consultation with Sport England and the sports governing bodies at the pre-application stage.

In relation to outdoor sports, in response to the strategy identifying deficiencies in football and cricket pitch provision, the strategy advises that the applicant explored the potential for on-site provision at pre-application stage but concluded that this was not feasible due to topographical, landscape and highways considerations. Instead, the strategy concluded that off-site provision options should be progressed involving financial contributions being secured towards off-site natural turf football pitches, 3G artificial grass pitches, rugby union pitches, cricket pitches and tennis courts.

In response to the Council's Playing Pitch Strategy advising new development to consider integrating opportunities for athletics within wider open spaces, as set out in paragraph 6.43 of the Sport and Leisure Strategy, consideration is being given to the provision of an informal Newgen active track <https://www.englandathletics.org/clubs-and-facilities/facilities/newgen-tracks/> within the proposed on-site country park. Paragraph 6.38 of the strategy also suggests that a community use agreement is pursued for the proposed primary school to secure community access to the school's outdoor sports facilities although the limitations of primary school facilities in meeting community needs have been set out in the strategy.

In relation to indoor sports facility provision, the strategy concludes that there is no justification for on-site indoor sports provision but that qualitative improvements may be required to sports halls and swimming pools to ensure existing facilities continue to meet demand due to their age/condition. The strategy also identified that while the Council's Leisure Facilities Strategy identified a quantitative deficit in health & fitness provision there is no evidence that demand from the development cannot be met by existing local provision. In relation to community halls, consultation has identified that there have been ongoing increases in community demand and a local community venue has closed. The strategy has indicated that an on-site community hall could integrate a health and fitness facility into

its design. Furthermore, as set out above a community use agreement has been recommended for the proposed primary school's facilities which would be expected to include a school hall which may have community use potential.

The recommendations in the applicant's Sport and Leisure Strategy for meeting the additional sports facility needs generated by the development are broadly welcomed. However, before Sport England could confirm its support for the proposals the following matters would need to be addressed:

- **Financial Contributions:** Reference is made in paragraph 12.11 of the Planning Statement to appropriate and proportionate contributions towards sports being agreed following discussions with the District Council. Tables 6.1/6.2 and paragraph 6.22 of the Sport and Leisure Strategy set out what the capital costs would be of meeting the additional demand for the facilities generated by the development. These costings have been informed by the use of Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator and Sports Facility Calculators, the use of which is endorsed for this purpose by the Council's Playing Pitch Strategy and Leisure Facilities Strategy.

However, despite these references there are no confirmed proposals at this stage in relation to the scope of the contributions and the amounts for the different sports facility types. Sport England would need certainty that appropriate contributions towards outdoor and indoor sports provision would be offered in practice before supporting the applicant's strategy for sports provision. This is necessary because if no contributions or inadequate contributions were proposed by the applicant and agreed by the District Council at a later stage of the determination process this would be unacceptable because the development's sports needs would not be met. A planning obligation would need to identify the projects that the contributions would be used towards and the trigger points for the contribution payments to be made. Confirmation is therefore requested of the scope and level of the financial contributions proposed.

- **NewGen Active Track.** While the reference in the Sport and Leisure Strategy to a NewGen Active Track being considered in the proposed country park is welcomed, no reference is made to this in the country park proposals set out in the Planning Statement or the Design & Access Statement. If an Active Track is to be provided within the country park, the track would need to be proposed as part of the application and its provision secured as part of a planning obligation. Without it being secured there would be no certainty that an Active Track which met England Athletics' guidance would be provided at the reserved matters stage as there would be no requirement to provide it in any outline planning permission. Clarity is therefore requested of whether an Active Track is proposed to be provided within the country park and how its delivery would be secured through any planning permission.

- **Community Hall:** As indicated, some indoor facility needs such as health & fitness can be met through multi-purpose community facilities such as community halls. Sport England's Village and Community Halls design guidance <https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/sports-halls> may be helpful in this regard. Consideration should therefore be given to whether the community centre proposed could be designed so that it could provide for formal sports use as well as other community uses. For example, community halls can be designed so that they are suitable for badminton, dance, fitness and martial arts while activity studios and fitness suites can be provided as part of community halls. This could potentially negate the extent of financial contributions that would be expected towards off-site projects. If this option is pursued, further advice from Sport England should be sought as a minimum specification for such a community hall would need to be included in a planning obligation in order to ensure that a facility is suitable for indoor sport in practice.

Conclusion

As there is further information requested about the proposals for meeting the development community 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 further information is provided as set out above.

Primary School

As indicated in the applicant's Sport and Leisure Strategy, the proposed primary school would be expected to provide some sport and recreation facilities for meeting educational needs that could also be used by the community outside of school hours such as the playing field and the school hall. While these facilities are principally for school use and would be designed for primary school aged children and should not be considered as a substitute for dedicated community facilities, they would offer potential to complement on and off-site provision made for dedicated community sports facility provision. While there is limited detail of what would be provided on the school site, to ensure that the school's facilities are secured for community use in practice, I would **request** that any planning permission makes provision for securing the community use of the sports facilities provided on the school site. A formal community use agreement would be the appropriate mechanism for securing community use. This has also been suggested by the applicant in paragraph 12.20 of the Planning Statement. Without a formal community use agreement being secured there would be no certainty that the facilities would be accessible to the community in practice after they have been built. Condition 16 from our model planning conditions schedule https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/planning-sport?section=playing_fields_policy should be used as a basis for securing this through a planning permission.

Active Design

Sport England, with support from Active Travel England and OHID, has produced 'Active Design' <https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/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. It should be noted that the Active Design guidance has also been advocated by Hertfordshire County Council's Healthy Places Team (who Sport England works closely with) in their response to this planning application.

The conceptual development proposals offer opportunities for incorporating the active design principles such as the proposed walking and cycling routes, the co-location of the community facilities, the country park and the other multi-functional open spaces. This potential for this has also been recognised in the applicant's Sport and Leisure Strategy and Health Impact Assessment. As the planning application is in outline form it would be inappropriate to provide detailed comments at this stage because the submitted parameter plans are 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. 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"

I hope that these comments can be given full consideration when a decision is made. I would be happy to discuss the response with the local planning authority and/or the applicant as the determination of the application progresses. Please contact me if you have any queries.

If this application is to be presented to a Planning Committee, we would like to be notified in advance of the publication of any committee agendas, report(s) and committee date(s). We would be grateful if you would advise us of the outcome of the application by sending us a copy of the decision notice.

9.25.2 Further comments 28.5.25 [No objection subject to conditions/S106 contributions]

Thank you for consulting Sport England on the amended plans/information relating to the above application. The applicant's agent's letter dated 22nd May 2025 responds to the comments made in our initial formal response dated 7th February 2025. I am now in a position to review our position on the planning application and would wish to comment on the following matters:

Sport England's Position

Community Sports Provision

The objection in the previous response is withdrawn subject to the following matters being addressed as set out in this response:

- Financial contributions being secured through a section 106 agreement towards off-site outdoor and indoor sports facility provision in accordance with the capital costings set out in this response. The projects that the contributions would be used towards and the trigger points for the contribution payments to be made would need to be addressed as part of the preparation of a section 106 agreement.
- A minimum specification for the community hall building being secured through a section 106 agreement.
- A planning condition being imposed to address the design and implementation of the NewGen Active Track.

Primary School

The previous request to secure a community use agreement for the primary school's sports facilities through the imposition of a planning condition is withdrawn.

Active Design

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

Financial Contributions: Off-Site Outdoor and Indoor Sports Provision

As set out in the agent's letter, if planning permission is forthcoming, the applicant is proposing to enter into a section 106 agreement with the District Council to secure financial contributions towards off-site outdoor and indoor sports facility provision in accordance with Table 1 in their letter (copied below). Financial contributions would address the majority of the additional demand for sports facilities generated by the proposed residential development.

Facility Type	Impact of New Development (Number of Pitches / size / courts)	Capital Cost
<i>Natural Grass Pitches</i>	2.12	£217,169
<i>Adult Football</i>	0.46	£52,381
<i>Youth Football</i>	0.75	£70,447
<i>Mini Soccer</i>	0.67	£20,951
<i>Rugby Union</i>	0.06	£10,767
<i>Cricket</i>	0.17	£62,624
<i>Artificial Grass Pitches</i>		
<i>3G</i>	0.10	£117,438
<i>Tennis</i>	0.18 courts	£21,226
<i>Indoor</i>		
<i>Swimming Pools</i>	14.9 sqm (0.07 pools)	£330,488
<i>Sports Halls*</i>	0.35 courts – equivalent to 0.09 halls	£273,238

The capital cost figures in the above table align with the costs associated with meeting the additional demand set out in the applicant's Sport and Leisure Strategy document which is based on Sport England's Playing Pitch Calculator and Sport Facility Calculator outputs. The above figures are therefore supported if secured as financial contributions through a section 106 agreement.

If the above contributions were secured through a section 106 agreement, Sport England's objection to the lack of confirmed proposals for financial contributions for meeting the demands arising from development would be **withdrawn subject** to a section 106 agreement identifying the projects that the contributions would be used towards and the trigger points for the contribution payments to be made. These matters can be addressed as part of the preparation of a section 106 agreement following determination of the planning application.

It is noted from the agent's letter that the principal terms of a section 106 agreement are yet to be agreed with the District Council and that updated evidence or viability factors may influence the terms of a section 106 agreement that are agreed. In the event that the above financial contributions (in part or in full) do not form part of the terms of a section 106 agreement that is subsequently agreed between the District Council and the applicant, the Council is requested to re-consult Sport England so that our position on this matter can be reviewed if necessary.

As set out below, if a minimum specification for the on-site community hall was agreed as part of a section 106 agreement and if this was subsequently delivered it would not be necessary to secure an off-site financial contribution towards sports hall provision as well.

Community Hall

As set out in the agent's letter, the applicant has agreed as the default proposal for meeting the additional sports hall and health & fitness facility needs generated by the development to deliver a community hall that would be suitable for indoor sports and an activity studio. The specification proposed in the letter is based on Sport England's advice and would be considered appropriate for providing an indoor hall that could be used for activities such as dance, fitness and martial arts and a suitable activity studio. In the event that a community hall designed in accordance with this specification is not feasible, the contingency proposal of a financial contribution being secured towards off-site indoor sports hall provision would be considered acceptable and should be included in a section 106 agreement as suggested in the letter.

I can therefore advise that Sport England's objection to the lack of confirmed proposals for the specification of the community hall is **withdrawn subject** to the following minimum specification for the community hall being included in a section 106 agreement:

"A community hall building with a minimum of 695 sq. metres (external) floorspace for the community hall building and the minimum internal dimensions for the community hall floorspace of 18x10 metres and an internal clearance height of at least 3.5 metres together with an activity studio with a minimum size of 12x9.1 metres and a minimum clearance height of 3.5 metres. The design of the flooring, walls, windows, ceiling, lighting, and ventilation for both the community hall and activity studio, as well as the provision of ancillary toilets and storage facilities, shall accord with Sport England's Village and Community Halls Design guidance <https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/sports-halls>."

NewGen Active Track

As set out in the agent's letter, the applicant has proposed a planning condition requiring details of the design and implementation of the proposed NewGen Active Track to be submitted and approved. The wording of the condition and informative proposed by the applicant is considered to be acceptable for securing this. The condition would address the request for certainty to be provided in a planning permission that an suitably designed Active Track would be delivered as part of the development for meeting the demand for athletics generated by the proposal.

I can therefore advise that Sport England's objection to the lack of confirmed proposals for securing a suitably designed Active Track in the development is **withdrawn subject** to the condition suggested by

"Details of the design of the NewGen Active track, and timetables for the implementation of the facility shall be submitted to the local planning authority for approval with or before the submission of reserved matters application(s). No development shall commence until those schemes have been approved in writing by the local planning authority, and the facility shall then be delivered in accordance with the approved schemes and thereafter retained."

Reason: To secure well managed safe NewGen Active Track to ensure sufficient benefit to the development of sport and to accord with the Applicants Sports Strategy, Three Rivers Core Strategy, Three Rivers Development Management Policies Local Development Plan Document Policy DM11 and DM12 and Chapter 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Informative: The applicant is advised that the design and layout of the active track should comply with the relevant industry Technical Design Guidance, including guidance published by Sport England, National Governing Bodies for Sport. Particular attention is drawn to: England Athletics NewGen Tracks guidance”

Primary School

While the applicant is amenable to a planning condition being imposed to secure a community use agreement for the facilities in the proposed primary school, it is understood that it has been advised by Hertfordshire County Council (as Local Education Authority) that such a condition should not be imposed at this stage until the operator of the school is identified due to the uncertainty about whether the operator would be willing and able to deliver community use in practice. As the school facilities were not proposed for meeting the community sports facility needs generated by the development on this occasion it would not be necessary for such a condition to be imposed on any outline planning permission. Sport England would be happy to revisit this matter at a future date when a reserved matters application for the primary school is submitted by which time the operator of the school may be known. I can therefore confirm that the previous request for a planning condition to be imposed requiring a community use agreement to be submitted and approved for the primary school is **withdrawn**.

Active Design

As set out in the agent's letter, the applicant has accepted a planning condition requiring reserved matters applications to submit details for approval to demonstrate how Active Design principles have been met. The wording of the condition is as set out in our previous response (repeated below):

“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 the Three Rivers Core Strategy, Three Rivers Development Management Policies Local Development Plan Document Policy DM11 and DM12 and Chapter 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Informative: Consideration should be given to using the Active Design checklist in Sport England's Active Design Guidance to assess reserved matters planning applications.”

It is therefore **requested** that the above condition is imposed if planning permission is forthcoming.

I would be happy to discuss the response with the local planning authority and/or the applicant as the determination of the application progresses. Please contact me if you have any queries.

If this application is to be presented to a Planning Committee, we would like to be notified in advance of the publication of any committee agendas, report(s) and committee date(s).

We would be grateful if you would advise us of the outcome of the application by sending us a copy of the decision notice.

Waste Comments

Following initial investigations, Thames Water has identified an inability of the existing FOUL WATER network infrastructure to accommodate the needs of this development proposal. As such Thames Water request that the following condition be added to any planning permission.

“The development shall not be occupied until confirmation has been provided that either:-
1. All foul water network upgrades required to accommodate the additional flows from the development have been completed; or- 2. A development and infrastructure phasing plan has been agreed with the Local Authority in consultation with Thames Water to allow development to be occupied. 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.”

Reason - Network reinforcement works are likely to 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.

The developer can request information to support the discharge of this condition by visiting the Thames Water website at thameswater.co.uk/preplanning. 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 (e-mail: devcon.team@thameswater.co.uk) prior to the planning application approval.

Thames Water recognises this catchment is subject to high infiltration flows during certain groundwater conditions. The scale of the proposed development doesn't materially affect the sewer network and as such we have no objection, however care needs to be taken when designing new networks to ensure they don't surcharge and cause flooding. In the longer term Thames Water, along with other partners, are working on a strategy to reduce groundwater entering the sewer networks.

Thames Water recognises this catchment is subject to high infiltration flows during certain groundwater conditions. The developer should liaise with the LLFA to agree an appropriate sustainable surface water strategy following the sequential approach before considering connection to the public sewer network. The scale of the proposed development doesn't materially affect the sewer network and as such we have no objection, however care needs to be taken when designing new networks to ensure they don't surcharge and cause flooding. In the longer term Thames Water, along with other partners, are working on a strategy to reduce groundwater entering the sewer network.

Following initial investigations, Thames Water has identified an inability of the existing SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS infrastructure to accommodate the needs of this development proposal. As such Thames Water request the following condition be added to any planning permission.

“No development shall be occupied until confirmation has been provided that either:- all sewage works upgrades required to accommodate the additional flows from the development have been completed; or - a development and infrastructure phasing plan has been agreed with the Local Authority in consultation with Thames Water to allow development to be occupied. 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.

Reason – Sewage Treatment Upgrades are likely to be required to accommodate the proposed development. Any upgrade works identified will be necessary in order to avoid sewage flooding and/or potential pollution incidents.”

The developer can request information to support the discharge of this condition by visiting the Thames Water website at Development Planning Department (telephone 0203 577 9998) prior to the planning application approval. 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 (e-mail: devcon.team@thameswater.co.uk) prior to the planning application approval.

The application indicates that SURFACE WATER will NOT be discharged to the public network and as such Thames Water has no objection, however approval should be sought from the Lead Local Flood Authority. Should the applicant subsequently seek a connection to discharge surface water into the public network in the future then we would consider this to be a material change to the proposal, which would require an amendment to the application at which point we would need to review our position.

Water Comments

With regard to water supply, this comes within the area covered by the Affinity Water Company. For your information the address to write to is - Affinity Water Company The Hub, Tamblin Way, Hatfield, Herts, AL10 9EZ - Tel - 0845 782 3333.

Supplementary Comments

STW capacity constraints with Maple Lodge STW being upgraded to ensure a higher quality of treated effluent, reducing phosphorus levels entering the river to below an average level of 0.25mg/l*. We'll also increase the capacity of the storm tanks. This will reduce the need for untreated sewage discharges during storm conditions. We plan to complete this work in 2030.

9.27 Transport for London: [Objection – further information required]

Thank you for consulting Transport for London (TfL) on this application for up to 600 residential dwellings, a children's social care and supported living property, a one form entry primary school, a mixed-use local centre, a community building, retail and café provision and a country park.

We provided comments for this site at pre-application stage. It appears that some of our comments have not been taken into consideration by the applicant. We are happy to discuss this further if required.

As per the pre-application comments, we encourage the applicant to aim to maximise travel by sustainable modes, including improved access to Croxley Underground station on the Metropolitan Line. Station access improvements should include a funding contribution towards the potential provision of step-free access at the station as well as measures to improve active travel routes, cycle parking and bus links from the development site.

As part of the Transport Assessment (TA), the applicant must consider the potential impacts of the proposed development on TfL services and infrastructure including Croxley station. A full station capacity assessment should be carried out using approved TfL data sources.

The TA submitted does assess the route from the development to Croxley station, however no improvements seem to be proposed. We welcome point 4.80 that does confirm the

applicant is willing to make an appropriate contribution to the proposed station access improvements at Croxley station. However, the impact assessment submitted currently only reviews the development's impact on the road network and as stated above a full station capacity assessment is required to be submitted.

Furthermore, could information be provided regarding the mode splits and trip rates that have been used to generate the impact assessment analysis.

In conclusion, further information is required to be submitted by the applicant prior to any decision being made on this application.

9.28 TRDC Environmental Health Officer (Residential): [No objection subject to conditions]

After reviewing the acoustic report for this application, it seems that not all the potential impacts have been assessed. However, I believe that these concerns can be overcome via condition.

The main impacts that are likely to be associated with this application are as follows.

- Increased traffic flows resulting in higher noise levels. This has been considered within the report and the impact on existing residents has been deemed insignificant. I do not have any grounds to consider this to be inaccurate.
- Noise associated with the school.
- Noise associated with the community centre and café. Odour and smoke associated with cooking could also have a negative impact.

School.

The report confirms that the precise location of the school is not yet known. This new facility is going to have an impact on existing and future residents. There will also be an impact on the school from the surrounding environment.

Whilst the precise location is not yet known, I am wary of confirming that this aspect of the application is completely acceptable. Therefore, a condition that requires revised calculations to be provided once the exact location is known would assist in overcoming this concern. These calculations also need to confirm that the internal noise level specified within section 5.9 of the report are achieved. There also needs to be consideration on how the school facilities might be used out of hours, for example, evening events or clubs such as football and how this impact will affect nearby residents and outline suitable controls, for example time limits or additional mitigation.

Community centre.

There are inadequate details on this new facility. These types of venues can have a substantial impact on residents from noise. The full impacts have not been considered. However, this new building can be subject to its own planning application where suitable controls can be set out. There also needs to be consideration on the control of impacts associated with food preparation.

Café.

There are no details provided on this. Some of the impacts are going to be similar to the centre, for example, deliveries and cooking. This also needs to be subject to a separate application.

Plant.

The precise detail of new plant is not yet known. Therefore, a condition requiring a separate planning application is needed to protect amenity.

Ventilation and glazing specification.

As per 5.8 of the acoustic report, the final glazing and ventilation scheme details need to be provided by an acoustic consultant or equally competent person. I am of the view that some properties will need mechanical ventilation systems that negate the need to open windows, particularly those close to the school and community centre. If there were any future complaints that required local authority investigation, assessments from properties fitted with an appropriate mechanical ventilation system would be made with the windows shut and the mechanical ventilation operating. A full mechanical ventilation with heat recovery would be appropriate.

Based upon the acoustic report, the application as it currently stands is only acceptable if the above conditions can be incorporated into the final decision. If that is not possible, the application ought to be refused until the required information is provided.

9.29 TRDC Environmental Protection: [Advisory comments regarding resources required]

Waste Services is nearing saturation point in terms of the amount of waste it can collect with the resources it currently has at its disposal. In order to enable the additional properties to be integrated into the service it would require two more refuse collection vehicles with associated running costs including two LGV drivers and 4 refuse collection loaders. The current Operators Licence allows for a maximum of 33 vehicles to be operated from the depot in Harefield Road. The depot is full to capacity and the additional two vehicles would lead to it being overfull and therefore an alternative site should be considered. Providing the above resources required would enable the service to absorb planned growth for the next few years

9.30 TRDC Heritage Officer: [Objection – less than substantial harm]

The application site comprises a parcel of agricultural land c. 40ha and includes an area of ancient woodland. A public right of way crosses the site (east-west) to the north of Dell Wood. The site is surrounded by hedged boundaries. The scheme would be a mixed-use development and include a country park along the northern and eastern fringes, a green corridor through the Site running north-south and other landscaped areas.

A nearby major housing development at Killingdown Farm c. 150m west of the site, was initially refused planning permission but allowed on appeal under PINS reference (APP/P1940/W/21/3280443).

This application follows EIA Screening Request (Ref:24/1220/EIA). The screening decision issued by the Council found that the EIA would not be required.

The current application has been accompanied by a Heritage Assessment (HA). This identified Durrants House (Listed Building Grade II, NHLE 1403581) and Cassiobury Park (Registered Park Grade II, NHLE 1000219) as heritage assets which could be affected by the proposals through change within their settings. This approach is considered appropriate by the Conservation Officer.

The stepped approach described in the Historic England Guidance document, The Setting of Heritage Assets (GPA3, 2017), has informed the accompanying Heritage Statement and the below advice. The four relevant steps are as follows:

1. Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected.
2. Assess the degree to which these settings and views make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated.
3. Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on the significance or on the ability to appreciate it. This may include effects which may not solely be visual.
4. Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm.

Durrants House is directly opposite the Site boundary on Little Green Lane. It is a Tudor/ Jacobean revival-style country house built in 1866-7, with an asymmetrical plan consisting of a rectangular, south-facing range; a north-east wing consisting of the ballroom, clock tower, and a rear service courtyard. It contains architectural interest including its exterior use of the Tudor/ Jacobean revival style to create varied elevational interest. It also contains historical interest due to its association with Thomas Hoade Woods, a local businessman.

The house was formerly set within 91 Ha of parkland all to the south but is now surrounded by modern development to the south and was itself subdivided into nineteen dwellings under planning reference 12/0221/RSP.

There is no known association between Durrants House and the Site either at the present time or historically. However, the Site has formed an agrarian backdrop to the house since its construction. There is strong intervisibility between the prominent northern elevation of Durrants and the Site when moving along Little Green Lane, particularly on the footway elevated above road level just to the west of Durrants House. There are also longer views south from Public Right of Way Sarratt 017, which runs east-west across the north of the Site.

Therefore, the Site forms an important part of the setting of Durrants House as a surviving remnant of its historic landscape context.

The introduction of a major housing scheme in this location would harmfully impact the appreciation of Durrants House within its historic agricultural setting. The submission recognises that there would be a harmful impact and has provided mitigation of a green corridor called 'Durrants View' on the master plan to retain views from the rear of Durrants house towards Whippendell Wood in the north.

This is shown to be approximately 50m in width at its southern end nearer Durrants House, then narrowing in the centre before widening out again. Although primarily a green pedestrian area, it would include two Primary Streets crossing from east-west, including one to towards the south of the Site and a LEAP and hard landscaped areas at the southern end. In addition, the Design Code document indicates that the green corridor would be fronted by higher density outward facing gateway/ perimeter blocks, up to a height of up to 4 storeys, designed to create a sense of enclosure.

The green corridor would provide some degree of mitigation of harm to the setting of Durrants House. However, while this is the rear of Durrants House, the Site forms its main surviving open setting and provides an appreciation of the building's historic landscape setting and its significance as a once isolated, rural dwelling. The view out from Durrants House looking north would be harmfully impacted by the built development and the complete change in the character of the landscape and the land use. Views from PROW 017 looking south towards Durrants House would also be harmed. This would be exacerbated by the scale of development along the edge of the green corridor and the built form within the green corridor.

This would result in less than substantial harm to the setting of Durrants House. The degree of less than substantial harm would be at a low-mid level. The degree of harm could be mitigated to some extent by increasing the width of the green corridor, reducing the height of development along the corridor and moving formal elements including hard landscaping, LEAP and main road to more distant areas. However, due to the scale of the proposal and the fundamental change in land use and character, the harm would not be removed.

Cassiobury Park is a Grade II listed Registered Park and Garden, which includes elements dating from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. It now contains a public park and a golf

course to the western side, which is separated from the Site by a thick tree belt which ends at Rousebarn Lane.

There is no historic link between the RPG and the Site, but the Site does form part of the agricultural setting that contributes to the significance of the RPG. There is a thick tree buffer on the western edge of the RPG meaning there would be no views into the development from the RPG, although there is a degree of intervisibility between the two along Rousebarn Lane. In addition, the existing Ancient Woodland within the Site would be retained, and a wetland area and country park would sit on the eastern boundary of the Site adjacent to the RPG, providing a clear green buffer. **This would mitigate the harm to the setting of the RPG to the extent that it would result in less than substantial harm at the lowest end of this spectrum.**

It is considered that the proposal would cause harm to the setting of the designated heritage assets, particularly Durrants House, contrary to Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 212 requires great weight to be given to the asset's conservation. In NPPF terms the degree of harm would be less than substantial and as per paragraph 215 this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

9.31 TRDC Housing Officer: [No objection]

Policy CP4 of the Adopted Core Strategy requires that 45% of new housing should be provided as Affordable Housing, unless it can be clearly demonstrated with financial evidence that this is not viable. As a guide, the tenure split should be 70% social rented, 25% First Homes, and 5% shared ownership.

The Local Housing Market Assessment (2020) outlines the recommended proportions for housing mix in development proposals submitted to Three Rivers District Council. These proposals should generally aim for a mix of 40% 1-bed units, 27% 2-bed units, 31% 3-bed units, and 2% 4-bed units.

However, the identified need for affordable housing, based on the current housing register and the family composition of customers in temporary accommodation provided by the Council, suggests the following updated preferred mix: 20% 1-bed units, 45% 2-bed units, 30% 3-bed units, and 5% 4+ bed units. The primary need is for 2-bed, 4-person units, as there is a significant demand for family-sized accommodation to ensure families in temporary housing are offered permanent, suitable properties in a timely manner.

I can confirm that Housing Services would generally support this application in principle, on the basis that 70% of the affordable housing to be provided is at social rent and the size of dwellings provided fulfils our current requirements.

9.32 TRDC Tree and Landscape Officer: [No objection subject to suitable compensation/mitigation]

The site is in Metropolitan Green Belt and the woodland within its boundary is recorded as ancient on the Ancient Woodland Inventory. Within the fields are a number of notable and / or veteran field and hedgerow trees. There is a Right of Way (Public Footpath Sarratt 017) running east / west across the northern end of the site and another (Public Footpath Sarratt 063) running north / south along the western boundary. There are trees and woodland bordering the site that are protected by Tree Preservation Order (TPOs 182; 026 & 118). Most of this woodland is also recorded as ancient, and some of the woodland (Whippendell wood) is a designated SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest).

The National Planning Policy Framework states that:

'development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons (70) and a suitable compensation strategy exists;

70 For example, infrastructure projects (including nationally significant infrastructure projects, orders under the Transport and Works Act and hybrid bills), where the public benefit would clearly outweigh the loss or deterioration of habitat.'

The outline plans indicate that there will be no direct impacts on trees and woodland on the site. With no trees needing to be felled or pruned, and no loss of irreplaceable habitats. In addition, no development is proposed to take place within the root protection areas of retained trees. Although some short sections of existing hedgerow would need to be removed.

However, the potential for indirect impacts on trees and woodlands, and the deterioration of irreplaceable habitats over the longer term, are significant. The proposal to site up to 600 new dwellings within 30 metres (at the closest points) to ancient woodland and notable / veteran trees would result in a significant increase in the residential population close to these irreplaceable habitats. This increase in population would inevitably lead to additional recreational pressures on the trees and woodland, such as the compaction of soils around important trees; the trampling of ground flora in woodland areas; erosion and widening of footpaths through woodland areas; and the disturbance of wildlife, through activities such as dog walking.

Other unintentional impacts of an increased population would be increased localised air and water pollution from vehicle movements, and the use of pesticides in gardens and allotment areas.

There will also be additional anti-social behaviour issues relating to an increased population. This may include vandalism; arson; off-road motorcycling and mountain biking; and fly-tipping, which would all contribute towards the deterioration of this irreplaceable habitat. Placing development close to notable and veteran trees and incorporating them into more formal green spaces will also increase the level of risk should a tree fail. This could be detrimental to these ecologically important trees if overzealous safety works to fell or heavily prune them is undertaken to address perceived safety concerns.

To prevent any long-term deterioration of these irreplaceable habitats would require a suitable compensation and mitigation strategy. The plans indicate that buffer zones between the housing areas, and the woodlands and trees, would be created, comprising of a Country Park, formal areas of green space, and allotment sites. These will provide some mitigation but over the long term, managing visitor access and pressure to the surrounding woodland and being able to deal with antisocial behaviour issues will be key to preventing the deterioration of the trees and woodlands. To successfully manage the open space, and visitor access and recreation, would require some form of ranger team or on-site maintenance staff to be able to respond to issues effectively and quickly. This ongoing management and maintenance would need to be adequately funded and resourced to ensure the irreplaceable habitats are protected over the long term.

9.33 TRDC Leisure Development Officer: [No objection subject to conditions]

After full consideration of all the documents and information relating to the above planning application, Leisure Development Officers would recommend the following, in the submission of the planning application to Three Rivers DC.

These comments are given to help the development achieve the aims of Three Rivers District Council's Local and Strategic plans and National Policy Framework sections detailed below:

- Achieving Sustainable Development
- Promoting Healthy Communities
- Health and Wellbeing

- Any outdoor leisure equipment must conform to the following standards:
 - ☐ Playground Equipment & Surfacing – BS EN 1176 & 1177
 - ☐ MUGA's (Multi Use Games Areas) – BS EN 15312 – Free Access Multi Sports
 - ☐ Skate Parks – BS EN 14974 – Roller Sports Equipment
 - ☐ Outdoor Fitness Equipment – BS EN 16630
 - ☐ Parkour Equipment – BS EN 16899

- New play spaces should be located with regard to areas of deficiency (and designed following the same principles as if they were being implemented by the local authority)
 - Particular attention should be given to DDA compliant access to any leisure areas including pathways, seating and equipment as per the Equality Act 2010 (or the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 in Northern Ireland).
 - Provision of sustainable active travel to support an active lifestyle, such as being bike friendly.
 - Where leisure provision is made by the developers, design advice must be sought from Three Rivers Leisure team which must include DDA compliant access, details of installation, quality details of all materials used, adherence to RoSPA recommendations such as gates and fences etc and RoSPA inspection of installed pieces of equipment.
 - Please consider vehicle access for maintenance of any leisure areas.
 - Operator signs for any leisure areas will need to be included for reporting of maintenance or reparation issues.
 - A full Risk assessment of any leisure equipment should be considered.
 - A RoSPA report or assessment should take place of any proposed play and/or leisure equipment.
 - Provision for the on-going maintenance of any leisure facilities should be detailed, particularly if it the developer plans to formally hand over to the leisure facility to the Parish Council or Three Rivers District Council. This must include DDA compliancy certification as per the Equality Act 2010 (or the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 in Northern Ireland)., details of installation, quality details of all materials used with the relevant certification, detailed maintenance guides for each piece of equipment, RoSPA inspection of installed pieces of equipment, adherence to RoSPA recommendations such as gates and fences etc.

- Officers would recommend a community use agreement is put in place to enable local sports clubs and community organisations to access any facilities.
 - Community use was not made clear in the planning application. If the applicant wishes to make the sports facilities available for community use outside of school hours, Officers recommend a community use agreement is put in place detailing hours of use, pricing and booking policy.
 - As highlighted in the sports and leisure strategy, there is a lack of football pitches in the local area. Officers would like to see the proposed school site made available for community football use in the interim period until such time as the school is built.
 - Officers would recommend that guidance on leisure facility planning (eg: Play England or Sport England) is sought from the relevant bodies and adhered to.

Therefore, A pre-commencement condition is therefore requested which requires

It is requested that the following condition is imposed which is based on:

- (a) No development shall commence until the following documents have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority after consultation with Three Rivers District Council's Leisure Team

- (i) A detailed assessment of community need for this equipment/building/MUGA.
- (ii) A detailed specification of the proposed equipment/building/MUGA and other operations associated with grass and sports turf establishment, RoSPA assessment, ongoing maintenance and a programme of implementation.
- (b) The approved scheme shall be carried out in full and in accordance with the approved programme of implementation. The land shall thereafter be maintained in accordance with the scheme and made available for use in accordance with the scheme.

Reason: To ensure that the equipment/building/MUGA is prepared to an adequate standard and is fit for purpose and to accord with Development Plan Policy **.

Three Rivers District Council's Leisure team can provide examples of acceptable completed documents and contractor's specifications to the applicant to assist with meeting the requirements of the above condition.

If there are any queries about leisure facilities design in relation to the proposals, please feel free to contact the Head of Leisure and Natural Infrastructure.

9.34 TRDC Planning Policy Team: [Advisory comments re. policy framework]

The application site has not been allocated as a housing site by the Site Allocations Local Development Document (2014) and as such is not currently identified as part of the District's housing supply. The site should therefore be considered as a windfall site. Policy CP2 of the adopted Core Strategy (adopted 2011) states that applications for windfall sites will be considered on a case by case basis having regard to:

- i. the location of the proposed development, taking into account the Spatial Strategy
- ii. the sustainability of the development and its contribution to meeting local housing needs
- iii. infrastructure requirements and the impact on the delivery of allocated housing sites
- iv. monitoring information relating to housing supply and the Three Rivers housing target.

The Spatial Strategy states that new development will be directed towards previously developed land in the urban area of the Principal Town (Rickmansworth) which is identified as one of the most sustainable locations in the District. The site is not within a defined settlement (although adjoins the northern boundary of the Key Centre of Croxley Green) and is not previously developed land. The development would result in the net gain of up to 600 new dwellings. The Council cannot currently demonstrate a five-year supply of housing land as required by the NPPF and currently has a 1.7-year housing land supply. The delivery of up to 600 dwellings would make a significant and positive contribution to much needed housing provision within the District. Additionally, there has been an undersupply of affordable housing within the District throughout the plan period and as such there is a pressing need for the delivery of affordable housing. The submitted planning statement sets out that up to 50% of the dwellings would be affordable housing, which would make a significant and positive contribution to the affordable housing need within the District.

The application site is located in the Metropolitan Green Belt. Paragraph 153 of the NPPF states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 153 further sets out that very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. Paragraph 154 of the NPPF states that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless certain exceptions apply. Paragraph 154 of the NPPF sets out the following exceptions to inappropriate development in the Green Belt:

a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;

b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use), including buildings, for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;

c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;

d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;

e) limited infilling in villages;

f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and

g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land (including a material change of use to residential or mixed use including residential), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

h) Other forms of development provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:

i. mineral extraction;

ii. engineering operations;

iii. local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;

iv. the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction;

v. material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds); and

vi. development, including buildings, brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

Additionally, paragraph 155 of the NPPF sets out that the development of homes, commercial and other development in the Green Belt should also not be regarded as inappropriate where all the following apply:

a.) The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan;

b.) There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed;

c.) The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of this Framework; and

d.) Where applicable the development proposed meets the 'Golden Rules' requirements set out in paragraphs 156-157

Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy states that 'there will be general presumption against inappropriate development that would not preserve the openness of the Green Belt, or which would conflict with the purpose of including land within it'.

Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that the Council will require housing proposals to take into account the range of housing needs, in terms of size and type of dwellings as identified by the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). The most recent version

of the Local Housing Needs Assessment (LNHA) was finalised in 2024 and is the most recent update to the SHMA. The recommended mix for Three Rivers in terms of market housing, affordable home ownership and social/affordable rented housing identified in the LNHA is shown below:

	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4+ bed
Market Housing	4%	21%	42%	32%
Affordable Home Ownership	19%	39%	30%	13%
Social / Affordable Rented Housing	20%	32%	35%	12%

It must be noted that Policy CP3 recognises that a proposed housing mix may need to be adjusted for specific schemes to take account of market information and specific site factors; where adjustment to the proportions is sought, applications should explain how relevant factors have contributed to the mix of housing proposed.

Policy CP4 of the Core Strategy requires 45% of all new housing to be provided as Affordable Housing, unless it can be clearly demonstrated with financial evidence that this is not viable. Policy CP4 sets out that the Council will “as a guide, seek 70% of the affordable housing provided to be social rented and 30% to be intermediate”.

On 24th May 2021, the Government published a Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) to set out the Government’s plans for the delivery of First Homes defining the product and changes to planning policy. Following publication of the WMS, Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) was updated to reflect the WMS and formed a material consideration in decision making. As a result of the introduction First Homes and changes to national policy, the Council released a First Home Policy Position Statement. This Policy Position Statement amended the tenure mix for affordable housing under Policy CP4 of the Core Strategy (2011) as:

- 25% First Homes
- 70% social rented, and
- 5% intermediate

However, changes were made to national policy following the publication of the newest version of the NPPF in December 2024. Within paragraph 6 of the NPPF, reference to the Written Ministerial Statement on Affordable Homes (24th May 2021), which contained policy on First Homes, has been removed and the prescriptive requirement that 10% of the total number of homes to be available for affordable home ownership as set out in former paragraph 66 has been deleted. As such, the Council will be reviewing its Policy Position Statement. It is advised that development complies with Policy CP4 as written, apportioning 70% of the affordable housing provision as social rented and 30% as intermediate.

A Local Wildlife Site is located within the site and the site adjoins another Local Wildlife Site to the north-west. Policy DM6 of the Development Management Policies Local Development Document sets out that:

“Development that would affect a Site of Special Scientific Interest, Local Nature Reserve, Local Wildlife Site or protected species under UK or European law, or identified as being in need of conservation by the UK Biodiversity Action Plan or the Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan , will not be permitted where there is an adverse impact on the ecological, geological or biodiversity interests of the site, unless it can be demonstrated that:

- i) The need for the development would outweigh the need to safeguard the biodiversity of the site, and where alternative wildlife habitat provision can be made in order to maintain local biodiversity; and*

ii) *Adverse effects can be satisfactorily minimised through mitigation and compensation measures to maintain the level of biodiversity in the area.*

9.35 Watford Borough Council: No response received.

9.36 Watford Environmental Health (Commercial): [No objection subject to conditions]

Air Quality

I have reviewed the Air Quality Assessment prepared by BWB Consulting (Report ref. LGL-BWB-XX-ZZ-LA-RP-001-AQA).

The construction phase dust assessment was undertaken to evaluate the potential impact of construction activities on local air quality, the assessment indicates that with the implementation of the recommended mitigation measures, the residual impacts from the construction phase will be not significant.

The operational phase road traffic emissions assessment was undertaken to consider the impact of development generated road traffic at identified existing receptor locations. Road traffic emissions were modelled using dispersion modelling and concentrations of NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} were predicted at identified sensitive receptor locations. The development is not predicted to result in any new exceedances of the air quality objectives and the impacts of the development are considered to be negligible at all modelled receptor locations.

Pollutant concentrations were also predicted across the site. Concentrations of NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} were predicted to be below the relevant air quality objectives.

The impact of the proposed development on local air quality is considered to be not significant.

I would recommend that a condition requiring the submission of a dust management plan be applied to any permission granted. The Dust Management Plan should incorporate the mitigation measures presented in Section 5.14 of the Air Quality Assessment.

Land Contamination

I have reviewed the Phase 1 Geo-Environmental Assessment prepared by BWB Consulting (Report ref. LGL-BWB-EGT-XX-RP-LE-0001_Ph1).

The preliminary risk assessment has identified a number of plausible contaminant linkages that require further investigation.

An assessment of the potential risks associated with the site is considered necessary.

Based on this, the standard contaminated land condition is recommended on this and any subsequent applications for the site.

1. Prior to the commencement of development approved by this planning permission (or such other date or stage in development as may be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority), the following components of a scheme to deal with the risks associated with contamination of the site shall each be submitted to and approved, in writing, by the local planning authority:

- i) A preliminary risk assessment which has identified:
 - all previous uses

- potential contaminants associated with those uses
- a conceptual model of the site indicating sources, pathways and receptors
- potentially unacceptable risks arising from contamination at the site.

ii) A site investigation scheme, based on (i) to provide information for a detailed assessment of the risk to all receptors that may be affected, including those off site.

iii) The site investigation results and the detailed risk assessment (ii) and, based on these, an options appraisal and remediation strategy giving full details of the remediation measures required and how they are to be undertaken.

iv) A verification plan providing details of the data that will be collected in order to demonstrate that the works set out in (iii) are complete and identifying any requirements for longer term monitoring of pollutant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action. Any changes to these components require the express consent of the local planning authority. The scheme shall be implemented as approved.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors.

2. Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme and prior to the first use or occupation of the development, a verification report that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out must be produced together with any necessary monitoring and maintenance programme and copies of any waste transfer notes relating to exported and imported soils shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval. The approved monitoring and maintenance programme shall be implemented.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors.

The above must be undertaken in accordance with the Environment Agency's 'Land contamination risk management (LCRM)' guidance, available online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/land-contamination-risk-management-lcrm>.

3. Reporting of Unexpected Contamination: In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of condition 1, and where remediation is necessary a remediation scheme must be prepared in accordance with the requirements of condition 1, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme a verification report must be prepared, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority in accordance with condition 1.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors.

Objection – impact on Woodland Trust sites and ancient woodland

The Woodland Trust is the UK's largest woodland conservation charity and a leading voice in bringing to the attention of government, landowners and the general public the state of the UK's woods and trees. We own over 1,000 sites across the UK, covering over 30,000 hectares and we have over 500,000 members and supporters.

We are an evidence-led organisation, using existing policy and our conservation and planning expertise to assess the impacts of development on ancient woodland and veteran trees. Planning responses submitted by the Trust are based on a review of the information provided as part of a planning application.

Woodland Trust Position

The Trust **objects** to this planning application on the basis of deterioration of Woodland Trust sites, and ancient woodlands designated on Natural England's Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI), as detailed below:-

- Woodland Trust site Dell Wood (grid ref: TQ 07630 97103) - designated Ancient Semi Natural Woodland
- Woodland Trust site Harrocks Wood / Newland's Spring Wood (grid ref: TQ 07632 97418) - part designated Ancient Semi Natural Woodland
- Long Newland's Spring (grid ref: TQ 07448 96826) - designated Ancient Semi Natural Woodland
- Green Lane Wood (grid ref: TQ 08013 97009) - designated Ancient Semi Natural Woodland
- Whippendell Wood (grid ref: TQ 07939 97631) - designated Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, SSSI, and Wood Pasture and Parkland

Impact on Ancient Woodland

The application is for 600 dwellings, a school and associated infrastructure on land which includes, and is adjacent to, areas of ancient woodland and Woodland Trust sites. We are particularly concerned about the impact of the proposals on two Woodland Trust sites adjacent to the development - Dell Wood ancient woodland and Newland's Spring (part ancient woodland).

A key suggestion for mitigation of impacts on ancient woodland is the provision of a "Woodland Recreational Management Plan", the details of which are only briefly outlined in this application, but which appear to include both measures to manage recreational impacts within the woodlands, such as signposting and fencing, and measures to deter the public from accessing woodlands. We are not aware that the Woodland Trust Operational or Land & Property teams have been consulted with regards to any such measures or approached regarding any associated permissions.

The Ecological Impact Assessment concludes that the implementation of a Woodland Recreational Management Plan, together with an un-encroached buffer of 15 metres and a further encroached buffer of 15 metres, will be sufficient to mitigate impacts on Dell Wood and "*maintain the level of biodiversity within the woodland*". However, there is no evidence provided in the application to support this conclusion.

As far as we are aware, the applicant has not approached the Woodland Trust to better understand or survey biodiversity within our woodland. It is not clear, on the basis of the information provided, whether it would be feasible to ensure that for example, sensitive species are not disturbed by noise and recreation; that sensitive ground flora will not be trampled; that pollution or disturbance from dogs will be avoided; or that cat predation will be controlled.

Dell Wood is already experiencing significant deterioration. The name “Dell Wood” is a reference to the large hollow within the woodland, which currently suffers from anti-social behaviour, fires and barbecues. This has resulted in a large area of compacted bare ground within the woodland and high levels of discarded items and broken glass. The hollow is surrounded by vegetation, which increases the risk of fire spreading through the woodland during periods of drought.

The Woodland Trust is not in a position to agree to the principle of a development of this nature and scale at this location in the absence of a robust evidence-based assessment of the impact on Dell Wood and proposals for mitigation.

We have similar concerns with regards to Newland’s Spring wood, although to a lesser extent as this woodland would be adjacent to the new Country Park and further from built up areas.

Natural England and Forestry Commission have identified impacts of development on ancient woodland and veteran trees within their standing advice. This guidance should be considered the Government’s position with regards to development impacting ancient woodland or veteran trees.

We note that Natural England has specified a “minimum 30 metre buffer” and has drawn attention to the need for the local planning authority to consider any impacts on ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees in line with paragraph 193(c) of the NPPF and the standing advice.

The applicant is proposing 15 metres of undeveloped buffer, with a further 15 metre zone incorporating some development, such as pathways and allotments. However, there is no supporting assessment to demonstrate that these proposals will be adequate to prevent impacts on the woodland from the increase in recreational pressure associated with a housing development of this scale.

The appropriate width, design and management of a buffer zone will be influenced by numerous factors, including, but not limited to: the proposed housing mix and density; the nature and extent of existing development close to ancient woodland; existing recreational use of the woodland; the position of the woodland within the landscape in relation to the development; and the design of the development, including green space and available options for activities such as recreation and dog walking.

It is stated in the Ecological Impact Assessment that the pressures on Dell Wood could be of a similar magnitude to the pressures on Green Lane Wood, and yet the circumstances are completely different. There are public footpaths leading directly to Dell Wood from the development site, whereas Green Lane Wood would be enclosed with barrier fencing. It is not clear why Green Lane Wood would be provided with an un-encroached 30 metre buffer, whereas Dell Wood would be provided with a 15 metre un-encroached buffer. Even with a 30 metre buffer, the applicant concedes that it would not be possible to fully mitigate all potential negative urban edge impacts to Green Lane Wood.

In addition to the woodlands discussed above, we are concerned that impacts have not been assessed with regards to the finger of ancient woodland (Long Newland’s Spring) connecting Dell Wood with Little Green Lane. This woodland will be particularly vulnerable to intensified use due to its extremely narrow width, and the location of the public footpath within it. The application should include an assessment of the impact of the development on Long Newland’s Spring.

With regards to lighting, it is unclear how lighting will be controlled into the future as residents make changes to their properties. We are aware of research that suggests light pollution above 0.1 lux around ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees will elicit

responses in animals (Azam et al., 2018). Mitigation of light pollution through buffers and screened zones that result in light pollution levels of 0.1 lux or below is suitable mitigation.

To conclude, we have not been able to find any modelling to assess the level of intensification of access and use of the woodlands, and therefore it is not possible to fully understand the pressures on the various areas of ancient woodland, including Woodland Trust sites, from the increase in people, dogs and cats associated with a development of 600 houses. It does not appear that the scale of recreational pressure resulting from the housing mix has been properly considered through evidence-based analysis.

Protection for ancient woodland is outlined within National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) at paragraph 193(c). This policy provides a test for developments and impact on ancient woodland. However, the test for impact is not a test of significance or magnitude, it is a test of whether there would be any negative impact.

In this case, not only has the feasibility of mitigating impact not been demonstrated, but the applicant has acknowledged that it will not be possible fully to mitigate impact with the current proposals. Feasibility of adequate mitigation needs to be demonstrated by the applicant before this outline application can be approved.

Impacts on Veteran Trees

We are concerned to ensure that all veteran trees on site have been correctly identified and appropriately protected. In this respect, we note that the RAVEN methodology has been used to assess for the presence of veteran trees.

The Woodland Trust does not use, or agree with, the RAVEN methodology as we consider that the application of a standard 'tick box' methodology and use of disqualifying factors such as girth is not in line with government guidance. Planning Practice Guidance for the 'Natural environment' (Natural environment - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)), which is intended to clarify and interpret the NPPF, states: *"Trees become ancient or veteran because of their age, size or condition. Not all of these three characteristics are needed to make a tree ancient or veteran as the characteristics will vary from species to species."* The Arboricultural Association provides further information here Arboricultural Association - VETcert (trees.org.uk).

When assessing veteran status, size alone should not be a disqualifier and we would expect to see full consideration of the tree's condition and whether significant decay features have been identified, in line with the most recent government definition provided within The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024. This states:

"Ancient and veteran trees can be found as individual trees or collections of trees in any setting."

Ancient trees have passed beyond maturity into an ancient life stage or are old in comparison with other trees of the same species which exhibit one or more of the following—

(i) demonstrably great age relative to others of the same species

(ii) changes to their crown and trunk development indicative of the ancient life stage

Veteran trees are mature trees that share physical and other characteristics in common with ancient trees, due to their life or environment, but are neither developmentally nor chronologically ancient. All ancient trees are veteran trees, but not all veteran trees are ancient. Veteran and ancient trees which have died are still recognised as such because they retain significant biodiversity value for many decades.

Veteran trees exhibit one or more of the following—

- (i) significant decay features such as deadwood, hollowing or signs of advanced decay in the trunk or major limbs*
- (ii) a large girth, depending on and relative to species, site and management history*
- (iii) a high value for nature, especially in hosting rare or specialist fungi, lichens and deadwood invertebrates”*

We would therefore encourage the involvement of the Council's tree officer to help determine the veteran status of trees on site. For example, we are concerned that oak tree T15 may need further assessment, and that its relatively small girth may have resulted in potential veteran status being ruled out. Any veteran trees on site should be provided with a veteran tree buffer zone in line with the standing advice.

Supporting Information - Ancient Woodland

Ancient woodland is an irreplaceable resource of great importance for its wildlife, soils, recreational and cultural value, historical and archaeological significance, and the contribution it makes to our diverse landscapes. It is a scarce and threatened resource, covering only 2.5% of England's land area, and has a high level of protection in planning policy.

Natural England and the Forestry Commission, the Government's respective bodies for the natural environment and woodlands, define ancient woodland as follows within their standing advice:-

“Ancient woodland takes hundreds of years to establish and is defined as an irreplaceable habitat. It is a valuable natural asset important for: wildlife (which include rare and threatened species); soils; carbon capture and storage; contributing to the seed bank and genetic diversity; recreation, health and wellbeing; cultural, historical and landscape value. It has been wooded continuously since at least 1600AD. It includes:-

- Ancient semi-natural woodland [ASNW] - mainly made up of trees and shrubs native to the site, usually arising from natural regeneration.*
- Plantations on ancient woodland sites [PAWS] - replanted with conifer or broadleaved trees that retain ancient woodland features, such as undisturbed soil, ground flora and fungi”*

In May 2022, the Government published an updated policy statement on ancient woodland, entitled 'Keepers of Time: ancient and native woodland and trees policy in England'. The Government's 'Keepers of Time' policy accentuates the importance of ancient woodland, stating: *“Ancient woodlands, ancient wood pastures and parkland and ancient and veteran trees are irreplaceable habitats which must be protected. Their long-standing presence, species and form serve as a rich cultural record of past management practices.”*

Supporting Information - Veteran Trees

Ancient and veteran trees are irreplaceable habitats and afforded a high level of protection in planning policy. They possess unique features which provide a rich and diverse range of habitats, playing host to countless other species. In particular, many rare invertebrate, fungi and lichen species are dependent on the decaying wood provided by such trees. They are irreplaceable keystone structures disproportionately supporting ecosystem function and acting as critical refugia for biodiversity. Where they occur outside of woods they are also particularly important for landscape connectivity. They are an essential part of our landscape and cultural heritage.

Natural England and Forestry Commission's standing advice on ancient and veteran trees states that they *“can be individual trees or groups of trees within wood pastures, historic parkland, hedgerows, orchards, parks or other areas. They are often found outside ancient woodlands. They are also irreplaceable habitats.*

“A veteran tree may not be very old, but it has significant decay features, such as branch death and hollowing. These features contribute to its exceptional biodiversity, cultural and heritage value.

“An ancient tree is exceptionally valuable. Attributes can include its: great age; size; condition; biodiversity value as a result of significant wood decay and the habitat created from the ageing process; and cultural and heritage value.”

Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 193, states: *“When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:-*

c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists;”

Footnote 70 defines exceptional reasons as follows: *“For example, infrastructure projects (including nationally significant infrastructure projects, orders under the Transport and Works Act and hybrid bills), where the public benefit would clearly outweigh the loss or deterioration of habitat.”*

There is **no wholly exceptional reason** for the development in this location and as such this application in its current form does not comply with national planning policy.

Conclusion

Ancient woodland is an irreplaceable habitat. As such, it should be protected from any form of development that will result in its loss or deterioration.

The Trust **objects** to this planning application on the basis that the feasibility of mitigating deterioration of ancient woodland has not been demonstrated. The applicant should submit additional information to demonstrate that effective mitigation could be provided. Until such time as the application is supported by an evidence-based assessment, it is not possible to determine whether a development of this nature and scale could be delivered in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

Please don't hesitate to contact us at planningcasework@woodlandtrust.org.uk if it would be helpful to discuss any of the points raised.