DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Tom Rea.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
18/00765/FP	Reconfiguration of internal access road and car parking including creation of 52 additional car parking spaces	Pinehill Hospital Benslow Lane Hitchin Hertfordshire SG4 9QZ

Submitted Plan Nos

6529/LPB 6529/PCP2C 2848-PH-002 2848-PH-001A 65290/CP1A

1.0 Policies

SECT1	Building a Strong, Competitive Economy

SECT10	Meeting climate change, flooding,coastal
SECT4	Promoting Sustainable Transport
SECT8	Promoting Healthy Communities
XD1	Sustainable Design
XD4	Air Quality
XNE7	Reducing Flood Risk
XNE8	Sustainable Drainage Systems
XSP10	Healthy Communities
XSP6	Sustainable Transport

2.0 **Site History**

2.1 See history sheet for full history.

88/00081/1: Single storey extension and 13 additional car parking spaces, granted
95/00751/1: Two storey extension and additional car parking, granted
02/01804/1: Extension of car park to provide an additional 23 car parking spaces, granted
08/01086/1: Extension of car park to provide 18 additional spaces, granted 1.8.08

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 **Hertfordshire Highways:** Recommends conditions and an Informative

3.2 **NHDC Environmental Health Officer (contamination):** Recommends an Electric Vehicle Recharging infrastructure condition and a Green Travel Plan condition

3.3 **NHDC Landscape Officer:** Request further information re tree protection measures

3.4 **Lead Local Flood Authority:** No response

3.5 **HCC Rights of Way:** No response

3.6 **Hertfordshire Ecology:** No response received

3.7 **Site Notice/ Adjoining occupiers:** No representations received

4.0 Planning Considerations

4.1 Site and Surroundings

Pinehill Hospital is located on the south side of Benslow Lane. It grounds include two and three storey hospital buildings and a large car aprk set in well landscaped grounds. The outer perimeter of the site is defined with mature trees and to the south is Benslow Playing field which has Village Green status.

Currently the site contains 114 car parking spaces. Vehicular access is only from Benslow Lane.

The site and the surrounding area is covered by a blanket Tree Preservation Order (TPO No. 37).

4.2 Proposal

The proposal is to re-configure the internal access road and car park and to create an additional 52 car parking spaces. The new car parking areas and access road wil be constructed with permeable tarmac. The amended layout will include 11 disabled car parking spaces. The layout will include 8 new lighting columns (4 m in height) to match existing. New trees and shrub planting is proposed within the site and around the site boundary.

The application is supported by the following documents:

- Tree Survey and assessment
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Ecological Impact Assessment
- Design and Access statement
- Planning statement
- Environmental Assessment
- Transport Assessment
- Travel Plan
- Arboricultural Impact assessment

4.3 Key Issues

The key issues are the principle of the development, visual and landscape impact, environmental impact, highway considerations and planning obligations.

4.3.1 **Principle of the development**

4.3.2 Pinehill Hospital has expanded significantly over the last few years and this has been due to the range of services that the hospital offers but more importantly to a large increase in NHS patients now using the hospital. In 2009 only 20% of patients were NHD funded – this has increased to 50%. The demand for parking spaces on site has increased as a result and this has been compounded by the lack of street parking in the vicinity of the site which is subject to parking restrictions. In addition the weekly visit of a mobile scanning unit takes up 4 – 5 car parking spaces. There has also been an increase in staff numbers (plus an estimated increase of 15 – 20% up to 2020).

The site is within the urban area of Hitchin and the site is a well established local hospital that provides both private and NHS services in a sustainable location. The site is not within a conservation area and there are no listed buildings on site that may be affected by the proposals. I consider that subject to careful consideration of visual, environmental and highway matters the principle of additional car parking at the site is acceptable.

4.3.3 **Visual and landscape impact / impact on neighbours**

4.3.4 The submitted Aboricultural assessment states that the proposal will result in the loss of 27 trees. Of these trees only 1 is a Category A tree (i.e. of good specimen quality and with more than 40 years life expectancy). The remaining trees fall within Category B (trees of moderate quality with less than 20 years life expectancy) and Category C (low quality / less than 10 years). A programme of tree planting is proposed to compensate for the loss of trees, including along the south west and south east boundaries where the visual impact of trees felled within the site will be more significant. Overall I consider that with the compensatory tree planting and factoring in the limited longevity of the category B and C trees to be removed, the visual impact of the development would not be severe. Landscaping within the site will be more urban in appearance with the additional parking however it must be appreciated that many of the grassed areas are currently parked on now. Taking into account the relatively contained nature of the site and the vey limited impact from the Benslow Rise frontage, I consider that on balance the public benefits of the proposals outweigh the visual and landscape harm.

Part of the proposed extended car park will be closer to the Benslow Rise neighbouring properties to the east. However a number of trees to the east of the proposed car park which are to be retained, there are existing trees outside of the site to the east and new tree planting is proposed along the south eastern boundary which should mitigate against the visual impact of the development on existing residents. The nearest new car park lamps are shown to be two directional facing away from the Benslow Rise properties and the lamps are fitted with hoods and therefore these aspects of the lighting should ensure that the impact on residents and local wildlife is minimised. Overall however it is considered that the impact on residents from noise and disturbance is unlikely to be significant given the separation distances and intervening landscaping.

4.3.5 **Environmental impact**

The submitted flood risk assessment proposes a SUDs system for the new car parking area which is considered capable of infiltration given existing soil conditions. Permeable tarmac is proposed to facilitate the scheme and flood risk is estimated as low given the site location of the site in Flood Zone 1 and the only issue being surface water management. Currently the car park has a drainage infrastructure comprising of surface water drains that discharge into soakaways some of which are off-site. The intention is to retain this system alongside the new SUDs system. No comments have been received from the Lead Local Flood Authority. It would appear that there are no significant surface water management issues identified that present reasonable flood risk grounds to withhold planning permission and therefore I recommend that the development is carried out in accordance with the submitted FRA.

4.3.6 The submitted Ecological report reveals that a Phase 1 habitat survey was carried out on the site in 2017. The survey concluded that the built up part of the site (i.e. car parks, buildings and storage sheds) provide negligible to low ecological value. The scattered shrubs and trees provide some moderate habitat for foraging / commuting bats. A number of mitigation features are proposed, including bird boxes, wood piles and compensatory planting that would offset the limited harm caused by the development. I recommend that the development is carried out in accordance with the recommendations of the submitted Ecological Impact Assessment.

4.3.7 The Council's Environmental Health officer considers that because the proposals are limited to the extension of an existing car park and do not involve residential use no land contamination condition is required. An EV recharging condition is recommended and I consider that this should be supported given the large increase in car parking spaces and impact on air pollution. Likewise I support the Travel Plan condition suggested as the submitted Travel Plan does not contain sufficient detail.

4.3.8 **Highway considerations**

The proposal is to increase the car park from 114 spaces to 166 spaces including 11 disabled spaces. In addition there would be 5 dedicated motorcycle spaces and 25 cycle spaces. Although there is a significant car parking issue at the hospital which results in congestion, badly parked cars and consequent stress for patients, staff and visitors the proposal is combined with a Car Parking Management Strategy which seeks to make more effective use of the car park and discourage car use in favour of more sustainable transport choices. This is set out in the accompanying Travel Plan.

There is no increase in operational floorspace – the proposals are intended to deal with a increasingly congested car park and its poor layout. As such no TRICs data is supplied to calculate increase in traffic movements. Indeed it is expected that car movements will potentially decrease as patients, staff and visitors are encouraged to use more sustainable transport modes.

4.3.9 The Transport statement includes a swept path analysis to show that refuse and delivery vehicles as well as standard cars can access, manoeuvre and leave the site in forward gear. The Highway Authority has advised that it considers that the development will not have an unreasonable impact on the safety and operation of the adjoining highways and does not raise any objections.

The submitted Travel Plan does not include any reference to promoting the use of ultra low emission vehicles (ULEV's) to address air quality issues and accordingly there are no proposed electric vehicle charging points within the re-configured car park. The Council's Environmental Health officer and the Highway Authority both consider that a condition requiring the installation of electric vehicle charging points should be included

if permission is granted. In addition because the travel plan does not make provision for ULEV's it will need to be revised and therefore a Travel Plan condition is recommended.

Details of the cycle storage enclosures will be required.

Overall it is considered that the car park extension will help to alleviate congestion within the site and off-site parking in the surrounding roads. In addition it should result in promoting more sustainable modes of transport through a Travel Plan. Given these benefits and that there is no objection from the highway authority it is considered that there are no highway grounds to raise an objection to this development.

4.3.10 **Planning Obligations**

Following the Court of Appeal decision in May 2016 the Government has established that no tariff style contributions through legal agreements should be sought for small scale developments including on sites where there is less than 1,000 sqm of floorspace proposed. In this case there is no increase in floorspace to the hospital buildings and the Highway Authority has not requested any S106 contributions towards sustainable transport initiatives. Furthermore, a Travel Plan is put forward as part of this proposal to promote sustainable transport choices by patients, visitors and staff. I conclude that a section 106 agreement to seek financial contributions in respect of the additional car parking spaces would not be justified in this case.

4.4 **Conclusion**

Planning permission has been granted for various extensions to the car park in recent years however the car parking area layout requires not only a capacity increase but improved useability. The proposed car park extension will provide the following additional benefits:

- An increase in disabled spaces from 3 to 11
- New footpath connections to the existing building and through the parking area
- New lighting
- Better circulation
- New cycling racks/ storage area
- Permeable surfacing
- Supplementary boundary planting
- Travel Plan

It is acknowledged that there will be a loss of trees within the site and less soft landscaping however new planting is proposed and this together with the benefits of a substantial amount of additional parking will provide a longer term solution to parking problems at the site for the benefit of patients, visitors and staff . In addition no objections have been raised by the statutory consultees or adjacent residents.

I consider that the benefits of the proposals will outweigh the harm to the scheme from the short term adverse visual impact and loss of landscaping. Accordingly it is considered that planning permission could be granted subject to conditions.

5.0 **Recommendation**

5.1 That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.

   Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out wholly in accordance with the details specified in the application and supporting approved documents and plans listed above.

   Reason:To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with details which form the basis of this grant of permission.

3. The approved details of landscaping shall be carried out before the end of the first planting season following either the first occupation of any of the buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner; and any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased, shall be replaced during the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority agrees in writing to vary or dispense with this requirement.

   Reason:To safeguard and enhance the appearance of the completed development and the visual amenity of the locality.

4. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved details of a site specific travel plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Plan shall include measures to encourage the use of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles. Measures within the approved travel plan shall be implemented in full within an agreed timetable set out in the Plan unless otherwise

agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of promoting sustainable transport and minimising the impact on local air quality

5. Prior to the first use of the extended car park , the development site shall include provision for four of its fifty-two car parking spaces to be designated for plug-in Electric Vehicles (EV) and served by EV Recharging Points. As a minimum the EV Recharging Points should be Fast Charging Points.

Reason: To contribute to the objective of providing a sustainable transport network and to provide the necessary infrastructure to help off-set the adverse impact of the operational phase of the development on local air quality.

6. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the Avoidance, Mitigation, Compensation and Enhancement measures set out in the submitted 'Ecological Impact Assessment by Capita (March 2018).

Reason: In the interests of nature conservation and enhancement

7. No development shall commence until a Construction Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the construction of the development shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved Plan. The Construction Traffic Management Plan shall include details of:
a. Construction vehicle numbers, type, routing;
b. Traffic management requirements;
c. Construction and storage compounds (including areas designated for car parking);
d. Siting and details of wheel washing facilities;
e. Cleaning of site entrances, site tracks and the adjacent public highway;
f. Timing of construction activities to avoid school pick up/drop off times;
g. Provision of sufficient on-site parking prior to commencement of construction activities;
h. Post construction restoration/reinstatement of the working areas and temporary access to the public highway if required.

Reason: In order to protect highway safety and the amenity of other users of the public highway.

8. Prior to the comemncment of the use of the car park details of the cycle enclosures / shelters shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans.

Reason: To ensure adequate provision is made for cycle parking

9. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out and maintained in accordance with the Sustainable Drainage Strategy set out in Appendix D of the submitted 'Flood Risk Assessment and Sustainable Drainage Strategy' (February 2018) by Capita.

Reason: To ensure that flood risk is minimised.

Proactive Statement:

Planning permission has been granted for this proposal. The Council acted proactively through early engagement with the applicant at the pre-application stage which led to improvements to the scheme. The Council has therefore acted proactively in line with the requirements of the Framework (paragraphs 186 and 187) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Signed  Simon Ellis Determining Officer	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Date: 23 May 2018	