

Land at Highover Farm, Hitchin

Comments on Design Code May 2025

1 General Planning Comments

	Reference	Comment	Response
1.1	General	I think you could add a general point about numbering. It is inconsistent, with long sections not being numbered at all, and many slightly related requirements being listed as bullet points. This makes it difficult to refer to specific points in the code, and will make compliance checking unnecessarily complicated. All paragraphs should be numbered. Bullet should be numbered unless they are to be taken as a group.	We have reviewed and make amendments where necessary but do not want to over complicate the structure unnecessarily and undermine the purpose of having a numbering system.
1.2	General	MUST's and SHOULD's While it is referenced at the beginning of the document, the use of the terms MUST and SHOULD are used sparingly throughout the code. Their importance is key to creating your compliance checklist (read below). There should be an exercise where the design team goes through and re-writes the core code with MUST and SHOULD statements throughout - otherwise there is nuance in the decision making on RM applications - which also detracts from the coded nature of the document and what we are trying to achieve.	DC has been updated. The checklist identifies all the musts and should. Note the whole of the landscape section is considered to be Must.

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	Reference	Comment	Response
1.3	Para 1.3.2	Check road and place name spellings, and throughout the document, eg Collison Close	Noted
1.4	Para 1.1.4 and 1.7	Two references to what the 'heart' of the development is – I think the heart is the public square, with the retail, school and park framing it	Noted
1.5	Page 29	Allotments (also see urban design comments) – signpost to condition 8 and informative 6 of the Decision Notice. Detail in there doesn't need to be covered in the code. There are no 'must/should' rules on this section. Would recommend stripping some detail and focus on a couple of rules to do with drop off/pick up point and boundary treatment/landscaping in relation to different neighbouring land uses. Greenspaces manager thought that water butts rather than mains water would be more appropriate.	Water butts added. Drop off/pick up and boundary treatment provided. Detail retained.
1.6	Page 22	Rules for bunds should be 'must'	Must added
1.7	Page 57	Please see attached Joe's suggestions on must and should for the Highover Green area. It should be noted that the delivery cost of the school must fit within the DFE scorecard costs therefore any such requests should be considered with this in mind.	See end of commentary

2 Sustainability

	Reference	Comment	Response
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2.1	1.8	The draft chapter covers some Sustainability SPD Themes in text and all in the summary table. SPD 'Targets' are set out in one or two of the Themes in the table. This should be provided for all Themes.	Revised chapter 1.8
2.2	1.8.1	For ease of implementing and checking compliance with the DC, the council would suggest that the Sustainability Chapter of the DC is set out with the same Themes as the SPD. Specific details should be cross ref to Themes that are secured by conditions and S106. The DC should therefore provide high level / overarching targets to guide the detailed information that should be provided and agreed via conditions and covenants.	Revised chapter 1.8
2.3	1.8.2	Of the 9 Themes set out in the SPD, 8 are applicable to the site at Highover Farm. Of these, 5 are covered elsewhere in the DC. For these, either provide a summary of these in the Sustainability Chapter and/or reference relevant conditions and S106 clauses where further details will be provided. Each Theme should include a target level (as per the Embodied Carbon section and table in the draft DC). The 3 key Themes to address in the Sustainability Chapter are highlighted below:	Revised chapter 1.8
2.4	1.8.2.3	Optimising Passive Design & Fabric Performance: Suggest including general solutions to heating and cooling principles to be applied across the site. i.e. Cooling - text and illustrations about over hanging eaves details on primary rooms and Heating – text and illustrations of primary rooms located on south facing elevations. Include reference to condition 17 (sustainability strategy) where further details will be provided. Add Target (Gold, Silver, Bronze).	Revised chapter 1.8
2.5	1.8.2.1	Achieving low-carbon energy DC needs to include design approaches to dealing with location and appearance of ASHP i.e. Aim to locate on non-public	Revised chapter 1.8

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		elevations and where it is essential that they are located on view these should be suitably screened with a shroud (provide illustrations). DC could include a plan showing potential locations / properties where solar PV would be appropriate in principle? Include reference to condition 17 (sustainability strategy) where further details will be provided. Add Target (Gold, Silver, Bronze).	Revised chapter 1.8
2.6	1.8.2.1	Minimising carbon footprint Comment: Inclusion of the Target is welcome. Overarching / high level information should be provided here to inform and guide more specific details provided as part of conditions 24 and 17 (Waste)	Revised chapter 1.8
2.7	1.8.2	Healthy Place Making Comment: This is covered elsewhere in the DC (Ryan to advise). Provide a reference in this chapter as to where this can be found? Reference conditions 28 & 29 (Open Space) 13 (Tree Protection) and relevant s106 covenants where further information will be provided.	Revised chapter 1.8
2.8	1.8.2	Promoting biodiversity – ref condition 16 (Ecology LEMP) This is covered elsewhere in the DC (Liz to advise?). Provide a reference in this chapter as to where this can be found? Reference condition 16 (LEMP / Ecology) where detailed information will be provided.	Revised chapter 1.8
2.9	1.8.2.4	Sustainable Travel – ref condition 18 (EV charging) This is covered elsewhere in the DC (Edward to advise). Provide a reference in this chapter as to where this can be found? But I would suggest that examples of EV charging solutions for different land uses and locations would be helpful / necessary? There is no specific condition to deal with cycle parking so it will be important	Revised chapter 1.8 The approach is to provide EV charging points for each dwelling. see 3.9.4

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		to set this out. This should cover solutions for different land uses / typologies – residential, commercial, educational, open space etc.	
2.10	1.8.3.4	Conserving Water – ref condition 17 Some information set out in draft DC. Specific details should come forward as part of the condition 17 and make cross reference. The high-level principles set out in the DC are acceptable. Add Target (Gold, Silver, Bronze).	Revised chapter 1.8
2.11	1.8.3.3 and 2.11	Sustainable Drainage Summarise SuDs solutions proposed for each character area or signpost to other relevant DC chapters? Reference conditions 21,22,23/relevant s106. See landscape advice from Ryan.	Revised chapter 1.8, but also note New section of main drainage text 2.11 & 2.12 added.

3 Urban Design

Please review these comments alongside the original Urban Design Comments Document: 250606_HT1 UD Comments JM as this document contains imagery etc to help illustrate some points.

	Reference	Comment	Response
		Key theme: Connectivity/Legibility	
3.1		[Open Spaces] Boundary treatments to open spaces should be considered with regards to having regular opportunities for good connectivity, ensuring the code facilitates the appropriate placement of access-points where predictive desire-lines exist i.e. Breaks in the Knee Rail MUST be regular (at least every 30m) to allow for permeability. Breaks MUST be wide enough to allow a pedestrian to pass but not wide enough for a vehicle to enter the greenspace.	Text updated to reflect break in timber knee rail.

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	Reference	Comment	Response
3.2		[Open Spaces] Signposting/wayfinding of open spaces/ play areas to be coded in with a recognisable (even fun?) way of identifying play on the site - perhaps there could be a simple beacon which is visible from afar that helps to draw people in (see images opposite REF Charles Holland Architects - Tooley Street Urban Landmark). This is a relatively easy way to create a strong and attractive sense of place/site identity. This could also be fed into the design of benches/bins in open spaces through the RAL colours for instance.	Updated plan at page 17 with locations. Details of them would be secured at RM stage.
3.3		[Open Spaces] Play on the way is an important way of creating connected neighbourhoods through interaction with the natural environment while enabling children to experience the built environment in a more friendly/engaging way. It is noted that the location of LEAP's and the NEAP on the site do not negate the need for doorstep play within 100m walking distance of every home (LAP's). These can be delivered in the form of play on the way features and should be coded to ensure that they can be placed effectively on streets as required in a safe and integrated way (wider verge with play feature). Consideration should be given to proximity of homes, legibility, accessibility and a range of different experiences (i.e. not just using boulders in every instance).	Play on the way' references added.
3.4		[Open Spaces] Within Dane Walk, the path switches sides of the hedgerow between the central and eastern sections. Code should dictate that the path be continuous across junctions to encourage people to use this route fully and not filter onto the road network because of poor wayfinding/illegibility when crossing the road i.e. The pedestrian footpath through Dane Walk MUST be continuous throughout its entire length and where it intersects with the secondary roadways, the footpath MUST remain level (the	A raised table can be added to allow Dane Walk to be continuous across junctions and remain level.

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	Reference	Comment	Response
		roadway MUST ramp up and over the footway), the junction must be designed to clearly show vehicles that there is a pedestrian crossing point, the footpath should be demarcated as different to the roadway and surrounding pathways, and must be clearly recognisable by pedestrians. I would suggest using a particular colour of paver to denote this route.	
	3.5	[Movement] Network of rest points along pathways should be coded with a minimum distance between benches i.e. 100m.	Note that this is not a policy requirement, note that they will be provided and carefully designed into the scheme and key places. Text re-worded to refer to rest points.
	3.6	[Movement] Concern over front access to on-plot parking along the avenue, with interruptions to the cycleway/footpath extremely regularly. The roadway will never look like the diagram given the constant nature of access to frontages required.	There will be frontage access to on-plot parking along the Spine Road. This has been a long agreed principle with HCC. However, given there is a verge that separates the cycleway/footway with the carriageway any change in gradient and drop kerb would be retained in the gap in the verge and we would therefore retain a level and continuous grade separated cycleway/footway. With adequate visibility the potential for conflict will be low. The number of cyclists and vehicular movements likely also relatively low.
	3.7	[Movement] There must be no streets defined by front parking, there should be a MUST statement which explicitly states this i.e. On-plot front parking MUST NOT be included on both sides of a Primary, Secondary or Tertiary Street. It is only allowed on both sides of a parking court. This is to avoid the visual dominance of cars as defining features of streets, avoiding tarmac surfacing to be too wide in the street scene and to encourage social interaction. Where on-plot front parking is included, parallel parking bays can be included across the street as visitor bays - or - the houses opposite should have on-plot side parking - or - parking is dealt with through the use of parking courts.	See 3.9.9.6 on the DC <i>"On-plot front parking "SHOULD be avoided" on both sides of a Primary, Secondary or Tertiary Street, to avoid visual dominance of cars and avoid wide asphalt surfacing in the street scene".</i> We will try to minimize this wherever possible. However, due to a mix of typologies and layout design, there may be instances where it is necessary. In such cases, the visual dominance of cars will be mitigated through landscape enhancements, as suggested by the code, which recommends screening every four parking bays.
		Key theme: Usability	

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3.8		[Open Spaces] The NEAP has been coded well with good referencing of the FIT standards. It would make the NEAP more usable if there was a water point included as a drinking fountain	Not policy requirement Whilst Barratt Redrow appreciate the need to hydrate and for a public in the centre of a large park or town centre and water source may be advantageous, the NEAP is serving the local community who will live in close proximity to the park. We feel the disbenefits (tampering/damage through anti-social behaviour, potential contamination issues) in this scenario out weight the benefits
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	Reference	Comment	Response
		and hand rinse station accessible for toddlers and older children/adults.	
	3.9	[Open Spaces] Highover Park would also benefit from a defibrillator located nearby and clearly signposted. This could be included near the neighbourhood centre/school for ease of access as required.	Not policy requirement, a note has been added for inclusion at the school
	3.10	Code should also contain information on a coherent boundary treatment (if required) which matches/relates to the that of the NEAP.	
	3.11	[Open Spaces] The allotments section needs to contain code which addresses the site specific nature of these allotments, detailing the parking requirement (loading bay and disabled space) and also stating that the boundary fence MUST be a mesh fence to avoid palisade fencing in future applications, and also to say that it MUST be painted green (giving an appropriate RAL colour).	Text and key images amended. RAL specified.
	3.12	[Open Spaces] It is indicated on illustrative plans that the attenuation basin and infiltration basin contain water. This needs to be clarified. We would prefer these to contain water year-round, which creates a more vibrant wildlife habitat and a stronger sense of place. If there is any possibility for these to retain water, we would push to see that being coded. If the attenuation basin will largely remain dry, it should be accessible for ad-hoc play and social interaction. It should be planted in the same way as green open spaces and slopes should be gentle enough to walk up and down into the basin.	Changed of colour (SUDs) on key diagram. At present, both the Attenuation Basin and the Infiltration Basin have been designed as dry basins, meaning they are not permanently wet and will only temporarily store surface water during and after rainfall events. These basins function as part of the strategic SuDS infrastructure to manage runoff volumes and promote gradual infiltration to ground, preventing downstream flooding. To support community use and contribute positively to the local landscape, the basins have been carefully shaped with gentle side slopes to allow safe and inclusive access. These gradients are suitable for informal play, amenity use, and maintenance, while also ensuring that the basins visually read as part of the open space network. The planting strategy has been developed to deliver strong ecological value even in the absence of permanent standing water. Species selected for the basin floors and slopes include wildflower meadow mixes that are resilient to intermittent seasonal wetting. This planting will support a

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			range of invertebrates, pollinators, and birds, creating a diverse habitat structure and enhancing the site's overall biodiversity In line with best practice, the basins will be managed as multifunctional green infrastructure — not only fulfilling their drainage role, but also providing visual interest, supporting urban cooling, and enhancing residents' connection to nature
3.13		[Movement] On-Plot Parking - Garages, where provided should count as parking spaces on-plot and should therefore be the minimum internal size required in the NHDC guidance. This	Garages will be built to appropriate standards. note 3.9.8.5 page 48 on the DC is unchanged.

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	Reference	Comment	Response
		should be coded. We do not want to see garages which are not big enough to take a modern family car. This should improve rear gardens as a result (as garages can be brought forward alongside houses, with one parking space inside and one in front). Garages can then be accessed from within the house creating better functional access for storage etc. Gardens are larger and less overshadowed as a result, with more of the amenity space taking up the entire width of the plot.	
	3.14	[Movement] Parking courts can serve more homes (currently saying 10 max) however they MUST contain landscaping (this is currently shown as a SHOULD) (there must be no more than 4 spaces before a 2.5m wide landscaping space containing a tree). Parking courts MUST also have two points of vehicular & pedestrian entry - in this way they should be connecting pieces - like mews streets with parking and overlooking/surveillance.	Landscape treatment to areas of parking courts shall be enhanced with tree and shrub planting where achievable. See note 3.9.10.5 on the DC We are following Hertfordshire highway guidance parking court as single access point (part 4 chapter 6 15.6)
		Key theme: Appearance	
	3.15	[Movement] On-plot parking spaces must be surfaced in a permeable block paver with a contrasting block to denote edges. This must be consistent throughout the scheme. This will also help with at-source water management as part of the SUDS Strategy.	Tarmac will be used on parking spaces, with block paving used as an outline to mark the parking and circulation areas." This was accepted during the meeting for school area. Private driveways will be constructed using asphalt surfacing to minimise staining from vehicle use and provide a durable, low-maintenance surface. A brick-paved edge will be incorporated to frame the driveway area, clearly define parking extents, and support localised surface water management as part of the site-wide SuDS strategy. This design approach provides a consistent aesthetic across the development while ensuring that water runoff from driveways is appropriately managed. The contrasting block paving detail also visually breaks up areas of hard surfacing and supports placemaking objectives. Although asphalt surfacing itself is impermeable, the brick edging and associated highway drainage measures (such as adjacent swales or piped connections) will direct water to SuDS features where it can be attenuated and treated

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			appropriately.
		[Building Form] There should be code to curtail the variation of form & materials along the same street. This will make for more legible streets which are easy to navigate and help to situate yourself within the development. This would give us a clear way forward with regards to development-wide street design i.e. Buildings along a single side of any street can vary in form but the materiality must remain the same - or - the materials can vary along the street, but the form must remain consistent. Exceptions	we would not want to limit the selection of housetypes as a result.

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	Reference	Comment	Response
		are corners or key buildings identified on the urban design plan, where a different house type must be used to address both streets or a key view.	
	3.16	[Building Form] Roof materials must be consistent and vary only in the case of corner or key buildings as set out in the urban design framework plan. This is to avoid the seemingly random pepper-potting of roof materials across the site and gives the change of material a rationale. A plan should be included at RM stages which clearly shows material composition that conforms to this principle.	DC sets distribution of roof material and colour for each character area . Noted re plan at RM stage
	3.17	[Building Form] There should be a general code element which states that close board fencing will not be visible from the public highway in any circumstance - even within parking courts where the boundary is defined by rear amenity spaces. These should always be brick walls with architectural detailing added for interest (incorporating stack bond/herringbone/sawtooth brick details within garden walls for instance).	DC specify high brick wall for side wall addressing the street public realm and or internal courtyards. Architectural details are for detailed stage
	3.18	[Building Form] The houses closest to High Dane on both sides of the avenue should work harder to demonstrate the form & materials/detailing of the local context, as such the first houses should be coded to be semi-detached dwellings without garages. These house types are shown further up towards the school. Also the homes adjoining on the south side should be in-line with the existing homes in terms of orientation and set-back, at least up until the first junction, where there is an opportunity to change this slightly.	Noted and agreed. See appearance on High Dane for first plots without garages and semis.
	3.19	[Building Form] If there is a possibility to get the 'quoins' for the High Dane Special Place on each of the houses along the main avenue route, this would elevate this area significantly. Currently	See note 4.6.3 on the DC on High Dane

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	Reference	Comment	Response
		these are only included for corner buildings - High Dane has these on each house. We want to see this as a contemporary continuation of High Dane merging into the rest of the site.	
	3.20	[Building Form] There are multiple references to 'White/Off-white Render' as a material choice across different character areas and phases of development (sometimes to be developed by different developers/builders). It is important that this render choice is fixed for the entire site. We do not want to see different render specifications across different parts of the site. Primary concerns are colour and texture semblance.	DC states rough cast render in white or off-white. Further spec should be dealt on detailed RM stage.
	3.21	[Building Form] In Section 4.14 Dane Walk Key Frontage code, under Boundary Treatments there is conflicting code around railings.	Noted and revised
	3.22	[Building Form] Bin Storage - on-plot must be within a covered bin store with easy access to waste bins. Drag distance to collection point should be clear of any obstructions i.e. steps, parked cars, EV chargers & cables etc. This is to combat bin blight, a common issue where residents leave bins on frontages/visible because the route to storage is convoluted and inconvenient.	Noted, for detailed stage to proof this.
	3.23	Planting Palette (also see landscape comments below) The use of EM4 is unsuitable for a chalk base (at highover the base tends to be chalk). EM6 would be a better mix for this site and should replace EM4.	Updated to EM6 as requested.
	3.24	Under scrub planting, Broom is listed, however this is better suited to more acidic soils. This should be reconsidered. Also, it was noted that the nearby Hillbrow Allotments have a butterfly group which have identified Small Blue in the area - a priority species for	Kidney vetch added to scheme Broom removed.

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	Reference	Comment	Response
		Hertfordshire. Their foodplant is Kidney Vetch, which could be added into the palette if possible. Consider whether detailed landscaping plans/species are needed for the Code, or keep detail to be guidance.	
	3.25	Service Margin on Roads What is the extra road width for? This will read as extra road width for those using the road in a vehicle and to those looking to park their vehicles? Can the services not go under the roadway or the verge? This has significant impact on land use.	The additional width on the minor/tertiary roads allows a 6m reverse distance to be provided for vehicles reversing onto/off driveways. Services are provided under the road and where feasible the Tertiary Roads can be narrowed.
	3.26	Design Code Compliance Checklist At a previous meeting, it was agreed that applicants should submit a Compliance Checklist alongside any future Reserved Matters (RM) applications. This requirement forms part of the Statement of Compliance outlined under Condition 6 of the approved Outline Planning Permission (Ref: 18/01154/OP).	Noted and will be provided. Checklist included at back of DC document.
	3.27	The checklist presents the MUST and SHOULD requirements from each section of the Design Code in a structured, easy-to-read table with a simple checkbox format. Applicants are expected to self-certify their RM applications against the design code using this checklist, ensuring that proposals align with the established design principles.	Noted and done as above
	3.28	This approach streamlines the assessment process, making it more efficient for both applicants and the Local Planning Authority (LPA). Where any deviation from the code occurs, the accompanying Statement of Compliance should provide clear justification, demonstrating how the proposed variation enhances or improves upon the baseline requirements of the code.	Noted and agreed

Title

	Reference	Comment	Response
3.29		The checklist should be submitted in a blank format alongside design code so that the LPA can confirm it is appropriate for the checking of future Reserved Matters applications.	Noted and as above comment

4 Landscape (Ryan Mills)

	Reference	Comment	Response
4.1	General	Please note that the level of detail included in the design code will set a clear expectation for future applications, and you may be held to this detail at later stages. Where appropriate, consider simplifying or generalising overly specific content to retain flexibility.	Noted, but Further detail was added at LPA request
4.2	General	Where possible, please use more directive terminology such as 'must' and 'should' to distinguish between mandatory requirements and strong recommendations.	'Must' and 'should' used more. In landscape section , everything is a must.
4.3	Open Space Section 2.0 - General	It is recommended that the Design Code includes a general 'Soft Landscape' section that establishes overarching principles applicable across the site. This would help to consolidate guidance currently scattered across the document and ensure a clear, consistent approach. For example, elements currently noted under Open Space, such as parkland tree planting, could be drawn together into a broader strategy. This section might outline a framework for standard native tree planting across the development, with opportunities for a limited number of feature specimen trees at key locations such as gateways, junctions, or focal points.	Framework follows previous structure LPA requested Repetitive structure of the code already provides this for each single landscape character area.

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	Reference	Comment	Response
		In parallel, a 'Hard Landscape' section could also be introduced to set out a coordinated approach to wayfinding, street furniture, and surface materials. This would help ensure consistency in materials and detailing across different character areas/open spaces, while allowing appropriate variation where justified by context or function. As with soft landscape elements, this doesn't necessarily need to be new information but drawn from the different Open Space sections already created. Both of these general sections would help to clarify site-wide expectations and improve legibility for future applicants, while still allowing for more detailed design responses at reserved matters stage.	
4.4	Open Space Section 2.0 - General	In the same way that general soft and hard landscape sections have been suggested, it would be beneficial to include a section on Ecological Mitigation and Enhancement. This could provide overarching guidance on how ecological measures are to be integrated across the site, including habitat creation and species-specific enhancements.	Ecological mitigation & enhancement chapter 2.10 added on landscape character areas sections
4.5	Open Space Section 2.0 – Open Space Plan	Tertiary Street 1 is shown on the Illustrative Open Space Plan, but its role and character are not clearly defined. If the intention is for this route to function as a green link or a visual connection to areas of open space, this should be made explicit within the design code. A short section or further definition would be helpful to clarify its landscape function, design intent, and how it contributes to the overall green infrastructure network.	Tertiary street 1 as indicated at page 42 will present deep front garden or consistent landscape area to reinforce green character of this route. To avoid confusion this has been removed from the diagram of open space, they are marked on movement section
4.6	Open Space Section 2.0 – Key Maps	While the Key Maps for each open space are helpful in illustrating the structure and components of each area, they could be strengthened by providing more detail on how the	Plan on page 17 shows all areas together

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	Reference	Comment	Response
		spaces respond to and connect with the surrounding development. In particular, it would be beneficial for the maps to highlight key pedestrian and cycle connections, important visual links or framed views, and gateway spaces that will require careful treatment at the detailed design stage.	
4.7	Page 17: 2.1 Green Infrastructure and Nature	Would recommend this section is titled Landscape Character Areas or Landscape and Open Space.	section relabelled as “ Landscape Character Areas ”
4.8	Open Space Section 2.0 – Key Maps	It is recommended that more contrasting colours are used to differentiate between amenity and meadow grassland on key supporting maps and diagrams. At present, the similar tones make it difficult to distinguish between the two, which could lead to confusion when interpreting the extent and distribution of different typologies.	Meadow grass lighten up.
4.9	Open Space Section 2.0 – Key Maps	The level of detail currently included, such as the specification of particular grass seed mixes and play area boundary treatments, may be overly prescriptive for this stage of the design process. It may be more appropriate to outline general principles and allow for refinement at the detailed design stage. However, if the applicant chooses to retain this level of detail, it should be reviewed. For example, EM4 is designed for clay soils, whereas a mix more appropriate for chalk soils, such as EM6, may be more suitable given the existing site conditions.	Grass mix updated to EM6.
4.10	Page 22 Section 2.4 Hitchin Meadows	Please ensure that SuDS basins are only shown in blue where they are intended to hold water permanently. Where basins are designed to function as dry swales or landscape depressions, they should be shown using appropriate symbology to avoid misinterpretation.	Suds colour updated to blue/green/grey.

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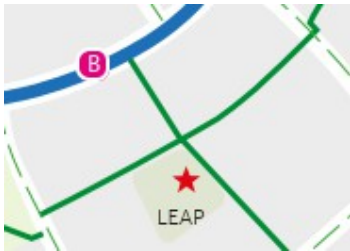
	Reference	Comment	Response
4.11	Open Space Section 2.10 Planting Palette	It is recommended that the general landscape guidelines include reference to the incorporation of naturalised bulbs within meadow areas. These can provide valuable seasonal interest and important nectar sources for pollinators. In addition, consideration should be given to including suitable perennials among larger shrub planting to introduce greater visual interest and seasonal variation. While specific species need not be identified at this stage, establishing these principles will help to deliver a more diverse landscape across the development.	Bulb planting added to Hitchin Meadows & Stotfold linear parkland and Gateway Planting palette is a guide for principle/core native species, this does not exclude the use of more perennial style planting to be used through the scheme at the detailed design stage
4.12	Open Space Section 2.9 - Allotments	The perimeter of the allotment areas should incorporate planting wherever possible to enhance the visual appearance while also enhancing biodiversity.	Allotment has boundary hedgerows as stated in text.
4.13	Page 32 Open Space Section 2.11 Drainage Strategy	The Drainage Strategy could be expanded to include precedent example images. Though technically sound, we would advise that further details of source control elements are included. For example, permeable paving, rain gardens and planters. Locations do not need to be included, however the aspiration to include and review at the detailed design stage must be included. This would then provide more confidence that the SuDS attenuation basins can provide the habitat enhancements that are part of the strategic drainage strategy.	Already covered by response to 2.11. Drainage section updated.
4.14	Open Space Section 2.11 Drainage Strategy Para 2.11.3	Reference is made to 'ponds and wetlands' within the SuDS options, but unless these features are intended to retain water, it would be appropriate to remove.	Whilst not part of the drainage strategy, the existing pond on site will be retained. In addition, the attenuation pond will hold water during high rainfall periods whilst it discharges at a controlled rate to the infiltration pond. Wording has been amended to clarify this.
4.15	Open Space Section 2.11 Drainage	A seed mix is proposed for the SuDS basins, which appears broadly appropriate for the wetter base of the basins. However, there should also be an aspiration to introduce complementary	Attenuation Basin and the Infiltration Basin have been designed so they aren't permanently wet, therefore no changes

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	Reference	Comment	Response
	Strategy Para 2.11.7	planting, include suitable marginal species, wet-tolerant shrubs, and other vegetation that enhances biodiversity and visual interest. A more layered planting approach would help to maximise the multifunctional value of the SuDS network.	
4.16	Movement Section 3.0	Where tree species are specified for different street typologies, it is advised that the phrase 'or similar' is included. This will allow for a degree of flexibility in species selection, enabling alternatives to be considered that meet the same functional and aesthetic objectives.	Added text or similar approved to each street typology.
4.17	Page 39 Building Form Section 4.0	There are discrepancies between the Open Space section and the Building Form section regarding boundary treatments. For example, the Threshing Barn Green Character Area refers to a 'single row of bollards', while the corresponding Open Space section specifies a timber knee rail. While our preference is for bollards in this location, we recommend that all boundary treatments across the document are reviewed to ensure consistency between sections. A unified approach will provide clearer guidance and reduce the potential for confusion at the detailed design stage.	Threshing Barn Green updated to bollards. Highover park updated to bollard to correspond with Groveland character area.
4.18	Building Form Section 4.0	Where parking courtyards are referenced, we advise that the design code includes specific reference to soft landscaping. This should include tree planting and supporting shrub or groundcover planting, set within adequately sized planting beds with appropriate soil volumes to support long-term growth. Integrating green infrastructure into these spaces will help to soften the visual impact of parking areas, contribute to urban cooling, and enhance biodiversity and overall character.	In the parking areas, pockets of soft landscaping will be integrated to accommodate climbing plants. These will bring a softer element into these hard landscape dominated parking courts and further enhance biodiversity and habitat value within the development parcels.

5 Transport (Edward Leigh)

Title

	Reference	Comment	Response
5.1	P36	Pedestrian and cycle routes should avoid staggered crossings as they reduce route legibility and usability for cycling. 	Direct routes for pedestrians and cyclists will be promoted but this needs to be assessed as part of the reserved matters application.
5.2	P36 §3.1.5.4	Design codes should avoid use of the phrase “where appropriate”. Lighting is required on all utility path and therefore includes the diagonal path across the central POS and the link to Highover Way.	The phrase “where appropriate” can be removed, however, light pollution needs to be carefully considered. the cycleway/footway to Highover Way should have lighting.
5.3	P36	There is not an obvious reason to distinguish between the “primary” and “secondary” active travel paths. The code does not define any differences in treatment. In general, active travel (utility) routes should be designed to a common standard (based on P&MPDG and LTN1/20) for consistency and legibility.	The routes have been shown differently to indicate the Avenue with a segregated facility, on road facilities and then the off road facilities.
5.4	P36	The diagram should show links into the Highover Farmyard development at its north-eastern corner (pedestrian) and the paddocks site (all modes).	All mode access into the existing residential/cottage units currently accessed from Highover Way (being retained) on the diagram pg40/42 Vehicular access from the future development to the paddock is marked at pg 42. There is no requirement or provision within the landsale contract for pedestrian route to the north-east from the farmyard – notwithstanding what the farmyard application shows
5.5	P36	Unclear what the top photograph is meant to be illustrating. In general, unsealed surfaces are not suitable for utility (as opposed to leisure) cycling or walking trips.	Changed

Title

	Reference	Comment	Response
			
5.6	P37	The distance contours around the bus stops should be isodistances based on available walking routes. It is likely that the eastern stop will need to move further north-east to come within 400m of the northernmost dwellings.t	The bus stop locations were previously agreed when looking at the masterplan as part of the outline planning application with the HCC bus team, however, as part of Phase 1 RM we will review the isodistances . At planning it was highlighted that a few dwellings were slightly further than 400m and this will likely still be the case. Therefore, wording in the design code should be, "Isochrone walking distance to a bus stop for all units within the development should be circa 400m".
5.7	P37	Add that any bus service that enters and leaves via High Dane will be able to turn around at the Stotfold Road roundabout (to make clear that this option will be supported even though it is not currently intended to provide such a service).	Noted and added. Whilst it is not anticipated that buses will make this movement, buses that potentially enter and leave via High Dane MUST be able to turn around at the Stotfold roundabout.
5.8	P38	Access to the Stotfold Road crossing and Letchworth Greenway link needs to be more direct and legible. A surfaced path should be provided through the hedgerow at a point that balances being close to the desire line and minimising ecological harm.	The location of the Letchworth Greenway crossing is dictated by the proximity to the roundabout, which has been considered and provision for this facilitated from the development side of Stotfold Road. Planning permission has been granted (22/00303/FP) for the Letchworth Greenway link as a cycleway/footpath and funding towards this (including landowner compensation) secured through the Highover Farm S106 Agreement. The County Council will be providing the link.
5.9	P38	Need to show the potential link to Collison close from the secondary street, as on page 36 (otherwise it's not a link).	This diagram was related to vehicular movement and access, as already discussed and comments previously. Pedestrian movements and ped/cycle access are indicated on diagram 36 and would overcomplicated this drawing. We added the link The link within Collison Close is subject to the ability to

Title			
			provide the required land up to the highway boundary – best endeavours
5.10	P38	Is it appropriate for the access to the paddocks development site to be a Tertiary Street 2?	Currently, the road typology follows the outline illustrative plan. The land sale contract we believe specifies the minimum width. Furthermore it is unknown how many houses will be served off this route.
5.11	P40	It is not safe to have a parking bay immediately adjacent to a cycle track because of the danger for someone cycling being “doored” by an unobservant car user. See LTN1/20 p54:	Visitor parking into verge along Avenue has been removed.

Title

	Reference	Comment	Response
		"Separation strip should be at least 0.5m alongside kerbside parking and 1.5m where wheelchair access is required."	
5.12	P40 Table 3.2 Footway	The footway along the northern side of The Avenue should be shared-use for some or all of the way to accommodate accompanied wheeling to the primary school. Although LTN1/20 specifies a minimum width of 3m, 2m should be sufficient as there is segregated provision for cycling on the south side. [I haven't checked this with HCC.]	There is a suitable facility on the southern side of the Spine Road for cyclists. Cyclists should be directed to use this rather than seeking to facilitate shared use of the footway on the northern side of the Spine Road. There is also adequate crossing facilities within the square to bring users to the northern side of the Spine Road to the school. This has always been the design principles provided through the outline.
5.13	P40 Figure	The bus stop is shown at the back of the footway. It is unclear what it intended here, but I assume the bus stop will be a cage within the carriageway (i.e. not an outset bay) with hard standing and a bus shelter between the footway and the carriageway.	That is correct, buses will stop in a cage within the carriageway and not within an outset bay
5.14	P41	A narrow verge between a parking bay and a footway is not practical for car users or grounds maintenance. The simplest solution is to widen the footway up to the parking bays, which still keeps pedestrians out of the "dooring zone".	A strip of grass has been removed and replaced with paving
5.15	P42	It may be easier to understand this with a single illustration showing variations of arrangement along the length of a tertiary street – i.e. to make clear it is a single street type that adapts to what it fronts.	These illustrations are fine and make it easier to demonstrate the variations rather than only in one drawing
5.16	P42	I am still unclear why there is a need for a 1.2m service margin that, to all intents and purposes, is part of the carriageway. A 6m wide road is simply too wide: it will induce higher driving speeds and on-street parking. It will also give drivers a misleading expectation that pedestrians <i>should</i> be walking on the service margin (as a pseudo footway) and may therefore drive less carefully. As it's not a soft-dig margin, how does it help utility companies? If there is a necessity for a demarcated service	The 6m is required where vehicles need to reverse from driveways, therefore a 1.2m margin has been added to provide the required width.

Title

	Reference	Comment	Response
		margin, then does the road need to be 4.8m? Alternatively, why not provide the service margin as a raised verge? Where there are parking bays, the overall width of uninterrupted hard surfacing is 8.5m, which will contribute to the heat island effect and high rates of rainwater run-off.	
5.17	P42	Two configurations for parking bays are shown: outset and on-street between buildouts. §3.9.10 states that only the latter design will be used for secondary and lower-order streets. However, parking bays may be partially outset between buildouts. This adds a traffic calming feature and reduces the area of hard surfacing required. For short runs of parking bays (pairs being the most space-efficient), the road can narrow to 4.1m shared carriageway + 2.5m parking bay = 6.6m (instead of 8.5m).	Parking bays have been outset to contribute to traffic calming although not sure where the 8.5 m is referenced from.
5.18	P42–43	How will turning heads be designed (where needed)? How will modal filters be designed?	This can be designed at the RM stage.
5.19	P43	Why is a service margin not deemed necessary here? Will all informal streets be, as shown, single-fronted?	6m will be required on the Informal streets where vehicles need to reverse from drives
5.20	P43	P&MPDG recommends a 4m corner radius for tertiary streets (P2/M1) – see Part 3 p165.	The radius is subject to tracking as part of the RM, however, happy to show 4m in the DC but this is subject to tracking.
5.21	P43	From the illustration on p38, it looks like waste collection vehicles will need to enter and turn around in some informal streets. The maximum distance that Waste Services recommend for reversing manoeuvres is 12m (the length of the vehicle). So, it will not be possible to serve any streets by driving in and reversing out. Hammer heads are also not recommended because they delay collection rounds and require a lot of land. This will need further consideration in the design code.	Noted. This should be down to the RM to prove refuse vehicles can adequately serve all units within Informal Streets.

Title

	Reference	Comment	Response
5.22	P43 Table 3.5 Lighting	Design codes should avoid use of the phrase “where feasible” and instead set out general requirements. Infeasibility that may require a departure from an agreed plan or code will be examined at the reserved matters stage.	See comments 5.2
5.23	P43 §3.8	The three virtually identical illustrations of junctions are inadequate for the purposes of coding design. They need to show how the carriageway, footway, verge and, for the primary street, the cycleway interact and connect at junctions. The default should be a Copenhagen style raised footway across side roads, in accordance with HCC Design Sheets for continuous footway crossings.	See appendix to the code
5.24	P40–43	This section needs to include treatments for: • Vehicle cross-overs (private driveways) – see HCC Design Sheet • Pedestrian crossings • Parallel (cycle/pedestrian) crossings • Bus stops (with a shelter unless set-down only) HCC is now recommending against raised tables where kerb protection of pedestrians is needed. HCC also recommends avoiding having steep ramps onto raised tables on bus routes. This creates a strong preference against having raised table junctions on the primary street. Consideration will also need to be given to the design of any ramps that are in close proximity to dwellings, especially if used by heavy vehicles (e.g. the south-western secondary loop road, which will be used by vehicles servicing the school and retail/commercial area). Sinusoidal ramps cause less noise disturbance than flat ramps.	See appendix to the code We would disagree with the comments that Sinusoidal ramps would be better, raised tables were strongly pushed by NHDC and HCC along the Spine Road previously and we agree this would provide the pedestrian priority at junctions and maintain the at grade cycleway through the site, which is also strongly requested even within this set of comments. Sinusoidal ramps would not provide any pedestrian/cycle benefits. NHDC have previously pushed to prevent any school coaches from using the bus gate, I’m glad their views have now changed to allow all passenger service vehicles from using the bus gate.

Title

	Reference	Comment	Response
		HCC is likely to permit all passenger service vehicles, including private coaches, through the bus gate, which will give the school flexibility with coaches.	
5.25	P44	Specify dimensions of parking bays. 5m x 2.6m is now recommended by the British Parking Association. 2.5m width is acceptable for parallel bays, but 2.6m is recommended for perpendicular bays, in particular to ensure that parked cars do not encroach into space designated for wheeling bikes or bins. Intermediate bays in a run of parallel bays should be 6m long. End bays should be 5m long, unless designated as a loading bay, in which case it should be 6m long.	Dimensions comply with both HCC and NHDC current guidance (4.8 x 2.4m and 6m x 2m for parallel or 6m x 2.4m if there is no footway).
5.26	P44	Echoing our urban designer's comment, there should be a mandatory requirement for all types of streets to avoid providing parking bays on opposing sides.	Same as per comments 3.7
5.27	P44	Consideration needs to be given to providing loading bays, primarily for delivery vehicles. These can count towards provision of visitor parking bays.	Loading bays throughout the development will not work in practise as delivery drivers will always seek to pull up as close to unit as possible, even if there is a bay 20m further along the street.
5.28	P44 §3.9.3	Provision of EV chargepoints, in accordance with Part S of the Building Regulations, is mandatory (i.e. <i>must</i> not <i>should</i>).	Noted
5.29	P44 §3.9.4	This conflates two unrelated matters: visitor bays (which must be provided off-plot) and EV chargepoints for dwellings.	See note 3.9.4 and 3.9.5 on the DC
5.30	P44 §3.9.5	This is redundant.	
5.31	P44 §3.9.7	Remove the requirement for parking spaces to start behind the building line. It leads to a larger expanse of hard surfacing and pushes any garage or car port further into the back garden.	

Title

	Reference	Comment	Response
5.32	P44 §3.9.8	The second bullet is relevant to perpendicular on-street and courtyard parking, rather than on-plot.	
5.33	P44 §3.9.10	The end bays of a run of parallel bays can be 5m long. Only intermediate bays (if provided) need to 6m. It is not clear what “mitigated with soft landscaping” means. I think “a full-length verge” should be “a full-depth verge”?	Noted
5.34	P44 §3.9.10	Two instances of “shall” are presumably intended to be “must” (in bold)?	Noted and actioned
5.35	P44 §3.9.12	The pedestrian and cycle passage must not be obstructed by an EV charging cable. There is a mix-up between the third and fifth bullets: residential and visitor cycle parking: visitor cycle parking should be provided in a publicly accessible location if shared, or in front of the dwelling if provided on-plot.	Noted and actioned
5.36	P68 §4.16.3	My understanding of conversations to date is that the LHA is unwilling to adopt the secondary streets. A possible exception to that was if one of the loops was to be used as a bus route, but I believe we have now ruled that out (on the basis that the Stotfold Road roundabout provides a bus turnaround to complement the High Dane–Tristram Road loop).	Revised stewardship chapter 4.16
5.37	P73	Please refer to HCC design sheets for continuous footway and cycle track crossings: Standard drawings Hertfordshire County Council	

Title

JM comments Highover Green Character Area

Appearance (includes Roofline)	
- The architectural composition of this space MUST clearly define it as the focal point of the development, ensuring a distinct identity that sets it apart from surrounding areas. - Key buildings MUST stand out architecturally, being designed in a contemporary style that differentiates them from the surrounding residential buildings. - Key buildings MUST be designed with a high-quality, durable brick that is relevant to the surrounding character areas. - Key buildings MUST incorporate design elements that signify their importance, such as enhanced detailing, increased height, prominent entrances, or distinctive roof treatments.	Added and accepted all of this section.
- The material palette SHOULD reflect the role of this area as the heart of the development, incorporating high-quality finishes that differentiate it from adjacent residential streets. - Landmark features, such as a gateway structure, public art, or a visually striking façade treatment, SHOULD strengthen its sense of place and provide a clear reference point within the development. - The arrangement of buildings SHOULD create a strong sense of enclosure and definition to the northern end of Highover Park, reinforcing the perception that this is a central gathering space, rather than a transitional area. - Roof forms of key buildings SHOULD vary from the surrounding residential context, providing a clear distinction in form and therefore further enhance the legibility of this place. - Architectural detailing SHOULD be of exceptional quality, reflecting the distinct identity of the Highover Green Character Area while complementing the broader development context.	Added however We will not include public art as not a requirements.

Title

Building Line & Set Back	
- Key buildings MUST frame the public open space to the south, creating a clear sense of enclosure along the entire length of Highover Park and the public square.	
- Variations in the building line SHOULD be introduced selectively to emphasise key spaces or landmarks, providing visual interest and breaking potential monotony. - Key buildings SHOULD offer some shelter from the elements within their public-facing elevation design.	Added
Vehicular Movements/Parking	
- The primary street through the public square MUST have a bus gate.	Added.
- The bus gate area MUST be designed in line with agreed highway principles to ensure safe and controlled access while maintaining a pedestrian-friendly environment. - A single point of access MUST be provided at the eastern end of the public square for school-related vehicular movements. - The layout of the highway at the last junction before the bus gate in each direction MUST clearly direct non-permitted traffic away from the bus gate by means of the road layout, markings, materials and signage.	
- Parking for the neighbourhood facility MUST be located to the rear, with some short-stay parking bays to the side. This is to ensure that vehicles do not park in the primary street (other than legally in the loading bay), nor obstruct the road to the allotments, nor dominate the street/public realm.	Added
- Parking for the primary school MUST be bounded by a solid wall to the south - or - be sited behind any school building along the Highover Green length. This is to ensure Highover Park's northern boundary is defined, enclosed and continuous, avoiding a visual gap in built form between the school and adjacent homes. - Cycle parking MUST be located close to the school entrance, play area and any other identifiable destinations within the Highover Green Character Area, with easy access, good natural surveillance and not likely to cause an obstruction.	Added

Title

Primary School	
- The school building MUST stand out architecturally, being designed in a contemporary style that differentiates it from the surrounding residential buildings. - The school building MUST flank the square, creating a strong edge and active frontage while maintaining appropriate security and privacy for classrooms and sensitive areas. It is anticipated that significant portions of this frontage will form part of the secure school boundary; however, the final extent and configuration will be determined at detailed design stage and should reflect a balanced approach between safeguarding and place-making objectives. - Functions that require public-facing interaction, such as administration offices, reception areas, staff facilities, circulation and parent engagement spaces, MUST be positioned along the urban square frontage to reinforce active engagement. - The building MUST be designed in accordance with Secure by Design for New Schools guidance, ensuring controlled access and safeguarding measures are integrated into its layout. Opportunities to incorporate parts of the school site into the public realm (e.g. through a school plaza treatment) SHOULD be explored, provided that safeguarding is not compromised. Where such treatments extend into the school boundary, appropriate management and maintenance mechanisms (e.g. service charges or site agreements) MUST be secured. - Playing fields MUST be located to the north side of the school building, ensuring separation from the urban square while maintaining appropriate access for students. - Boundary treatments to the north, east and west of the school plot MUST be high quality fencing painted green or black with natural planting incorporated to aid in the screening of the site. - The school site MUST include clearly designated, accessible car parking for disabled users. An accessible and direct route from these bays to the school's principal entrance MUST be provided, ensuring safe and inclusive access for all users.	Added

Title

- A covered area, recessed entranceway or sheltered walkway SHOULD be incorporated along the schools frontage, bringing the building line back at ground floor level and providing protection for parents and children while entering the school. - The school's design SHOULD establish a strong civic presence within the square, potentially reinforced through increased height, landmark architectural treatments, or distinctive façade elements. - School buildings SHOULD be legible inside and out with each broad function individually expressed in the architecture, ensuring that it is easy to navigate and understand for children and parents when approaching and inside of the school.	Added
Neighbourhood Facility - The neighbourhood facility MUST standout architecturally, being designed in a contemporary style that differentiates it from the surrounding residential buildings. - The building MUST have a taller element to serve as a beacon and wayfinding vista from Highover Park which MUST be visible over any trees in the square. This ensures visual prominence and acts as a landmark within the development to drawn people towards High Dane and Hitchin centre. - The building MUST be designed to accommodate 2 storeys, supporting a 4,000 sqft convenience retail unit at ground floor level, with appropriate frontage and access that encourages pedestrian movement and engagement. - The neighbourhood facility MUST provide active overlooking to the Avenue, reinforcing a strong street presence and contributing to local surveillance. - Loading and servicing MUST be integrated discreetly within the public realm, with the raised loading bay zone matched to footway height (25mm upstand) to ensure seamless integration with the school square's paving treatment.	Added
- The frontage SHOULD be highly transparent, incorporating	Added

Title

generous glazing and an inviting entrance to reinforce engagement with the street and square. - Landmark features SHOULD be introduced to enhance legibility, such as a clock tower, flag pole, decorative parapet, signage panel, or framed entranceway that reinforces its role as a central community facility. - External seating or public realm enhancements SHOULD be incorporated near the frontage to encourage gathering and support vibrancy within the square.	
Public Realm	
- The total area of public square (paved area minus the area taken up by the vehicular [bus] corridor) MUST be a minimum of 1250sqm. - The public square MUST feature a cohesive block-paved area, (i.e. MUST NOT contain a tarmac surface treatment) establishing a distinctive and high-quality public space with a strong identity. - A grid of statement trees MUST be incorporated to provide visual structure, shade, and seasonal interest, reinforcing the square's prominence. These SHOULD be different to the street trees as part of 'The Avenue' character area but MUST work alongside them harmoniously. - Raised planters of a robust material MUST be used to integrate informal seating and frame the bus route, making a distinction between the pedestrian only areas and the parts of the square over which a vehicle may pass. - Cycle parking and seating for all MUST be incorporated into the square's layout, reinforcing usability without compromising movement and access. - The zone immediately in front of the school MUST allow sufficient space for parents and children to gather and circulate, supporting safe and accessible pedestrian movement. - A pocket square leading from the front of the school into Highover Park MUST be articulated by a gate structure, public art and provide seating and informal play features, fostering a child-friendly environment and supporting legible active travel routes into Highover Park. - Existing low-quality hedges and trees MUST be removed to open the	Added

Title

<i>square to Highover Park, reinforcing connectivity and visual continuity.</i>	
- The lighting solution SHOULD respond to the tree grid, creating a distinctive night-time character while ensuring adequate illumination for safety and ambiance. - Materials and street furniture SHOULD complement the wider Highover Green Character Area, reinforcing a cohesive design language between built form and the public realm. - Paving treatments SHOULD subtly define pedestrian priority zones, reinforcing the square's function as a gathering space while allowing occasional bus movement. - Water-permeable paving solutions SHOULD be considered to support sustainable drainage and enhance environmental resilience. - Public art or wayfinding features SHOULD be explored to reinforce local identity and aid navigation within the space.	Added