

<u>Location:</u>	Land To The South And East Of Senuna Park Station Road Ashwell
<u>Applicant:</u>	Mr Ben Wilkinson
<u>Proposal:</u>	Residential development of 36 no. dwellings including creation of vehicular access off Station Road, associated parking, drainage, amenity space and landscaping.
<u>Ref. No:</u>	25/02547/FP
<u>Officer:</u>	Anne McDonald

Target Determination date: 16th January 2026.

Extension of Time date: 17th April 2026.

Reason for delay: Time taken to receive consultation responses and amended plans.

Reason for referral to committee: The application is proposing residential development on a site larger than 0.5 ha (the site area is 3.18 ha) and therefore in accordance with the Council's Constitution, as set out at 8.4.5, is being presented to Planning Control Committee for determination.

Supporting documents and plans: Please refer to the list attached at Appendix 1.

1.0 Policies

1.1 North Herts Local Plan 2011 - 2031

Policy SP1: Sustainable development in North Hertfordshire;
 Policy SP2: Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Distribution;
 Policy SP5: Countryside and Green Belt;
 Policy SP6: Sustainable Transport;
 Policy SP7: Infrastructure requirements and developer contributions;
 Policy SP8: Housing;
 Policy SP9: Design and Sustainability;
 Policy SP10: Healthy communities;
 Policy SP11: Natural resources and sustainability;
 Policy SP12: Green Infrastructure, landscape and biodiversity;
 Policy SP13: Historic Environment.

Policy CGB1: Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt;
 Policy CGB2b: Community facilities, services and affordable housing in the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt;
 Policy T1: Assessment of Transport matters;
 Policy T2: Parking;
 Policy HS2: Affordable housing;
 Policy HS3: Housing mix;

Policy HS5: Accessible and adaptable housing;
Policy D1: Sustainable Design;
Policy D3: Protecting living conditions;
Policy D4: Air Quality;
Policy NE2: Landscape;
Policy NE4: Biodiversity and geological sites;
Policy NE6: New and improved open space;
Policy NE7: Reducing flood risk;
Policy NE8: Sustainable drainage systems;
Policy NE11: Contaminated land;
Policy HE4: Archaeology.

1.2 **National Planning Policy Framework**

Section 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
Section 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities;
Section 9 – Promoting sustainable transport;
Section 11 – Making effective use of land;
Section 12 – Achieving well-designed and beautiful places;
Section 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change;
Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

1.3 **Ashwell Neighbourhood Plan (ANHP) – Made April 2022**

ASH 1 – Location of development.
ASH 2 – Housing mix.
ASH 4 – Design of development.
ASH 8 – Locally significant views.
ASH 9 – Natural landscape and rural character.
ASH 10 – Natural wildlife assets, wildlife corridors and green infrastructure.
ASH 18 – Education provision.
ASH 19 – Accessible paths in the village and rural areas.
ASH 20 – Residential and public car parking.

1.4 **Supplementary Planning Documents**

Developer Contributions SPD (2023).

2.0 **Site History**

2.1 17/01406/1 - Residential development of 46 no. dwellings, children's play area, two new sports pitches, pavilion building and associated infrastructure. Refused and dismissed at appeal. This application is within the back third of this site area. This application was refused for six reasons for refusal. These are:

1. In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority due to the location of this planning application site, separated from the main body of Ashwell village, the proposed development for 46 dwellings and sports pitches would have a heavily urbanising impact on the character and appearance of the rural area, against the pattern and grain of existing development and poorly integrated with Ashwell village. Such a piecemeal form of development would as a result harm the character and appearance of the locality. The proposal therefore conflicts with saved Policy 57 of the North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No. 2 - with Alterations, Policy D1 of North

Hertfordshire Submission Local Plan (2011-2031) and paragraphs 57 and 64 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

2. By reason of its siting beyond the built limits of Ashwell, the location within open farmland in landscape character area 226 - Steeple Morden Plain Area and the heavy use of planting to screen the site, the development proposal would fail to positively enhance the wider landscape setting of the village, nor would it improve the character and quality of the Rural Area and, as such, would afford significant and demonstrable harm to the intrinsic beauty of the countryside. This harm is considered to clearly outweigh the benefits of providing new dwellings on the site. The proposal is therefore contrary to the provisions of saved Policies 6 of the North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No. 2 with alterations and, Paragraph 17, 109, 116, 156 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The development would also be contrary to Policy CGB1 of the North Hertfordshire Emerging Local Plan 2011 - 2031.
3. The submitted planning application has not been accompanied by a valid legal undertaking (in the form of a Section 106 Obligation) securing the provision of 40% affordable housing and other necessary obligations as set out in the Council's Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (adopted November 2006) and the Planning obligation guidance toolkit for Hertfordshire: Hertfordshire County Council's requirements January 2008. The secure delivery of these obligations is required to mitigate the impact of the development on the identified services in accordance with the adopted Planning Obligations SPD, Policy 51 of the North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No. 2 - with Alterations (Saved Policies 2007) or Proposed Local Plan Policy HS2 of the Council's Proposed Submission Local Plan (2011-2031). Without this mechanism to secure these provisions the development scheme cannot be considered as sustainable form of development contrary to the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
4. The application fails to adequately demonstrate that there is a proven need for the proposed sports facilities. In addition, the proposal fails to demonstrate that the development would not occasion harm to either existing residents in the vicinity of the site or future occupiers of the proposed dwellings in terms of noise, the impact of access arrangements on residential amenity and the management and operational arrangements for the sports pitches. As such the application would be contrary to saved Policy 57 of the North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No. 2 - with Alterations, Policy D1 & D3 of North Hertfordshire Submission Local Plan (2011-2031) and paragraphs 57 and 64 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
5. Given the lack of essential services in the vicinity of the site, in particular a lack of primary education provision to serve the needs of this development, the occupiers of the proposed dwellings would be heavily dependent on services provided outside of the immediate area, giving rise to a significant reliance on private transport. In addition to this, the land on which the site is located is Grade 2 agricultural land, which constitutes the best and most versatile land. As well as being harmful to the natural environment, this would amount to development of the land which is both environmentally and economically unsustainable. In the absence of any realistic measures or other reasons which may offset this unsustainable impact, the proposal would be contrary to the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework, generally and specifically Paragraphs 14, 49 and 112, and to Policies SP1 and SP6 of the Emerging Local Plan 2011 - 2031, and to Planning Practice Guidance - Natural Environment para. 026.

6. The proposed development lies within an Area of Archaeological Significance. Records in close proximity to the site suggest it lies within an area of significant archaeological potential. Given this and the large scale nature of the proposal, this development should be regarded as likely to have an impact on significant heritage assets with archaeological interest, some of which may be of sufficient importance to meet NPPF para 139. This could represent a significant constraint on development. In the absence of a geophysical survey or archaeological field evaluation, there is insufficient information to determine the importance of any archaeological remains on the site. The proposal will be contrary to Section 12 of the NPPF.
- 2.2 20/03070/FP - Residential development of 28 no. dwellings and landscaping including pond, wildflower meadow and woodland and associated infrastructure. The application site for application 20/03070/FP is the front part of the site area for application 17/01406/1 and is land outside of the application site area for this 25/02547/FP application. Application 20/03070/FP was refused for two reasons for refusal and was allowed at appeal. The LPA reasons for refusal were the same as reasons 1 and 3 stated above for the 2017 application.
- 2.3 Following the allowing of the appeal for application 20/03070/FP there have applications made to agree the imposed conditions and application 23/01477/S73 to vary condition 13, which requires the provision of a new bus stop on Station Road, and has allowed for the works to be completed prior to occupation rather than prior to the commencement of the development.
- 2.4 No pre-application scheme was submitted prior to the receipt of this application. The Council's website states under 'Amend a planning application' that it is our normal position not to seek or accept any significant amendments after validation but that we will accept amendments to applications that were the subject of pre-application consultation where applicants have considered and addressed pre-application advice given. Minor changes have been sought to the layout of the proposal which have been accepted by the applicant.
- 3.0 **Representations**
- 3.1 **HCC LLFA** – the site contains an area of high surface water flood risk to the northwest corner of the site and the development has the potential to improve existing flooding issues. The LLFA object to the application due to the absence of an acceptable Flood Risk Assessment and / or Drainage Strategy.
- 3.2 **HCC Archaeology** – the adjacent site has been the subject of geophysical survey and trial trench evaluation and no heritage assets of national significance were found. The Heritage Assets that were found were remains of a possible late Iron Age or Roman road with roadside ditches. Therefore, it is appropriate to recommend no objection to this application subject to the inclusion of a condition.
- 3.3 **HCC Water and Fire Rescue Officer** – no objection subject to a condition requiring the provision of fire hydrants.
- 3.4 **HCC Spatial Planning Unit Minerals and Waste** – no objection subject to condition requiring a Site Waste Management Plan.
- 3.5 **HCC Highways** – no objection subject to conditions.

3.6 HCC Growth and Infrastructure – require the following planning obligation:

1. Secondary Education Contribution towards the expansion of Knights Templar Secondary School, Baldock, and/or provision serving the development (£439,126 index linked to BCIS 1Q2024).
2. Childcare Contribution towards increasing the capacity of 5-11 year old childcare facilities at Ashwell Primary School and/or provision serving the development (£643 index linked to BCIS 1Q2024).
3. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Contribution towards new Severe Learning Difficulty (SLD) special school places (EAST) and/or provision serving the development (£63,760 index linked to BCIS 1Q2024).
4. Library Service Contribution towards increasing the capacity of Baldock Library and/or provision serving the development (£10,630 index linked to BCIS 1Q2024).
5. Youth Service Contribution towards resource requirements to support the delivery of youth work with young people in the area and/or provision serving the development (£7,250 index linked to BCIS 1Q2024).
6. Waste Service:
 - ☐ Recycling Centre Contribution towards a new recycling centre at Baldock and/or provision serving the development (£7,609 index linked to BCIS 1Q2024).
 - ☐ Transfer Station Contribution towards the new Northern Transfer station and/or provision serving the development (£10,641 index linked to BCIS 1Q2024).
7. Fire and Rescue Service Contribution towards the expansion of Baldock Fire Station and/or provision serving the development (£15,451 index linked to BCIS 1Q2024).
8. 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 £420 (adjusted for inflation against RPI January 2024). For further information on monitoring fees please see section 5.5 of the Guide to Developer Infrastructure Contributions.

3.7 NHDC Environmental Health – no objection subject to conditions.

3.8 NHDC Conservation Officer – the site is some distance from the Ashwell Conservation Area. No comment.

3.9 NHDC Housing Officer – Key points:

- ☐ the affordable housing provision is 40% as more than 25 homes are provided and the Council requires a 65% rented and 35% affordable home ownership or other form of affordable housing tenure mix.
- ☐ The North Herts and Stevenage SHMA Update 2023 shows a need for 65% social rent / 15% affordable rent / 20% affordable home ownership mix and there is a higher need for two bedroom family homes and some need for larger family homes for rent.
- ☐ The Ashwell Neighbourhood Plan identifies a greater need for one, two and three bedroom homes across all tenures which is to meet the need for single people, couples and smaller families in need of affordable housing or entering the market or for older people wishing to downsize.
- ☐ The applicant has not provided a tenure plan and their proposals do not meet the needs identified in the recent housing needs survey or requirements of the Ashwell Neighbourhood Plan for market or affordable housing.
- ☐ To meet the housing needs the affordable housing should comprise 5 x 1-bed flats, 3 x 2-bed housing and 1 x 4 bed house which is M4(3) wheelchair accessible for social rent and 4 x 2-bed houses and 1 x 3-bd house for affordable home ownership.

- ☐ The application should consider the provision of bungalows and / or two bedroom houses for market sale to meet the needs of elderly downsizers who wish to remain in the village.
- ☐ The affordable housing is clustered together away from the market housing which does not provide a mixed and balanced community. The affordable housing comprises terraced housing and flats and the market housing are detached dwellings.
- ☐ The applicant's proposals do not meet housing need.
- ☐ The two bedroom flats should not have one open living space but should comprise two habitable rooms to allow for separate spaces for homeworking or children doing homework.
- ☐ Parking courts should be avoided and there is often limited of no natural surveillance and residents prefer to park outside their homes.

3.10 **Anglian Water** – no objection subject to informatives. They state that their records show there are no assets owned by Anglian Water in the site. Based on Q90 DWF figures verified by the Environment Agency, the Ashwell WRC is within acceptance parameters and can accommodate the flows from this proposal growth. The drainage proposals are acceptable to connect to the manhole upstream of the pumping station.

3.11 **Place Services Landscape Advice Service** – the Ashwell Neighbourhood Plan has five Visual Character Areas and this site is close to but outside of 'V2 – The Eastern Area'. The application has been submitted with a Landscape and Visual Appraisal. The photo survey for this was undertaken in April 2025 with some deciduous trees without leaf cover but new growth on hedgerows. Preference is for winter photography to show 'worse case' scenario. The site falls within the North Herts Landscape Study (Character, Sensitivity and Capacity) Landscape Character Area (LCA) Steeple Morden Plain Area 226.

- ☐ We agree with the judgements of the existing sensitivity of the LCA of the site as low-medium and the landscape effect of 'minor adverse' at year 1.
- ☐ We have concerns on the assessment of the landscape effects at year 1 on the townscape of Ashwell Village assessed at 'minor / moderate adverse' and consider this could be higher.
- ☐ We would have liked to have seen 'Significant Viewpoint G' of the Ashwell Neighbourhood Plan assessed and consider that may be some impact on this viewpoint from the development. This viewpoint location is considered at viewpoint 10 in the Landscape and Visual Appraisal, although the impact upon 'Significant viewpoint G' is not considered. As a result we consider the effects on viewpoint 10 in the Landscape and Visual Appraisal could be assessed higher as 'moderate adverse'.
- ☐ Some objections are raised to the layout proposed. In particular the road through the trees, the lack of garden spaces, the proximity of plots to the trees, the amount pathways / hardstanding, the screening of the play area not allowing for visual surveillance and the lack of connectivity to the existing houses at Senuna Park. (Officer note – these comments were made on the original layout plan and the in the revised plan the garden sizes to some plots were increased and the amount of hardstanding and pathways was reduced).

3.12 Following the submission of the amended information Place Service Landscape Service comments that the submission of visualisation for viewpoint 11 is welcomed demonstrating the view of the new edge of Ashwell and the proposed mitigation to reduce the visual effects for users on Station Road. This services concludes to advise conditions which are recommended.

- 3.13 **Place Services Ecology Service** – no objection subject to conditions.
- 3.14 Ashwell Parish Council – object. The response from Ashwell PC is attached in full at Appendix 2.
- 3.15 **Steeple Morden Parish Council** – object. Key points raised include:
- ☐ The developers Transport Assessment clearly indicates that the vast majority (97%) car traffic from the site will use the Odsey junction onto the A505 and the parking close to the rail station.
 - ☐ The development will therefore have a detrimental impact upon a dangerous junction and will compound the already serious problem of roadside parking at Ashwell and Morden Station. The Transport Assessment suggests that approximately 200 trips to and from the site in a 12-hour period and would have a serious cumulative impact.
 - ☐ If the planning Authority is minded to approve this application, then without prejudice to our objection we would ask for a condition that no houses will be occupied until the Odsey A 505 junction has been upgraded by a roundabout, traffic lights or similar scheme and that a suitable parking scheme at the Station is operational.
- 3.16 **South Cambs The Mordens Cllr Heather Williams** – objects to the continued expansion of Ashwell and the adverse impact this is having on Odsey. It appears that Hertfordshire's planning process is currently considering the implications for Odsey in South Cambridgeshire only in a limited capacity, with insufficient attention given to the significant issues posed by the A505 Odsey junction, which is already a recognised accident black spot. The construction of these additional homes, and the subsequent residential use, will inevitably generate a substantial increase in vehicle movements. Residents of the proposed development will make multiple daily trips, many of which will pass through Odsey in order to access the A505. This will contribute to increased traffic congestion and road safety concerns. This matter cannot be regarded solely as a Hertfordshire planning issue. Odsey, located within South Cambridgeshire, must also be fully considered in the assessment of cumulative impacts. Previous planning applications have failed to account for the effects on Odsey and the A505 junction, and unless both the community and Hertfordshire planning authorities are made fully aware of these concerns, further developments are likely to proceed without adequate consideration for the significant consequences on our area.
- 3.17 **CPRE Hertfordshire** – objects to the application for the following reasons:
- ☐ this is the rural area beyond the Green Belt and this development does not meet any of the criteria for acceptable development in this area.
 - ☐ There are errors in the Planning Support Statement Executive Summary which both does not mention that the area is rural area beyond the Green Belt and also states that the Local Plan has not progressed to a significant stage. The provision of 3.9 5YLS is appropriate for this stage of the plan process.
 - ☐ The benefits of this proposal do not significantly outweigh the harm to the open countryside and rural character of this location.
 - ☐ We urge the Council to refuse planning permission for this speculative and inappropriate development.
- 3.18 The application has been advertised with site and press notices and neighbour notification letters. At the time of writing there are 15 comments submitted on the application. Key points raised include:

Neutral comment

- ☐ If this is approved then there should be a condition requiring swift bricks. (Officer note – this is covered by condition BNG 2).

Object

- ☐ This development is not needed in the village.
- ☐ Ashwell has had too much development in recent years.
- ☐ Ashwell cannot cope with another development of this size.
- ☐ Object to the loss of yet more of our countryside. There has already been building on to both ends of the village with it going further and further out.
- ☐ Do not turn Ashwell into a town. It is a village and should stay as a village.
- ☐ The site is outside of the village.
- ☐ Ashwell is an old agricultural settlement and wishes to retain its identity centred on the historic centre and not become another suburb of Baldock or Letchworth.
- ☐ It is increasing the size of the eyesore that is already there.
- ☐ The village school is over-subscribed with no potential to increase the size and the doctors is full.
- ☐ There is an issue with water pressure. The whole village is poor and in the summer some homes were without water and tankers were needed.
- ☐ The sewage system blocks and floods.
- ☐ Senuna Park is already experiencing problems with their sewage system which does not bode well for the future as this site is still not complete.
- ☐ The flooding at junction of Bear Lane, Back Street and Silver Street is awful due to the new houses there.
- ☐ More houses do not make the water companies take action. They warn of the problem before the houses are built and ignore it afterwards.
- ☐ Station Road is now very busy and more disruption from road closures during the construction phase is not welcomed.
- ☐ The design is out of a pattern book and has no reflection to Ashwell.
- ☐ The solar panels are poorly sited.
- ☐ The houses are separate from Ashwell and are not well linked to the village centre. To go anywhere future residents will use cars which is bad of climate change.
- ☐ North Herts needs to insist on architecture that is good for the planet.
- ☐ I object to another side road off Station Road and if this land has to be developed it should be access through Senuna Park.
- ☐ The village cannot take any more traffic.
- ☐ The village lanes are narrow and already under considerable pressure / strain. Increased traffic from this development could heightens safety risks to pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders.
- ☐ Car parking at the station is along the verge, the access to the A505 is dangerous and needs a roundabout. These have been issues for years but more housing just makes this worse.
- ☐ Ashwell needs smaller houses and bungalows for the current village and not more outsiders who just want the status of a posh village to live in but will not participate in the community.
- ☐ There are high value new houses that are empty are year after completion in the village.
- ☐ If affordable houses were built where local people could live it would be better, but these are homes that are not affordable.
- ☐ Those who live in these new houses do not walk or cycle anywhere but go in their cars. They don't support the local groups and pubs and could live anywhere. The new houses should be on a town not this village.
- ☐ Building in this location is not good for the environment. People will use cars for all trips out and this is not a sustainable location.

4.0 Planning Considerations

4.1 Site and Surroundings

- 4.1.1 The application site is 3.18 ha in size and is located to the south-east of the village of Ashwell on the east side of Station Road, and adjoins the new development, now called Senuna Park, on its east and south side. The site is roughly a reverse 'L' in shape, with a narrow area fronting on to the lane, with the site widening out to the east and north. The southern and northern parts of the site are open former agricultural fields with a field gate access off Station Road. Running across the middle of the site is a woodland, known as Millennium Wood, and this wood connects into Senuna Park. The land levels fall slightly from the lane frontage to the east and also fall gently to the north.
- 4.1.2 The site is outside of the village settlement area for Ashwell and does not contain any land use designations such as Conservation Area, AONB or listed buildings. Open fields extend to the east, south and west on the opposite side of the road. To the north, the recent development of Senuna Park is largely complete and occupied. Further north-west along Station Road there is a mature, residential development and north of the site past Small Gains Lane, which the site adjoins and has access to on its northern border, lies the open land of Ashwell playing fields.

4.2 Proposal

- 4.2.1 Full planning permission is sought for residential development in the form of 36 dwellings, comprising 6 x 1-bed flats, 2 x 2-bed flats, 2 x bungalows in a semi-detached pair (1 x 2-bed and 1 x 3-bed), 6 x terraced houses (3 x 2-bed and 3 x 3-bed) and 20 x detached houses (18 x 4-bed and 2 x 5-bed). 22 of the dwellings are for open market houses and 14 are for affordable housing. Apart from the bungalows, all the dwellings, including the blocks of flats, are two storeys in height. A play area is also shown, although this contains no play equipment or seating.
- 4.2.2 The application sets out that the design ethos of the proposal is for the frontage section to replicate a farmstead layout with the detached houses rear of this being in a garden layout with the groups of the houses being the 'village green' rear of the farmstead, and the 'eastern fringe' and 'north-western cluster' in the north part of the site. As a result, there is a two-storey block of flats positioned close to the frontage of the site, with the terraced homes sitting rear of this to appear as rural barn type buildings. The two bungalows on the south-eastern edge of the site are lower buildings to form a transition to the rural edge in views from the road. There are then 7 detached houses positioned to the south of the wood and a further 13 detached houses positioned to the north of the wood, with a road way to be cut through the wood. A small sub-station is also proposed. The flats and terraced houses have parking within a parking court and each terraced house and two of the flats would each have a small private rear garden. All of the detached houses would have a garage, on plot parking and front and rear gardens, and the bungalows would both have on plot parking and gardens and the 3-bed would have a garage.
- 4.2.3 As set out in Appendix 1, documents have been submitted in support of this application. Key points from some of these documents include:

Planning Support Statement:

1. The site lies immediately adjacent to the Senuna Park development, which has been developed over the last three years since consent was allowed on appeal in April 2022.
2. That development was allowed by the Planning Inspector largely on the basis that North Hertfordshire Council could not demonstrate a five years supply of deliverable housing sites, and therefore the local plan was out of date and the presumption in favour of sustainable development was engaged.
3. This is still the case now, and a new Local Plan has not been progressed to any significant stage.
4. In addition to providing new housing to meet housing need, the Inspector stated that "the site was a relatively short drive and walk from the centre of Ashwell, and so village facilities are likely to be accessible to a range of residents, and it would also bring socio-economic benefit during and after construction through custom for local facilities, businesses and services, which would contribute towards sustaining them, including through new bus stop provision."
5. The Inspector considered the tilted balance under the National Planning Policy Framework, and approved planning consent.
6. Since approval the development has been built and construction is approaching completion, demonstrating that new housing development in this location is deliverable within five years once approved.
7. This application has been prepared on the basis that there is still a significant undersupply of new homes in the district, and the number of new homes needed into the future has been increased significantly by the governments new standard method for calculating future housing supply.
8. Ashwell village is a sustainable settlement, the centre of which is constrained from new development by a Conservation Area. The application site is considered well-located to the village, in terms of walking, cycling and by public transport, but is not within any area of constraint that would prevent consideration under paragraph 11 of the NPPF.
9. In terms of landscape impact, when compared with the open, expansive nature of the surrounding agricultural landscape to the east and south, the site's boundary vegetation provides a high level of containment.
10. The design of the proposals, have been landscape-led and provide a high-quality development meeting both open market and affordable housing need and additional benefits to the local area.
11. The application site is within walkable distance of the main facilities and as such is considered a sustainable location for new residential development, being similar in these terms to the Senuna Park development that the site lies adjacent to on Station Road.
12. A new bus stop, on Station Road, is currently being delivered by the adjacent Senuna Park development, approximately 350 metres from the site's existing access, and will improve access from the application site to the local bus network.
13. The site lies wholly within Flood Zone 1 on the Environment Agency's Flood Zone Maps, representing an area at the lowest risk of flooding. All other forms of potential flooding are considered to be low-risk at the site.
14. Integral to the development are extensive landscaping proposals, that also feature significant ecology and biodiversity improvements. The Biodiversity Net Gain Report demonstrates a 52% net gain in habitat units and a 16.87% net gain in hedgerow units, which are significant improvements above the required 10%.
15. The proposal includes changes to the site access and Station Road showing the proposed site access with a 2-metre wide footway into and through the site, and the relocation of the 30mph speed limit approximately 120 metres to the east of the access, in the form of a gateway feature, encouraging lower vehicle speeds on

approach to the village and enhancing the overall highway safety in the area for new and existing residents.

16. The Transport Statement details that based on a trip generation and distribution assessments, the development will not have a significant impact on the operation of the local highway network.
17. We acknowledge that the site is located outside of the existing settlement boundary of Ashwell, and that development would likely be considered contrary to relevant policies in the Local Plan relating to the site location. However, the application acknowledges that much of the Local Plan is considered to be out of date due to the Council's inability to demonstrate a deliverable supply of housing land, and therefore the presumption in favour of sustainable development is engaged.
18. Based on the considerations of the importance of the proposals benefits and the lack of any substantial adverse impacts, the presumption in favour of sustainable development means that the application should be approved.

Design and Access Statement

1. The design of the houses and their proposed materiality has been carefully considered with reference to the varied age and style of the built form in and around the village and to compliment the new development to the east.
2. The development ensures the regularity and uniformity associated with suburban estate type development is avoided and combined with the integral landscape proposals and open spaces, will create an attractive, organic arrangement that will form an appropriately soft transition between the village and the surrounding open, rural landscape
3. Proposals include a play space, sited centrally towards the southern site boundary, surrounded by trees, which provides a visual break in filtered views of proposed built form along this edge.
4. A central green space softens the interface between proposed properties and Millennium Wood and provides a valuable area of public open space.
5. To the north-west of the site, where a localised depression in the landform is shared with the adjacent Senuna Park development, a series of attenuation basins are proposed within an open green space complemented by new tree planting. This reflects the adjacent green space that will be delivered as part of the proposals for Senuna Park, creating a natural extension to the preceding development.
6. The landscape proposals for the site are comprehensive. In addition to providing a positive aesthetic whilst assimilating the development into its village edge setting, a key objective for the landscape proposals was to enhance the biodiversity of the site by improving the existing woodland and boundary hedgerows and introducing new tree and hedgerow planting, wildflower meadow areas and marginal and aquatic plants to the pond area. With the exception of a limited number of ornamental trees within garden areas, the landscape proposals focus on the provision of appropriate native species.
7. The site is bisected by a rectilinear belt of mixed species tree planting (Millennium Wood), which was planted by a previous landowner over 25 years ago, at a time when government grants were available for such projects.
8. The woodland comprises a mixture of circa 6 to 10m high native and non-native, deciduous and evergreen (conifer) tree and shrub species and is protected by a stockproof fence.
9. The woodland is not considered to be wholly consistent with the character of the wider landscape by virtue of the species mix and rectilinear form. As part of the approved proposals for the adjacent development at Senuna Park there will be improvements made to Millennium Wood, including new woodland planting to create a more organic form to the western end of the woodland.

10. Given the open, expansive nature of the surrounding agricultural landscape to the east and south, the site's boundary vegetation provides a comparatively high level of containment.

4.3 Key Issues

- 4.3.1 The key issues to be considered in this application is the delivery of 36 new homes on land outside of the settlement boundary, and whether the planning benefit of this outweighs any identified harms from the development. Therefore, the principle of the development, layout, design, highway matters, parking, impact in the landscape, ecology, affordable housing provision and other S106 contributions are discussed below and a conclusion in the planning balance is reached.

Principle

- 4.3.2 Local Plan Policy SP1 sets out that the Local Plan supports the principles of sustainable development within North Hertfordshire and that we will maintain the role of key settlements within the District as the main focus for housing, employment and new development. Policy SP2 supports this aim by setting out that the Local Plan makes provision for 13,000 new homes over the plan period with new homes 'allocated' to the towns and villages in the District. Policy SP5 sets out that we support the principle of the Green Belt and recognise the intrinsic value of the countryside. As a result, Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt are protected as criteria d) of Policy SP5 states that we will operate a general policy of restraint in Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt. Supporting this Policy CGB1 lists the specific types of development that are accepted in such areas. This policy states:

"In the Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt, as shown on the Policies Map, planning permission will be granted provided that the development:

- a) Is infilling development which does not extend the built core of a Category B village;*
- b) Meets a proven local need for community facilities, services or affordable housing in an appropriate location;*
- c) Is strictly necessary for the needs of agriculture or forestry;*
- d) Relates to an existing rural building;*
- e) Is a modest proposal for rural economic development or diversification; or*
- f) Would provide land or facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and cemeteries that respect the generally open nature of the rural area".*

- 4.3.3 At the local level, this policy is supported by the ANHP ASH 1 which requires for development to be within the settlement boundary.
- 4.3.4 As set out above, the application site is for 36 new homes on land outside of the settlement boundary on land within the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt. The proposal does not meet any of the exceptions of Policy CGB1 listed above and therefore conflicts with the provisions of Local Plan Policies SP2, SP5 and CGB1 and ANHP ASH 1.
- 4.3.5 However, the Council's latest Five-Year Housing Land Supply Position Statement (November 2025) shows that the Council can only demonstrate a 2.6 year supply of deliverable housing sites for the period 2025/26 - 2029/2030, representing a shortfall of 3,347 dwellings. This means that the policies in the Local Plan, in general but specifically with regard to new housing development are considered 'out of date', even though we are still within the time period (2011 – 2031) of the Local Plan. Therefore, NPPF paragraph 11d) is relevant. This states:

“11. Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For plan-making this means that:

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”.*

- 4.3.6 As set out above, in the summary section of the supporting documents submitted with the application, the application states that the developer will be able to deliver these new homes on site within five years. Therefore, I attribute significant weight to the delivery of 36 new homes in the planning balance of this application.

Sustainability

- 4.3.7 The NPPF December 2024 version, like the versions before, sets out that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and that to achieve this the planning system has three overarching objectives. These are that development must have an economic, social and environmental objective. These core aims are reflected within the Local Plan Policies SP1 and D1.
- 4.3.8 In considering housing applications, it is stated that the construction phase can boost the local economy with the provision of jobs and local spending at meal times meeting the economic test for sustainability and that in the future new home owners can join local clubs and groups and friendship can form between neighbours, meeting the social requirements of sustainability. In my view this is a low to moderate benefit of the proposal.
- 4.3.9 With regards to the location of the site, the application site is outside of the settlement boundary for Ashwell, but it is positioned close to its outside edge as the Senuna Park development adjoins the settlement boundary and this application is to the east and south of Senuna Park. As a result, there is a footpath on Station Road connecting the site into the village, and a new bus stop is being provided on Station Road, as part of the S278 works for Senuna Park. On its northern side the site connects with the trackway Small Gains. Therefore, it can be concluded that the site is in a relatively sustainable location as walking and cycling into the village is a realistic prospect from the site.
- 4.3.10 In terms of environmental sustainability, all new dwellings will be fitted with an EV charging point (which is a requirement of current Building Regulations) and again to meet Building Regulations all the new homes will have to be built with low flow water fittings, double glazing and high levels of insulations. The proposed site plan also shows that an Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHPs) is to be provided for each property. This is supported given the Future Homes Standards (2025) Building Regulations which have been phased in since 2022 are anticipated to mandate that all new homes meet a 75-80% reduction in carbon emissions compared to pre-2022 standards which

is likely to require heat pumps and solar panels on most new homes. On this basis the application is considered to meet environmental sustainability requirements and to comply with the requirements of Local Plan Policy D1 and ANHP ASH 6 in terms of overall sustainability objectives. In my view this is a moderate planning benefit of the proposal.

Layout and design

4.3.11 Local Plan Policy SP9 states that the Council considers good design to be a key aspect of sustainable development and that we will support new development where it is well designed and located and responds positively to its local context. These aims are supported by Policy D1 which requires for new development to 'respond positively to a site's local context' and ANHP ASH 4.

4.3.12 The application sets out that the design rational for the proposal is for the frontage buildings to resemble a farmstead with the remaining dwellings then being set in a landscape led, rural / garden setting rear of this. The vehicle access for the site is utilising the existing field gate access off Station Road, and this results in an internal roadway that branches into two sections, one extending to the south-east of the wood and one to the north, transecting through the wood. Following the submission of the application, a number of layout and design concerns were raised with the agent. In summary, the concerns and the replies are:

1. Concern regarding the scale of the frontage buildings the small garden sizes.

Applicant's response:

- ☐ the 'farmyard' cluster of properties is now proposed to be in two separate blocks, so plots 5-7 and plots 8-14 are now no longer connected.
- ☐ The gardens to plots 5-7 have also been increased in size.
- ☐ Additional details have also been provided showing the bin store and cycle storage to be made available to the farmstead cluster plots.
- ☐ Plots 35 and 36, which are located opposite the main farmstead building have been reduced from two storey properties to single-storey bungalows. Following a request to remove these plots from the development, the applicant highlighted that the position of buildings in this location was a key feature of the approach to the farmstead cluster of the development. To address the concern however they have been reduced in height from two storey houses to single story bungalows.

2. Concern raised to the amount of hardstanding across the site in particular on the east side.

Applicant's response:

- ☐ Plots 25 – 27 - due to concerns regarding the amount of hardstanding around the dwellings in this area, including the footpath and pump station with parking, further consideration has been given to these three plots and the footpath to the eastern boundary that they connected with. The changes see the plots amended slightly in terms of their position and layout and in the orientation of the dwelling, which has been complemented by the removal of the substation (this has been confirmed as no longer required on site) and a decision made to remove the footpath to the east of these three plots, meaning there is no longer a need for natural surveillance to the eastern boundary in this location. All three properties now front the access road and are connected to the rest of the site via the path and road through the woodland, retaining their connection to the rest of the development.

3. Concern raised to the road going through the woodland.

Applicant's response:

- ☐ The area of trees to be removed represents as narrow a section as possible through the existing woodland. Additional planting is also proposed to replace the trees lost and the biodiversity net gain (BNG) across the site is raised by more than 50%, even accounting for the trees lost, which is a major uplift from the requirement for a 10% increase in BNG.
- ☐ Extensions to the woodland area were already proposed on its boundary in several locations consistent with the approach taken on the adjacent development site, and the removal of the footpath from the eastern section of the Wooded Edge character area of the development will also provide for further additional boundary planting in addition to that originally proposed.
- ☐ An estimate of the trees to be removed to provide the road and footway through the site, includes two dead trees, 14 beech, 5 pine, 4 oak and a sycamore tree. There is an understorey of smaller trees that do not meet the British standard at their current size to be classed as trees. Of the trees to be removed, the beech trees average 120mm in diameter, with the oaks smaller than that. The pine trees (of which there are 5) are generally larger and an average 320 mm in diameter. The majority of trees are young, with the larger pines being semi-mature.

4. Concern raised that the plots did not have clearly defined private amenity spaces.

Applicant's response:

- ☐ The Landscape Layout Plan has been updated to provide more clarity regarding the boundary treatments around each plot, which will be hedgerow of different heights to highlight the rear, side and front gardens of each plot and provide well defined boundaries. Additional detail showing pathed links from the main access to the front doors within each plot has also been added.

4.3.13 It is considered that the proposed development does have a broadly acceptable layout and design. The frontage of the site would be visible from Station Road, providing interaction with the road that would be acceptable. The scale and massing of the frontage buildings, with two plots being bungalows and the 'farmhouse' building being two storey in height, is not out of context or scale for the locality. The proposed houses are reflective in style, scale and external materials to the neighbouring Senuna Park development, so in time these two developments will appear as one co-ordinated development. The detached houses are well spaced without being wasteful of land, and the use of hedgerows to form private gardens is complementary to this rural location. A band of trees is proposed along both the east and south boundaries which will protect the landscape in views (this is discussed in more detail below).

4.3.14 With regards to the roadway going through the wood, it has been explained that this is the only option as connecting via Senuna Park is not a possibility given their SUDs drainage basin neighbours this site on its eastern edge and the legal contracts affecting that land. The application set outs that 24 live trees and two dead trees will be removed for the access through the wood. However, the proposed planning drawing shows that in excess of 140 new trees will be planted on the site in addition to the hedgerows. This is considered to be suitable mitigation to compensate for the removal of the trees to allow the road through the wood. Furthermore, in time the existing trees remaining in the woodland will grow and form a canopy over the road reducing visual impact in the long term. Given the number of new trees that are

proposed to be planted on the site, and the need to be able to access the top part of the site to deliver 13 houses, no objection is raised to the road going through the wood.

- 4.3.15 The proposed external materials for the dwellings are primarily red brick, sections of black weather boarding and a red roof tile, especially for the frontage buildings. On the detached houses some have sections of white render and some have a black roof tile. Apart from the bungalows, all the buildings are two storeys in height and are a tradition design with gables and ridged roofs. The design and external materials are complementary to Senuna Park and no objection is raised to the application on this basis. A materials condition is recommended to ensure full details are secured.

Landscape impact

- 4.3.16 Local Plan Policy NE2 sets out that planning permission will be granted for new development that respect the sensitivities of the relevant landscape character area and do not cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area or landscape character. This policy also requires that new developments consider the long term management and maintenance of existing and proposed landscaping. This is further supported by Local Plan Policy NE1 which requires that new development protects, conserve or enhances strategic green infrastructure and suitably mitigates or provides appropriate replacement to satisfactorily address any adverse impact on the strategic green infrastructure network. These aims are further supported by ANHP ASH 8 locally significant views.

- 4.3.17 The application is submitted with a Landscape and Visual Appraisal which assesses the impact of the development in the locality. The assessment concludes that with the exception of the woodland and boundary vegetation, which is of medium value, the landscape features of the site are considered to be of low value. It states:

“The landscape features within the Site are limited to its boundary vegetation and internally located woodland (Millennium Wood). For the most part the existing woodland and boundary hedgerows on the Site can be retained and enhanced. Furthermore, the redevelopment of the Site provides the opportunity to deliver a comprehensive landscape scheme which would increase the quantum and quality of the landscape features on the Site. The susceptibility to the proposed change is low”.

- 4.3.18 This assessment concludes that those visiting the playing fields and allotments to the north may experience limited views of the application site from close proximity, but that views are and will be limited by existing hedgerows and proposed tree planting. Nearby existing residents may see oblique views in long range views from between 300 – 450m but that the development will be seen in the context of the open fields in front with the development in the mid-view point of the view if viewed from the Sunnymead Orchard Park homes side, or rear of and part of Senuna Park if viewed from the Station Road site. The report concludes that any impact will not be adverse for either sets of nearby residents. For views within the wider landscape the report sets out that none of the views identified in the ASH 8 policy will be affected. The built form will be visible in some long-range views, but in time proposed landscaping will effectively screen the development.

- 4.3.19 It does conclude that there will be some medium sensitivity in views from nearby footpaths and states that views from the PRoW network are generally attractive, rural, yet relatively ordinary views across farmland, with some long views from the footpaths might include built form within the village or with the surrounding countryside. The views are not recognised or acknowledged and do not have any designations that would elevate their value. The report concludes that over time as planting matures the

proposed landscaping around the edges of the site will form a green buffer that will soften views of the development. The report states that the impact of the development in the landscape will be minor-adverse in year 1 but as the landscaping grows this reduces to a negligible impact in the longer term.

- 4.3.20 This assessment has been reviewed by the Place Services Landscape team who agree with and support these conclusions and recommend no objection to the application on the basis of impact in the landscape, subject to conditions regarding hard and soft landscaping and boundary treatments and a Landscape Management Plan, which are recommended.
- 4.3.21 The layout plan for the development shows that the drainage / SUDs for this development is located on the west side of the site adjacent to the SUDs features for Senuna Park, which forms a green wedge along the west side boundary of the site and south of the wood with the open space for the play area on the south side of the site, allowing for green infrastructure to extend through the site. As set out above, extensive planting is proposed across the site, partly to screen and enhance the setting of the development so that it has a negligible impact in the landscape in the long term, and partly a mitigation for the removal of the trees in the wood to allow the access road. This is considered to be in accordance with the aims of Local Plan Policy NE2.
- 4.3.22 It is noted that the previous 2017 application was refused on the basis of harm to the character area of the open Steeple Morden landscape area 226, which is an area that is predominantly large open fields. The proposed landscape measures of this application are to enhance the field edge planting to effectively enclose the site with landscaped edges, which could be considered contrary to the landscape area.
- 4.3.23 The application site is partly open fields and partly a wood with hedgerows and trees along the site boundaries. Enhancing the tree line around the edges of the site both as a compensation for removing trees for the access through the wood and for the benefits of BNG net gain, are considered to be a benefit greater than the potential impact the additional landscaping would have on the enclosure of the site and any harm this would have on the open character of the landscape area. Therefore, no objection is raised to the application on this basis, and these measures are considered to be acceptable and the application is considered to comply with the aims of Local policies NE1, NE2 and ANHP Policy ASH 8.

BNG and ecology

- 4.3.24 As the application was submitted after February 2024 it is subject to the national requirement of meeting the requirements for a 10% uplift in Bio-Diversity Net Gain (BNG) on site. Local Plan Policy NE4 requires for new development to appropriately protect, enhance and manage biodiversity on site and for all development to deliver measurable net gains for biodiversity and this is supported by the ANHP ASH 10 policy. A BNG Metric, BNG Design Stage Report and Ecological Impact Assessment have all been submitted for consideration. The BNG Design Stage Report sets out:

“Under current proposals, other neutral grassland, modified grassland, a sustainable drainage system, bioswale, developed land and vegetated garden will be created, one hundred and forty-three (143) individual trees will be planted and existing other woodland; mixed habitat will be enhanced from ‘poor’ condition to other woodland; mixed at ‘moderate’ condition. This will result in a biodiversity net gain of +52.24% (+3.42 units).

Under current proposals, most species-rich hedgerows with trees on site will be retained but not enhanced, with the exception of two locations which will be lost for proposed access routes, totalling 0.012 km. A further 0.090 km of species-rich native hedgerows with trees and 0.315 km of native hedgerow will also be planted which will result in a biodiversity net gain of +25.54% (+1.45 units)”.

- 4.3.25 The Place Services Ecology Service has reviewed this and concludes no objection to the application on the basis of ecology and BNG and subject to conditions requiring a BNG gain plan and ecology matters, both of which are recommended. On this basis, the application is considered to comply with the requirement of the national 10% BNG requirement and the aims of Local Plan policy NE4 and ANHP ASH 10.

Open Space

- 4.3.26 Local Plan Policy NE6 states that planning permission will be granted for development proposal that make provision for new and / improved open space which meet the needs arising from the development, contributes towards improving the provision, quality and accessibility of open space and incorporate any necessary open space buffers for landscape, visual and ecology reasons.
- 4.3.27 As set out above, a large section of the site would be open space. This is partly the wood area, partly the SUDs area and partly the play area, along with densely planted landscaped buffers on the north, east and south sides of the site. The details of the long-term maintenance provisions of the open space will be a requirement of the S106 Legal Agreement and is proposed to be under the care of a management company. No objection is raised against the proposal on this basis.

HoTs and affordable housing

- 4.3.28 Local Plan Policy SP7 requires for new development to make provision for infrastructure that is necessary in order to accommodate the additional demands resulting from the development. This is supported by Policy SP8 which requires for 33% of all new homes over the plan period to be Affordable Housing with a target, set out in Policy HS2, of new developments providing more than 25 new homes to deliver up to 40% affordable housing, with a broadly even split between smaller (1- and 2-bed) and larger (3+ bed) homes being delivered, subject to local need, with 65% of the homes being provided to be rented and 35% being other forms of affordable housing tenure.
- 4.3.29 The application is seeking the following S106 contributions (NB all payments are to be indexed linked). At the time of writing the applicant has agreed the HCC contributions and is proposing 14 dwellings for affordable housing contributions.
- 4.3.30 HCC: (NB inflation will be added along with a monitoring fee based on £420 per trigger point):
- ☐ Secondary school - £439,126.00;
 - ☐ Childcare - £643.00;
 - ☐ SEN education - £63,760.00;
 - ☐ Library - £10,630.00;
 - ☐ Youth - £7,250.00;
 - ☐ Waste Recycling centre - £7,609.00;
 - ☐ Waster transfer station - £10,641.00;
 - ☐ Fire and Rescue - £15,451.00.
 - ☐ Sustainable transport - £354,996.00

4.3.31 NHDC - Affordable housing:

The Housing Officer has requested a 40% affordable housing contribution which is 14 dwellings. To meet local need it is identified that the following homes are needed:

- ☐ 5 x 1-bed flats, 3 x 2-bed houses and 1 x 4-bed (M4(3)) house for social rent; and
- ☐ 4 x 2-bed houses and 1 x 3-bed house for affordable home ownership.

The application is proposing to meet the 40% contribution by offering 14 dwellings as affordable housing, and is proposing:

- ☐ 6 x 1-bed flats all for social rent;
- ☐ 5 x 2-bed dwellings (2 x flats and 3 x houses); with one flat and two houses for social rent and two houses for affordable home ownership; and
- ☐ 3 x 3-bed houses all for affordable home ownership;

4.3.32 No dwelling is proposed to be built to M4(3) standard. The applicant has confirmed that all the dwellings will meet or exceed the Nationally Described Space standards. A schedule of offered affordable housing is attached at Appendix 3.

4.3.33 Ashwell Parish Council – sports provision:

Ashwell Parish Council is seeking a contribution of £230,400.00 towards the delivery of a new Sports Pavillion. At the time of writing the applicant supports a payment towards the sport pavilion but is querying the amount. An update on this payment will be provided at the meeting.

4.3.34 The Council's Housing Officer has raised an objection to the proposed affordable housing contribution on the basis that the proposed dwellings do not meet the locally identified need, the proposed homes have parking courts for parking and not on plot parking, and the layout of the homes is with open plan living rooms (where there is a concern that children doing homework will not have a quiet space to work). The Housing Officer is also objecting on the basis that the affordable homes would be grouped at the frontage of the site with the open market homes being larger detached homes set in more spacious plots, so the proposed development will not result in a form of development that is tenure blind.

4.3.35 The applicant has confirmed that they are working in partnership with a Registered Provider who is happy with the parking layout and open plan living / dining room space. Furthermore, whilst there is an aspiration to have tenure blind development, there is currently no Local Plan policy which requires this.

4.3.36 Regarding the mis-alignment of the dwelling sizes between the requested and the proposed dwellings, this a conflict and an objection to the application. However, the Housing Officer has sought 14 dwellings, 9 for social rent and 5 for affordable home ownership, providing a total of 26 bedrooms. The applicant is offering 14 dwellings, 9 for social rent and 5 for affordable home ownership, providing 25 bedrooms. Therefore, whilst it is considered that the proposal would not fully comply with the aims of Policies SP8 and HS2 the under provision of one bedroom is considered to be a very minor objection to the application and therefore attracts limited weight in the planning balance.

Housing mix and accessible housing

- 4.3.37 Local Plan Policy HS3 requires an appropriate range of house types and sizes be provided with the density of the development being appropriate to the location and surroundings of the development. Policy HS5 requires for a proportion of new homes on schemes of 10 or more new homes to be accessible with at least 50% of the homes built to M4(2) accessible standard and 10% to M4(3) wheelchair accessible standard. ANHP ASH 2 requires for a demand of smaller one, two- and three-bedroom homes to meet the needs for single people, young couples, small families and older people wishing to downsize.
- 4.3.38 The application does not clarify if 50% of the homes will be built to accessible standard, and the elevation plans for the new homes appear to show a standard stepped entrance. As set out above, the Council has requested for one 4-bed dwelling to be built to M4(3) standard to meet the needs of an existing family on the housing register, and this need is not being met. Furthermore, the number of detached larger homes does not meet the needs identified in the ANHP, and whilst a range of home sizes is being proposed in the development as a whole, for the open market homes, 22 new homes are proposed. These comprise 1 x 2-bed bungalow, 1 x 3-bed bungalow (these bungalows are semi-detached with each other) 18 x 4- bed detached houses and 2 x 5-bed detached houses. The proposed dwelling sizes for the open market homes are of larger sized homes and the application is in conflict with the ANHP policy seeking more smaller homes for open market sale.
- 4.3.39 In the Planning Statement, it is set out that due to the Council having a lack of a 5YLS, in accordance with the advice contained in the NPPF paragraph 11d) the policies in the Local Plan and ANHP are out of date and no weight should be given to the aspirations of the ANHP Policy ASH 2. This issue is discussed further in the planning balance section below.

Parking and bikes

- 4.3.40 Local Plan Policy T2 sets out that new residential development needs to meet the minimum parking standards set out in Appendix 4 which is supported by ANHP ASH 20 which requires that new residential development does not to create demand for on street parking.
- 4.3.41 Appendix 4 states that a 1-bed property needs to have one car parking space whilst a 2+ bed dwelling needs two parking spaces and that at least 1 covered secure cycle space per dwelling must be provided if no garages are proposed. In addition, visitor parking must be provided with between 0.25 – 0.75 space per dwelling provided with the higher figure used when a there is no garage and the lower figure used when there is a garage.
- 4.3.42 22 parking spaces are provided for dwellings 1 – 14. This in excess of the parking standards as 8 of these dwellings are 1-bed flats. However, there is no objection to this, as it allows for visitor parking and space if a couple occupies a 1-bed flat and they both have a car. Two large bin and bike stores are provided for these dwellings. For the rest of the dwellings, with the exception of plot 35, which is the 2-bed bungalow which has on plot parking for two cars, all the houses would have a double garage and on plot parking for at least two cars, with some driveway areas being able to

accommodate three or four cars on plot in addition to the garage. Two visitor spaces would also be provided and the houses could accommodate bikes in the garages. Plot 35 is close to the communal bike store for plots 1 – 14 so can utilise this but a condition is recommended seeking an on-plot bin and bike store for plot 35. On this basis no objection is raised to the proposed parking provision for bikes and cars.

Bins

- 4.3.43 Bin storage can be problematic in new developments. In 2025 the Council changed its waste and recycling collection service and each home is now allocated 5 bins (4 wheelie bins and 1 food caddy) that are collected on a 3 week timetable. Additional bags of appropriately collected waste / recycling can be collected to be put out on the right day. As a result, a large land area per dwelling is needed for waste and recycling storage. The proposed layout accommodates this requirement with a two large bin and bike stores for plots 1 – 14, and there is space on plot, by side flanks walls of the houses / garages, for each of the bungalows and detached houses for bins to be stored to the side of plots and not left out in frontages looking unsightly, which is in accordance with the aims of design policy Local Plan D1.

Traffic impact and connectivity

- 4.3.44 Local Plan Policy T1 requires for new developments not to lead to highway safety problems or to cause unacceptable impacts upon the highway network. Whilst this is not supported by a similar policy in the ANHP, the ANHP does contain ASH 19 which requires for new development to provide footpaths that link with the existing network.
- 4.3.45 The HCC Highways officer has raise no objection to the proposal to use the existing field gate access on Station Road as the main vehicle access point and recommends no objection subject to conditions and sustainable transport contribution. He concludes:

“The HA has reviewed the TS and considers that the proposed development of 36 dwellings, with the recommended mitigation measures, will not materially impact the operation or safety of the local highway network. This conclusion is supported by the HA’s previous acceptance of 28 dwellings and the subsequent appeal decision, making the proposal acceptable.

Furthermore, the site benefits from good accessibility to a wide range of sustainable transport options, offering viable alternatives to private car use. This significantly reduces reliance on private vehicles and demonstrates strong alignment with both local and national transport policies”.

- 4.3.46 There is an existing footpath on Station Road, and two links to Small Gains to the north, one in this development and one in the adjoining Senuna Park development. As a result, the proposal is considered to be well connected.
- 4.3.47 The objection, regarding the junction at Odsey onto the A505, from Steeple Morden Parish Council is noted. This concern was passed to the HCC Highways officer who has replied (response is attached in full at Appendix 4) setting out that this development is not considered to be of sufficient size or in close enough proximity to the A505 junction to have an adverse impact on it, and therefore requesting a contribution to upgrade the junction would not be reasonable.
- 4.3.48 The application is therefore considered to comply with the provisions of Local Plan Policy T1 and connectivity aspirations of ASH 19.

Flood risk

- 4.3.49 Local Plan Policies NE7 and NE8 require for new developments to meet their drainage needs by using the most appropriate sustainable drainage solution whilst ensuring that new development is located outside of medium and high risk (flood zone 2 and 3) flood areas and other sources of flooding. The application sets out that this land is within flood zone 1, which is the lowest risk of possible flooding. The concern from the HCC LLFA team regarding potential flood risk in the northern part of the site is noted. As set out above, the application is currently under a technical objection response from the HCC LLFA team, and at this time the additional information submitted by the applicant to overcome this, is still being considered by that team. I see no reason why this objection cannot be addressed and the application is being recommended on this basis.
- 4.3.50 A SUDs basin is located on the west side of the site, alongside the SUDs basin for Senuna Park. This will provide for a large, green open area for the benefit of all residents as well as meeting the requirement for drainage to be sustainably treated on site. The application is therefore considered to comply with the provisions of these two Local Plan policies.

4.4 Conclusion and Planning balance

- 4.4.1 As set out above, this proposal conflicts with Local Plan Policies relating to the location of residential development. Specifically, the site is located outside of the village settlement boundary within the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt, S106 HoTs are not fully agreed, and whilst the application is proposing 40% affordable housing, it would not fully address locally identified need. The proposal would also not fully meet the locally identified need for smaller dwellings sizes and would not provide a wheelchair accessible 4-bedroom home for affordable housing. Individually I give each of these objections moderate weight in the planning balance.
- 4.4.2 The NPPF paragraph 11d) directs that when an LPA is behind in its delivery of new homes, significant weight has to be given to the benefit of providing new homes. 36 new homes, with 14 dwellings for affordable housing, is considered to be significant benefit. The adverse impacts identified do not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits that would arise from the delivery of the proposed housing. As a result, the application is therefore recommended for approval, subject to the recommendation below.

4.5 Alternative Options

- 4.5.1 None applicable

4.6 Pre-Commencement Conditions

- 4.6.1 I can confirm that the applicant is in agreement with the pre-commencement conditions that are proposed.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 In making decisions on applications submitted under the Town and Country Planning legislation, the Council is required to have regard to the provisions of the development plan and to any other material considerations. The decision must be in accordance with the plan unless the material considerations indicate otherwise. Where the decision is to refuse or restrictive conditions are attached, the applicant has a right of appeal against the decision.

6.0 **Recommendation**

- 6.1 That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following resolutions:

1. The receipt of a no objection response from the LLFA and the imposition of any conditions delegated to the Development and Conservation Manager;
2. The agreement of the sports pavilion payment delegated to the Development and Conservation Manager;
3. The completion of a S106 legal agreement for the HoTs as set out above and the inclusion of the sports pavilion contribution, all indexed linked;
4. An extension of time as required to address the above; and
5. The conditions and informative as set out below:

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. Details and/or samples of materials to be used on all external elevations and the roof of the development hereby permitted shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the development is commenced and the approved details shall be implemented on site.

Reason: To ensure that the development will have an acceptable appearance which does not detract from the appearance and character of the surrounding area and to comply with Policy D1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 to 2031.

4. No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority a scheme of hard and soft landscaping and boundary treatment for the site, which shall include any proposed changes in ground levels and also accurately identify spread, girth and species of all existing trees, shrubs and hedgerows on the site and indicate any to be retained, together with measures for their protection which shall comply with the recommendations set out in the British Standards Institute publication BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction.

The soft landscaping plan should include plant species, number, density, location and sizes of the proposed planting. The planting specification should provide details of tree planting pits, green roofs, planting preparation and establishment operations.

We would recommend an alternative to plastic guards, such as the use of perimeter protective fencing where appropriate, or guards manufactured from 100% biodegradable materials.

The hard landscaping plan should include details of specific materials, colours and finishes of paved or otherwise hard surfaces, built features and street furniture. The plans should clearly show the position of any new fencing and hard surfaces in relation to existing and proposed planting.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and the character and appearance of the area. This condition is required to be agreed prior to the commencement of any development to ensure matters of tree and hedgerow protection are secured early to ensure avoidance of damage or loss due to the development and/or its construction. If agreement was sought at any later stage, there is an unacceptable risk of loss and damage to important trees and hedgerow that would result in harm to amenity. Local Plan Policies D1 and N2.

5. None of the trees to be retained on the application site shall be felled, lopped, topped, uprooted, removed or otherwise destroyed or killed without the prior written agreement of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To safeguard and enhance the appearance of the completed development and the visual amenity of the locality, and to comply with Policy NE2 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 to 2031.

6. No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority a landscape management plan for a minimum of 5 years. This should include:

a) Drawing/s showing the extent of the LMP i.e. only showing the areas to which the LMP applies, areas of private ownership should be excluded.

b) Written Specification detailing:

- o All operation and procedures for soft landscape areas; inspection, watering, pruning, cutting, mowing, clearance and removal of arisings and litter, removal of temporary items (fencing, guards and stakes) and replacement of failed planting.
- o All operations and procedures for hard landscape areas; inspection, sweeping, clearing of accumulated vegetative material and litter, maintaining edges, and painted or finished surfaces.
- o Furniture (Bins, Benches and Signage) and Play Equipment.
- o All operations and procedures for soft landscaping to SuDS features; inspection of linear drains, basins and swales, removal of unwanted vegetative material and litter, including inlets and outlets.

c) Maintenance task table which explains the maintenance duties across the site in both chronological and systematic order.

d) Mechanism for monitoring and review of the management plan and operations.

Reason: To support plant establishment and ensure appropriate management is carried out and to maintain functionality and visual aesthetic. Local Plan Policy NE4.

7. Prior to the first occupation of the first dwelling hereby approved, details of the Air Source Heat Pumps shall be submitted to the LPA and approved in writing and installed on site (for each dwelling).

Reason: To ensure that there are no adverse impacts on the design of the dwelling hereby approved or adverse harm on the amenities of the neighbouring occupiers. Local Plan Policies D1 and D3.

8. All mitigation measures and/or works shall be carried out in accordance with the details contained in the Ecological Impact Assessment Report (aLyne, November 2025) as already submitted with the planning application and agreed in principle with the local planning authority prior to determination.

This will include the appointment of an appropriately competent person e.g. an ecological clerk of works (ECoW) to provide on-site ecological expertise during construction. The appointed person shall undertake all activities, and works shall be carried out, in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To conserve protected and Priority species and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended).

9. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 as amended no development as set out in Classes A, AA, B, C and E of Part 1 (and any further new class that may be introduced by way of an update) of Schedule 2 to the Order, (or any subsequent Statutory Instrument which revokes, amends and/or replaces those provisions) shall be carried out without first obtaining a specific planning permission from the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: Given the nature of this development, the Local Planning Authority considers that development which would normally be "permitted development" should be retained within planning control in the interests of the character and amenities of the area and to comply with Policy D1 and/or Policy D3 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 to 2031.

10. A construction environmental management plan (CEMP: Biodiversity) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The CEMP (Biodiversity) shall include the following.

- a) Risk assessment of potentially damaging construction activities.
- b) Identification of "biodiversity protection zones".
- c) Practical measures (both physical measures and sensitive working practices) to avoid or reduce impacts during construction (may be provided as a set of precautionary working method statements).
- d) The location and timing of sensitive works to avoid harm to biodiversity features.
- e) The times during construction when specialist ecologists need to be present on site to oversee works.

- f) Responsible persons and lines of communication.
- g) The role and responsibilities on site of an ecological clerk of works (ECoW) or similarly competent person.
- h) Use of protective fences, exclusion barriers and warning signs.

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.

Reason: To conserve protected and priority species and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended).

11. Prior to any works above slab level, a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy for protected, Priority and threatened species, prepared by a suitably qualified ecologist in line with the recommendations of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Ground Level Tree Assessment v003 (aLyne Ecology Ltd., October 2025) and BNG Design Stage Report V005 (aLyne Ecology, December 2025), shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

The content of the Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy shall include the following:

- a) Purpose and conservation objectives for the proposed enhancement measures;
 - b) detailed designs or product descriptions to achieve stated objectives;
 - c) locations of proposed enhancement measures by appropriate maps and plans (where relevant);
 - d) persons responsible for implementing the enhancement measures; and
 - e) details of initial aftercare and long-term maintenance (where relevant).
- The works shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details shall be retained in that manner thereafter.

Reason: To enhance protected, Priority and threatened species and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under paragraph 187d of NPPF 2024, s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended) and Policy NE4: Biodiversity and Geological Sites North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031.

12. Prior to occupation, a "lighting design strategy for biodiversity" for areas to be lit in accordance with Guidance Note 08/23 (Institute of Lighting Professionals) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The strategy shall:

- a) identify those areas/features on site that are particularly sensitive for bats and that are likely to cause disturbance in or around their breeding sites and resting places or along important routes used to access key areas of their territory, for example, for foraging; and
- b) show how and where internal and external lighting will be installed (through provision of appropriate lighting contour plans and technical specifications) so that it can be clearly demonstrated that areas to be lit will not disturb or prevent the above species using their territory or having access to their breeding sites and resting places.

All internal and external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the scheme and maintained thereafter in

accordance with the scheme. Under no circumstances should any other external lighting be installed without prior consent from the local planning authority."

Reason: To allow the LPA to discharge its duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended).

13. The development hereby permitted shall not commence (save for the access road into the development) until the proposed access has been constructed to base course construction for the first 12 metres and the join to the existing carriageway has been constructed to the current specification of Hertfordshire County Council and to the local Planning Authority's satisfaction.
Arrangement shall be made for surface water drainage to be intercepted and disposed of separately so that it does not discharge from or onto the highway carriageway.

Reason: To ensure satisfactory access into the site and avoid carriage of extraneous material or surface water from or onto the highway in accordance with Policy 5 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan.

14. Prior to occupation of the development hereby permitted, the main access road gradient of the access shall not be steeper than 1 in 20 for the first 12 metres from the edge of the carriageway, shall be constructed to a minimum of 5.5m wide with the kerb radii being 6m complete with improved footways 2.0m wide footways on both sides of the access, continuing through the site and Station Road along the frontage of the site and pedestrian crossing point with tactile paving and dropped kerbs at site access. Thereafter the access and highway improvements shall be retained at the position identified on the approved drawing.
Arrangement shall be made for surface water drainage to be intercepted and disposed of separately so that it does not discharge from or onto the highway carriageway.

Reason: To ensure satisfactory access into the site and avoid carriage of extraneous material or surface water from or onto the highway in accordance with Policy 5 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan.

15. Before the access is first brought into use, relocating the 30mph speed limit further east on Station Road, speed transition moved 121m east of the site access, aligning with visibility splays and ATC 85th percentile speed data to both directions shall be provided and permanently maintained as identified on the approved drawings. Within which, there shall be no obstruction to visibility between 600 mm and 2.0 metres above the carriageway level. These measurements shall be taken from the intersection of the centre line of the permitted access with the edge of the carriageway of the highway respectively into the application site and from the intersection point along the edge of the carriageway.

Reason: To ensure construction of a satisfactory development and in the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policy 5 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).

16. Before commencement of the development, a 'Construction Traffic Management Plan' shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority. Thereafter the construction of the

development shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved Plan. The 'Construction Traffic Management Plan' must set out:

- o the phasing of construction and proposed construction programme.
- o the methods for accessing the site, including wider construction vehicle routing (swept path drawings).
- o the numbers of daily construction vehicles including details of their sizes, at each phase of the development.
- o the hours of operation and construction vehicle movements. (including delivery times and removal of waste) and to avoid school pick up/drop off times.
- o details of any highway works necessary to enable construction to take place.
- o details of construction vehicle parking, turning and loading/unloading arrangements clear of the public highway. (swept path drawings)
- o details of any hoardings and how visibility splays will be maintained.
- o management of traffic to reduce congestion.
- o control of dirt and dust on the public highway, including details of the location and methods to wash construction vehicle wheels.
- o the provision for addressing any abnormal wear and tear to the highway.
- o waste management proposals.
- o Provision of sufficient on-site parking prior to commencement of construction activities;
- o Post construction restoration/reinstatement of the working areas and temporary access to the public highway;
- o where works cannot be contained wholly within the site a plan should be submitted showing the site layout on the highway including extent of hoarding and remaining road width for vehicle movements.

Reason: To minimise the impact of the construction process on the on local environment and local highway network in accordance with Policies 5, 12, 17 and 22 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).

17. 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. Provision to be made for public outreach and interpretation
 8. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation.
- B The demolition/development shall take place/commence in accordance with the programme of archaeological works set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition (A)
- C The development shall not be occupied/used until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set

out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition (A) and the provision made for analysis and publication where appropriate.

Reason: To protect any archaeological assets. Local Plan Policy HE4.

18. Prior to the commencement of development a scheme shall be submitted for the protection of the dwellings from noise for approval in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall be in accordance with the recommendations stated in the Mayer Brown Ltd report (Ref: 29016-RPT01-V2) dated 29th September 2025. No dwellings shall be occupied until the scheme providing protection for those dwellings has been implemented in accordance with the approved details. The approved scheme shall be retained in accordance with those details thereafter.

Reason: To protect long term amenity. Local Plan Policy D3.

19. No development approved by this permission shall take place until the following has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority:
- o A Generic Quantitative Risk Assessment
 - o A Detailed Quantitative Risk Assessment (where shown to be necessary by the General Quantitative Risk Assessment)
 - o A Remedial Options Appraisal and Remediation Strategy (where shown to be necessary by the Detailed Quantitative Risk Assessment).

All such work shall be undertaken in accordance with Land Contamination Risk Management (Environment Agency, 2023) or other appropriate guidance issued by the regulatory authorities. The work shall be sufficient to ensure that measures will be taken to mitigate any risks to human health and the wider environment.

Reason: To prevent unacceptable risk to Human Health and Controlled Waters and to prevent pollution of the Environment in accordance with the aims and Paragraphs 187(f), 196 and 197 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024).

20. Prior to the dwelling being occupied a validation report shall be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority to demonstrate the effectiveness of any agreed Remediation Strategy. Any such validation shall include responses to any unexpected contamination discovered during works.

Reason: To prevent unacceptable risk to Human Health and Controlled Waters and to prevent pollution of the Environment in accordance with the aims and Paragraphs 187(f), 196 and 197 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024).

21. Prior to the commencement of development, a scheme showing the provision of fire hydrants serving the development is to be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA and shall be installed on site prior to the first occupation of the first dwelling.

Reason: To ensure there are adequate water supplies available for use in an emergency. Local Plan Policy D1.

22. No development shall take place until a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP) for the site 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).

23. Prior to the first occupation of the first dwelling the full details of the sub-station are to be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA and the approved details shall be constructed on site.

Reason: To ensure an acceptable visual appearance of the structure. Local Plan Policy D1.

24. Prior to its first occupation, details of a bin and bike store(s) for plot 35 are to be submitted to and agreed in writing by the LPA and shall be provided on site.

Reason: To ensure space for bins and bikes to be stored on plot. Local Plan Policy T2 and D1.

Proactive Statement:

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

Informative/s:

1. 1. Notification of intention to connect to the public sewer under S106 of the Water Industry Act Approval and consent will be required by Anglian Water, under the Water Industry Act 1991. Contact Development Services Team 0345 606 6087 Option 2.
2. Protection of existing assets - A public sewer is shown on record plans within the land identified for the proposed development. It appears that development proposals will affect existing public sewers. It is recommended that the applicant contacts Anglian Water Development Services Team for further advice on this matter. Building over existing public sewers will not be permitted (without agreement) from Anglian Water.
3. Building near to a public sewer - No building will be permitted within the statutory easement width of 3 metres from the pipeline without agreement from Anglian Water. Please contact Development Services Team on 0345 606 6087 Option 2.
4. The developer should note that the site drainage details submitted have not been approved for the purposes of adoption. If the developer wishes to have the sewers included in a sewer adoption agreement with Anglian Water (under Sections 104 of the Water Industry Act 1991), they should contact our Development Services Team

on 0345 606 6087 Option 2 at the earliest opportunity. Sewers intended for adoption should be designed and constructed in accordance with Sewers for Adoption guide for developers, as supplemented by Anglian Water's requirements.

2. 1. Storage of materials: The applicant is advised that the storage of materials associated with the construction of this development should be provided within the site on land which is not public highway, and the use of such areas must not interfere with the public highway. If this is not possible, authorisation should be sought from the Highway Authority before construction works commence.

Further information is available via the County Council website at:
<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/business-licences/business-licences.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

2. Obstruction of highway: It is an offence under section 137 of the Highways Act 1980 for any person, without lawful authority or excuse, in any way to wilfully obstruct the free passage along a highway or public right of way. If this development is likely to result in the public highway or public right of way network becoming routinely blocked (fully or partly) the applicant must contact the Highway Authority to obtain their permission and requirements before construction works commence. Further information is available via the County Council website at:
<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/business-licences/business-licences.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

3. New or amended vehicle crossover access (section 278): Where works are required within the public highway to facilitate a new or amended vehicular access, the Highway Authority require the construction of such works to be undertaken to their satisfaction and specification, and by a contractor who is authorised to work in the public highway. If any of the works associated with the construction of the access affects or requires the removal and/or the relocation of any equipment, apparatus or structures (e.g. street name plates, bus stop signs or shelters, statutory authority equipment etc.) the applicant will be required to bear the cost of such removal or alteration.

Before works commence the applicant will need to apply to the Highway Authority to obtain their permission, requirements and for the work to be carried out on the applicant's behalf. Further information is available via the County Council website at:
<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/changes-to-your-road/dropped-kerbs/dropped-kerbs.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

4. Debris and deposits on the highway: It is an offence under section 148 of the Highways Act 1980 to deposit compost, dung or other material for dressing land, or any rubbish on a made up carriageway, or any or other debris on a highway to the interruption of any highway user. Section 149 of the same Act gives the Highway Authority powers to remove such material at the expense of the party responsible. Therefore, best practical means shall be taken at all times to ensure that all vehicles leaving the site during construction of the development and use thereafter are in a condition such as not to emit dust or deposit mud, slurry or other debris on the highway. Further information is available by telephoning 0300 1234047.

7.1 There are four appendices attached to this report. These are:

1. The list of submitted plans and supporting documents.
2. Ashwell Parish Council objection.
3. The offered Affordable Housing.
4. Highways response on the view that a contribution should be sought to upgrade the junction on the A505 at Odsey.