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Contact: Bernie Fleming
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Date: 27 March 2025

Dear Sarah,

[24/02780/RM](#)

Reserved Matters : Construction of the main spine road (The Avenue) from and including the roundabout on Stotfold Road through and connecting to High Dane, creation of drainage ponds, swales and other associated drainage infrastructure, signage and other necessary highway and service infrastructure (to serve future development parcels) (outline was EIA development with an ES submitted)

Land North of Highover Farm to Stotfold Road, Highover Way, Hitchin

ECOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Overall Recommendation

- ☒ The application can be determined accordingly with no ecological objections

Summary of Advice

- The application for reserved matters can be approved and Conditions 7, 9 & 11 can be (partially) discharged

Supporting documents

I have made particular use of the following documents in providing this advice:

- Cover letter (Submission of Infrastructure Reserved Matters (RM) Application in Respect of 18/01154/OP and the Discharge of Associated Conditions), Rapleys, 13 December 2024
- Highover Farm Design Code (Rev P3), McBains, December 2024

- Environmental Impact Assessment Supplementary Note, Rapleys, December 2024
- Site Wide Phasing and Delivery Plan (503/55/1/SWDP), Rapleys, 5 December 2024
- (Conditions 7, 9 and 11) Planning, Decision and Access Statement, Rapleys, 13 December 2024
- Tree Planting Proposals Ref: GL2024 05 - 09, golby+luck, 27 November 2024

Comments

Thank you for your letter of 15 January 2025 which refers, and for consulting Herts LEADS (Ecology); I apologise for the delay with this reply.

As part of the application for reserved matters approval for construction of The Avenue and its associated drainage primary infrastructure (Condition 3 of 18/01154/OP), I understand it necessarily seeks the partial discharge for Conditions 7 (detailed highway plans), 9 (lighting) & 11 (landscape) though only in so far as they relate to the construction of The Avenue etc (as they can only be discharged completely when all reserved matters have been approved).

Conditions 7, 9 & 11 are shown in full in Appendix 1.

Where relevant, I consider that the proposals as described in the application documents appear consistent those put forward in the outline application. Accordingly, the Environmental Statements remain valid for these purposes.

Given these circumstances, and that the measures are restricted to The Avenue (or main spine) with its specific lighting and landscaping requirements, I do not anticipate any harmful ecological impacts arising. We anticipate making more detailed comments on other partial discharges of Conditions 9 and 11 in future phases.

Therefore, the application for reserved matters can be approved and Conditions 7, 9 & 11 can be (partially) discharged.

Yours sincerely,

Bernie Fleming
Ecology Advisor
Hertfordshire LEADS

Hertfordshire LEADS provides Landscape, Ecology, Archaeology, Design and Sustainability support to planning departments in Hertfordshire.

Appendix 1

Condition 7

All reserved matters applications for each development parcel or sub-phase shall include full details in relation to the design of estate roads (in the form of scaled plans and / or written specifications) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority to detail the following:

- a. Roads;
- b. Footways;
- c. New pedestrian and cycle accesses into the site;
- d. Cycleways (compliant with LTN 1/20);
- e. External public lighting;
- f. Minor artefacts, structures and functional services;
- g. Foul and surface water drainage;
- h. Visibility splays;
- i. Access arrangements including temporary construction access
- j. Hard surfacing materials;
- k. Parking areas for vehicles and cycles;
- l. Loading areas; and
- m. Turning and circulation areas.

The development shall be implemented in accordance with those approved plans.

Reason: To ensure suitable, safe and satisfactory planning and development of the site in accordance with Policy 5 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan 2018.

Condition 9

No development shall commence within a development phase until the artificial lighting scheme for that development phase has been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved lighting scheme for that phase shall be installed, maintained and operated in accordance with the approved details / measures for that phase unless the Local Planning Authority gives its written consent to any variation.

Reason: To protect the character and appearance of the area and the amenity of existing and future residential properties in accordance with NPPF paragraphs 120 and 125 and North Hertfordshire Local Plan Policy D3.

Condition 11

All reserved matters applications for any development parcel or sub-phase shall include the follow design details:

Soft Landscape

- a) Details of trees, hedgerows, habitats, ponds and other natural features it is proposed to retain or remove and details of how they will be protected during the construction phase. Such details to include the tree protection measures in accordance with BS5837:2012.
- b) Full details of planting plans and written specifications, including cultivation proposals for maintenance and management associated with plant and grass establishment, details of the mix, size, distribution, density and levels of all trees/hedges/shrubs to be planted and the proposed time of planting. The planting plan shall use botanic names to avoid misinterpretation. The plans should include a full schedule of plants;
- c) 1:100 plans (or at a scale otherwise agreed) with cross-sections of mounding, ponds, ditches and swales and proposed treatment of the edges and perimeters of each development phase;
- d) The landscape treatment of roads (primary, secondary, tertiary and green) through each development phase;
- e) A specification for the establishment of trees within hard landscaped areas including details of space standards (distances from buildings etc.), tree pit details and details of the species, number and spacing of trees and shrubs;
- f) The planting and establishment of structural landscape to be provided in advance of all or specified parts of the site as appropriate;
- g) Full details of any proposed alterations to existing watercourses/drainage channels and details of any water features;
- h) Details and specification of proposed earth modelling, mounding, regrading and/or embankment areas or changes of level across the site to be carried out including soil quantities, topsoil storage to BS 3882 : 2007, haul routes, proposed levels and contours to be formed, sections through construction to show make-up, and timing of works;
- i) A specification for the Topsoil Strip, storage, re-spread and remediation in accordance with Defra : Construction Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites.

Hard Landscape

- j) Full details, including cross-sections, of all bridges and culverts;
- k) The location and specification of minor artefacts and structures, including furniture, refuse or other storage units, signs and lighting columns/brackets;
- l) 1:200 plans (or at a scale otherwise agreed) including cross sections, of roads, paths and cycleways;
- m) Details of all hard surfacing materials (size, type and colour). No subsequent alterations to the approved landscape details are to take place unless submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The landscape within each Development Phase shall be implemented in accordance with the approved landscape details for that Development Parcel or Strategic Engineering and Landscape Element.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of residents and to ensure that a detailed approach to the development of the built-up area (or parcels thereof) is agreed, in order to safeguard the setting of the site and its surroundings, and to ensure a suitable relationship and integration of the built development with its surroundings in accordance with the North Hertfordshire Local Plan Policies SP9, SP17, NE2 and NE6.