

<u>Location:</u>	Land North of Highover Farm to Stotfold Road, Highover Way, Hitchin, Hertfordshire
<u>Applicant:</u>	Barratt David Wilson c/o Rapleys LLP
<u>Proposal:</u>	Reserved Matters application for Construction of the main spine road (The Avenue) from Stotfold Road 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)
<u>Ref. No:</u>	24/02780/RM
<u>Officer:</u>	Sarah Kasparian

Date of expiry of statutory period: 24th March 2025

Extension of statutory period: 27th October 2025

Reason for Delay

Negotiation on detailed aspects and delays in responses from consultees

Reason for Referral to Committee

The site area for this application exceeds 0.5ha.

1.0 Relevant History

- 1.1 These reserved matters are the subject of outline planning permission ref. 18/01154/OP and relates to the infrastructure 'phase 0' of the development for 700 homes. Infrastructure is limited to the main road through the site and site wide drainage infrastructure.
- 1.2 Alongside this application, the applicant has also sought to discharge various conditions to the outline planning permission ref. 18/01154/OP, in particular Condition 5 relating to the Site Wide Phasing and Delivery Plan (25/00076/DOC) and Condition 6 relating to the Site Wide Design Code (24/02906/DOC). Both these conditions are required to be discharged prior to approving the first application for reserved matters.
- 1.3 Other applications to discharge conditions have been made, which are required to be prior to the commencement of development.

2.0 Policies

2.1 North Hertfordshire District Local Plan (NHLP) 2011-2031 and Proposals Map

Policy SP1: Sustainable Development in North Hertfordshire
Policy SP2: Settlement Hierarchy
Policy SP6: Sustainable transport
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 T1: Assessment of transport matters
 Policy T2: Parking
 Policy HS1: Local Housing Allocations
 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 HC1: Community facilities
 Policy NE1: Strategic green infrastructure
 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 NE9: Water quality and environment
 Policy NE10: Water conservation and wastewater infrastructure
 Policy NE11: Contaminated land

2.2 The site is identified in the NHLP as a housing site ref. HT1 in Policy SP17, which sets out specific masterplanning criteria for the site.

2.3 **Supplementary planning documents:** Design (2011); and Sustainability (2024).

2.4 **NPPF** (December 2024): Generally, and specifically:

Section 2: Achieving sustainable development
 Section 5: Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
 Section 6: Building a strong competitive economy
 Section 8: Promoting healthy and safe communities
 Section 9: Promoting sustainable transport
 Section 11: Making effective use of land
 Section 12: Achieving well-designed places
 Section 13: Protecting Green Belt land
 Section 14: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
 Section 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
 Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 **HCC Growth and Infrastructure Unit** – No comments.

3.2 **HCC Ecology** – No objection.

3.3 **HCC Archaeology** – Noting that the works set out in the WSI need to be complete before development commences. Further comment was received, and in light of recent archaeological investigation a further condition is proposed.

3.4 **Hertfordshire Highways** – No objection to this phase. Noting that the Highway Authority will adopt the 'spine road', further detailed checks will be undertaken in the Section 38 application. *'While the process of checking the detailed design is underway,*

the Highway Authority is content that the spine road dimensions are in accordance with expectations, including the provision of high quality links for pedestrians and cyclists’.

- 3.5 **Lead Local Flood Authority** – No objection.
- 3.6 **Anglian Water** – No objection. Request to be consulted on all RM Applications and condition 5. The LPA has also received a copy of the notice under Section 8(2) of the Water Industry Act 1991 for Advanced Water Infrastructure Networks Ltd to be water and sewerage undertakers.
- 3.7 **NHDC Urban Designer** – No objection.
- 3.8 **NHDC Environmental Health** – No comment.
- 3.9 **NHDC Transport Officer** – No objection.
- 3.10 **NHDC Greenspaces** – No objection
- 3.11 Other consultees were consulted on the application, but no response received. These include: NHDC Waste and Recycling Services, HCC Rights of Way, and HCC Minerals and Waste.
- 3.12 **Residents**
- 3.13 A total of 739 local residents and neighbours to the site were notified of this application for two rounds of consultation as a result of amended plans. Since then, 42 representations were received around February 2025, mainly objecting and one supporting the plans. The following comments have been raised:

Objections:

- Concern what type of bus gate is proposed for the spine road; that it is confusing, and that CCTV will not be sufficient to prevent drivers from continuing along the spine road. Subsequent there is concern that the road will become a ‘rat run’ for drivers.
- Note that there should be provision for vehicles to turn around before the bus gate via a turning circle or similar. There also needs to be provision for children to be dropped off at the proposed school.
- Concern that buses currently struggle to traverse High Dane due to parked cars, and this problem will continue.
- Concern about impact of surface water runoff, impermeable road surfacing
- Suggestion that the report on flooding at Woolgrove Road should be published so that the developer can better assess the impact on local flood risk
- Concern regarding the lack of public consultation by the developer.
- Concern that some local residents were not notified by the council.

In support:

- Support for the level of planting included on the proposed plans

This is a list of other comments that are planning considerations, which are not relevant to this type of application as detail based on an already granted outline planning permission:

- Objection in principle to housing development at this site.
- Objection in principle to the quantum of development and impact that will have on traffic volumes in the area.

- Objection in principle to the vehicular access to the site partly from High Dane which will be dangerous. Suggestion of traffic calming measures.
- Concern about previous traffic surveys and data used to support the outline application
- Concerns about the spine road being a through route
- Concern about increased traffic and considerations given to mitigate increased traffic including at Woolgrove Road and the eastern access to the railway station
- Note that the developer should pay for the connection to the Letchworth greenway, not the council
- Concern about the lack of affordable housing
- Concern about the impact on local services and infrastructure
- Concern regarding electricity supply and capacity and need for a new local substation.
- Concern that provision of retail is not included in this application
- Concern for the natural environment, wildlife, noise and air pollution and flood risk
- Question about management and maintenance of green spaces 'around the new estate'
- Suggestion about a bypass using this application site and connection to the Wilbury Industrial Estate
- Concern that the spine road has been termed 'The Avenue'

4.0 Planning Considerations

Site & Surroundings

- 4.1 The site is located to the north-east of Hitchin, within a roughly triangular shape between the Great Northern railway line, Stotfold Road and the built-up edge of the town. The industrial estate sits to the north and primarily residential development to the south and west of the site. Letchworth garden City is located to the east, with a gap of about 700m comprising arable land.
- 4.2 The land currently comprises several disused arable fields of varying sizes. There is established hedgerow around much of the perimeter of the site and some field boundaries. The Highover Farmyard is located at the end of Highover Way and adjoins the application site at the south.
- 4.3 This application site boundary relates to reserved matters for the main road and drainage within for the wider site. The red line for this application broadly shows the whole main road joining High Dane to the new Stotfold Road roundabout, plus drainage links throughout the site linking up to the proposed drainage features in the top northern corner of the site.

Proposal

- 4.4 The application seeks approval of reserved matters of outline permission ref. 18/01154/OP for 'Phase 0' and the development of the main road and drainage infrastructure. Detail is included in this application in relation to all reserved matters of landscaping, layout, scale and appearance for 'Phase 0' in accordance with Condition 3 of outline permission ref. 18/01154/OP.
- 4.5 It is noted that the detail of the vehicular access onto Stotfold Road and the new roundabout was given planning permission in the outline application, and the principle of vehicular access from High Dane was approved without the detail at outline stage. This application shows the detail of how the new spine road will attach to the new roundabout and to the end of High Dane.

- 4.6 The plans listed below were updated on 3rd October 2025 to reduce the red line to remove any parts, of what will be the 'public square', out of this application for reserved matters, meaning that all reserved matters for the public square will be the subject of its own application for reserved matters. This will be reviewed holistically at a later date, with appropriate consultation and also once the boundary of the school is known.
- 4.7 The application is accompanied by the following plans and documents:
- Location Plan HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-0002-P05
 - Infrastructure Site Layout HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-0001-P05
 - Electricity Sub Station Generic detail EDS 07-3102.11 VERSION A sheets 1-3
 - Drainage layout plans HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-5001-P06, HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-5002-P06, HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-5003-P06, HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-5004-P06, HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-5005-P05, HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-5006-P06, HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-5007-P04, HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-5008-P04, HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-5009-P04, HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-5010-P04, HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-5011-P04, HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-5012-P04, HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-5013-P03, HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-5014-P04, HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-5015-P04
 - Drainage Details – Inlet Headwalls/outlet Headwalls ACO SuDS Swale Inlet Brochure, AWSFA6A Outlet Headwall 300, AWSFA6Y Inlet Headwall 300, AWSFA10X inlet Headwall 375, AWSFA10X Inlet Headwall 450x, AWSFA11Y Outlet Headwall 525, AWSFA15W Inlet Headwall 600, AWSFA20Z Inlet Headwall 1200, AWSFA20Z Inlet Headwall 1350, AWSFA28Z Outlet Headwall 1350x
 - Drainage Details – Design Guidance Construction Approved Version 2.1 (May 2021)
 - General Purpose GRC Headwall
 - Adoptable Drainage Construction Details HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-5201-P01
 - Hydrabrace Details Design and Hydraulic Specification SHE-0474-1672-2200-1672, MD-SHE-0474-1672-2200-1672
 - Surface Water Manhole Schedule HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-5301-P02
 - Foul Water Manhole Schedule HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-5302-P02
 - Rising Main Long Section HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-8101-P01
 - Attenuation Basin Sections HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-5401-P02
 - Infiltration Basin Sections HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-5402-P02
 - On-site Swale Sections HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-5403-P02
 - Site-wide Drainage Strategy HOF-WSP-XXX-ZZ-SK-C-0004-P02
 - Site-wide Bulk Earthworks HOF-WSP-XXX-ZZ-SK-C-0005-P04
 - Indicative Site-wide Levels Strategy HOF-WSP-XXX-ZZ-SK-C-0006-P03
 - Pumping Station (Sewer Sector Guidance
 - The Avenue - General Arrangement Plans HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-1001-P10, HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-1002-P10, HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-1003-P10, HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-1004-P10, HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-1005-P10
 - The Avenue – Bus Tracking Plans HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-1501-P04, HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-1502-P04, HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-1503-P04, HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-1504-P04, HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-1505-P04
 - Road Construction Details HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-7101-P02, HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-7102-P02
 - The Avenue – Pavement and Kerbing Detail HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-7001-P05, HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-7002-P05, HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-7003-P05, HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-7004-P05, HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-7005-P05
 - The Avenue – Long Sections HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-8001-P01

- The Avenue – Signing and Lining Plans HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-12001-P06, HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-12002-P06, HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-12003-P06, HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-12004-P06, HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-12005-P06, HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-12006-P02

Supplementary Plans for Information:

- The Avenue – Lighting Detail – S38 Works Column Lighting HOF-WSP-S38-ZZ-DR-LI-01300-S3-P03, HOF-WSP-S38-ZZ-DR-LI-01400-S3-P03,
- Bus Gate General Arrangement HOF-WSP-XXX-ZZ-SK-C-0021-P02
- The Avenue – Tree Planting Proposals GL2024 LP 05; GL2024 LP 06; GL2024 LP 07; GL2024LP 08
- The Avenue – Tree Pit and Planter Details GL2024 SP 02
- Cover letter 02/10/2025 (Rapleys LLP)
- Planning, Design and Access Statement (Rapleys LLP)
- Environmental Impact Assessment Technical Note (Rapleys LLP)
- Tree Survey 19/09/2024 (ACD Environmental)
- Design Code Checklist 02/10/2025

Key Issues

- 4.8 As this is an application relating to reserved matters based on a previously approved outline application and so the extent of the consideration to key issues is limited to layout, scale, appearance and landscaping as set out in condition 3 (insofar as they can apply to the proposed road and drainage development); as well as highway matters set out in condition 7; and hard and soft landscaping set out in condition 11.
- 4.9 There is also consideration given to conditions that need to be discharged prior to this application being determined, namely Condition 5 on Phasing and Delivery Plan and Condition 6 Design Code; and to conditions or obligations affected by this application. Details submitted on Condition 5 on Phasing and Delivery Plan (ref 25/00076/DOC) and Condition 6 Design Code (ref 24/02906/DOC) have been assessed by officers and technical and statutory consultees. Both these applications are considered acceptable and ready to be approved alongside this application for reserved matters.
- 4.10 This report will first review the background to the application, followed by a discussion and analysis on the subject of reserved matters, and finish with a conclusion.

Background

- 4.11 Outline permission was given for this whole site known as Land North of Highover Farm to Stotfold Road, which is also an allocation in the NHLP ref. HT1. The conclusion of the Officers report for that outline application was that the proposals were in accordance with the NPPF and the NHLP and would enable the delivery of a 'strategic housing site' allocated in the adopted local plan.
- 4.12 There are some matters that are fixed as a result of the outline planning permission, as set out in the Officer report for application ref. 18/01154/OP and in securing parameter framework plans as part of the Strategic Masterplan. These include the principle of developing the site for up to 700 homes, locations of development parcels, principle and broad location of a 2 FE primary school and retail floorspace, the principle of vehicular and non-motorised access points, detail of the roundabout on Stotfold Road, principle of two construction accesses, three play areas, allotments, drainage and the provision of 40% of housing to affordable housing.

- 4.13 The framework plans also indicate urban design features, the bus gate location, building heights, density character areas, street hierarchy, measures for biodiversity, landscaping and phasing. Conditions 5 and 6 build on this information with more detail.
- 4.14 It is noted that HCC Archaeology have requested a condition for further archaeological investigations, outreach and analysis, which follow on from the investigations that have been ongoing in the summer of 2025 as agreed in the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) with outline permission ref. 18/01154/OP. However, the redline for this application does not cover much of the site, or the areas where there have been archaeological findings, as the red line is limited to the main road and drainage infrastructure only. Officers may recommend further enhancements to the WSI or provisions for archaeology on other development parcels that are more relevant to the locations of the findings.

Layout

- 4.15 Layout is defined in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2015 (as amended) as: *'the way in which buildings, routes and open spaces within the development are provided, situated, orientated in relation to each other and to buildings and spaces outside the development...'*
- 4.16 The main spine road creates the west-east link through the site, linking Stotfold Road and High Dane with the bus gate broadly in the middle of the site, where the school and main park will be located. The proposed layout of the main road enables connection to secondary roads and non-motorised path connections. Crossings are shown as well as highway verges although Officers suggest the final location of crossings are the subject of a condition. Lighting is the subject of an existing condition on the outline permission.
- 4.17 A segregated foot and cycle path is identified along the southern side of the main road, which would connect through to the new Greenway link over Stotfold Road. The path on the northern side of the road is sufficiently wide to accommodate shared walking and cycling, thinking about children accessing the new school site.
- 4.18 The public square in the centre, covering the bus gate and focal point of where the school and main park meet has been designed to be a shared space of level access, with an informal crossing point. Detail regarding road finishes has been provided in order to distinguish between the primary road and the bus gate, which will assist in navigating the site and deterring drivers from entering the bus gate. Together with additional open space public realm to the north, which is not included in this phase, this square would form a picking up and dropping off area for the school. It is expected that this detail would come forward alongside reserved matters for phase 3, which would align to the delivery of the school.
- 4.19 The layout of the site wide drainage is shown, where water will be taken from across the site up to the top northern corner where there will be an infiltration and attenuation basin. The LLFA have no objection to the site wide strategy, which is in accordance with the principles agreed in the outline planning permission. Officers note that each phase will provide further detail on how that parcel will be drained with detail on surfacing and landscaping. Officers note the concern of residents regarding the cumulative impact of development on the capacity of the River Purwell, which was subjected to flooding in September 2024 after significant rainfall and the further impact on sewer capacity. The LLFA are confident that the proposed plans for Highover Farm will not impact on surface water runoff towards Woolgrove Road, as all water is due to be transferred towards to the northern point of the site, and away from High Dane / Woolgrove Road.

- 4.20 Overall, the proposals are in accordance with the approved Strategic masterplan for the site, as approved by 18/01154/OP, as well as the Design Code (ref 24/02906/DOC) and Phasing and Delivery Plan (25/00076/DOC). The proposals are also in accordance with NHLP Policy SP17 for site allocation ref. HT1.

Appearance

- 4.21 Appearance is defined in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2015 (as amended) as: *'the aspects of a building or place within the development which determines the visual impression the building or places makes, including the external built form of the development, its architecture, materials, decoration, lighting, colour and texture...'*
- 4.22 The proposed road and drainage infrastructure is in accordance with the Strategic Masterplan. The proposed road is in accordance with the Design Code in its purpose and linking Stotfold Road and High Dane, and on the detail. Materials proposed for the scope of this application are appropriate.
- 4.23 The bus gate area is designed in along the road, alongside the proposed school, park and remaining road layout. The bus gate includes an informal crossing, and both elements will form part of the public square. This will be the visual and social focal point for the site, described as 'the heart' of the site in the Design Code. This detail of phase 0 helps facilitate the formation of the public square. Further detail for the public square will come forward as part of phase 3 (the parcel of development at the High Dane end), once the school and park boundaries are defined.
- 4.24 The appearance of the proposed drainage infrastructure and basins in the north corner of the site cannot yet be assessed as much of the detail is subterranean. Otherwise, the appearance of the drainage basin is in accordance with the Strategic Masterplan and Design Code, and NHLP Policy SP17 for site allocation ref HT1.

Scale

- 4.25 Scale is defined in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2015 (as amended) as: *'the height., width and length of each building proposed within the development in relation to its surroundings'...*
- 4.26 There are no buildings proposed as part of this application for reserved matters. The proposal for the road and drainage infrastructure is in accordance with the masterplan approved by outline planning permission reference 18/01154/OP.

Landscaping

- 4.27 Landscaping, in relation to reserved matters applications, is defined in the Town and Country planning (Development Management procedure) Order 2015 (as amended) as: *'the treatment of land (other than buildings) for the purpose of enhancing or protecting the amenities of the site and the area in which it is situated and includes: (a) screening by fences, walls or other means; (b) the planting of trees, hedges, shrubs or grass; (c) the formation of banks, terraces or other earthworks; (d) the laying out of provision of gardens, courts, squares, water features, sculpture or public art; and (e) the provision of other amenity features...'*

- 4.28 The landscaping strategy is integral to the need for sustainable drainage systems and provision of open space, green infrastructure, road network and amenity space. This application relates to the main spine road through the site and main drainage infrastructure (underground pipes from across the site and drainage basins). This application is read alongside an application for more detailed drainage plans under application to discharge condition 15, as requested by the LLFA. The LLFA have no objection to either application. The extent of un-reserved matters for landscaping is covered regarding earth works and layout, with the exception of soft landscaping, planting and hard landscaping. It is reasonable that details of soft and hard landscaping including planting of the basins should be submitted by condition should this application be approved, which would tie into the detail submitted under reserved matters for relevant phases of residential development which will include the area of green space identified as 'Hitchin Meadows', and subsequent phases in accordance with the Phasing and Delivery Plan.
- 4.29 The location plan identifies that the pipework for the drainage system will be subterranean, and the developer and applicant has confirmed that this is the extent of the work and all above ground landscaping and any other works will be secured by condition alongside the relevant phased application for reserved matters. The location plan also identifies the drainage infiltration and attenuation basins in the 'Hitchin Meadows' area.
- 4.30 In summary on reserved matters for landscaping, the proposed level of landscaping for this application where various elements can be subject of a condition should the application be approved. This phase 0 will facilitate the development of the site. The proposals are in accordance with the approved strategic masterplan and design code, as well as the NPPF and NHLP policies D1, D3 and T2.

Design Code Compliance

- 4.31 Condition 6 of the outline permission required the approval of a design code against which all future applications for reserved matters would be assessed against. The Design Code is a technical urban design document that provides rules that the applicant or developer needs to comply within designing each phase. The Code includes a compliance checklist to demonstrate the design of that phase is in accordance with the rules.
- 4.32 Applying the design code to this application is limited, due to the application's limited scope to road and drainage infrastructure. However, the Senior Urban Design Officer is content with the layout and design of phase 0 and its compliance with the design code.
- 4.33 Officers conclude that the design code can be approved by condition. This plan was required before this application is approved. This application for reserved matters is in accordance with the design code.

Phasing and Delivery Plan

- 4.34 Condition 5 of the outline permission required the approval of a phasing and delivery plan against which all future applications for reserved matters would be assessed against. In this case, the phasing plan identifies that the spine road through the site will be 'phase 0'; it will be the first phase of the development, after which all other development parcels including the school can be developed from. Drainage for the whole site was also required 'up front', which has been included by the applicant at this early phase.

- 4.35 Officers conclude that the phasing and delivery plan can be approved by condition. This plan was required before this application is approved. This application for reserved matters is in accordance with the Phasing and Delivery Plan.

5.0 Conclusions

- 5.1 This application for reserved matters follows from the approval of outline application ref. 18/01154/OP which includes detail on access, layout, scale, appearance and partial detail on landscaping.
- 5.2 Subject to appropriately worded conditions, Officers consider that the proposed development would be of good quality design which would help facilitate further development parcels. The proposals are of a functional layout and suitable appearance for the wider development; and host good accessibility to and within the site itself. The proposals are in accordance with the Strategic Masterplan, Design Code and Phasing and Delivery Plan.
- 5.3 The proposed development is considered to accord with relevant policy provisions of the local development plan as listed above as well as the NPPF.
- 5.4 The application site is an allocated housing site in the adopted local plan and will therefore make an important contribution to the housing land supply. As the council is currently unable to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply, the tilted balance of paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF is engaged, the collective benefits of the development would be significant. Any adverse impacts would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole. The scheme therefore benefits from the presumption in favour of sustainable development which is a further material consideration.
- 5.5 The application site falls within the settlement boundary of Hitchin, as defined in the Local Plan, which removed the site from the Green Belt. The application site benefits from an allocation under Policy SP17 for site reference HT1 for approximately 700 new homes. The policy contained details criteria for consideration in the determination of any relevant applications for planning permission. It is considered that the proposal complies with policy criteria set out in Policy SP17.
- 5.6 There are no material considerations to indicate that the application should not be determined in accordance with the development plan. For the reasons set out above it is officer's view that the proposed development would accord with the development plan including the adopted Local Plan, and that there are no reasons to withhold the approval of reserved matters. As such, details should be approved subject to conditions.

6.0 Alternative Options

- 6.1 None applicable

7.0 Pre-Commencement Conditions

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

8.0 Legal Implications

- 8.1 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.

9.0 Recommendation

9.1 That reserved matters be **APPROVED** subject to the following:

A) providing delegated powers to the Development and Conservation Manager to update conditions and informatives with minor amendments as required; and

B) conditions set out below:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out 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.

2. No development above ground level shall take place until a detailed soft and hard landscaping plan for the areas of open and greenspace including the footpaths, drainage basins, swales and bunds within the relevant subsequent phases as set out in the Site Wide Phasing and Delivery is submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The hard and soft landscaping plans shall include:

- 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;
- The location and specification of minor artefacts and structures, including furniture, refuse or other storage units, signs and lighting columns/brackets;
- 1:200 plans (or at a scale otherwise agreed) including cross sections, of roads, paths and cycleways;
- Details of all hard surfacing materials (size, type and colour).

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

Reason: To safeguard and enhance the appearance of the completed development the visual amenity of the locality in accordance with the North Hertfordshire Local Plan Policies SP9, SP17, NE2 and NE6.

3. No development above ground level shall commence on relevant development parcels until details are submitted showing the location of any vehicular crossovers and street trees (including tree pit details and details of the species; number and spacing of trees and shrubs) along the highway verge of the main road subject of this application within the relevant subsequent phases as set out in the Site Wide Phasing and Delivery. The development shall be completed in accordance with the approved details and thereafter retained.

Reason: In the interests of consistency with future plans and highway safety, and to safeguard and enhance the appearance of the completed development the visual amenity of the locality in accordance with the North Hertfordshire Local Plan Policies SP9, SP17, NE2 and NE6 and Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (2018).

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 (paragraphs 186 and 187) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

INFORMATIVES:

None