

ITEM NO:	
<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 Phase 1 Residential comprising 236 dwellings, associated road, drainage, servicing/utilities infrastructure, landscaping and open space provision in accordance with condition 3 of 18/01154/OP (and the partial discharge of associated condition 19)
<u>Ref .No:</u>	25/02794/RM
<u>Officer:</u>	Sarah Kasparian

Date of expiry of statutory period: 6 February 2026

Extension of statutory period: 22 April 2026

Reason for Delay

Negotiation on detailed aspects and following further re-consultation

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. There is another previous application for reserved matters which has been approved for 'phase 0' ref. 24/02780/RM relating to infrastructure including the main road through the site and site wide drainage infrastructure. The applicant has also sought to discharge various conditions to the outline planning permission ref. 18/01154/OP.

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). Draft District Design Code was published for consultation in March 2026.

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 comment

3.2 **HCC Ecology** – No objection. Comment regarding swift bricks in phase 1 which can be incorporated into the LEMP which is subject to a separate application

3.3 **Hertfordshire Highways** – No objection to this phase, subject to conditions and addressing the tracking of large vehicles

3.4 **Lead Local Flood Authority** – No objection

3.5 **HCC Fire and Rescue** – No objection

3.6 **NHDC Housing Supply Officer** – Comments about the distribution of mix and tenure over the whole of the phased development with a concentration of flats in this phase and therefore more 1 and 2 beds in this phase.

- 3.7 **NHDC Urban Designer** – No objection, subject to changes to detail which have been made
- 3.8 **NHDC Landscape** – No objection, subject to changes to detail which have been made
- 3.9 **NHDC Environmental Health** – No comment
- 3.10 **Architectural Liaison Officer (Police)** – Do not fully support the application and recommend the applicant engage with Hertfordshire Constabulary's Crime Prevention Design Service. See informative.
- 3.11 **Affinity Water** – No objection. Comments for the developer relating to water quality, water efficiency and infrastructure connections and diversions.
- 3.12 No response has been received from NHDC Waste and Recycling, NHDC Greenspaces, HCC Archaeology, and HCC Minerals and Waste.
- 3.13 **Residents**
- 3.14 A total of 750 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, 13 representations were received, mainly in objection.
- 3.15 The following comments have been raised, most of which relate to the principle of development, relating to the outline planning application already granted, rather than the detail of this application:

Relevant comments to this phase:

- Regarding the LEMP, a comment to ensure the Plan will be delivered, although this is subject of an application to discharge condition.
- Need to consider the use of swift bricks for each home
- Lack of consideration to the use of renewable energy especially solar panels for all roofs on the development

Comments relating to the outline application:

- Development on Green Belt land
- Scale of new development is too great
- Lack of infrastructure in Hitchin including hospital, doctors and dentists
- The impact the proposed development will have on the traffic in Letchworth and Hitchin and train services
- Impact on air pollution
- Poor connection of the site into Hitchin
- Impact on flood risk
- Support in principle for new homes including affordable homes that address the needs of the district
- Need for the development to be socially sustainable, that encourages social cohesion
- Question where children will go to school before the primary school is built and is there enough school capacity for older children
- Poor consultation on the application
- The need to see the phase adjacent to High Dane to see how residents there will be impacted

- 3.16 Hitchin Forum has also objected in principle and concern about the lack of infrastructure or roads to accommodate the scale of development. Lack of information in the application relating to bus vouchers for residents, retail, healthcare. Relevant comments to this application relate to the cramped form of development, which will be addressed later in this report.

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 wider 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 phase 1 and broadly shows the area of new housing focused at the Stotfold Road part of the site, around where the new roundabout will be and on either side of the new 'spine road' through the site. The site area of phase 1 is about 6.7ha.

Proposal

- 4.4 The application seeks approval of reserved matters of outline permission ref. 18/01154/OP for 'Phase 1' which relates to the first phase that includes residential development. Detail is included in this application in relation to all reserved matters of landscaping, layout, scale and appearance for 'Phase 1' 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 detail of 'phase 0' related to the main road through the site and drainage infrastructure. This application shows the detail of the first 236 residential units will be around this end of the site.
- 4.6 The plans listed below were updated and registered on 26 February 2026 to respond to comments from internal consultees and the highway authority. The application is accompanied by the following plans and documents:
- **Location plan** HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0199-D5-P1
 - **Site Layout** HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0229-D5-P4
 - **Residential Layout** HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0230-D5-P7
 - **External materials** HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0231-D5-P8
 - **External Boundaries/Surfacing materials** HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0232-D5-P7
 - **Affordable Tenure** HITPH1-MCB- ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0233-D5-P7
 - **Parking Strategy** HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0234-D5-P7
 - **Refuse Management** HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0234-D5-P7

- **Adoptable Highways** HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0236-D5-P7
- **Storey Heights** HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0237-D5-P7
- **Drainage** HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-5001-P02, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-5002-P02, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-5003-P03, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-5004-P02, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-5005-P02, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-5006-P03, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-5007-P03, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-5008-P02
- **Highways** HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1001-P04, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1002-P04, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1003-P05, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1004-P04, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1005-P04, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1006-P05, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1007-P05, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1008-P02, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-7101-P01, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-7001-P04; HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-7002-P04, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-7003-P05, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-7004-P04, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-7005-P04, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-7006-P05, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-7007-P05, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-7008-P02
- **Levels** HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1101-P05, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1102-P05, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1103-P06, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1104-P05, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1105-P05, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1106-P06, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1107-P06, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1108-P02
- **Electricity substation** EDS-07-3102_01(C), EDS-07-3102_11
- **Landscaping** GL2024 LP 10E; GL2024 LP 11E; GL2024 LP 12E; GL2024 LP 13D; GL2024 LP 14D, GL2024 LP 20A; GL2024 LP 21A; GL2024 LP 22A; GL2024 LP 23A; GL2024 LP 24A, GL2024 SP 01, GL2024 SP 02; GL2024 LP 05A; GL2024 LP 06A; GL2024 LP 07A
- **Fire Hydrant Locations** HOF-WSP-XXX-ZZ-SK-C-0022-P03
- **House Types** HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0105-P3, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0106-P4, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0107-P3, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0109-P2, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0111-P3, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0113-P3, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0117-P3, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0118-P3, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0120-P3, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0121-P3, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0122-P3, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0123-P3, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0124-P1, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0125-P3, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0126-P2, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0127-P3, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0136-P2, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0137-P3, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0138-P4, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-1140-P3, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0141-P3, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0142-P4, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0144-P3, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0145-P3, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0146-P3, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0147-P3, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0148-P3, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0149-P2, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0151-P4, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0152-P3, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0153-P3, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0154-P3, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0155-P3, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0156-P3, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0157-P3, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0158-P3, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0159-P2, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0160-P2, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0161-P3, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0162-P3, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0163-P3, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0164-P3, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0167-P1, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0168-P2, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0169-P1, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0170-P3, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0174-P4, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0176-P4, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0178-P3, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0180-P4, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0181-P4, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0182-P3, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0183-P4, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0184-P1, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0195-P2, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0305-P2,

HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0306-P2, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0307-P2,
HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0308-P2, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0309-P1,
HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0310-P2, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0311-P2,
HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0312-P2, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0313-P2,
HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0314-P1, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0313-P1

- **Garages/Binstores** HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0190-P4, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0191-P3, HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0192-P1

4.7 Supplementary documents and plans for Information:

- Planning, Design & Access Statement, dated 29/10/25
- Design Code Compliance Statement, dated October 2025
- Design Code Checklist, dated 23/3/26
- Environmental Impact Assessment Technical Note, dated 27/10/25
- Statement of Community Involvement, dated 21 August 2025
- Illustrative Street scenes HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0270-D5-P4/ HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0271-D5-P4/ HITPH1-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0272-D5-P4
- Tracking HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1551-P05, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1552-P05, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1553-P05, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1554-P05, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1555-P05, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1556-P05, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1557-P05, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1558-P03, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1559-P05; HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1560-P05; HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1561-P05, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1562-P05; HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1563-P05, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1564-P05, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1565-P05; HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1568-P05; HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1569-P05; HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1570-P05; HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1571-P05; HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1572-P05; HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1573-P05, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1574-P05; HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1575-P03, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1501-P05, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1502-P05, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1503-P05, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1504-P05, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1505-P05, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1506-P05, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1507-P05, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1508-P03, HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1509-P05; HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1510-P05; HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1511-P05; HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1512-P05; HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1513-P05; HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1514-P05; HOF-WSP-ZZ-PH1-DR-C-1515-P03

Housing mix and tenure

- 4.8 This application sets out the housing mix and tenure for this first phase of residential development on the site, out of what is anticipated to comprise four phases. This is the housing mix:

Type	Market units	Affordable units
1 bed flat / FOG / Maisonette	0	23
2 bed flat / FOG	4	18
2 bed house	0	24
3 bed house	96	22
4+ bed house	41	8
Total (236 units)	141 units	95 units

- 4.9 There will be 40% provision of affordable housing in this phase, with a tenure split of 71.6% social and 28.4% intermediate tenure. This is the breakdown of provision:

Type	Social	Intermediate
1 bed flat / FOG / Maisonette	21 (of which 13 at M4(3))	2 (of which both M4(3))
2 bed flat / FOG	11 (of which 3 at M4(3))	7 (of which 3x FOG)
2 bed house	24	-
3 bed house	8	14
4+ bed house	4	4
Total (236 units)	68	27

- 4.10 Of the affordable units, it is noted that 47 units (50%) will be M4(2) compliant and 18 units (19%) will be M4(3) compliant.

Key Issues

- 4.11 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.
- 4.12 There is also consideration of conditions 7, 10 and 11 from 18/01154/OP which covers 'reserved matters' relating to highways, landscaping and waste and recycling storage for this phase. The applicant has also submitted information in order to address two pre-commencement conditions relating to conditions 9 and 19 for lighting and fire hydrants respectively for phase 1 only.
- 4.13 This report will first review the background to the application, followed by a discussion and analysis on the subject of reserved matters and conditions, and finish with a conclusion.

Background

- 4.14 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.
- 4.15 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.
- 4.16 Consideration will be given in the assessment of this application to the compliance with conditions that were previously approved prior to the first application for reserved matters being determined, namely Condition 5 on Phasing and Delivery Plan ref 25/00076/DOC and Condition 6 Design Code ref 24/02906/DOC.

Layout

- 4.17 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...'*
- 4.18 This phase of development is for the first residential phase for the site and is focused at the eastern side around the where the new main road (Phase 0 approved under ref 24/02780/RM) joins the new roundabout on Stotfold Road. This is in accordance with the Phasing and Delivery Plan. The layout of road reflects the intention to have two 'secondary road' loop road to the north and south of the main road. The loop road on the northern side is entirely within this phase, and the southern loop road will be fully delivered through phase 4.
- 4.19 The blocks of development allow for routes to connect into the main road, enabling a permeable and legible development, in anticipation of features to be delivered in other phases, such as the pocket park in phase 4 and footpath connections into the existing built form of Hitchin in the future.
- 4.20 This phase overlaps three character areas shown in the strategic masterplan including The Avenue, Grovelands and Hitchin Meadows. There is a need for different densities, characters, built form and materials across the phase, which are in accordance with the Design Code. By way of example, The Avenue, along the main road, allows for greater height and so there are some terraced properties and blocks of flats that would allow for that. The wider built forms along the spine road also help facilitate less dropped kerbs along the main road. The Grovelands area enables a denser form of development including terraces, 'tertiary' style roads which are more shared and closer together, examples of this can be seen in the southern part of phase 1. The northern part of phase 1 is designed to be more spacious which lends itself to larger 3, 4 and 5 bedroom plots with more landscaping which will blend more easily with the countryside edge. The layout is considered to be in line with the Strategic Masterplan and the site wide Design Code.
- 4.21 Regarding the proposed housing mix for this site, there is a whole range of housing types and sizes, which is broadly in accordance with the Strategic Masterplan and outline planning permission. The density of housing for this phase based on 236 units on 6.7ha is 28 dwellings per hectare, which overall is not high, but reflective of the prevailing density of suburban Hitchin. The overall layout of the streets and housing along streets is in accordance with the Strategy Masterplan, approved outline planning permission, and the requirements of the Design Code
- 4.22 On the provision for affordable housing, the mix and tenures are now set out for phase 1 and there is concern from the housing supply officer that this phase disproportionately contains too many flats of a smaller size and fewer of the larger 3+ bedroom units. The applicant is required to provide 40% over the whole site, with the agreed mix and tenure at outline permission stage, and it is noted there is some flexibility in how that is delivered according to a phase by phase affordable housing scheme. The applicant has provided officers with a draft schedule of the distribution of affordable homes across the whole site, which demonstrates that with the exception of two units at present the applicant is able to deliver the remainder of the affordable homes over following phases. The reason for a disproportionate number of flats and smaller units is that The Avenue character area is able to more easily accommodate buildings that are taller, which will include flatted development. Although the site is phased and split into four, this is the largest phase and which contains the main bulk of The Avenue development.

- 4.23 In terms of the distribution of affordable housing across the phase, there are affordable homes on both sides of the main road, although a higher concentration on the southern parcel, likely due to the type of character areas, resulting housing types and affordable housing mix. The Design Code for the site highlights the need for tenure neutrality across the site and it is noted that the emerging District Design Code (eDDC) that tenure neutrality also relates to street, by limiting affordable housing on both sides of the same road (ref BF01.04) and encouraging clusters by block instead. This is not well reflected in this plan, although the eDDC was not published when this application was submitted but should be reflected in future phases.
- 4.24 Regarding waste and recycling storage provision, bin collection points have been removed from areas that should be kept as complimentary habitat around existing trees and hedgerow. Officers including the highway authority have clarified that 'tertiary streets' should be capable of kerbside collection, meaning that block paved streets need to be constructed to a standard capable of accommodating refuse lorries. Instances of corridors of fenced footpaths to mid-terraced properties have been reduced to a minimum, and in line with the eDDC should be avoided.
- 4.25 Part of the open spaces as part of Hitchin Meadows is included in this phase around the previously approved drainage basins. This area includes a LEAP. Other green infrastructure that is included is Dane Walk; the hedgerow that currently defines the southern boundary of the northern most field and would divide what will be phase 1 and 2. This existing hedgerow is to be retained and enhanced by including a 6m buffer on either side. The developer has also agreed to incorporate some play on the way features. It is noted that there is a lack of play space provision for phase 1 given its scale, particularly for the southern half of the phase, who for the first few years would need to cross the main road and walk more than 400m to the main LEAP. So the active travel corridor in the southern parcel will also incorporate some play on the way features, which will link in with the future pocket park on Phase 4, but help bridge the gap in the meantime.
- 4.26 From consultee responses the layout of highways, fire hydrants and lighting are also acceptable, subject to vehicle tracking matters being resolved. This might involve slight rearrangements to the end of roads and the position of parking spaces. Waste and recycling storage has been reviewed by urban design officers and is also agreed following discussion with the applicant about bin collection points and drag distances given the preference for kerb side collection and some narrower street sections. This has resulted in amended plans, and a reduced instances of the need for bin collection points, which is more in accordance with the eDDC.
- 4.27 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

- 4.28 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...'*

- 4.29 The plans for this phase 1 of residential development have been prepared alongside the preparation of the Design Code for the site. Section 4 of the Code looks at building form, heights and character areas which defines the visual appearance of the site including materials.
- 4.30 The proposals include house type designs for 236 homes, including external materials for house types, external materials of boundary treatments, and hard surfacing. The external materials site plan shows the phase wide approach to materials, which is logical and demonstrates consistency in approach across the site. These are acceptable in principle with choices of brick and tiles and officers recommend a condition once more detail is known such as brick specifications for external materials and brick-built boundary treatments. Other boundary treatment materials are acceptable.
- 4.31 The illustrative streetscenes show what the house types together with the layout will look like in a street section, which is helpful in understand the overall look of the street. The streetscenes show a range of the phase in part or full length, which reflect the character of the areas in which the streetscene is located, for example: in section DD, it shows the 3 storey block on the corner with the main road, going back into 2 storey houses on a side street within the Grovelands Character Area; and along streetscene EE a mix of brick and render is shown on 2.5 to 3 storey buildings, representing an increase in height and denser form of development, successfully indicating that is the main road using built form, which is reflected on both sides of the main road.
- 4.32 Building lines are consistent along the main road, and corners are highlighted with key buildings using their architecture, height and materials in accordance with the site wide Design Code. The materials and detailing shown for affordable units are neutral compared to market units on both the north and south sides of the main road, bearing in mind character areas and the potential for different house types built by different housebuilders (Barratts and David Wilson).
- 4.33 In terms of hard surfacing, the Design Code has been applied to various street typologies. More information is needed on the type of block paving, as well as its construction, which needs to be suitable to take the load of refuse and fire vehicles. Otherwise, a detailed specification of hard surfacing is provided within landscaped areas and these details are in accordance with the Code and therefore acceptable.
- 4.34 Overall, the proposed plans have been assessed by officers in accordance with the Design Code, as well as the Strategic Masterplan, and as such the appearance of phase 1 is acceptable.

Scale

- 4.35 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'*...
- 4.36 Similarly to appearance, the plans for this phase 1 of residential development have been prepared alongside the preparation of the Design Code for the site with regard to scale. Section 4 of the Code looks at scale and height of buildings within the site. The proposals are in accordance with the rules set out in the Design Code which has been checked through the Compliance Checklist.
- 4.37 It is considered that the scale of development, as well as individual buildings is acceptable. The majority of dwellings would be two storey with some 2.5 to 3 storey

buildings located along the main road. In terms of proposed garage buildings, these would all be single storey in height. There has been some discussion with the applicant on the position of garage buildings pushing into rear gardens as well as the size of garages in the context of other parking spaces, which at times is excessive particularly for 5 bedroom homes, and is inconsistent with the eDDC. Officers expect future phases of development to consider the eDDC for this aspect and better reflect the code on parking and garages, which aims to prevent built form in rear gardens to protect residential amenity, prevent excess built form, provide better storage solutions for new homes and restrict excessive hardstanding for car parking.

- 4.38 The proposals include a mix of both private and affordable homes and would consist of a range of sizes and types. This would be consistent with the surrounding residential development. Within the site there is a varied layout of detached, semi-detached, terraced and flatted units. There is a good relationship between all buildings.
- 4.39 Given that this phase of development starts from the new roundabout into the site, there will be no immediate neighbours to these new homes.
- 4.40 The scale of development is acceptable in accordance with the Strategic Masterplan and Design Code, and NHLP Policy SP17 for site allocation ref HT1.

Landscaping

- 4.41 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...'*
- 4.42 The hard and soft landscaping plans have been submitted and read alongside condition 11 of permission 18/01154/OP, details submitted for condition 13 and 21, as well as phase 0 plans under 24/02780/RM. The council has outsourced landscaping advice to a consultant, funded by the developer, who advised on both the Design Code, subsequent phases of development and details of conditions where appropriate.
- 4.43 The application is accompanied by landscape proposals and planting plans by Golby and Luck and have been amended in response to comments from the council's landscape consultant. The extent of landscaping information is to the public realm and public open spaces and includes planting detail, play on the way detail and materials for hard surfacing in line with the requirements of condition 11.
- 4.44 Phase 1 includes open space identified on the Strategic Masterplans as Hitchin Meadows, excluding the drainage basins, but including the LEAP, and Dane Walk. Dane Walk and the active travel corridor on the southern side of the road will contain play on the way. Detail is provided for the play equipment, plus benches and litter bins, which are in accordance with the Design Code. The intention is for the Council to adopt the green spaces, in which case dog litter bins would not be required. Hitchin Meadows itself is a more natural area of open space, considering the potential for more wet areas of open space where the drainage basins are, and the area for farmland birds located in the far northern tip of the site away from housing. The landscaping detail and intended management and maintenance arrangement reflect that intention. It is noted that

landscaping details for phase 0 is a condition of that permission but will be agreed in consideration to the detail presented for these phase 1 plans and relate to the drainage features and 'Stotfold Linear Greenway' as noted on the Strategic Masterplan.

- 4.45 Other landscaping is shown throughout the site as verges along roads, as well as areas that might become part of householder's front gardens. The developer has included additional trees and landscaping to add height to landscaping along streets and parking areas. This is all in accordance with the Design Code and the requirements of condition 11 of the outline permission. It is noted that the Landscape Consultant did request some additional planting, which the applicant has not undertaken on amended plans (in relation to planting in front of plots 55-56, 57, 77 and 110), although other comments have been actioned, and overall, the planting scheme is acceptable.
- 4.46 In summary on reserved matters for landscaping, the proposed level of landscaping for this application is acceptable. The proposals are in accordance with the approved Condition 11, the Strategic Masterplan, Phasing and Delivery Plan, and Design Code.

Condition 7 Highways – Phase 1 Reserved Matter

- 4.47 This is a condition for details to be submitted with each application for reserved matters relating to highway details. The details will also be secured by s38 with the highway authority. The applicant has submitted plans including General Arrangement including lighting Plan 1-8, External Levels Plans 1-8, Fire Tracking Plans 1-8, Road Construction Details, Pavement and Kerbing Detail Plans 1-8, Refuse Tracking Plan 1-8, Parking Areas for vehicles and Cycles, Temporary Construction Access Plans, and Drainage Layout Plans 1-8. The tracking plans do not need to be approved plans.
- 4.48 Following consultation with the highway authority, the NHC Senior Transport Officer and NHC Urban Design Officer, some amendments were made to the internal road layout as well as updates as a result of other urban design changes. This has resulted in an issue with tracking for larger vehicles crossing over slightly into greenspaces. Amendments are needed to address that concern from highways and the fire and rescue service at the County Council. Officers do not expect these changes to have a significant impact on the layout or the Highway Authority's response. Members will be updated on this at the Planning Control Committee meeting.
- 4.49 Otherwise, the Highway Authority are content with the amendments and that the requirements of this condition have been met, subject to two conditions: the first on the vehicle tracking, but Officers recommendation is to resolve that prior to issuing a decision on this application; and the second regarding the maintenance and management of roads in the estate, although this is already covered by highway legal agreements under s38. Informatives will be added rather than highway conditions.

Condition 9 Lighting – Phase 1 Pre-commencement

- 4.50 This is a pre-commencement condition, and details have been incorporated into this application for reserved matters. The condition was required to ensure the amenity of residents and visual amenity of the site. The proposed lighting columns are sufficiently spaced to limit the impact on visual and residential amenity. The highway authority have no objection. The details submitted are therefore sufficient to satisfy the requirements of this condition for phase 1. The applicant has expressed intention to have this condition removed through by s73 application, as it is repetitive and covered by other conditions, however in the meantime, the details submitted are acceptable to satisfy the requirements of this condition.

Condition 10 Waste and Recycling – Phase 1 Reserved Matter

- 4.51 This is a condition for details to be submitted with each application for reserved matters relating to waste and recycling storage facilities. Following comments from NHC Urban Design and NHC Senior Transport Officer and discussion with the applicant, amendments to the site plan have been received which improves the location of waste and recycling storage and increases the opportunity for kerbside collection. The details submitted is therefore acceptable to satisfy this condition.

Condition 11 Landscaping – Phase 1 Reserved Matter

- 4.52 This is a condition for details to be submitted with each application for reserved matters relating to soft and hard landscaping for the development parcel. Plans have been submitted and subsequently amended to reflect comments from NHC Urban Design, the landscape consultant and HCC Ecology. The OLEMP and Phase 1 LEMP submitted under separate applications to discharge conditions are consistent with the landscaping plans, as well as the approved plans for phase 0, which is inextricably linked where the drainage ponds are within phase 0 and the surrounding landscape is within phase 1. Following amendments the details are suitable, as set out previously in this report.

Condition 19 Fire Hydrants – Phase 1 Pre-commencement

- 4.53 There is no objection raised by Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue who are content with the proposed locations of fire hydrants on phase 1. The detail submitted for this condition is therefore acceptable.

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 under conditions 3, 7, 10 and 11. This application also includes details for phase 1 for condition 9 on lighting and condition 19 for fire hydrants.
- 5.2 Subject to appropriately worded conditions, Officers consider that the proposed development would be of good quality design which constitute the first phase of residential development for Highover Farm under Policy SP17. The proposals are of a functional layout, suitable appearance and scale, and appropriate landscaping plans. The proposals are in accordance with the Strategic Masterplan, Design Code and Phasing and Delivery Plan. The proposed development is considered to accord with relevant policy provisions of the local development plan as listed above as well as the NPPF.
- 5.3 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.
- 5.4 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 fore 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.

- 5.5 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. Details and/or samples of materials to be used on all external elevations and roofs of the buildings, block paving of streets including construction sub-base detail, brick boundary treatment and railings hereby permitted shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the development above ground slab level 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, including suitable sub-base for block paved streets to accommodate fire and refuse vehicles in

accordance with the North Hertfordshire Local Plan Policies SP9 and SP17 and Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (2018).

For the decision notice: 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:

DOG LITTER BINS have been shown on the landscape plans. It was confirmed to the applicant that these can be removed from the plans but have not been. On implementation the dog litter bins do not need to be installed.

Hertfordshire Constabulary: Crime Prevention

Request that the applicant engage with Hertfordshire Constabulary's Crime Prevention Design Service with a view to seeking to achieve accreditation to the Police preferred minimum security standard that is Secured by Design (SBD). This is a proven method of crime reduction and, by building to this standard will enable the following:

1. Achieve enhanced compliance with part 'Q' (Security) of Building Regulations.
2. Demonstrate that the issues of crime, disorder, and the fear of crime have been addressed.
3. Compliance with the new 'Healthy Homes Design Code

Hertfordshire County Council Highway Authority

AN1) 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 website: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/development-management/highways-development-management.aspx>

AN2) Obstruction of public highway land: 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 website: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/development-management/highways-development-management.aspx>

AN3) Road Deposits: It is an offence under section 148 of the Highways Act 1980 to deposit mud or other debris on the public highway, and 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 are in a condition such as not to emit dust or deposit mud, slurry or other debris on the highway. Further information is available via the website: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/development-management/highways-development-management.aspx>

AN4) Estate Road Adoption: The applicant is advised that if it is the intention to request that Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority adopt any of the highways included as part of this application as maintainable at the public expense then details of the specification, layout and alignment, width and levels of the said highways, together with all the necessary highway and drainage arrangements, including run off calculations must be submitted to the Highway Authority. No development shall commence until the details have been approved in writing and an Agreement made under Section 38 of the Highways Act 1980 is in place. The applicant is further advised that the County Council will only consider roads for adoption where a wider public benefit can be demonstrated. The extent of adoption as public highway must be clearly illustrated on a plan. Further information is available via the website <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/development-management/highways-development-management.aspx>