Blue Cross Centre, Kimpton Bottom, Kimpton, Hitchin, Herts SG4 8EU

Remodelling of Animal Re-Homing Centre and creation of replacement access, alterations to layout of external areas (to include demolition, alteration and replacement of existing buildings and replacement of septic tanks with small package treatment plant)

Planning Statement Incorporating Design & Access Statement

Prepared for Blue Cross

February 2018

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1. Introduction & Planning Submission Checklist

Introduction

1.1. This application is for the remodelling of the existing Animal Re-Homing Centre and the creation of a replacement access, alterations to external layout (to include demolition, alteration and replacement of existing buildings with new buildings and replacement of foul drainage system), at the Blue Cross, Kimpton Bottom Centre.

1.2. Blue Cross is the applicant.

Planning Submission Checklist

1.3. This application comprises the following:

General

Application form
Application fee of £5,544

Technical Reports

Planning, Incorporating Design & Access Statement (February 2018) by Artisan
Arboricultural Report LSDP1056-01b (drawing based) by Land and Sculpture Design Partnership
Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment by Bernwood ECS Ltd. (September 2017)
Package Treatment Plant Brochure

Drawings

Patrick Allen Architects

As Existing

3786-01A	Site Location Plan
3786-02	Topographical Survey of Site
3786-02C	Buildings to be demolished
3786-03	Lower Kennel
3786-04	Top Kennel
3786-05	Cattery
3786-06	Supervisors House and Crash Pad
3786-07	Reception

As Proposed

3786-10E	Scheme Design – Reception Building
3786-11C	Scheme Design – Residential Flats
3786-12F	Scheme Design - Crash Pad and Team Room
3786-13C	Scheme Design – Cattery Units
3786-14C	Scheme Design – Laundry Former Cattery
3786-15E	Scheme Design – Lower Kennels Elevations
3786-16G	Scheme Design – Lower and Upper Kennels – Floor Plans
3786-17F	Proposed Site Plan
3786-18	Site Section
3786-19A	Scheme Design - Upper Kennels Elevations
3786-20	Scheme Design - Cattery Units Re-Homing Elevations
3786-21	Scheme Design – Cattery Units - Kittens & Admissions Elevations

External Materials Schedule (Jan 2018)

Landscaping Proposals

LSDP1056-02b (drawing based) by Land and Sculpture Design Partnership.

2. Background to the Proposed Development

2.1. Blue Cross is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (number 00363197) and a charity registered in England and Wales (charity number 224392 and in Scotland SC040154) whose registered office is at Shilton Road, Burford, Oxfordshire, OX18 4PF. It is a national organisation and has rehoming and animal welfare centres and shops throughout England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. More information about its mission and charitable purpose can be found at https://www.bluecross.org.uk/about-blue-cross.

Blue Cross at the Kimpton Bottom Site

2.2. The Blue Cross has had a presence at the Kimpton Bottom site since 1949, so for almost 70 years. In that year, the 'Hertfordshire Dogs Home' was established on a site of some 6 acres and a cottage to which some kennels and a staff bungalow were added. The site continued to develop and expand with the arrival of catteries in the early 1950s when it was referred to and described as the model to be replicated throughout the country.

2.3. During 1952, the site is reported to have 'dealt with 1591 dogs and boarding for both cats and dogs was clearly much in demand over the next 20 years. Stabling was added in the early 70's and in the early part of this decade the Hertfordshire Police are reported to have taken to the site, 1000 stray dogs per annum.

2.4. Since 1971 and in the 70's the Centre was subject to only a modest level of development including the addition of portable buildings, the renovation and adaptation of the stables. In the 80's a more comprehensive redevelopment plan was derived and the first phase of which included the provision of more kennels so that the ability of the site to deal with double the number of 'welfare dog boarding' and for home kennels.

2.5. During the 1980s the programmed upgrade of facilities continued and a new section for stray cats and dogs was created. The contemporary staff bungalow was sub-divided and made capable of taking two members of staff thus reflecting the demand for more attendance and an out of hours' service.

2.6. The Centre continued to respond to the vagaries of public demand and available finance in the 1990s and so for example, with recessions and severe financial cutbacks, the Centre responded by taking in more homeless animals and certain unpopular breeds when in receipt of adverse publicity. `In 1995, a new maternity

unit was added and a notable highlight of Blue Cross Foundation Centenary was a celebration held at the Centre in 1997. In 2010, a kitten unit was built.

2.7. So, in summary what we see is a significant animal welfare operation taking place on the Kimpton Bottom site for over 70 years where the site has evolved, expanded and grown in terms of its role and physical characteristics over a very long period of time.

2.8. The layout and design of the centre hasn't fundamentally changed over the years although it has expanded and existing buildings have been modified and redeveloped as the need arose but the requirements for a modern animal welfare centre have changed beyond recognition.

2.9. The current Kimpton Bottom site fails to meet many, if not all, of the animal welfare requirements when set against Blue Cross's own internal welfare framework audit. The designs proposed will bring the facilities for cats and dogs to the required standard by providing an improvement in space allowed per pet and by reducing the contact between pets which in turn reduces stress and prepares each pet for an earlier new home. The other improvements are intended to resolve deficiencies in the Blue Cross visitor facilities and their access.

2.10. The Organisation is now able to fund the redevelopment and modification of many of the buildings on the site and is what is now proposed within this Planning Application. So, what we see now is a further generation of improvements and enhancements to the site and facilities to reflect contemporary needs and anticipated future requirements for an animal welfare centre whose role is ever greater in 2018 and beyond.

2.11. The challenges facing the Blue Cross are well recognised and these are to:

- Ensure that its facilities are fit-for-purpose,
- Ensure that its developments are sustainable in all areas,
- a greater demand for their services,
- The need to stand out and be recognised as a professional provider of animal welfare services,
- Increasing costs of delivering a quality service,
- Increased demand on resources both internally and externally,
- Greater competition,
- The changing trends of animal welfare,

Pre-Application Consultation

2.12. Blue Cross engaged with the District Council and the County Council with a detailed pre-application enquiry in Autumn/Late Summer 2017 the results of which were encouraging and are as set out in the Council's response as Appendix 1 to this Statement. Blue Cross proposed a mixture of redevelopment of the Kimpton Bottom site with some replacement buildings and improvements and enhancements to others. The response to the pre –app has enabled the scheme design to evolve the result of which is now presented in this Planning Application for Full Planning Permission.

2.13. The County Council's Highway advice specified a form for the new access with visibility splays which are not achievable in this location within the Green Belt without significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. A more modest but much improved visibility splay over the existing access, is proposed.

3. Site Description, Scheme Proposals and Design & Access.

3.1. The purpose of this Statement is to identify the context of the proposed development and to include an assessment of how the proposal accords with current National and Local Planning policies but also to set out the scheme proposals in detail and fulfilling the requirements of a Design and Access Statement. In the first instance, we consider the context for the site followed by a description of the development and finally move in section 4 of this Statement to a consideration of the scheme against current Planning Policy.

Site and Surroundings

3.2. The Blue Cross site at Kimpton Bottom is in a relatively rural location just under a mile or so to the south west of Kimpton village, about 3 miles to the north of Harpenden and 6 miles to the east of Luton. For planning purposes, the existing and proposed site is located within the designated Green Belt in this part of the North Hertfordshire District.

3.3. The application site measures approximately 0.96ha and is part of a much larger site at Kimpton Bottom owned and operated by Blue Cross in this location. This application focusses on change to part only of the Blue Cross animal welfare centre site.

3.4. The Blue Cross site comprises part of a former agricultural field, containing various buildings, sheds and fenced enclosures with ancillary parking and hardstanding areas. The site is bordered by the B652 to the north-west and by a bridleway to the north-east and east where these boundaries are marked by hedgerows and trees associated with the former agricultural landscape. The south-western edge of the site is marked by a post and rail fence, but is otherwise open. The site has a single point of access off the B652 where the available visibility is not very good. The application proposes its closure and its replacement within the same site frontage.

3.5. The site is relatively isolated and sits comfortably in its countryside location with no near neighbours for whom noise might be a disturbance. There has been no instance of noise complaint. However, it is very accessible to nearby major urban centres for its catchment business.

Existing Operations

3.6. The site's public opening times are 11:00 to 16:00, Monday to Sunday (Closed Wednesday) whereas staff access the site and premises at conventional working hours. There are 18 Full Time and 3 Part Time employed staff as well as a bank of

volunteers. At its peak operational time, there are usually 17 team members and up to 5 volunteers in attendance at the Centre. This Planning Application proposals does not envisage any increase in these numbers.

3.7. The number of pets admitted to the Centre in 2016 were: 302 dogs, 244 cats, 86 small animals, thus totalling 632. The target pet admission numbers, post refurbishment in 2020 will be: 388 dogs, 408 cats, 86 small animals, totalling 882

3.8. Whilst it is envisaged that the number or pets admitted to the Centre will increase, (e.g. for dogs) there will be a reduction in the number of dog kennels (where the capacity presently is 52, plus 2 x isolation kennels) which will be reduced to 24 plus 2 x isolation).

3.9. However, the replacement kennels are of a much better quality and so the typical length of stay (average 30 days) will reduce. The maximum number of dogs on site at any one time will only be 24, but they will be rehomed locally or transferred to other centres more quickly. Having better but less kennels does not increase the number of dogs on site.

3.10. The benefit of a larger cattery is that this provides separate facilities for cat and kitten admissions and the cats are better prepared ready for rehoming. This again reduces stress in the animals and gets them ready for rehoming much more quickly than would otherwise be the case and is the case on site currently.

3.11. All operational activities in respect of animals on this site are by appointment only and so there is an imposed and managed limit to the capacity of the site. However, there is the instance of members of the public arriving on site uninvited on occasions but the vast majority of visits are controlled by the Blue Cross appointment system.

Community Objectives

3.12. In this planning application, the Blue Cross has adopted the following community objectives: -

- To ensure that the Blue Cross has fit-for-purpose, modern animal welfare and rehoming facilities, that exceed all current legislation and guidelines and provide flexibility to meet the changing animal welfare needs in the short, medium and long-term,

- To provide a resource to the community that provides an holistic service, embracing education, prevention and treatment. The proposal

is for the centre to be appreciated and valued by the community even if they are not end users of the services provided

- To be a good neighbour to the surrounding properties and the wider community,

- To introduce innovative service provision that embraces technology and new ways of working that facilitate the delivery of high quality, accessible services,

Sustainability Objectives

3.13. In this planning application, the Blue Cross has adopted the following sustainability objectives:

- To ensure that the centre remains viable and sustainable in all areas; this include financial, flexibility to ensure that it can cope with any increase in demand for its services and accommodate the proposed future expansion requirements

- To ensure that the Blue Cross name and brand is fully recognised as a leading provider of animal welfare provision and is at the forefront of people's minds when thinking about animal welfare,

- To design a setting that supports current and future models of care and provides an efficient and effective environment for the work of all staff, volunteers and clients,

- To retain a clear link to the historical memorial association of the charity in the locality,

- To ensure that the services have a strategic fit within the wider operation of the charity,

- To embrace and promote sustainability during construction and day to day operation by providing an environmentally responsible and responsive design solution within an aesthetically pleasing setting which respects the environment and is successfully assimilated into site and surroundings.

Proposed Development: Design and Access

3.14. It is generally accepted within the animal welfare sector that this type of facility is best located in rural areas that are close to large centres of population. This ensures that noise disturbance is minimised whilst the community is well served by an accessible facility.

3.15. The following contextual factors and site specific characteristics have influenced the scheme design: -

- Green Belt designation of land within which the application site and existing facility is located
- Relatively poor existing site access and vehicle turning facility
- Only one possible alternative point of access to serve the site
- General Security of Centre site boundary
- Bio security of boundary
- Due to the nature of the service and the need for separation and isolation of the various units, the scheme is arranged as a series of independent but grouped buildings.

3.16. The proposed building arrangement and site layout design was conceived with the following objectives in mind: -

- To make the primary building, which receives visitors, the focal point when entering the site but to ensure that its mass and appearance is not overbearing in context. The primary building is to be the main reception and administration centre.

- To ensure that the relationship of buildings with one another is optimum

- To create a visually coherent arrangement on the site

- To locate the buildings in a way that utilises the natural enclosure of existing trees and hedges to screen the development.

Design

3.17. Whilst the scheme proposals comprised within this application deliver the Blue Cross development brief, they also address the specific characteristics and needs of the site and its location in this part of the Green Belt. The architectural style expressed within the scheme design is that of a simple contemporary rural aesthetic with a co-ordinated range of external materials as set out within the submitted 'External Materials Schedule'.

Landscaping Proposals

3.18. The detailed Landscaping Proposals which accompany this application (Drawing LSDP 1056-02b) reflect the existing landscape characteristics of site and

surroundings and we say, successfully assimilates the range of new and improved buildings in context and at an appropriate scale.

Access and Layout

3.19. The existing access and internal site arrangement for vehicle parking and turning area is not ideal. The existing site access off the B652 has very reduced visibility and whilst in this sensitive rural location it will be impossible to provide a new access with textbook standard visibility splays it is possible to provide a much better access with improved visibility splays to the standard shown in the submitted 'as proposed layout drawing 3786-17F.

3.20. This access design also facilitates a much-improved internal site arrangement for vehicle parking, deliveries and turning. There are 28 parking spaces proposed as well as on site secure cycle storage and two-wheeler parking. Access within the site is provided for all, including car parking space for disabled drivers.

3.21. The reality is that access to the site will mainly be by car and/or other vehicle when transporting animals as there is no public transport service to this rural location. There is a bus service which serves nearby Kimpton village but there are no bus stops in close proximity to the site. Employees and visitors arriving by bicycle or powered two wheel vehicles are provided for on-site with secure, covered stands.

Amount of Development

3.22. The proposed works at this site comprised within this application consists of the following: -

1. Demolition of the existing manager's bungalow, to make way for;
2. New reception building (Building 2)
3. Existing offices converted to crash-pad (Overnight room) (Building 7)
4. Existing reception converted to team/staff room (Building 8)
5. Existing crash pad extended & converted to manager's house. (Building 16)
6. Existing cattery (10 pens) converted to laundry & store. (Building 11)
7. Construction of cat admissions (8 pens) (Building 5), Cat re-homing (16 pens) (Building 4). - All pre-fab modular pvcu construction.
8. Relocation of existing cat isolation unit. (Building 6)
9. Remodelling and Extensions to existing Lower & Upper kennel buildings but reduction in numbers (Existing 52 kennels) (As proposed 25 kennels)
10. Re-location of existing vehicular access to improve visibility.
11. Associated Re-modelling of parking areas and landscape.
12. Demolition of stable block.

3.23. The existing gross internal floorspace on site is 846m2. Of that, 428m2 gross internal floorspace will be demolished. A total of 880m2 floorspace (gross internal) in new buildings is proposed. The total new floorspace on site post development is therefore 1298m2 (gross internal). The net increase in floorspace is therefore is 452m2 reflecting the ned to bring accommodation for both animals and humans up to contemporary standards. Those existing buildings to be demolished are shown on drawing 3786-02C.

3.24. The requirement to have on-site residential accommodation is deemed essential for the safe, efficient supervision and management of this Animal Welfare site. There is already residential accommodation on site which is to be upgraded to meet contemporary standards.

3.25. Although not classified as an agricultural holding, there are many similarities with the former PPG7 'The Countryside and the Rural Economy' definition for agricultural dwellings and of course the successor Policy Document PPS7 'Sustainable Development in Rural Areas' Annex A, both documents now having been superseded by 'The Framework'. Para. 55 in particular does not restrict the accommodation of the rural worker to those engaged in agriculture or forestry:

> *To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities.*
> *For example, where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby. Local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances such as:*
>
> ***•• the essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside;***

There is an essential need for on-site residential accommodation on this site whilst acknowledging the special landscape status of the site and wider area.

3.26. Nevertheless, the principles at issue remain extant and the primary justification for having a Centre Managers House on this site is in case animals require essential care and emergency assistance at short notice which of course they frequently do in a rescue situation.

3.27. In addition, the Animal Boarding Establishments Act 1963 with its supplementary guidance notes, the CIEH Model Licence Conditions and Guidance for Dog Boarding Establishments, states: -

Supervision & Responsibility
The kennel proprietor or a responsible person over the age of 18 years should always be present to exercise supervision and deal with any emergencies whenever dogs are boarded.

3.28. The scale of the residential accommodation is commensurate with the established functional requirement of the Centre. Blue Cross policy for all of its rehoming sites is to have one house or flat suitable for the Manager (or other senior employee) and their family to live as their main residence. In addition, there is a crash-pad for occasional visiting `Blue Cross Managers. This arrangement ensures that there are two members of staff available 24 hours a day to respond to any animal welfare needs.

Animal Welfare Issues

3.24 It is not uncommon for dogs to be tied to a gate, or cats & kittens to be dumped in a box outside a Centre and it is important to ensure someone is on site to ensure these animals are secured and cared for promptly. Having a clear permanent presence on site also provides for security and ensures the site remains quiet overnight for the benefit of any neighbours but of course in this instance there are very few and some distance away and screened by hedging.

Operational Issues requiring residential presence

3.25 There are also operational needs for the Centre which means an on-site residential requirement is essential. Provision has to be made to cover manager sickness, maternity and holiday cover. Furthermore, two bedsits (the crash pads) for employees to provide rota overnight cover as the need arises. These employees will check on post op animals overnight, feed young animals and cover for the manager in their absence. These bedsits will be used only for overnight cover and will not be a main residence for any individual.

3.26 Most Blue Cross centres have experienced extreme weather (usually snow), which can prevent individuals, or even whole teams of employees from getting to work. With a manager living on site, and two crash pads, the Charity can ensure that there is always a sufficient number of team members on site to ensure the welfare of animals when extreme weather is forecast.

3.27 Alternative arrangements (to on site residential presence) such as remote alarms, CCTV and external security companies have been considered but Blue Cross have reached the conclusion that these alternatives cannot provide the level of safety, care and service that their sites, animals and neighbours require of any Blue Cross site.

Other Technical Issues

3.28 A number of other reports and surveys is submitted with this application and the primary conclusions and matters of particular importance for the scheme proposals are summarised in the following paragraphs.

Bat Roosting Survey and Report

3.29 Following scoping agreement with the Council a Preliminary Assessment for Roosting Bats was required. This has been completed by Bernwood ECS Ltd. the conclusions are that there was no evidence of roosting bats in any of the surveyed structures and that generally, the buildings on site have a negligible to low suitability to support roosting bats.

There are opportunities for bio-diversity enhancement and these will be taken into the scheme proposals particularly in respect of landscaping.

Foul Sewage, Surface Water Drainage Proposals

3.30 Foul water will discharge into a new, small scale, private, package Treatment Plant and existing septic tank arrangements on site decommissioned. The proposed location of the private treatment plant is shown on proposed Site Plan 3786-17F. A Brochure illustrating the package plant is included within the submission.

3.31 Existing soakaways on site will be used for surface water drainage.

3.32 As long as maintenance of the new and existing drainage systems are correctly carried out, the risk of flooding and the subsequent risks from infrastructure failure or pluvial means, is extremely small.

Arboricultural Survey and Landscape Assessment and Landscaping Proposals

3.33 The Arboricultural and tree constraints survey has been undertaken by Land and Sculpture Design Partnership and is presented in drawing format within the application bundle ls1056-01b. The results of the 'arbo' assessment are incorporated and reflected in the landscaping proposals which are shown on drawing number ls1056-02b as submitted. The proposed landscaping scheme is

entirely complementary to the proposed buildings' layout and design and vice versa whilst both will be successfully assimilated into the existing landscape.

Site waste management plan

3.34 This is shown on Patrick Allen drawing number 3786 – 17F and will take the form of a commercial waste collection of separated clinical waste and other waste as well as measures for recycling appropriate material.

4. Planning Policy Context

4.1. Planning applications are to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise[1].

4.2. This section of the Appellant's Statement sets out in detail how the appeal proposals fare when assessed against policies of the Council's adopted Development Plan for the North Hertfordshire District as well as an appropriate assessment against all other material considerations, the most significant of which is the Government's National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (the 'Framework').

Planning Policy

4.3. Reference to the 'North Hertfordshire District Local Plan no.2 with alterations 1996' will be made as 'NHDLP'. Supplementary Planning Documents referred to in this Statement include 'Vehicle Parking Standards' (VPS); Design ('Design'); North Herts Landscape Study 2011 (NHLS). Consideration is also given to policies of the emerging North Hertfordshire Draft Local Plan 2011-2031 (NHDLP draft) although not yet adopted and so carries limited weight in any decision taking. The Statement begins with a review of the Framework.

National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework)

4.4. In the first instance the development proposed within this application comprises sustainable development in accordance with paras 6-16 of The Framework and does not conflict with any of the primary Core Planning Principles as set out within Para 17 and following.

4.5. The 4th bullet point of para. 28 of The Framework **'Supporting a Prosperous Rural Economy**' provides for instances such as this development scheme. Similarly, the Blue Cross scheme design meets all of the high design standards for development in the countryside envisaged by section 7 of The Framework.

4.6. In the event that a development proposal materialises which doesn't align 100% with the extant Development plan The Framework provides for this at para10 which states: -

> *Plans and decisions need to take local circumstances into account, so that they respond to the different opportunities for achieving sustainable development in different areas.*

[1] Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, s.38(6)

4.7. The extant Local Plan of 1996 which was itself an altered version of a much earlier Plan is now out of date (except for Framework compliant saved policies as indicated by the imminent arrival of the Local Plan replacement (NHDLP draft) but that has not yet reached the adoption stage and at pre-application we are advised that its policies carry limited weight for planning decisions.

4.8. The Framework also provides for this at para.14

where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, granting permission unless:

- *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; or*
- *specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.9*

4.9. This is further reinforced at the last bullet point of para 17 which states that one of the Core Planning Principles on which development management decisions should take place is: -

take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.

4.10. The Blue Cross facilities already exist at this location. The proposed enhancements and remodelling at the application site in Kimpton Bottom are designed to serve the community based needs of a widely located but urban based population in North Hertfordshire.

4.11. That community based need and the need to make provision for a wide range of community services is also recognised in The Framework which states: -

70. To deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:

- plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;
- guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs;
- ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise in a way that is sustainable, and retained for the benefit of the community; and
- ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.

4.12. The most significant paras. of the Framework, pertinent to this application are contained within section 9 of the Framework which address the issue of development within the Green Belt and the key policies and paragraphs of Framework are set out below. How the Framework Green Belt Policy of 2012 relates to the Council's review of the designated Green Belt in North Hertfordshire as part of the Council's Review of Local Plan (NHDLP draft) is considered in the paragraphs thereafter.

Green Belt Paragraphs and Policy from the Framework

87. As with previous Green Belt policy, inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

88. When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

89. A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:

- buildings for agriculture and forestry;
- provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and for cemeteries, as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
- the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;
- the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
- limited infilling in villages, and limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the Local Plan; or
- limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.

4.13. In terms of planning considerations and whilst being aware of the provisions of Para 2 of The Framework, we note the caveat 'unless material considerations dictate otherwise' *(Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990)* and we say that there are extraordinary and exceptional considerations which are of paramount importance in this planning decision for the Blue Cross proposals at Kimpton Bottom.

4.14 In the first instance the overriding need for this facility cannot be denied. The existing centre at Kimpton Bottom has operated for several decades and has provided an animal welfare service to the Hertfordshire area for several decades. In 2018, their work has never been in greater demand and that demand now has a much wider base, extending into the urban areas of North Herts. and beyond. The need to update and improve the existing Centre is urgent because many of the existing buildings are nearing the end of their working life, not capable of economic repair and are no longer fit for purpose.

4.15 A modernised improved facility at Kimpton Bottom serving the area, particularly in such an accessible location, increases the Blue Cross potential to deliver that same, excellent, much needed service to the wider community thereby making a continuing contribution towards its well-being, consistent with the Community based Policy in The Framework.

4.16 The Blue Cross Kimpton Bottom site is situated within the designated Green Belt. The proposed landscape scheme prepared by LSDP will ensure that any impact arising from the development will be minimal and capable of successful mitigation. Due consideration and weight in any assessment of the Green Belt issue should be given to the fact that the Blue Cross facility already exists and probably pre-dates the Green Belt designation.

4.17 Any landscape impact concerns in relation to the existing facility can be mitigated by good design. Blue Cross have demonstrated in the submitted scheme design which treats the site comprehensively, that the proposed development which comprises the erection of a series of buildings in a rural aesthetic design, successfully assimilated into local context by a comprehensive landscaping scheme.

4.18 We think that the provision of an animal welfare facility is but one example of a local strategy to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs. Given the current position with the existing facility at Kimpton Bottom we say that the provision and expansion of facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities should be supported. (para 70 of the NPPF).

4.19 In summary, the proposed development is not inappropriate in this Green Belt location and there are very special circumstances which exist in this instance and have been set out within this Statement (compliance with para.87 of the Framework).

4.20 Similarly, any perceived harm arising from the remodelling of the existing facilities we say is outweighed by the public benefits of the improvements to the facility (para.88 of the Framework compliance). Those new and remodelled buildings need to be where they are proposed and in the form/style/scale, they are designed (compliance with para.89 of the Framework). None of the submitted scheme proposals affect or adversely impact on the openness of the Green Belt nor compromise the character of the site location or wider area for which Green Belt status was originally confirmed.

4.21 Blue Cross conclude that any such assessment will demonstrate that the benefits of the development at this site will clearly outweigh the minimal impact that it is likely to have on the immediate site area and the adjacent countryside environment.

4.22 New Buildings are normally considered to be inappropriate development but in this instance, the replacement of outdated buildings and the design of others which are to be remodelled, comply with many of the specific bullet points in para.89 of the Framework which constitute acceptable exceptions to the general prohibitive rule.

Local Plan Policy

4.23 This Statement now turns to North Herts. local plan policy considerations including those in the Supplementary Planning documents and the emerging replacement Local Plan. Specific NHDLP 'saved' policies which apply to this application include Policy 2 Green Belts and Policy 57 – Residential Guidelines and Standards.

4.24 The requirements of the Green Belt Policy contained within the Framework are of are of greater significance than the simple and brief Local Plan Policy in that they are more comprehensive and recent. As set out in earlier paragraphs of this Statement, the development proposals comprised within this application comply with the provisions of that Green Belt policy and so must also comply with the less onerous or very similar requirements of Policy 2 which states.

> In the Green Belt, as shown on the Proposals Map, the Council will aim to keep the uses of land open in character. Except for proposals within settlements which accord with Policy 3, or in very special circumstances, planning permission will only be granted for new buildings, extensions, and changes of use of buildings and of land which are appropriate in the Green Belt, and which would not result in significant visual impact.

4.25 Policy 57 – Residential Guidelines and Standards: - The residential proposals within this application which are relatively small scale, are considered to comply with the relevant guidelines set out within this policy as set out within the submitted application drawings.

4.26 In terms of the Council's Supplementary Planning Documents, those relevant to this application include that relating to Vehicle Parking Provision although it is difficult to ascribe a standard to this sui generis use. However, given that no increase in employees is forecast from the physical changes on site it is concluded that the proposed 28 on site spaces is for purpose.

4.27 Where traffic levels to and from any proposed development are likely to exceed 5% of the two-way traffic flow on the adjoining highway from which it takes access, the Council deems that a Transport Assessment may be required. This is clearly not the case with this development proposal. Moreover, there is no congestion in the local highway network and the location is not sensitive in highway terms.

4.28 The Design Guidelines for development in Rural Areas contained within the Councils Supplementary Planning Document has also been taken into account in the preparation of the scheme design for altered and replacement buildings and suitably complemented by the Landscape Proposals, both reflecting the intimate character of the landscape and countryside within which the existing site is located. The scheme proposals are very modest in terms of the physical changes that they will bring and the majority if not all, will enhance the site's appearance and contribution towards local distinctiveness. There will be no adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area.

North Hertfordshire Draft Local Plan 2011-2031

4.29 Although carrying limited weight for decision making purposes because of their current status within the emerging Local Plan, several polices are worthy of note in relation to the submitted development proposal.

4.30 The submitted scheme complies with 'SP1: Sustainable Development in North Hertfordshire' inasmuch as it delivers sustainable development which should be supported in compliance with the last three criteria of sub para. (c) the Policy by

4.31 The submitted scheme also complies with Policy SP5: Countryside and Green Belt where, following a comprehensive review of the Green Belt as part of the Local

Plan process, the submitted scheme finds support for the policy which states (inter alia) that the Council

"c. Will only permit development proposals in the Green Belt where they would not result in inappropriate development;

Essentially the Local Plan relies upon national guidance for development proposals in the Green Belt and when considered acceptable in principle, the Council's detailed development management policies should apply to the decision. We say that it is the case with the Blue Cross application proposals that not only can development be supported in principle because of the very special circumstances which prevail, but the scheme design also complies with local development management policy such as meeting the criteria for sustainable development.

4.32 As part of the new Local Plan exercise, the District Council undertook a comprehensive review of its Green Belt and completed the 'North Hertfordshire Green Belt Review' in July 2016 (GBR 2016). The study and analysis now forms a significant part of the evidence base for the new Local Plan. For the purpose of this application and its consideration there is a useful analysis of the Green Belt criteria and characteristics including that part where the Kimpton Bottom site is located and an examination of the individual locations sensitivity to change brought about by development against those criteria.

4.33 In particular the Study notes: -

> *26 The assessment of the Green Belt within the District against the purposes set out in the NPPF has identified relatively few areas of land which make a limited contribution and no areas which have no contribution. This reflects the strategic role of the Green Belt as part of the Metropolitan Green Belt in helping to contain the sprawl of Greater London through preventing the merger of towns and the urbanisation of the countryside generally. The more localised role of the Green Belt in helping to maintain the settlement pattern of the District (being three main settlements and an array of villages of hamlets) has also been effective, reflecting the role of Green Belt policy in systematically implementing development restraint which would be more difficult to achieve through policies limiting development in the 'open countryside'.*
>
> *4. The analysis of village character and relationship with the Green Belt takes a similar approach to the assessment of the parcels of the wider Green Belt. The criteria used for assessment are finer grained in their detail and with a specific focus on the relationship of built development with its context, as follows:*

- *General character – location and overall setting, topography, settlement form, building type/age, overall sensitivity, sense of identity/unity/cohesion, key focal points, Conservation Area(s). North Hertfordshire Green Belt Review July 2016 68*

- *Density and layout of buildings – degree of spaciousness/enclosure, opportunities for infill, existing village boundary.*

- *Presence and character of open space – location and relationship with settlement.*

- *Interface with the surrounding landscape – settlement depth, rear garden character, glimpsed/panoramic views to the wider landscape, connectivity with landscape context.*

4.34 The GBR 2016 analysis provides a summary of the sensitivity of component elements of Green Belt land in the District in map form and this is reproduced as Appendix 2 to this Statement whilst a tabular summary follows.

North Hertfordshire Green Belt Review July 2016

Sector	Check unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	Prevent merging of neighbouring towns	Safeguard countryside from encroachment	Preserve setting and special character of historic towns	Overall evaluation and contribution to Green Belt purposes
3c Land to east of Whiteway Bottom Lane, Bendish in the north, abuts northern edge of Kimpton with eastern boundary a mix of footpaths.	1 – This parcel plays no role in preventing sprawl.	1 - Plays no role in preventing merger of neighbouring towns.	2 – Prevents encroachment into the accessible countryside. Helps to retain the rural setting of Kimpton to the south.	1 – No relationship with historic towns.	Includes Chiltern Way. Prevents encroachment into the accessible countryside. Helps to retain the rural setting of Kimpton to the south. **Moderate Contribution**
3d Land bounded by Kimpton Bottom to south, Kimpton Road to north and district boundary to west.	1 – This parcel plays no role in preventing sprawl.	1 - Plays no role in preventing merger of neighbouring towns.	2 – Prevents encroachment into the accessible countryside.	1 – No relationship with historic towns.	Links into the wider Metropolitan Green Belt covering adjoining districts. **Moderate Contribution**
4 Porters End	1 – Not within the vicinity of a large built up area, although Blackmore End is immediately to the south east.	1 – Not in the vicinity of towns.	2 - Prevents encroachment into accessible countryside. Helps to retain the rural setting of Kimpton to the north.	1 - No historic towns in this area.	Much of the parcel is relatively remote (though still accessible) countryside, and as such is sensitive to encroachment through incremental change. **Overall the parcel makes a contribution to Green Belt purposes.**
4 Land to south of Kimpton bounded by Kimpton Bottom to north, district boundary and Blackmore End to south and Hall	1 - No major settlements that may sprawl.	1 – No neighbouring towns but has maintained the separation of Blackmore End and Kimpton.	2 - Prevents encroachment of Kimpton and Blackmore End	1 - No historic towns in this area.	Links into the wider Metropolitan Green Belt covering adjoining districts. **Moderate Contribution**

4.35 The area component of Green Belt within which the application site is located is parcel 3d in the Table above and is located in the south west corner of this part of the District's Green Belt. It is readily evident what the parcel contributes to the Green Belt and those most sensitive aspects of its character when considering development proposals (darker green panels). It is the applicant's opinion that the

key consideration is the potential for new development to encroach into open countryside.

4.36 Whilst these points are important to bear in mind the Framework does not define openness, leaving it to interpretation where it is generally taken to mean generally (but not exclusively) an absence of built development. Given that built development is often an integral part of the character of the countryside, in relation to particular areas, the degree of openness is an overall judgement which needs to stem from the consideration of a number of factors which include, in the case of villages, matters such as their general character, scale and density, setting within and interaction with the wider landscape.

4.37 The Blue Cross Kimpton Bottom site is not located in wide open, uninterrupted countryside or in an overtly agricultural landscape free of structures and buildings. On the south side of the B652 and the valley bottom where the Blue Cross facility is located, there are a number of established houses with extensive garden curtilages with overtly residential characteristics, farmsteads with a number of modern utilitarian farm buildings of an industrial character and appearance.

4.38 Key Development Management Policies which the scheme meets, include D1: 'Sustainable Design' reproduced below.

Policy D1: Sustainable design

Planning permission will be granted where development proposals:

a. Respond positively to the site's local context;

b. Take all reasonable opportunities, consistent with the nature and scale of the scheme, to:

   i. create or enhance public realm;

   ii. optimise the potential of the site by incorporating Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS);

   iii. reduce energy consumption and waste;

   iv. retain existing vegetation and propose appropriate new planting;

   v. maximise accessibility, legibility and connectivity;

   vi. future proof for changes in technology and lifestyle;

   vii. design-out opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour; and

   viii. minimise the visual impact of street furniture and parking provision;

c. Have regard to the Design SPD and any other relevant guidance; and

d. For residential schemes, meet or exceed the nationally described space and water efficiency standards.

4.39 Similarly, the development goes as far as it is able in meeting the requirements of Policy D3: Protecting living conditions, respecting the amenity of existing dwellings nearby of which there are very few and these are set some distance away (Harbeck House, Paddock End).

Policy D3: Protecting living conditions

Planning permission will be granted for development proposals which do not cause unacceptable harm to living conditions.

Where the living conditions of proposed developments would be affected by an existing use or the living conditions of an existing development would be affected by a proposed use, the Council will consider whether there are mitigation measures that can be taken to mitigate the harm to an acceptable level. If the Council is not satisfied that mitigation proposals would address the identified harm, development proposals will not be permitted.

4.40 Although works of construction will involve limited demolition and alteration to other buildings these are not considered to be of a scale such that they will give rise to any significant or temporary excessive impacts on local air quality or other aspects of local amenity and the environment such as that required by Policy D4: 'Air Quality'. A condition requiring a Construction Management Plan is all that is need to successfully control the construction phase and a condition is anticipated and welcomed by the Applicant.

4.41 The trigger criteria where Air Quality emissions and their impacts will need to be assessed in the context of new development, particularly where they are located in existing Air Quality Management Areas and in the vicinity of major roads running through the District are set out in para. 9.30 of the NHDLP. The types of development for which the Council would expect due consideration to be given to the submission of an air quality impact assessment is detailed in that paragraph. What is proposed at the Kimpton Bottom site by Blue Cross does not warrant an air quality impact assessment.

4.42 The development would thus be in compliance with para 123 of the Framework which states: -

123. Planning policies and decisions should aim to:

- avoid noise from giving rise to significant adverse impacts[27] on health and quality of life as a result of new development;
- mitigate and reduce to a minimum other adverse impacts[27] on health and quality of life arising from noise from new development, including through the use of conditions;
- recognise that development will often create some noise and existing businesses wanting to develop in continuance of their business should not have unreasonable restrictions put on them because of changes in nearby land uses since they were established;[28] and
- identify and protect areas of tranquillity which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason.

5. Summary & Conclusions

5.1 This application by Blue Cross consists of a proposal to remodel, update and enhance an existing facility which is located within the Green Belt where it has been in existence from a date which probably pre-dates the designation of green belt status for this specific area.

5.2 The main issues for the application proposals are whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt when set against extant planning policy at the national and local level.

5.3 Due consideration needs to be given to the effect on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it. If the proposed development is deemed potentially inappropriate, whether the harm by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm is clearly outweighed by other considerations so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development.

5.4 The analysis of the proposed development in the context of the Kimpton Bottom site contained within this Planning Statement leads to the reasoned conclusion that the scheme is not inappropriate development and that any perceived harm arising from it in terms of impact upon the Green Belt's openness is very limited.

5.5 Paragraph 89 of the framework sets out the categories of development which may be regarded as not inappropriate (subject to certain conditions). New buildings within the Green Belt are generally inappropriate unless, among other things, they consist of the replacement of a building, providing the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces.

5.6 In this case, the Blue Cross proposals at Kimpton Bottom hit three of the six listed bullet points for exceptions provisions in para.89 (nos. 2, 3 and 4) as they comprise

- the provision of appropriate facilities for a use which is similar in its characteristics to the specific uses listed (outdoor sport, recreation and cemeteries),
- the extension of or alteration to existing buildings provided that does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original buildings,

- the replacement of a building, where the new building is for the same use and is not materially larger than the buildings which are being replaced.

5.7 It is further notable that the Framework does not include a specific threshold to assess whether a proposal is materially larger. In this instance, we say the Blue Cross proposals are not materially larger to the extent that they cause harm.

5.8 The application site is within the Green Belt and contains several modest, single-storey buildings and outbuildings with some two storey and one and a half storey elements. It is proposed to alter, remodel and replace some of these buildings in the manner described in detail within this application. Overall, there is proposed no unnecessary and disproportionate increase in floor space and no encroachment and so no consequent material harm to the openness of the Green Belt or to visual and/or landscape impact.



5.9 The relevant test is whether the new building, alterations and proposals are materially larger than the ones it alters extends or replaces or as the Framework expresses it, the change/additions are not disproportionately larger than what is to be replaced. It is reasonable to conclude that the proposed Blue Cross development is not materially larger than the buildings to be altered, remodelled or replaced and so would comply with the relevant exception provisions of paragraph 89 of

the Framework. The new and altered buildings are essentially confined to the same developed footprint as exists on site.

5.10 The essential characteristics of Green Belts as set out in paragraph 79 of the Framework are their openness and permanence. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policies is to safeguard the countryside from encroachment. The proposals comprised within this application are not likely to result in a greater intensity of activity on the site – this would be limited and there will be no encroachment as the development proposed all takes place within the confines and boundaries of an established site which is already in use as an animal rehoming and welfare centre. The proposed Blue Cross development does not take that use beyond its existing boundary and so does not encroach on to other areas of countryside/Green Belt.

5.11 When considered as a whole, in the context of the existing buildings on the site and its established use, the proposals comprised within this application would not result in inappropriate development in the Green Belt. No reduction in openness would arise and there would be no encroachment into the countryside. The overall impact would be positive and represents an enhancement of the existing situation with very limited harm (if any) arising. It represents a proposal for sustainable development which should be supported without delay.

Appendix 1

North Herts and Herts County Council Pre-App response

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
Correspondence address:
North Hertfordshire District Council, PO BOX 10613, Nottingham, NG6 6DH
Telephone: (01462) 474000
Text Phone: (01462) 474800
DX 324201, Nottingham 59

11 August 2017

Ms L Short
Artisan PPS Ltd
Berwick House
Homechurch
Baylham
Ipswich
IP6 8RF

Our Ref : 17/01641/1PRE

Contact : Tom Allington
Direct Line: 01462 474508
Email : tom.allington@north-herts.gov.uk

Dear Leslie Short

RE: Proposed Development Scheme - Remodelling of Herts rehoming centre at Blue Cross, Kimpton Bottom, Herts, SG4 8EU

Thank you for your application for pre-application advice, which the Council received on the 28 June 2017. I can confirm that I have received a responses from the Council's Environmental Health team and from Herts Ecology, which I attach with this letter for your records and information.

Please note that this response is not a formal determination of your proposal and is without prejudice to any subsequent planning application.

Development site
The development site comprises the Blue Cross animal rehoming centre in Kimpton Bottom and which is located on the south side of the B652 road. The centre comprises a u number of buildings, including two residential dwellings, offices, a reception building and various kennels and stables and other ancillary buildings for the keeping and accommodating of animals. The site is located within the Green Belt.

Proposal
The pre-application submission seeks advice on the remodelling of the Blue cross premises, including the demolition of various buildings, the extension and conversion of buildings to alternative uses and the provision of new accommodation. Of particular note is the proposal to erect a new reception building towards the north-eastern corner of the site (Building 2), next to the entrance, the extension and provision of larger kennel buildings towards the southern end of the site (Buildings 14 and 15) and the provision of several new buildings for the accommodation of cats towards the north-western side of the site, alongside the road (Buildings 3, 4, 5 and 6).

Policy background
The application would be assessed with regards to the following policies from the North Hertfordshire District Local Plan no.2 with Alterations 1996:

- Policy 2 - Green Belts;
- Policy 57 - Residential Guidelines and Standards.

Supplementary Planning Document - Vehicle Parking Provision at New Development
Supplementary Planning Document – Design
North Hertfordshire Landscape Study (Character, Sensitivity and Capacity) (2011)

In addition, consideration will be given to the National Planning Policy Framework: Section 9; Protecting Green Belt land

I would also bring to your attention the North Hertfordshire Draft Local Plan 2011-2031. The emerging local plan has now been submitted to the Secretary of State, following completion of the final public consultation exercises and having been agreed and approved by Full Council in April 2017. The Policies of the draft Local Plan therefore carry limited weight at this stage, however the policies are to be afforded increased weight and consideration at each stage of the process up until full adoption. The policies of relevance in this instance are as follows:
Strategic Policies:

- SP1: Sustainable Development in North Hertfordshire
- SP2: Settlement Hierarchy
- SP5: Countryside and Green Belt
- SP6: Sustainable Transport

Development Management Policies:

- D1 - Sustainable Design
- D3: Protecting living conditions
- D4: Air quality

Please note that the Local Plan can be viewed under the Planning Services section of our website: www.north-herts.gov.uk.

Principle of the proposed development within the Green Belt
The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that 'When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt.' At paragraph 89 of the NPPF, it goes on to state that 'A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in Green Belt', apart from a list of exceptions. As mentioned, the site includes a number of existing buildings spread over a relatively large area and it also includes large areas of hardstanding. As such, I consider this to be a brownfield site and so the relevant exception, as listed under paragraph 89 of the NPPF, is as follows:

'limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.'

The proposed development would represent the 'partial redevelopment of a previously developed site which is in a continuing use'. However, as per the second part of this exception, in order to consider an appropriate form of development, the proposal must not have any greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

In this regard, I note that the several new buildings are proposed, some of which would replace existing buildings which are due to be demolished. However, I consider that in this instance, there would be a net gain in new built form on this site. I do not raise any concerns with regard to Buildings 14 and 15, as this would present a proportionate increase to the scale of existing buildings which could accord with another exception as listed under paragraph 89 of the NPPF). However, the Proposed reception building would be quite tall, featuring a large pitched roof and would be relatively visible and prominent from the Kimpton Bottom Road. Furthermore, I also note that buildings 3, 4, 5

and 6 would be located in an otherwise open part of the site which does not appear to feature any built form. As such, I consider that these aspects of the proposal may lead to some form of harm to the openness of the Green Belt, as these would represent an increase in built form.

I also note that there are mitigating circumstances in this instance. As mentioned, these buildings would form part of the redevelopment of the wider, brownfield site and which is considered previously developed land. Furthermore, Buildings 2 – 6 would be located between the road and the existing buildings and so I consider that these would not result in any encroachment into the Green Belt or in the Countryside. What is more, it is my view that the proposed development would not be contrary to any of the other purposes of the Green Belt, as listed under paragraph 80 of the NPPF (for example, the proposals would not result in neighbouring towns merging into one another). Lastly, I note that the 'cattery' buildings (Buildings 3-6) would be of a modest scale with a low height and so these would not be overly dominant features within the site and would not be overly prominent within the landscape setting

In summary, I consider that the principle of the proposed development within the Green Belt could be supported (both the aspects discussed above and the other aspects of the proposal as listed in your letters dated 26th June 2017, which includes the conversion of existing buildings and the reallocation of various ancillary uses around the site). However, I would emphasise that any future application wold need to be supported by a Planning Statement which outlines and makes a strong argument in addressing the Green Belt issues. In addition, I would also recommend that you explore alternative designs for the reception building (Buidling 2), to seek to lower its height and its prominence and I would also recommend that an application be accompanied by a landscaping scheme. Suitable landscaping around the site could serve to screen and soft some of the proposed development and further reduce any potential impact on the openness and the viual amenity of the green Belt.

Impact on the living conditions of neighbouring properties

Owing to the relatively low height of the proposed buildings, together with the significant distance and orientation from neighbouring properties, I consider that these would not result in any harm to the living conditions of neighbouring properties in terms of any overbearing impact and there would not be a significant loss of light at neighbouring properties. Furthermore, the buildings would not result in a loss of privacy at neighbouring dwellings.

Please see attached the comments I have received from the Council's Environmental Health Officer with regard to noise. Essentially, it is considered that the proposed redevelopment of this site is likely to result in an intensification of the existing use. However, given the relatively isolated location of the site, the use would be unlikely to result in a significant increase of noise and so would not be unneighbourly in this regard.

Highway matters and parking

Although the Hertfordshire County Council Highway Officer has been consulted, a response has not been received as the Highways team now provide their own, separate pre-application service. However, I note that the proposed redevelopment of this site and the subsequent intensification of the existing use would likely result in increased journeys to and from the property. I would recommend that any future application include details on the likely traffic generation the development would result in, compared to the existing situation, particularly as the site is accessed via a relatively narrow country road. This information would enable a proper assessment as to the impact on highway safety. In any case, I would recommend that you seek advice from the HCC Highway team prior to the submission of an application.

From: **Roger Taylor** Roger.Taylor@hertfordshire.gov.uk
Subject: Pre-Application Advice : Remodelling of Herts rehoming centre. HCC Ref: NH/233/2017
Date: 1 August 2017 at 11:51
To: admin@artisan-pps.co.uk

RT

For the attention of Mr Leslie Short

Pre-Application Advice : Remodelling of Herts rehoming centre.

Dear Mr Leslie Short

Pre-Application Advice : Remodelling of Herts rehoming centre.

Blue Cross Rehoming Centre, Kimpton Bottom SG4 8EU

Thank you for your pre-application enquiry dated 10 July 2017 regarding the above development.

VEHICLE ACCESS

The property is accessed off Kimpton Bottom which is the B652 secondary distributor road subject to a derestricted speed limit.

The new vehicle access has been shown to be 5.5 metres wide this would not comply with the HCC vehicle cross over procedures, (the maximum length of dropped kerbs being 2.75) nevertheless the access at 5.5 metres with the minimum 6.0 metre radii kerbs at the entrance can be delivered by using a s278 highway agreement.

The submitted drawings do not indicate any surface treatment of the proposed access road to the development, nevertheless to prevent loose material from passing onto the public highway as part of the planning permission the access would have to be hard surfaced for the first 6.0 metres to the satisfaction of the LPA and HCC.

EXISTING VEHICLE ACCESS

There are no details of the treatment of the existing north easterly vehicle access, if this is to remain without stopping up a case would need to be made why you need to retain the existing access in close proximity to the proposed vehicle access.

HIGHWAY SAFETY - Visibility along the highway from the new access.

Vehicle to vehicle inter visibility

The proposed development would be served from a new access from Lilley Bottom that is subject to a derestricted speed limit (60 mph).

To meet the current highway safety requirements the vehicle to vehicle inter-visibility provision at the access must comply with Design Manual for Roads and Bridges it would be necessary to provide the vehicle to vehicle inter-visibility sightlines by providing

Furthermore, you would need to ensure that sufficient parking is provided for your clients, for staff and for visitors, so that vehicles would not be required to park in the road (although given how narrow the road is, it is not likely that this would be possible).

Environmental protection

In this instance I refer to the attached comments by the Environmental Health Officer who specialises in Contaminated Land and matters of Air Quality. As you will see from the attached comments, it is considered that any future application will need to consider the potential for existing contaminants and so further (limited) information will be required. In addition, any supporting Planning Statement which accompanies a future application will need to give consideration to air quality mitigation/ improvements.

Ecology

I also refer you to the attached comments provided by Herts Ecology. Given the rural location of the site, it is likely that Bats use this area and so some of the buildings, which are proposed to be altered or demolished, maybe used for roosting. As such, it is reasonable and necessary in this instance to request that any future application include a Preliminary Roost Assessment.

Conclusions

It is my view that the proposed development, comprising the redevelopment and additions to the existing site, can be considered as appropriate development within the Green Belt. Although the proposals would result in increased built form, which may cause harm to the openness of the Green Belt, it is my view that there are potentially mitigating circumstances in this instance which could limit this harm (as outlined above). However, I would recommend that Building 2 be reduced in height, otherwise this would be particularly prominent and visible from public view. In addition, I would also recommend that suitable landscaping be considered in order to further screen and soften the appearance of any increased development.

Please note that this is an officer opinion only, and is not binding on the Council.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish to discuss the above in greater detail.

Yours sincerely,



Tom Allington
Strategic Sites Planning Officer

visibility splays to both directions this must be provided along land within control of the highway authority or the applicant and must be demonstrated on any future planning application.

The submitted pre application layout drawing 3786-17B shows the sightlines from the centre of the proposed access, this level of visibility is considered substandard, for the category of road the visibility should accord with Sightlines at Junctions (Ref: Design Manual for Roads and Bridges Volume 6 (Road Geometry) Section 1 (Highway Link Design) Table 2.

The appropriate vehicle to vehicle inter visibility should be 2.4 metres x 120 metres to the both directions from the new access.

No details of speed and volume data has been provided within the pre application submission. It is likely for the Lilley Bottom Road, subject to a 60mph speed limit, that the 85th percentile speeds may be lower than the speed limit. The visibility splay ('y'-distance) should be determined from the 'design speed' based on 85th percentile measured speeds. A stopping sight distance ('y'-distance) of up to 120 metres could be required, (this has been compared to the observed speed of around 40 mph when travelling along the road to the development).

Further information is required such as a speed and volume survey along Lilley Bottom at the location of the proposed access followed by a Stage One Safety Audit Review

The submitted details show vehicle to vehicle inter-visibility to comply with the minimum visibility within Manual for Streets the standard visibility splays of 2.4 metres x 43 metres have been shown to both directions from the centre of the access.

The speed and volume survey may reveal that the sightline distances may be acceptable nevertheless without such proof of approach speed it is difficult to assess the required vehicle to vehicle inter-visibility needed.

Where landscaping may be located near the access any fencing, walls, trees or bushes should be kept clear of the visibility splays.

The visibility splays should be shown over land within the control of the applicant or highway authority.

SERVICING THE NEW DEVELOPMENT

The plot is located next to the adjacent public highway to keep Kimpton Bottom free of waste collection bins, a store must be provided within 10 metres of the highway.

A layout plan should be submitted showing the above details to accord with the above advice showing the detailed method of waste collection from the development, this would need the agreement of North Herts District Council waste collection agency

MANOEUVRABILITY

The development has been provided with a turning area this would be sufficient to accommodate the proposed scale of development for vehicles likely to access the development.

Any gates provided must be set back at least 6.0 metres from the edge of the carriageway.

CONSTRUCTION OF NEW VEHICLE ACCESS

The associated road works as part of the development shall be constructed to the satisfaction of the Highway Authority and in accordance with Hertfordshire County Council publication Roads in Hertfordshire Highway Design Guide

The applicant is advised to contact HCC via the hertsdirect@hertscc.gov.uk or for information use the HCC website https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/highways-roads-and-pavements.aspx or call on 0300 1234 047 to obtain the requirements for a section 278 agreement for the associated road works as part of the development. This should be carried out prior to any development work is carried out.

The above response sets out the views of the area development management team from the information available at the time of the enquiry and does not represent the Highway Authority's formal response to any subsequent formal application. It assumes that the applicant has the necessary ownership of rights over the land required to implement the proposed scheme.

I would like to assure you of my full attention in this matter I trust that the above is a full explanation to help you form a comprehensive response to the applicant.

In the meantime if you require any clarification please do not hesitate to call the number set out at the bottom of this response.

Yours sincerely
Roger Taylor
Senior Development Management Officer
Highway Operations and Strategy

01992 588414

Hertfordshire – County of Opportunity

Appendix 2

Green Belt Review sub parcels assessment

Figure 2.8: Overall contribution to Green Belt purposes

