

# REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## Local Authority List of Applications 14<sup>th</sup> February 2019

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### PL/18/4593/RC

Case Officer: Gary Murphy  
 Date Received: **04.12.2018** Decide by Date: **06.03.2019**  
 Parish: **Amersham** Ward: **Amersham On The Hill**  
 App Type: Regulation 3 - District Councils own dev  
 Proposal: **Demolition of existing buildings known as Chiltern Pools, Drake Hall, Chiltern Youth Centre and Amersham Library (excl. Annex and Barn Hall) and construction of a replacement two-storey (plus part-lower ground floor) leisure, sports and community building (Use Classes D1 and D2), including 25m swimming pool, diving pool, multipurpose sports hall, squash courts, climbing walls, spa, library, community hall, fitness and gym studios, nursery and dedicated external sports equipment including MUGA and play areas alongside associated external car parking, coach drop off, cycling provision, alterations to vehicular access and landscaping.**  
 Location: **Site Of Chiltern Pools, Drake Hall, Community Centre, Amersham Library and Associated Car Parks and Part Of King George V Playing Fields  
Chiltern Avenue and King George V Road  
Amersham  
Buckinghamshire  
HP6 5AH**  
 Applicant: **Chiltern District Council**

### SITE CONSTRAINTS

Article 4 Direction  
 Adjacent Conservation Areas  
 Adjacent to Unclassified Road  
 Adjacent Public Footpaths and Public Rights Of Way  
 Community Assets/ CDC Owned Land  
 North South Line  
 Public footpath/bridleway  
 Within 500m of Site of Importance for Nature Conservation NC1  
 Tree Preservation Order Individual Trees  
 Townscape Character  
 Thames Groundwater Protection Zone GC9  
 Adjoining Public Amenity Open Space  
 Public Amenity Open Space

## **CALL IN**

No Member call in received. Referred to Planning Committee as the proposal is on the Council's own land and the Council is the applicant.

It is a Major Application.

## **SITE LOCATION**

The site area is 4.14 hectares and comprises a collection of existing buildings in D1/D2 use, namely Chiltern Pools, Drake Hall, Chiltern Youth Centre and Amersham Library. Immediately to the south of these buildings is an area of public open space, known as King George V Field, this is designated as open space in the Adopted Chiltern District Local Plan, together with a smaller area of public open space in the south-western corner of the site. There are a number of established trees located across the site, as well as children's play area, playground, outdoor multi-use games area (MUGA), outdoor gym, skate park, petanque courts, electricity sub-station and associated parking areas providing for 233 parking spaces. There are two existing vehicular site access points from Chiltern Avenue, and one from King George V Road.

For the avoidance of doubt the two locally listed buildings known as the Annexe and Barn Hall fall outside of the application site boundary and as such are not subject to any change as part of this application.

The site is located on the edge of Amersham-on-the-Hill shopping centre immediately adjacent to the Council Offices which are located on the opposite side of King George V Road with the Law Courts and Police Station. Further south of these, are the existing multi-storey car park and Amersham rail station. To the north of the site is an ambulance station. To the north-east, south-east, south-west and north-west are existing residential properties situated on Woodside Road, Hyrons Lane, King George V Road and Chiltern Avenue. Amersham-on-the-Hill shopping centre is approximately 400m north-west of the site. On the opposite side of King George V Road, south of the site are Chiltern District Council offices. The existing built form in the surrounding area displays a mix of different building types with two-storey residential and other non-residential buildings of three and four storeys.

No buildings within the site are statutory listed, and the site is not within a Conservation Area.

The site has good public transport accessibility due to its close proximity to Amersham on the Hill town centre, Amersham railway station and is well served by bus routes.

## **THE APPLICATION**

The proposal involves the demolition of existing buildings known as Chiltern Pools, Drake Hall, Chiltern Youth Centre and Amersham Library (excl. Annex and Barn Hall) and the construction of a replacement two-storey (plus part-lower ground floor) leisure, sports and community building (Use Classes D1 and D2).

The four existing buildings on site being proposed for demolition total 4,570sqm, the largest of these being Chiltern Pools building which is 3050sqm.

In place of the demolished buildings it is proposed to provide a replacement two-storey (plus part lower ground floor) multi use leisure, sports and community building, incorporating 25m swimming pool, diving pool, multipurpose sports hall, squash courts, climbing walls, spa, library, community hall, fitness and gym studios, nursery and dedicated external sports equipment including MUGA and play areas alongside associated external car parking, coach drop off, cycling provision, alterations to vehicular access and landscaping.

The replacement building will be concentrated to the southern part of the site. This intentionally allows for the temporary retention of the existing Chiltern Pools, Drake Hall and Chiltern Youth Centre buildings during construction. Only the existing library building would not be retained during construction; this service may be relocated to Chiltern District Council (CDC) offices on an interim basis.

The table below illustrates what the proposed building will include by way of replacement facilities and new and enhanced facilities:

Existing On-Site Facilities	Proposed On-Site Facilities (approx. GIA)
<b>Internal Sports Facilities</b>	<b>Internal Sports Facilities</b>
25m x 6 lane swimming pool (150 spectator seats)	25m x 8 lane swimming pool (150 spectator seating) (2105sqm)
Teaching pool	Diving / learner pool (with movable floor)
Fun / splash pool	Splash children's pool
Gym (75 fitness stations)	Gym (875sqm) (160 fitness stations)
2 studios (Group exercise and Group cycle)	3 studios (535sqm) (Spin, yoga, dance)
Climbing wall	Climbing centre (incl. wall)
	Multi-sports hall (880sqm)
	Dry Dive facility (80sqm)
	2 x squash courts (180 sqm)
	Clip and climb / soft play facility (520sqm)
<b>External Sports Facilities</b>	<b>External Sports Facilities</b>
MUGA pitch	MUGA pitch (250sqm)
3 x Petanque pitches	3 x Petanque pitches (165sqm)
Skate Park	Skate Park (675sqm)
Children's play spaces	Children's play spaces (1075sqm)
Table Tennis	Table tennis
Outdoor gym	Outdoor gym (190sqm)
Street Snooker	Street Snooker (130 sqm)
Five-a-side Pitch	Replacement provision provided within new internal sports hall
<b>Community Facilities</b>	<b>Community Facilities</b>
Library	Library (300sqm)
Community Centre and Theatre	Community Centre and Theatre (600sqm) with 150-200 capacity
Youth Centre	Youth Centre (410sqm)
Nursery (facility for up to 32 children)	Nursery – 50 children (410sqm)
	Spa and Treatment Rooms (475sqm)
	Soft play space (520sqm)
	Cafe

The following elements would also be provided for:

- 221 replacement car parking spaces (incl. 12 accessible spaces, x 1 DDA electric charging point and x 10 standard electric charging points);
- 50 cycle parking spaces;
- 8 motorbike spaces and x 1 mini-bus parking bay
- Designated vehicle drop-off / pick up lay-by on site;

- Designated coach drop-off / pick up area;
- Refuse, servicing and delivery area;
- New landscaping and tree planting;
- Ecological enhancements;
- Water attenuation measures for improved surface water management and mitigation

The central street running through the building is considered to be a fundamental design element of the proposal and this is intended to support the use of the building as a 'co-location' space and encourage social interaction. The central street will be a fully enclosed double storey height space, with natural light, running the length of the building connecting front and back.

The new 8-lane swimming pool (which is supported by Sport England and Amersham Swimming Club) with spectator seating will provide additional lanes (8 in total), along with a new dedicated diving/training pool, splash pad and separate children's splash pool. This will be complemented by a dedicated dry dive facility elsewhere in the building. During times the diving pool is not in use it can double up as dedicated teaching pool. The pool areas are served by a changing village on the north eastern side of the ground floor.

Also at ground floor level the children's soft play area has been located next to the café, clip and climb area and the library. The community hall is adjacent to this, situated at the front of the building. At the rear of the ground floor is the spa facility.

The replacement community hall, with its own kitchen and meeting rooms has been intentionally located towards the front of the building, with a separate entrance lobby. This separate entrance is intended to provide greater flexibility of use, ensuring any evening performances can be undertaken without compromising security for the wider building. Locating this here also provides a more active frontage onto King George V Road and Chiltern Avenue.

At lower ground floor the multi-use sports hall represents a significant enhancement to the existing on-site facilities. Comprising four separate courts it will allow for a wide range of sports to be played throughout the year, such as badminton, basketball, netball, indoor football and gymnastics. The dry dive area, squash courts (x2) and climbing area are also at this level.

The new fitness suite and studios at first floor level will represent a much enhanced facility compared to the existing provision. A new, replacement nursery will be provided at first floor, served by two separate lifts for level access. This will be served by a dedicated covered outdoor play space, also at first floor level. The nursery will have capacity for up to 50 children.

Vehicle access will be retained via two accesses off Chiltern Avenue. The existing access on King George V Road will be closed, and reinstated as a footway.

Pedestrian access into the building will be via the main entrance, from Chiltern Avenue. An access is also proposed along King George V Road, which will allow access into the building where the soft play and spa facility are situated. This point of access will relate well internally to the main leisure reception area/desk.

Externally, and surrounding the building on the south eastern side, will be older children's play area, outdoor gym, street snooker, table tennis tables (x2) and skate park. Along the north western side will be petanque courts (x3), and MUGA. A dedicated junior play area is proposed to the front of the building.

Phasing details for the construction have been provided, these however are not final. The applicant has indicated that the final phasing programme would be the subject of a Construction Management Plan condition.

The proposed phasing programme is split into five phases and this allows for the existing leisure centre and pool building to remain open throughout construction, likewise the existing community centre, nursery and youth club buildings can remain in operation until the new centre is provided.

A Planning Statement and Design and Access Statement have been submitted to accompany the application and additional information provided in the form of technical reports and assessments.

Community engagement and public consultation:

Due regard has been had to the Localism Act 2011, the NPPF, as well as the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The Council (as applicant) undertook public consultation over a two year period, between 2016 and 2018. The nature of this consultation is set out in detail in the submitted, Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). In summary the consultation undertaken included the following:-

- Nov/Dec, 2016 - public consultation exercise inviting local residents to give their views on providing a new multi-use replacement facility. Results obtained from over 2000 responses indicated overwhelming support, with 80% agreeing (or strongly agreeing) with the proposed development.
- Sept, 2017 - public consultation undertaken with regards to land ownership swap between the District Council and Amersham Town Council.
- Aug - Oct, 2018 - further public consultation, seeking the views of local residents and Chiltern Pools (and surrounding community facilities) users about the proposed redevelopment. Detailed plans of the proposal were presented via four separate public exhibitions.

It is submitted as part of the SCI that feedback comments received have been taken into account in the design of the development, with consideration also given to the constraints of the site. Local residents and stakeholders were also notified of the opportunity to formally comment following submission of the planning application in December 2018.

In addition to the above there has been a dedicated website since 2016, providing information and updates on the project. A number of surveys have been undertaken to allow qualitative data collection and meetings with a range of different stakeholders have taken place as part of the process.

Further information submitted in response to consultee comments:

Following the initial review of the application and the receipt of some consultation responses, further information was provided by the applicant. The following matters were clarified:

- Updated Arboricultural Report, Arboricultural Impact Assessment and tree survey plans, in response to Tree Officer comments;
- Highway Technical note submitted, dated 18 Jan 2019, in response to interim Bucks CC Highway comments;
- Policy/consultation response note provided by planning agent, dated 18 Jan 2019;
- Revised indicative landscaping details provided, with indicative treatment for building frontage along King George V Road, and Chiltern Avenue, and pedestrian route to the north of the building;
- Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) strategy revised following feedback from SuDS officer. Updated SuDS response (31.01.19) confirming no objection, subject to conditions.

### RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

CH/2009/0154/FA: Insertion of two ground floor and two first floor windows within north west elevation of existing building. Conditional Permission.

CH/2007/2009/FA: Extension of existing entrance ramp on north east elevation. Conditional Permission.

CH/2006/0621/RC: Car park extension. Conditional Permission.

CH/2000/1484/RC: Replacement of curtain walling on south east elevation to match glazing and cladding on adjacent wall. Conditional Permission.

CH/1996/0065/RC: Increase height of roof over part of training pool to accommodate climbing wall. Conditional Permission.

CH/1996/0066/RC: Construction of external flume on south elevation of swimming pool. Conditional Permission.

CH/1993/0495/RC: Alterations and glazed entrance to health and fitness suite. Conditional Permission.

CH/1990/1491/RC: Variation to condition 1(c) of planning permission 90/0933/CH to enable the hours of operation for the leisure pools to be extended to include 3.00 pm to 5.30 pm on Mondays to Fridays (including temp use of alternative car parking facilities at Dr. Challoners School). Temporary conditional permission

CH/1989/2037/FA: Alterations, extensions to leisure centre to provide diving and leisure pools, meeting rooms, creche, bar, staff area and health & fitness suites. (variation to details permitted under planning permission 88/2091/CH). Conditional Permission

CH/1984/1970/FA: The erection of four eight-metre high floodlights to serve an existing tennis court. Conditional Permission.

CH/1980/1760/FA: 2 no. squash courts. Conditional Permission.

CH/1988/2091/RC Alterations, extensions to leisure centre to provide diving and leisure pools, meeting rooms, bar, staff area and health and fitness suite. Conditional Permission.

### TOWN COUNCIL

It has been confirmed they are in support of the proposal.

### REPRESENTATIONS

No representations received from Members.

78 representations from have been received, which includes some where a contributor has submitted more than one representation, and/or where more than one representation has been received from the same address. 56 representations raise objection to the proposal. The grounds of objection are summarised below:

#### Impact on open space

- Loss of existing green space/amenity space
- Loss of green infrastructure

- Proposal will destroy existing green corridor
- Building will result in harmful visual impact from King George V open space
- Object to the land swap, and this is not a true land swap as there will be a net reduction in open space
- Loss and damage to trees, and more new trees are required to compensate
- The public consultation undertaken prior to submission was not clear on the amount of open space that would be lost
- Proposed building should be built on footprint of existing swimming pool building reducing impact on the existing open space
- Loss of open space contrary to policies R7 and R8
- Planning Policy officer consultation comments note that the loss of open space is contrary to policy, so why is this deemed to be acceptable?

#### **Design / Impact on character and visual amenities of the area**

- Building will lead to overshadowing of surrounding townscape
- Poor design
- Will be harmful to properties within adjoining Weller Estate Conservation Area as the proposal will impact on the view from these properties.
- Noise and light pollution for Woodside Road properties due to proposed locations of the MUGA and skate park
- Inappropriate choice of building materials
- Proposed building is too large. Where is the evidence that there is a need for such a large building?
- Building design/architecture is inappropriate and out of character
- Inappropriate location for a building of this size, it should be in an out of town location
- Building is imposing and lacks any cohesion with the surrounding area
- Building doesn't connect with Amersham-on-the-Hill town centre
- Detrimental to the character of Amersham-on-the-Hill
- Building is too high and bulky - upper floor should be stepped back
- Unacceptable view of building from Woodside Close
- Not in keeping with John Betjeman's view of Metroland and this building will dwarf adjacent housing
- Building sited too close to Chiltern Avenue and King George V Road
- Design should include a pitched roof fronting Chiltern Avenue
- Building is in the wrong place and breaks the view from Woodside Close
- Proposed 'internal street' does not line up with Woodside Close, so this doesn't work
- Plans should be scaled back and demolish and rebuild on the site of the existing facilities, even if this puts these uses out of action temporarily.

#### **Impact on residential amenity**

- Loss of privacy
- Light pollution
- Noise and disturbance from building and external facilities
- How will the skate park be managed to prevent anti-social behaviour from users
- No information around the construction programme and duration of the works
- Noise impact assessment does not consider the impact on north-east or eastern boundaries from displaced or re-located facilities
- Glazing will reflect light into surrounding residential properties, and such glazing should have reflective glass
- Harmful to existing neighbouring residential properties
- Location of air conditioning units/plant should not be harmful to neighbouring amenity
- Harmful to people's existing quality of life
- No details provided on opening hours for the proposed centre

### **Traffic, access and parking impacts**

- Proposal will increase traffic, as well as HGV's during construction
- Will result in increased traffic and congestion along Woodside Close and Chiltern Avenue
- Insufficient parking provision on site
- The additional traffic and congestion will lead to increased pollution
- Where will building contractors park their vehicles, and where will the construction team be based?
- Insufficient parking provided for the community centre use
- Surface level parking is not appropriate, plans should include underground parking
- Need to reconsider pedestrian and cycle provision
- Parking surveys were undertaken during school holidays and therefore does not present an accurate picture.
- Poor disabled access
- Existing pedestrian desire lines across King George V open space will be impacted
- Inadequate coach parking provision
- The site layout should include 'exit' only and 'entry' only access points

### **Drainage and ecology**

- Proposal will lead to drainage problems on King George V open space
- Drainage and groundwater assessment was conducted during a very dry summer and does not appear to represent typical or winter conditions.
- More consideration of ecological impacts required. Will increased hedging be proposed on the northern boundary?
- More planting required along north-eastern boundary to strengthen the landscape buffer

### **Need for the facility?**

- No need for the proposed spa facility and small learner pool should be included as part of the plan
- It has not been demonstrated that there is demand for such an expansion in facilities

### **Facilities proposed**

- Location of children's play area next to the car park is not acceptable and this is un-safe
- Children's play area should not be separate from other outdoor facilities
- Loss of existing water slides, which are a valuable recreational asset
- Locating the nursery at first floor is not appropriate
- Will there be an external 5-a-side pitch?
- The replacement community centre should cater for a greater range of user groups, and the kitchen facilities are not adequate
- There is no tennis court provision
- Lack of surveillance and supervision for play areas and outdoor facilities due to their location
- The lack of a young children's or teacher pool is a missed opportunity
- Not enough lifts to serve the first floor
- Proposed library is smaller than the existing
- Library should be on the first floor, with views across the open space
- Reduction in spectator seat numbers for swimming pool
- Climbing wall and café are poorly located

### **Public consultation**

- More consultation with local residents required
- Critical of the pre-application consultation that the Council undertook with the community. Further consultation is required with the community to re-design the scheme
- Object to the timing of the application and the public consultation period falling over the Christmas period



- Further time should be given for the public to comment on the application and additional information submitted

### **Policy conflict**

- There should be a requirement for an Impact Assessment despite what the Planning Policy Officer has said in their consultation response.
- Contrary to Local Plan policies R7 and R8
- Loss of green infrastructure is contrary to policy CS32
- The lack of an Impact Assessment is contrary to the NPPF

### **Other issues**

- Contractor's compound is inadequately sized
- Not enough consideration for plant, delivery and waste vehicles during construction
- Contractor's compound and space required for construction could further erode King George V open space, this hasn't been properly thought out

### **Issues raised that are not material planning considerations**

- Lack of clarity over what is proposed for the land currently occupied by the swimming pool, simply referring to this as 'future development site' is too vague
- Future development site is likely to impact on Woodside Road properties in a negative way
- Loss of value to nearby properties
- Question the claims made in the submission that the proposed development is financially viable at no cost to the tax payer
- It has come to light that a sum of money (£500,000) was taken from the Affordable Housing Reserve to be spent on feasibility studies for the 'future development site'. How can this be right?
- What security will be in place to prevent future illegal encampments by travellers?
- Cost of the development is excessive
- Removal of existing playground is a waste of money as this was only provided in 2015
- Building on open space contrary to existing land covenants

In addition, there have been 14 separate representations of support for the application, including support from Amersham Community Centre and Lindfield pre-school nursery. It should be noted one of the support letters received has not given an address. The reasons for support are summarised below:

- Will help modernise Amersham town centre and will be a wonderful facility for local families
- Welcome the improved facilities
- Will provide increased opportunities for people to engage in regular physical activity and sport
- Will be beneficial to users of Amersham Community Centre
- Welcome the replacement of existing outdated buildings
- Existing buildings are not fit for purpose and are in urgent need of replacement. Simply refurbishing them will not be sufficient
- Benefit to the local community
- Support the design and the range of facilities proposed
- Will provide additional jobs for the area
- Support the diving facilities
- One of the most exciting things to happen in Amersham in many years and will be positive for the area

A neutral comment has been received from the Chilterns Conservation Board, and a further neutral comment from a member of the public wanting to know if a replacement MUGA is being proposed.

## **CONSULTATIONS**

### **Bucks County Council Strategic Access:**

No objection.

### **Environment Agency:**

No objection raised, some guidance and advice provided for the applicant to note.

### **Thames Water:**

No objection.

### **Building Control:**

Proposed works to comply with Approved Document M. No comments to make in relation to fire access.

### **Bucks County Council Archaeological Service:**

No objection, but it is recommended that a further archaeological recording condition be secured.

### **Economic Development Team:**

Support the proposal, it is expected this development will have a positive multiplier effect across the local economy.

### **Natural England:**

Advised that they have no comments to make.

### **Affinity Water:**

No objection.

### **Tree Officer:**

Initial comments were provided on 21 December 2018, in response to these comments the applicant has subsequently submitted revised/updated information. This has been reviewed by the Tree Officer, and the following comments are provided:-

"Some revised tree information has now been submitted including an Arboricultural Report, an Arboricultural Impact assessment and a Tree Protection Plan.

The Arboricultural Report consists of a tree survey of the whole site but I note that a birch in front of the library between T1 birch and T4 horse chestnut has still been omitted, apparently because it was omitted on the original site survey.

The proposal involves the construction of a large building which would result in the loss of one Public Amenity Open Space in front of the library and the loss of a significant portion of another in the King George V Playing Field. The plans appear to require the loss of all the trees within the basic footprint of the building and the surrounding parking areas leaving only trees adjacent to the access road to the Chiltern Pools and within the remaining open parts of the King George V Playing Field. I note that a good young hornbeam T7 is now shown for retention and that much of the hedgerow adjacent to King George V Road is also now retained.

Many of the trees proposed for removal have been listed in Category B in the tree survey and generally any development proposal should be designed to retain these trees as far as possible.

Most of the trees proposed for removal were planted as landscaping around the existing Amersham Library. There are several useful amenity trees in front of the library including a lime, two horse chestnuts and three birches. The lime is a good mature tree and the three birches are good maturing trees but the two horse chestnuts have some health issues. Behind the library are a reasonable Scots pine and a cherry that is prominent but is beginning to show signs of ageing. Between the library and the community hall are two sycamores that have been cut back in the past but now have good shapes. Between the swimming pool and the car park are two sycamores and a maple in a line. These have been heavily cut back in the past to facilitate access to the climbing facility but are recovering and have some value as amenity trees. In addition several young trees planted as landscaping around the open air fitness equipment in the King George V Playing Field would be lost and so would the hedge between the playing field and the library.

The hedgerow and the trees along the King George V Road boundary of the King George V Playing Field are now largely retained. The important group of large oaks and beeches within the playing field would be quite close to the development but only a relatively small part of their root protection areas would be affected and this should not have a significant effect on the health of the trees. A line of five fairly poor cherries beside the existing access to the leisure centre along with the adjacent beech hedge are shown to be retained and so is the line of cherry trees along the boundary in front of the leisure centre building.

A revised Tree Protection Plan has now been submitted as part of the application and this now clearly shows the trees proposed for removal (apart from the omitted birch). It also shows appropriate tree protection fencing.

The application plans include landscape proposals that show the indicative planting of several native hedgerows and various trees but there is little detail on species and sizes. Nonetheless significant new planting would be appropriate to compensate for the proposed tree loss. I note that the Arboricultural Impact Assessment states in paragraph 3.16 that "Overall there will be a net gain of quality tree stock throughout the site as a result of the soft landscape proposals for the scheme". Whereas this may be true in terms of tree numbers, it would not be true in terms of foliage and photosynthetic effect, and it would be likely to be a number of years before any new planting compensates for the trees lost.

Overall the proposal would require the loss of open space and a number of good amenity trees. Normally the Council would seek to retain such trees and such loss would only be considered to be acceptable if there were significant planning benefits as a result of the proposal. Furthermore there should be a good landscaping scheme with suitable replacement tree and hedge planting".

**Planning Policy Officer:**

"The proposal involves building on part of the designated land of King George's Field and is thus in technical conflict with Local Plan policies R7 and R8. The NPPF states at Paragraph 97 that "Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless: [...] c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use." The NPPF post-dates the Local Plan policies and the current proposal falls within the scope of the exemption stated in the NPPF. This, together with the relatively small amount of King George's Field to be lost and the overall enhanced provision of community facilities on the site leads me to conclude that an objection on the grounds of conflict with R7 and R8 would be inappropriate. I therefore do not wish to raise a policy objection on the grounds of conflict with Local Plan Policies R7 or R8.

Core Strategy Policy CS28 aims to retain and improve leisure and recreational facilities. The proposal complies with this policy.

Core Strategy Policy CS32 relates to the identification, protection and enhancement of strategic green infrastructure assets within the District. The policy includes requirements for where development is deemed to sever existing assets but I consider that that does not apply in this case. I consider that the proposal is overall positive in terms of green infrastructure and does not conflict with this policy.

The site is just outside the Amersham on the Hill town centre boundary and as such falls to be considered as an edge of centre site.

The proposal falls within the definition of a Main Town Centre Use in the NPPF. Such uses are subject to a sequential test whereby main town centre uses should be located in town centres, then in edge of centre locations (paragraph 86). I can see no evidence that such a test has been undertaken in this case. Nevertheless, it is apparent that no suitably sized site is available within Amersham on the Hill town centre and so an edge of centre location such as this is acceptable in principle. Paragraph 87 of the NPPF says that, when considering edge of centre proposals, preference should be given to accessible sites which are well connected to the town centre. The application site is very well connected and well related to the town centre and I consider there is no policy conflict despite the lack of a sequential test being undertaken.

The NPPF paragraph 89 states that leisure development over 2,500 sqm (gross) outside a town centre should be subject to an impact assessment which would assess, inter alia, the likely impact on town centre investment, trade, vitality and viability. I can see no evidence that such an assessment has been undertaken in this case. Nevertheless, the proposal is to replace and enhance an existing leisure centre on the site that has an established catchment and trade draw, and it seems unlikely that a new facility would have any significant negative effects on town centres within its catchment. Indeed such an investment in a new facility close to Amersham on the Hill town centre appears likely to enhance perceptions of the centre and the town as a whole. I consider there is no policy conflict despite the lack of an impact assessment being undertaken".

**Sport England:**

"Consider that the proposal will significantly increase the sporting and recreational offer currently provided by the existing facilities. Advise that Swim England, Badminton England, England Netball and Table Tennis England support the facilities. Further clarification sought on the use of the small sided indoor football pitch. The proposal is considered to meet the objectives of the NPPF through protecting existing facilities by securing appropriate replacement provision as well as providing new facilities to meet additional demand generated by growth. The facilities are considered fit-for-purpose. This being the case, Sport England offers its support for this application".

**Bucks County Council Sustainable Drainage:**

The initial response dated 8 January 2019 raised an objection due to insufficient mitigation measures relating to surface water runoff and the proposal of deep borehole soakaways. In response the applicant's drainage consultant has prepared a technical note (dated 18 January 2019) seeking to address the grounds for objection and has been in subsequent discussions with the LLFA. Having reviewed the additional information submitted the LLFA confirmed in a response dated 31.01.19 that they remove their objection, subject to recommended conditions (which the applicant is agreeable to).

**Bucks County Council Highways Officer:**

"The existing community centre use benefits from on-site parking via three separate car parks, Chiltern Avenue and the Chiltern Pools car park, both accessed via Chiltern Avenue, and the Civic Centre car park, accessed via King George V Road. These car parks are pay and display car parks for the general public and provide 233 spaces in total currently. In addition to these car parks, the Council Offices car park on King George V Road is used as overflow parking for weekend use only.

The gross floor area (GFA) of the existing buildings currently measure 4,570sqm and is split across four separate buildings. The proposed development would provide a floor area of 9,989sqm, which is an increase of 5,419sqm on the site. A TRICS® (Trip Rate Information Computer System) analysis has been undertaken in order to determine the likely trip generation from the site once fully operational. Whilst I would agree that both the weekday and weekend surveys submitted are considered representative, I would point out that the weekend surveys submitted consist of one site from Greater London, which would not usually be acceptable given the higher levels of public transport in the London area. It is noted, however, that the TRICS® data for weekend use of Leisure Centres are very limited, and therefore in this case, having had further discussions with the applicant, the TRICS® data supplied by the applicant is deemed acceptable in this instance.

It should be noted that not all of the additional floorspace would be expected to generate vehicular movements in their own right, such as storage rooms, offices and changing rooms, and this has been taken into account when applying the TRICS® data. The TRICS® data shown demonstrates that the additional 3,093sqm Leisure Use Class would have the potential to generate an additional 25 movements (14 arriving, 11 departing) in the AM weekday peak, an additional 70 movements (36 arriving, 34 leaving) in the PM weekday peak, and an overall total of 588 additional vehicular movements across the weekday in total. On a weekend, the development would be expected to generate in the region of 916 vehicular movements (two-way) per day in total. As previously stated, I consider that the TRICS® data submitted is adequate in this instance, as discussed during the pre-application phase.

Week long ATC (Automated Traffic Count) surveys were also undertaken along the three principal roads around the site. These surveys were undertaken on Chiltern Avenue and King George V Road between the 16th July - 22nd July 2018, whilst an ATC survey on Woodside Road was undertaken between the 22nd July and the 28th July 2018. These surveys were undertaken within school term time, with a parking survey undertaken on Chiltern Avenue in September also recording similar traffic figures. I am therefore satisfied that the ATC surveys undertaken are robust and can be relied upon.

Classified turning counts of the junctions in the vicinity of the site have also been undertaken, with traffic re-distributed in order to take the closure of the car park on King George V Road into consideration. The data has been up-lifted using TEMPRO® in order to account for local growth in the area, with the TRICS® data included so as to predict the level of impact on the access point and roads in the vicinity of the site at the year of opening. From the data submitted, I do not consider that the impact on both the site accesses and the junctions in the vicinity of the site would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety and convenience.

Parking surveys of the existing four car parks in the vicinity of the site (Chiltern Pools, Chiltern Avenue, Civic Centre, and Council Offices) have been undertaken, which show that currently, the car parks associated with the Chiltern Centre have spare capacity both on weekends and weekdays, with the peak period coinciding on a Thursday at 11:00am, where 82% of the existing 233 spaces were occupied. The survey undertaken at the Council Offices car park showed that spaces are often at or close to capacity on weekdays, with a peak car occupancy of 103% at 10:00am on Friday. It should be noted however, that this car park is not available to visitors to the Chiltern Leisure Centre during the working day of the District Council offices.

In addition to this, I am aware that during the construction period of the nearby Multi-Storey car park, that 147 long-stay commuter parking permits were reallocated to five other car parks in Amersham (Chiltern Pools, Chiltern Avenue, Civic Centre, Sycamore Road and the Boot and Slipper). Given that the car parks currently serving the leisure centre are in closer proximity to the railway station than Sycamore Road or the Boot and Slipper, it is reasonable to assume that the majority of vehicles displaced as a result of the construction period would be parking in this location.

In terms of site layout, I note that within the site, 221 car parking spaces are proposed, consisting of 11 standard electric charging points, 12 accessible spaces (1 electric), 12 grass-crete spaces and 187 standard parking spaces. In addition to this, the site will accommodate a 15m drop-off layby for cars and taxis, 8 motorcycle spaces, 1 minibus parking space has been shown within the service yard. This location of this space is not considered acceptable, due to refuse and storage of material associated with the operation of the centre that may cause a hazard to pedestrians accessing vehicles. Therefore the Highway Authority requires space to be provided within the car park for minibuses, this should be managed through a Parking Management Plan, as set out in condition 4 below. The Local Planning Authority may wish to comment on this further. There are 50 cycle parking spaces and a delivery and servicing loading area. From the submitted site plan, I note that all car parking spaces measure 2.5m x 5m, with all accessible spaces benefitting from a 1.2m strip across the rear and one side. Whilst I trust that the Local Planning Authority will consider the adequacy of the parking provision, I can confirm that the standard spaces are of adequate dimensions to allow for vehicles to park within the site.

Within the site, I note that pedestrian footways measuring 3m in width have been provided, which I can confirm are of an appropriate width to serve the site. However, I would have some concerns with the pedestrian access points from Chiltern Avenue being step accesses, and would therefore be unsuitable for use by wheelchair/disabled users. I would request that step-free access is provided, or a ramped access shown so as to allow the site to be accessed by all users. Further to this, I note that a pedestrian footway is provided adjacent to the service yard, with chemical storage and waste collection being provided from this area. The Highway Authority would require this area to be fenced off and gated in order to prevent members of the public from entering this area.

In terms of coach parking, I note that a space has been provided on King George V Road; however Buckinghamshire County Councils Parking Services manager does not consider this to be appropriate in this location, as they do not consider the limitation of a single vehicle type to be an appropriate use of public highway kerb side space. In addition to this, the placement of large vehicles in this location, albeit temporarily, would limit visibility for vehicles both entering King George V Road and egressing from existing spaces, and would limit access into the council offices service/delivery area opposite. An alternative coach parking area has been provided to the north of the building, which would also be used for refuse collection and deliveries. Swept-path analyses have been submitted of a 12m coach vehicle, which confirm that these vehicles are able to manoeuvre through the site acceptably, however as previously stated, this would be in an undesirable location for children to disembark from the vehicle. Parking of coaches within the site should therefore be managed through Parking Management Plan, with bays taken out of service at times when planned coaches are expected to allow for coach parking off the highway. I would request that all deliveries and refuse collection vehicles should enter and exit the site via the northern access point.

The site is in a sustainable location only a short walking distance from the railway station and Amersham town centre. The application proposes 50 cycle parking spaces, which I acknowledge is double the amount required by Buckinghamshire County Council's Parking Guidance document. I am confident that this level of cycle parking provision is appropriate; however the Sheffield Stands provided for cycle parking are neither lit, nor covered, which could deter visitors to the site from using this method of transport to and from the site. I would request that these cycle spaces are revised to provide a cover and a lighting source.

The Highway Authority has concerns that during construction there will be a loss of parking available at the site, which will have a detrimental impact on the surrounding area, given that it has been demonstrated there is an existing capacity strain on parking in the area. In view of this, it is expected that the applicant makes adequate provisions to minimise disruption during the construction phase. As part of the CMP, the applicant would need to provide details of phasing, including timescales for each phase. This should include details of, where possible, how the maximum amount of car parking will remain undisrupted, and where a loss of

parking cannot be avoided, an indication of any potential alternative locations where parking may take place. Details should also be submitted of public notices to be displayed in advance of works to make users of the car park aware there will be a loss of parking.

It will also be required that a swept path analysis of a construction vehicle entering, manoeuvring and exiting the site is provided for each phase of the construction".

Mindful of the above, the Highway Authority raises no objection to the proposals, subject to recommended conditions.

**Council's Ecology Consultant:**

No objection raised, subject to securing conditions relating to a scheme of ecological enhancements, external lighting and a Construction Environmental Management Plan.

**District Strategic Environment Teams (Air & Land Quality, Major Development, Sustainability, Carbon Reduction, Radioactivity) and (Environmental Health, Sustainability and Resilience):**

No objection, subject to recommended conditions.

**District Historic Buildings and Conservation Officer:**

No objection raised.

**District Landscape Officer:**

"The proposals are generally acceptable. However further details are required about the proposed planting (on a detailed planting plan) about tree, hedge and shrub plant species, numbers and locations on the site.

The loss of some of the open space will be regrettable. This space is currently used by many people for informal activities, and those activities might be affected by the reduced space. The wildflower meadow areas are a good idea but has thought been given to the potential implication of these on user groups on the site, and on-going maintenance?"

**District Estates Team:**

The response is summarised as follows:-

The proposals will improve the urban landscape, currently occupied by a collection of ageing 1960's buildings, which are beyond their economic life.

Proposed building will reduce the Council's carbon footprint.

Facilities will encourage social interaction, learning and support the leisure needs of the community.

The range of facilities proposed offers a strategic approach to delivering services across the public, private and community sector to the benefit of Chiltern residents.

Will allow for the consolidation of car parking on site, enabling the increased provision of disabled parking, electric charge points and opportunities for cycle and disabled vehicle parking.

As a new asset with a 60+year life the building will reduce the Council repair and maintenance liabilities but also create the opportunity to add value to the Councils Corporate assets. As a facility that will be delivered at no increase to the council tax payer this presents a very strong case for redevelopment.

This will have a positive impact on the local economy. Public consultations undertaken show a high proportion of support in favour of the proposal.

For these reasons the application is supported.

**Thames Valley Police (TVP) Architectural Liaison Officer:**

No objection has been raised. A condition is recommended requiring approval of a security strategy, including CCTV provision, once an operator has been appointed for the facility.

**POLICIES**

National Planning Policy Framework (Revised July 2018) (NPPF)

National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)

Core Strategy for Chiltern District - Adopted November 2011: Policies CS1, CS4, CS5, CS20, CS24, CS25, CS26, CS28, CS29, CS30 and CS32

Chiltern District Local Plan - Adopted September 1997, Consolidated September 2007 and November 2011: Saved Policies GC1, GC3, GC4, GC7, GC9, GC14, TR2, TR3, TR11, TR14, TR15, R2, R3, R7, R8, CSF1, CSF2, and CA2.

Sustainable Construction and Renewable Energy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (2015)

**EVALUATION**

**Principle of development**

1.1 The NPPF contains the most up to date national planning policy. There is a presumption in favour of sustainable development; the overarching objectives to achieving sustainable development are; (i) an economic objective, (ii) a social objective, and (iii) an environmental objective.

1.2 The site is located within the built up part of Amersham-on-the-Hill that is outside of the shopping centre boundary, and comprises a local authority owned site which currently accommodates a range of existing D1/D2 use buildings, external sports and leisure facilities and public open space. With the exception of the loss of some public open space as addressed in section 3 of this report, the proposed redevelopment providing enhanced D1/D2 facilities is considered acceptable in principle.

1.3 Paragraph 91 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places. These should help to promote social interaction, provide safe and accessible places, and enable and support healthy lifestyles. The proposed development would help to improve people's health and well-being through the provision of new and enhanced sports facilities.

1.4 Paragraph 92 of the NPPF supports the provision of social, recreational and cultural facilities the community needs. Planning policies and decisions should plan positively for the use of shared spaces and community facilities, and guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services. The proposed replacement facility will include uses and services that support the aims of the NPPF in this regard (i.e. through provision of replacement library and community hall and a building that supports co-location).

1.5 Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities. The NPPF (paragraph 97) states that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:



- a) An assessment has been undertaken which clearly shows the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
- b) The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
- c) The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.

1.6 Equally Local Plan policies R7 and R8, whilst pre-dating the NPPF do not support the change of use of designated public open space other than in specific circumstances which do not apply in this case, nonetheless as discussed in section 3 below, there are considered to be benefits to this scheme which mitigate the loss of the open space. Additionally, NPPF exception tests do allow for development on existing open space under certain circumstances.

1.7 Development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. All developments that will generate significant amounts of movement should be supported by a Travel Plan, and a Transport Assessment so that the likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed (NPPF, paragraph 109).

1.8 Paragraphs 117 and 121 of the NPPF promote more effective use of land and existing sites that provide community services, provided this maintains or improves the quality of service provision and access to open space.

1.9 Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy - the spatial strategy - focuses development to the main settlements, specifically referring to Amersham-on-the-Hill, with limited development able to take place in other smaller settlements excluded from the Green Belt. The Policy aims to protect the AONB and Green Belt by concentrating development within the existing settlement areas.

1.10 Policy CS3 refers to distribution of new leisure, community and health facilities, stating these should largely be in the four main centres for growth, of which Amersham-on-the-Hill is one.

1.11 Policy CS4 seeks to ensure that all new development has appropriate regard to sustainable development principles. This includes making use of sites that are easily accessible by public transport, walking and cycling, and making effective use of previously developed land.

1.12 Policy CS28 seeks to protect the loss of existing public leisure and recreational facilities. Where a need for improvements or new facilities is identified the Council will work with partners to find ways of delivering these improvements. New development must provide for the recreational needs of the new communities including public open space and play areas. This application is consistent with this approach.

1.13 Policy CS29 seeks to retain existing community facilities and to provide additional facilities to meet future needs. Also the policy states that community facilities should be located close to existing community infrastructure and frequent and reliable transport infrastructure. Again this application is on the site of existing facilities, there is no material change of use.

1.14 The Council undertook a comprehensive feasibility study (Leisure Needs Assessment - April 2016) to understand the current leisure needs of the District and consider future opportunities to provide new facilities, to help meet predicted growth and which would assist the local authority in encouraging future health benefits for the District's population. The report made a number of recommendations aimed at increasing current activity. There was evidence to suggest a shortfall in multi-activity spaces in the Amersham area. The

current condition and quality of the Chiltern Pools building was considered to be making it increasingly difficult for a good quality sports offer to be provided. The replacement of this ageing facility was identified as a priority for the Amersham area. It was identified that there is a large and increasing demand for health and fitness facilities, and a need for new investment in sports facilities to accommodate greater community access and participation. Following the results of this assessment the Council developed plans for the replacement of the existing leisure and community facilities on-site to provide one multi-purpose facility. This approach was also subject to public consultation between 2016 and 2018 with the local and wider community, as well as stakeholders (refer to Community Engagement section below).

1.15 Emerging Local Plan evidence base document Open Space Strategy (2018) identifies that Amersham currently has (and will in the future) a surplus of amenity grassland and natural and semi-natural greenspace. It also identifies a deficit in the provision of facilities for children and young people. This represents an up-to-date' assessment of need.

**Suitability of location:**

1.16 The site is outside of Amersham-on-the-Hill town centre, but is considered an edge of centre site. NPPF would direct a main town centre use such as this to a town centre location in the first instance, and if proposed in locations outside of a town centre should be subject to a sequential test. Planning policy officers questioned if any such exercise had been undertaken, and the applicant has since clarified this further. It has been confirmed that the Council considered the suitability of this site and a number of alternative sites nearby. This included; the application site, the site currently occupied by Council offices, the Police Station and Health Centre and Bury Farm (Gore Hill), as well as a number and range of other potential sites around Amersham. Other potential development sites were identified as being unsuitable for a number of reasons, such as being outside of town centre, poor accessibility, land designated for other purposes and coming forward as part of alternative development proposals, or currently being occupied. The application site was concluded to represent the most appropriate, and deliverable option. Two of the identified sites within the preferred town centre location (East Building Supplies and Amersham Royal Mail Delivery Office sites) are too small. The application site also benefits from historical established use for leisure, sport, recreation and community facilities and the proposal would give rise to replacement and upgraded facilities.

1.17 Taking into account the proposed increase in the size of the facility and expansion of facilities on site it is reasonable to expect an uplift in visitor numbers. No impact assessment has been undertaken to assess likely impact on the existing town centre. Notwithstanding this, Policy officers do not consider that one is necessary, on the basis this would replace and enhance existing facilities that serve an established catchment. In fact a new facility such as this could positively benefit the town centre as uplift in visitors could translate to increased footfall within the town centre, which is only a short walk away.

1.18 In summary, the site is currently in D1/D2 uses, therefore, the principle of these uses is already established, with the need for new sports and leisure facilities in the Amersham area identified in the aforementioned feasibility exercise, in 2016. Part of the site is designated as public open space, and whilst there will be a net reduction in public open space the proposed development will provide replacement modern sports, leisure and community facilities and represents a significant enhancement in provision, in accordance with paragraph 97 of the NPPF. Therefore the principle of the proposed development is considered to be acceptable when balanced against all relevant material considerations. It is advanced that the development, by virtue of its location and multi-purpose use, would also provide additional local economic benefits to support the role of the nearby town centre. The facility is in a sustainable location, and makes effective use of previously developed land, in accordance with the NPPF. National planning policy, the Adopted Core Strategy and Adopted Local Plan supports the proposed development.

## Public open space

2.1 Local Plan policies R7 and R8 do not support the change of use of designated public open space and also development that would detract from its existing character and appearance. The NPPF which is more up-to-date than the Local Plan protects existing open space from development, unless certain exception tests are met. The proposal does involve building on part of the existing public open space. There are two parcels of open space on the site, and the proposal would result in the loss of the smaller parcel which is in the south-western corner of the site, abutting King George V Road (i.e. the landscaped area in front of the existing library). There would also be partial loss of the larger parcel of public open space, known as King George V Field, that is to the rear of the proposed building. This space offers a wide range of recreational uses and is an important area of open space for the Amersham area. Approximately 342 sqm of open space will be lost at the front of the site, and 4,106 sqm from King George V Field. A significant proportion of the proposed building footprint will be situated where there are existing hard standing structures and outdoor facilities (i.e. skate park, MUGA and children's play area). So, the loss of existing areas of undeveloped, open space is far less when this is taken into account. The replacement and enhanced external facilities will result in some additional encroachment into the open space, beyond the building footprint.

2.2 The proposed siting of the replacement building, coupled with the proposed footprint result in the loss of land designated as public open space. The rationale for the proposed location of the replacement building is to allow for the construction of this facility whilst ensuring the continued operation of the existing sports, leisure and community buildings on site. This approach will only result in the temporary loss of the library service, which will then be re-provided within the replacement building, therefore minimising the impacts on existing service provision during the construction period.

2.3 Due consideration has been given to the objections received on the grounds of loss of existing open space, these have been balanced against the wider planning merits of the proposal. It is noted in paragraph 97 of the NPPF that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless one of the exception tests have been met; these are, a) an assessment has shown the space to be surplus to requirements, or, b), the loss resulting from the development would provide for a better quality and quantity of provision, or c), the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use, have been met. Officers consider that in this instance the loss of existing sports and recreational buildings, and the partial loss of existing open space resulting from the development would be replaced by significantly better sports and play provision in terms of quantity and quality, in a suitable location, and that the proposed development is for alternative sports and recreation provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the partial loss of public open space. The 2018 NPPF post-dates Local Plan policies R7 and R8, and it is considered, on balance, that the proposal does satisfy NPPF exception tests b) and c). The open space loss will have a degree of harm, but this is outweighed by significant benefits in terms of enhanced replacement provision, and is therefore found to be in accordance with paragraph 97 of the NPPF.

2.4 The reduction in existing open space is justified for the reasons set out above, therefore satisfying the exception tests set out in the NPPF. Additionally, there are practical reasons that further justify the loss. For example, the proposed location of the building and loss of an area designated as open space is to prevent the temporary closure of facilities on site (save for the library) during the construction phase, therefore ensuring continuity of these well used facilities and minimising impacts on the local community during construction. The replacement facility will also replace out-dated facilities with modern and much enhanced facilities that will allow for increased accessibility and participation in a range of activities.

2.5 The proposed development would see a proportion of King George V open space built on. Amersham Town Council has agreed to the release of a small portion of land, in return Chiltern District Council has agreed to the transfer of the ownership of the green at Woodside Close to Amersham Town Council. The

green at Woodside Close would be protected through Fields in Trust organisation. This land swap has been raised in a large proportion of the objections received, however this is a matter that relates to land ownership and is not held to be a material planning consideration. As discussed above, on balance it is considered the loss of open space is justified on planning grounds.

### **Design and appearance / Impact on character of the area**

3.1 The proposed building would represent a significant change in the street scene from the existing collection of buildings currently provided on this site. It is fair to say that the existing buildings (with the exception of the Annex and Barn, which are both being retained) are ageing, are very much of their time and do not contribute positively to the streetscene or character of the area. The replacement built form will be modern in appearance and bought closer to both Chiltern Avenue and King George V Road (with associated landscaping provided). It will be concentrated to the south western part of the site which is a notable difference, and it will be greater than the existing in terms of footprint, mass and scale, which is due to the range of operational requirements and uses needing to be accommodated within the multi-use building. To set it in the context of the street scene, the adjacent development to the south west of the application site (on the opposite side of King George V Road) comprises a three-storey building occupied by Chiltern District Council, and the proposed building is of a comparable height and scale to this. As such, it is considered that this will not appear incongruous in scale with the existing built form along the south western side of Chiltern Avenue. The character along the south western side of Chiltern Avenue is materially different to the north western side, which is residential in character.

3.2 The design of the scheme follows pre-application consultation, including a Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) design review having been undertaken with the applicant in September 2018. In summary, CABE were supportive of the principle, and considered that this facility will help improve the health and wellbeing of people in Amersham and beyond. The site was noted as being in an accessible sustainable location, which it was considered would support the vitality of the town centre. CABE's position in relation to more detailed design elements of the proposal is summarised below:-

- Height, massing and the level of development proposed were considered appropriate for the site.
- The design of the building was considered to be promising, but it was felt that more could be done to integrate the building with its surroundings.
- The building should be more outward looking.
- More could be done to emphasise the building entrances and greater variation to the roof profile should be considered.
- The building and landscape could have a more defined character and identity and further thought should be given to how the centre could relate to its surrounding context.
- Need to create safe, welcoming movement routes within and beyond the site to improve connectivity.
- Considered the site layout to be car park dominated - planting and landscaping should be used to reduce dominance.
- Highlighted a conflict with the location of the junior play area.
- More work required to refine the elevations and more thought given to the scale of each proposed material.
- Further consideration of the sustainability strategy required, including exploring the feasibility of sustainable technologies.

3.3 In response to the CABE feedback the building design and landscaping were evolved. This resulted in the following changes:-

- Variation of the roof profile introduced.

- Additional openings were added to the building, this allows views into and out of the building to areas such as the clip and climb, and soft play.
- Revisited the external materials palette, resulting in changes to the sports hall cladding and choice of brick.
- Use of additional landscaping to reinforce pedestrian routes.
- More emphasis given to the secondary entrance.
- More glazing added and planting carried through inside the building to the internal street, this is to provide a stronger connection between building and landscaping.
- Provision of electric vehicle charging points, and additional cycle parking to provide greater sustainable transport options.
- Introduction of air sourced heat pumps, a more efficient heating and ventilation system (PV panels for the sports hall roof are also being explored to see if feasible)

3.4 It is unfortunate that the building has not been designed to be even more outward looking, it is felt that the facades to the sports hall would benefit from more articulation and interest. On balance however, the redesign of the building has added interest and generally addresses the points raised. Comments received more recently from the Council's Urban Design consultant indicated how the external landscaping could be enhanced, which would positively contribute to the public realm, these changes are discussed further below in section 6.

3.5 In terms of car parking, the CABE suggestion that car parking be reduced is not considered to be appropriate for a development of this nature, therefore this has not been pursued with the applicant. Car parking provision is discussed further below in section 8.

3.6 The NPPF attaches the government's importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is seen as a key aspect of sustainable development and good design creates better places in which to live and work. Local authorities should seek to secure high quality design and it should contribute positively to making places better for people.

3.7 Policy CS20 refers to design of new development and requires that it should reflect the local character and surrounding area. The existing non-residential buildings on the site and in the surrounding area vary in their character and appearance and were developed in an ad-hoc fashion. The existing buildings on site (to be demolished) date from the 1960's and 1970's, and these are flat roof buildings that are either finished in brick, concrete or cladding. They are considered to have little architectural merit. To the south west of the site is the Council office building, a three-storey brick building with pitched roof. Adjacent to this are the existing Law Courts, Police Station and Health Centre buildings, these are similar in appearance and scale to the Council offices. Further south-west along Chiltern Avenue is the multi-storey car park building (recently extended). This is a prominent structure in Amersham-on-the-Hill, and is comprised of a brick construction with 'grilled' openings, with part of the upper floor being 'enclosed' by a corrugated sheet roof, and the recently opened multi-storey car park extension is constructed in cladding, with similar 'grilled' openings. Beyond this is a modern 3-storey office building constructed in glass and brick. Opposite and adjoining the site on two sides are two-storey dwellings. These are a mixture of brick or render finished, and the use of flint as a building material (primarily for aesthetic reasons) is prevalent in the surrounding area.

3.8 The submitted Design and Access Statement (DAS) sets out the design rationale, having had regard to the local context. Plans demonstrate that the proposed building height will be commensurate with the height of the roof of the Council office building opposite. Consequently, it is not considered that a two-storey building of this mass and bulk would, in principle, appear out of place in this location, a position also supported by CABE. As referred to above there are comparisons in terms of height and massing along Chiltern Avenue due to the nature of the existing non-residential buildings. The scale and massing of the proposed

building is broken down in any event through variation in height, materials and roof forms, which help make the building appear as a series of connecting elements rather than a single mass.

3.9 The proposed materials palette is described in detail in the submitted DAS, and is partly influenced by a desire to reflect the local character in terms of building materials, textures and tones. As referred to above flint dressing is commonly used in the surrounding area. To reflect this influence a multi-mix grey brick is proposed to be used for much of the ground floor parts of the building. Rimex cladding panels are proposed in bronze colour tones, these are to relate to the colour tones of surrounding brick buildings, and this will feature on all elevations, with particular prominence along the south-west (rear section) and south-east elevations. Vertical wood cladding (western red cedar) will be used to the forward projecting two-storey element fronting Chiltern Avenue, which is where the community functions of the building are accommodated, and this also wraps around the corner of the building. This provides a softer, more natural material and will help to identify the community function element of the building. Within the timber cladding the lettering for the centre name will be etched. The sports hall section of the building has proven to be the most challenging in terms of design, articulation and use of materials, as its internal function largely dictates its physical form. Having explored a number of options for the sports hall it is proposed to reflect the local vernacular found on the locally listed Annexe and Barn buildings, and picking up on the fact these buildings are treated in dark (black) timber a dark grey metal cladding is proposed for the sports hall, with a lighter grey brick used at the lower level. There are no openings to the sports hall element, though the use of glazing on other elements of the building has been maximised given the need for natural light into the building, and the need to provide visual permeability into and out of the building. The glazed sections of the building define the swimming pool, giving this a strong presence along the frontage (seen along Chiltern Avenue), and will define the main entrance, and community hall. Along the south-west elevation a large central glazed section serves the soft play area and void above this, which helps add visual interest and breaks up the façade along King George V Road. The smaller glazed openings along this elevation serve the spa at ground floor, and fitness suite at first floor. The south-east elevation, facing towards King George V Field incorporates ground and first floor glazing to the spa and fitness suite elements, and a central double height glazed section serves the climbing area and the internal central street, which helps to connect the internal space with the external landscape. The amount of glazing to this façade will maximise views across the open space, help provide a level of natural surveillance and help to add visual interest to the elevation, which will be prominent when viewed from the adjacent open space. It is considered unfortunate that the sports hall element cannot be broken up in a similar way, however it is understood that there are practical reasons why this cannot be done. The use of the multi-purpose sports hall does not lend itself to having areas of glazing from a practical point of view and use of glazing also presents internal lighting issues and glare for participants. Furthermore, the use of glazing in sports hall buildings goes against best practice guidance published by Sport England.

3.10 Notwithstanding detail of materials included as part of the DAS, in order to ensure the final quality of external materials is appropriate and delivers a high quality building a condition is recommended requiring the submission and approval of materials.

3.11 The proposed building due to its height, scale and massing would have some impact on the locality, and, whilst representing a significant change from the existing situation, on balance it is considered that this would not appear unacceptably obtrusive. It would be of modern design; but it has been demonstrated that the choice of materials has had regard to local context, and the nature of the use does constrain to a degree how the elevations can be treated. Integration of the building with the landscaping will help to ground the building, so that it responds to its wider setting. Overall it is considered the proposed replacement building would be an improvement on the existing collection of buildings to be demolished, these are of no architectural merit and do not contribute positively to the character of the area. The impacts of the proposed building would not be unduly harmful to the character of the area, and any harm would be outweighed by the

tangible public benefits the proposed facility will deliver, and these public benefits should be given significant weight when weighing up the planning merits.

### **Heritage impact and Archaeology**

4.1 Paragraph 189 of the NPPF states that in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, and should assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including development affecting the setting of a heritage asset).

4.2 Local Plan policy CA2 requires new development to preserve or enhance important views, looking into, or out of a Conservation Area.

4.3 The application site is not within a designated Conservation Area, nor does it include any listed buildings on the site, or in close proximity. The two existing locally listed buildings within the north western corner of the site area non-designated heritage assets, and these are remaining remnants of the former Woodside Farm. Both buildings are outside of the redline application site boundary and are being retained.

4.4 Retention of the existing heritage assets was an important point of feedback that came out of early consultation, so this has been a key consideration and the scheme has been designed in order to achieve their retention. The current setting of these buildings is provided in the form of the surface level car park, and the collection of existing 1960's and 1970's buildings. There is no existing landscaped setting for them. The proposed scheme has considered the setting of these buildings, and this is reflected through the proposed materials palette. The use of materials that are red/bronze/orange in tone would pick up on the historic brick type and clay roof elements. Additionally, the black timber that exists on these buildings is interpreted in a modern way, through the use of the dark grey cladding on the sports hall. The proposed western red cedar timber on elements of the replacement building will also tie in with these historic buildings. The landscape setting for these buildings would also be noticeably improved.

4.5 The southern boundary of the Weller Estate Conservation Area does adjoin the north eastern boundary of the site, and this comprises of 1930's two-storey residential development on Woodside Road and beyond. The proposed replacement building would be visible from within the Conservation Area with vantage points coming from residential properties backing onto the site. It is noteworthy that the proposal would position the replacement building further away from the Conservation Area's southern boundary when compared to the existing buildings. Given the degree of increased separation to be provided, the re-concentration of building mass further away from the Conservation Area, the limited views into and out of the Conservation Area, the residential character of the Conservation Area and the fact that the proposed building would relate to the existing concentration of civic buildings (i.e. Council offices, Police Station, multi-storey car park) situated fronting on to Chiltern Avenue, it is considered that the Weller Estate Conservation Area would be subject to less than substantial harm and there would be significant public benefit achieved through this proposal.

### **Archaeology:**

4.6 Notwithstanding that the site is not located within a known area of archaeological importance, the application is supported by a Historical Environment Assessment, and Written Scheme of Investigation. Due to some uncertainty about the degree of archaeological potential on the site owing to the lack of previous archaeological investigations the report considered it likely that further investigation would need to be carried out. This will give a better understanding of the nature and potential for remains on site. In response, the applicant has undertaken archaeological trial trenching, as agreed with Bucks CC Archaeology Officer, who has subsequently confirmed in writing that no further investigation work is required, nor are any conditions recommended.

4.7 No concerns are raised by the Council's Conservation/Listed Buildings Officer, who having reviewed the proposals considers that the proposal would better preserve the setting of the Weller Estate Conservation Area as it would reduce the built form on its fringes, and within the immediate setting of the non-designated heritage assets (i.e. the two locally listed buildings).

### **Landscaping and Trees**

5.1 Well considered landscaping is fundamental to good design, and to creating well designed, inviting and useable spaces that contribute to a good sense of place. This is crucial to the success of the proposed scheme. The NPPF recognises this, in paragraph 170, where it refers to the need to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment, and recognises the contribution trees make to the character of an area. The importance of effective landscaping is also cited in paragraph 127.

5.2 Local Plan Policy GC4 seeks the retention, where appropriate, of existing established trees and hedgerows in sound condition and of good amenity.

5.3 The proposals are supported by a landscape strategy and arboricultural report. The landscape strategy seeks to deliver two distinctly different areas. To the east of the building a more informal, open and natural approach is proposed for King George V Field. In front of the building along Chiltern Avenue, around the car parking area and along King George V Road more formal landscaping is proposed. At the heart of the overall landscaping strategy for the site is this concept of the internal street, this provides an internal connection with the external landscape. This feature has been designed to line up with the main entrance, it runs front to back inside the building and will be internally landscaped to achieve a green corridor that connects the building inside to its landscaped setting outside. Views will be possible through this space to the external spaces, maximising the outlook onto King George V open space.

5.4 The external areas can be broken down into distinctly different areas, each requiring a difference in landscape treatment. The arrival point is where the main entrance is situated, and this lines up with the well used pedestrian route to the town centre, via Woodside Close. This will provide a legible connection between the building and Amersham, and is a significant improvement on the poorly defined, and hidden entrance to the existing Chiltern Pools building. The landscape treatment of this area will be more formal, with structural landscaping, a well defined level pedestrian route to the main entrance, new trees, seating areas and low level planting. Around the car parking area there are less opportunities for soft landscaping due to the need to achieve a certain level of parking within the site, provide appropriate circulation routes and to facilitate space for servicing vehicles within the site. The use of materials within this area is then important as the variation in materials proposed will help break up the space, provide visual interest and define the hierarchy of routes and connections through the space. New tree planting and low level planting around the perimeter will help to soften this car park area.

5.5 The external play and exercise areas are located around the building, and these facilities will replace as well as enhance the existing facilities that are well used by the local community. The recently installed junior play equipment will be relocated to the front junior play area, and a new dedicated older children's play area will be located at the rear of the building. Site constraints do not allow for the two play areas to be next to one another unfortunately. Adjacent to the older play area will be the outdoor gym, street snooker, skate park, table tennis tables, and then wrapping around the sports hall element will be the petanque courts and MUGA. New pedestrian routes connect these spaces to the wider area, and King George V Field, and there will be opportunities for low level planting and informal seating around them. Further details of the layout, equipment and finishes to these external areas will be secured through condition.



5.6 The detailed design of the skate park has not been carried out yet, the applicant advises this would be done by a specialist, so this detail, along with details of the equipment in other areas, external finishes and fencing (where required) will be secured by condition.

5.7 An indicative hard landscaping and planting strategy has been provided, however precise details of materials, species, planting sizes, locations and a maintenance strategy will be secured through condition. It will be important that the landscaping proposed around the edges of the junior play area at the front is robust, so that this is well separated and enclosed from the adjacent car park area, and the use of high quality and permeable surfacing materials throughout will be key to creating an attractive landscape setting.

5.8 The more informal and natural approach that is proposed for King George V Field will enhance the open space both visually, and also from an ecological and biodiversity perspective.

5.9 Since submission of the application some further changes to the landscape strategy have been presented, these changes are in response to suggestions made by the Council's Urban Design consultant. Whilst these are indicative only these changes relate to the landscaped area in front of the main entrance, the building frontage along King George V Road and the area adjacent to the MUGA. The suggested changes are submitted to improve the public realm. Along King George V Road it is proposed to enhance this space by incorporating raised planters with integrated seating. This will activate this frontage, provide opportunities for informal seating and is a more robust approach to landscaping. The arrival space along Chiltern Avenue is to be enhanced with more formal landscaping; identifying an area for a piece of public art to be installed and the main entrance route would be better defined by a line of trees. Adjacent to the MUGA and skate park a new footpath is proposed, this will benefit from a landscaped buffer strip and a corridor of trees that will help define this pedestrian route and it make it more inviting for users. These indicative changes are considered to enhance the landscape strategy, and further details will be secured through condition.

5.10 The landscaping strategy is found to be well considered, will create attractive external spaces, enhance the public realm and the internal street concept provides a strong connection between the building and its landscaped setting. The loss of existing landscaping and trees is not ideal, however the wider benefits to the local community that this proposal will deliver do outweigh any harm, and a comprehensive landscape strategy supports the proposal.

#### **Trees:**

5.11 Supporting the application is an Arboricultural Report (including tree survey) and Arboricultural Impact Assessment. These have been revised in the light of the Tree Officer's initial comments, and no objection is raised subject to the submitted Tree Protection Plan (TPP) being fully adhered to, which will be secured through condition. The Tree Officer is satisfied that the TPP, if adhered to, will safeguard the important group of oaks and birches within the existing open space. Whilst it is unfortunate that the building footprint will result in the loss of some mature specimens, the landscape strategy does make provision for new tree planting which will increase the tree numbers overall. Clearly these newly planted trees will take time to establish, but long-term there will be a greater number of trees on the site. No objection is raised by the Council's Tree Officer.

#### **Residential Amenity**

6.1 Policy GC3 requires development proposals seek to protect the amenities enjoyed by the occupants of existing and adjoining neighbouring properties. Policy GC7 states that noise generating development will not be permitted where noise which would result from that development would cause unacceptable disturbance.

6.2 The proposed building would essentially replace existing D1/D2 facilities on site so surrounding residential properties will be accustomed to the noise already associated with these. The replacement building

would be situated closer to Chiltern Avenue dwellings than the existing, and those properties opposite would be closest to the building. The proposed built form would be moved further away from residential boundaries shared with Woodside Road properties, therefore this relationship would be improved. With regard to the existing residential properties opposite, on Chiltern Avenue the proposed building would be higher and positioned further forward (in part) than existing buildings. Whilst existing outlook conditions from these properties will be subject to change, however the building design however includes a footprint that is stepped away from Chiltern Avenue, such that the separation increases as you move across the site. Given the distances involved, that the relationship between residential dwellings and the site has a well-used road (Chiltern Avenue) in between, and the fact that the site is already in use for a range of D1/D2 uses, it is considered that the scheme would not result in significant levels of harm to residential amenity such as to justify a refusal of planning permission.

6.3 The proposal is supported by a noise assessment, air quality assessment and lighting strategy. None of these give rise to concerns that there would be unacceptable impacts on surrounding residential amenity. No objection has been raised by the Council's Environmental Health Officer (EHO), subject to conditions.

6.4 Conditions are recommended that will mitigate potential adverse impacts and further safeguard surrounding residential amenity, both during construction and once in operation.

6.5 The external play and sports facilities are essentially replacing existing facilities on the site, though there will be some re-arranging of these around the site. Again, it is considered that surrounding dwellings will be familiar with the noise associated with these. The skate park and MUGA are proposed to be moved further north within the site, but this still retains generous separation distances to boundaries shared with Woodside Road properties. As a safeguard the EHO has recommended a condition requiring the operator to submit a Noise Management Plan, relating specifically to these external facilities.

6.6 It is inevitable that for a development of this size there would be expected to be some additional impact on the surrounding area during the construction phase, this is a consequence of large construction projects in built up areas. Such impacts are temporary and would not be a justifiable planning reason to resist such a development. In this case conditions are recommended to mitigate any impacts associated with construction related activities; a Construction Traffic and Logistics Management Plan is required, which shall set out mitigation measures such as management and timing of deliveries, mud, dust and noise prevention measures. A separate condition will restrict the hours of operation during demolition and construction.

6.7 Potential impact on amenity arising from increased traffic generation has been considered, and the comments of the Highway Authority are noted. On the basis that no objection is raised on the grounds of increased traffic flows, or vehicle trips, and that parking levels remain broadly similar to the existing site it is not considered the proposed scheme could be resisted on the grounds of any harm to residential amenities from increased traffic generation.

### **Accessibility, Parking and Highway Impacts**

7.1 The NPPF directs significant developments to locations which are sustainable, limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. The application site is in a sustainable location, and is well served by public transport. Paragraph 109 of the NPPF says that development "should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds of there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe".

7.2 Core Strategy policy CS25 says that new development should not adversely impact on the transport network, and that there should be an assessment of the impact new development can have on the transport network.

7.3 Core Strategy policy CS26 refers to, the need for new development to make suitable connections to existing infrastructure, that new development is appropriately located to the road network, an expectation that appropriate vehicle and cycle parking and servicing arrangements will be provided, the need to ensure that vehicular traffic generated by future development does not materially increase traffic problems (i.e. congestion). Development should secure the implementation of travel plans and parking management plans where appropriate.

7.4 Local Plan policy TR2 states that satisfactory access onto the existing network should be provided, and that the highway network in the vicinity of the development site should have the capacity to accept the additional flow of traffic generated. Off-street vehicle parking should accord with policy TR11 and the standards set out in TR16. Policy TR15 refers to the design standards for car parks, and this is reinforced through policy GC1, Policy GC14 set out the need for suitable disabled parking provision.

7.5 A Transport Assessment (TA) supports the application, and this has looked at the existing site and surrounding transport network with traffic and parking surveys undertaken, and it has considered the proposal on the basis of existing conditions, and also in terms of future access, parking, trip generation, effects on local transport network, servicing and refuse collection. In addition a Framework Travel Plan has been submitted, this sets out a range of measures to reduce car dependency travel to the site, and encourage more sustainable modes.

7.6 Buckinghamshire County Council Highway Authority provided an interim response initially, and the applicant subsequently submitted further details providing further clarity, a Technical Note was submitted on 18 January 2019. The Technical Note addresses matters relating to minibus and coach parking, electric vehicle charging provision and car parking availability during construction, all of these matters were raised initially by the Highway Authority as requiring further clarification.

7.7 A comprehensive Transport Assessment has been submitted in support of this application and this again has been reviewed by the Highway Authority, and their response is set out in detail above. There is not significant change proposed to the existing access arrangements. The principal points of access will continue to be from Chiltern Avenue, as existing, and the existing car park access from King George V Road will be stopped up, therefore this will have the effect of reducing the number of vehicles turning into King George V Road. Pedestrian access will be improved as users of the facility will no longer have to travel through and across the car park, a more legible access will be provided.

7.8 Given the scale of the proposed development a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CMP) would need to be prepared and approved by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority to mitigate the associated impacts. It is noted that this is not only recommended by the Highway Authority but also by the Strategic Environmental Health Team in terms of also addressing potential noise and disturbance, and this can be secured by condition.

**Parking:**

7.9 The existing buildings are served by 233 parking spaces. Opposite the site to the south, the Council offices car park provides an overflow car parking facility for 115 vehicles outside of restricted hours. This is well established and it is proposed that this relationship is maintained, so that at times of increased demand the users of the proposed facility can continue to utilise this overspill parking. Furthermore, within easy walking distance of the site is the recently extended Amersham railway station multi-storey car park, with significantly increased capacity for 1182 cars. Also within walking distance of the site are existing town centre car parks (Sycamore Road and Woodside Road) that could also be used by visitors, if required. It is of note that during construction of the extended multi-storey car park 147 permits for long-stay commuter parking

had to be reallocated to other car parks across Amersham. Due to the site's proximity to Amersham railway station it has reasonably been assumed that the majority of these vehicles displaced during construction will have been parking across the three on-site car parks, and this additional demand will have been reflected in the parking surveys undertaken in support of this application. Now the multi-storey has opened this displaced long-stay car parking will have been required to relocate, and this will have a significant positive effect in terms of reducing car park demand across the three on-site car parks.

7.10 Traffic and parking surveys were undertaken to inform the development, further details of these are set out in the TA. It can be confirmed that all surveys were undertaken during school term time and therefore provide a valid representation of highway and parking conditions.

7.11 The development proposes 221 spaces across a single consolidated car park area, of this number 11 spaces will be dedicated for disabled users and 10 will be electric vehicle charging bays. In addition a vehicle drop-off area will be provided, 8 motorcycle spaces, as well as a minibus space. Notwithstanding the parking standards set out in policy TR16 the quantum of spaces proposed has been informed by the existing use of the three on-site spaces as surveyed, as well as trip generation data (derived from TRICS based calculations), and this approach is accepted as valid by the Highway Authority.

7.12 Parking survey results obtained demonstrate that all three car parks across the existing site have spare capacity each day between 07:00am and 18:00pm. The maximum parking occupancy was observed to take place on a Thursday at 11:00am, where 191 spaces were taken, equating to a parking occupancy of 82%, with 42 spare spaces available. Results obtained further demonstrate, as one might expect, a significant reduction in parking demand outside of typical working hours (09:00am - 17:00am). Car parking usage across the weekend is significantly lower with maximum demand peaking at 48% (111 spaces in use) on a Saturday and 42% (98 spaces in use) on a Sunday.

7.13 The Highway Authority has not raised concerns in respect of the traffic and parking survey data obtained. The impacts of the predicted trip generations on both the site accesses and the junctions in the vicinity of the site would not be considered to have an unacceptable impact on highway safety and convenience. It has been identified that there is spare parking capacity available at all times across the three on-site car parks. Additionally there is the ability to continue to use the Council offices car park outside of restricted times (i.e. at evenings and weekends) when demand from the proposed facility is expected to be busier, which coincides with the times when ample space exists. Another notable factor that should be given weight is the increased parking capacity now provided for in the recently extended Amersham multi-storey car park. The report to Planning Committee for this application (CH/2016/2081/RC) justified need on the grounds "that between 339 and 520 additional parking spaces would be needed at the multi-storey car park over the next 20 years to ensure it operates at 85% capacity and prevent rail as a form of travel being restricted in the long term". With 1182 spaces now on site this provides additional long term parking capacity for Amersham-on-the Hill, and indicates that due to the level of provision now on site there will be spare capacity over the next 20 years, should that capacity be needed by other nearby uses such as the proposed facility. The nearby car parks referred to will be able to accommodate overspill parking demand arising from the proposed facility.

7.14 Roads within the vicinity of the site are regulated at certain times by existing parking controls, these controls will prevent overspill parking on the highway, in the vicinity of the site.

7.15 BCC parking guidance does state that "Safe and secure cycle parking is an important component in encouraging cycling. For new developments, BCC aims to ensure that developers make efficient use of land and promote sustainable travel choices." Given the sustainable location of the site and the opportunity to encourage people to make journeys by bicycle instead of the private car, it is considered that this also

supports a higher provision of cycle parking at the site. The proposed provision of 50 cycle parking spaces is double the amount required, and this is welcomed.

7.16 Coach parking was initially proposed as two different options. The option to provide this along King George V Road was not supported by the Highway Authority, with their preference being for an on-site solution. As a result the on-site solution has been advanced, and this will involve coaches entering the site, turning and manoeuvring within the loading area north of the building, and using parking spaces that have been temporarily marked out by cones, to allow for embarking and disembarking of coaches. This arrangement is preferred by the Highway Authority owing to their concerns that coaches embarking and disembarking within the loading area, presents a potential pedestrian conflict. This is supported by the Highway Authority, who request that this be managed through a Parking Management Plan, with bays taken out of service at times when planned coaches are expected to allow for coach parking off the highway. On that final point it is important to recognise that coaches will be expected during weekday daytime (i.e. school bookings), and the wider use of the proposed facility is expected to be at its greatest demand across weekday evenings and weekends, therefore general parking demand is expected to be lower when coaches would be visiting the site. No objections are therefore raised in relation to coach parking provision.

7.17 There is not expected to be a material increase in the number of vehicles and servicing trips generated by the site as the proposals are largely a re-provision of existing uses on the site. Servicing and delivery access will continue from Chiltern Avenue, and within the site a dedicated servicing/loading area is proposed, which represents an improvement as the existing uses on site have no formal area to accommodate delivery and servicing vehicles. The Highway Authority is satisfied that the swept paths submitted demonstrate an acceptable layout for access and manoeuvring purposes, and are satisfied that this can be managed through a Car Park and Vehicle Management Plan.

7.18 Accident data has been considered over a five year period, up until July 2018, this was to determine whether or not there are any road safety issues that are material to the proposal. Inspections of incidents show that there were just five accidents within the five year period. All appear to have occurred as a consequence of human error, rather than highway design, no two incidents occurred in the same location either. In summary, due to the low number of incidents, and the other factors referred to there are not considered to be any road safety issues pertinent to the proposed application

7.19 It has been demonstrated that the proposal is not in conflict with paragraph 109 of the NPPF; the Highway Authority does not consider this proposal is likely to result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety, nor will the resulting impacts on the road network be severe. Overall, it can be concluded that the proposal will be acceptable in regards to access, highway safety, parking and servicing, subject to the imposition of appropriate and necessary conditions.

## **Air Quality**

8.1 Paragraph 181 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should sustain and contribute towards compliance with relevant limit values or national objectives for pollutants, taking into account the presence of Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) and Clean Air Zones. Opportunities to improve air quality and or mitigate impacts should be identified.

8.2 The application site is not within a designated AQMA. However, an Air Quality Assessment does support the application, and this identifies there is a potential for impacts on local air quality during the construction phase, as a result of dust and particle emissions. The impacts arising from the operation of the proposed development on local pollutant concentrations is considered to be negligible, with no mitigation found to be necessary.

8.3 The District Strategic Environment Team agrees with findings of the assessment, as such there are no comments arising relating to the methodology. It is recommended that a Construction Environmental Management Plan be secured through condition; this Plan would be expected to provide details of dust and particulate mitigation during construction, which would mitigate the potential impact on air quality during construction.

### **Drainage / Flood Risk**

9.1 The NPPF requires the planning system to take full account of flood risk and all plans should apply a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of development and ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere. Core Strategy policy CS4 requires regard to be had to sustainable drainage and reducing the risk of flooding in appropriate circumstances.

9.2 The site is not within an identified flood risk area, it is designated by the Environment Agency as Flood Zone 1 (area of lowest risk). The application is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy. It should be noted that no objection has been raised by the Environment Agency on flood risk grounds. Due its location within the lowest area of flood risk this then satisfies the sequential test approach to site selection, as outlined in the NPPF. Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) maps indicate the site is located in an area of low to high risk of surface water flooding and a surface water overland flow path passes along King George V Road, and through the southern part of the King George V Field. To safeguard the proposed building from this potential flood risk the threshold levels of fire escapes/entrances along King George V Road have been set above existing ground levels and graded away from the building. The risk of groundwater flooding was identified as low. Based on Thames Water advice the risk of sewer flooding to the site is also considered to be low.

9.3 Bucks County Council, as the Lead Local Flood Authority, initially raised an objection on grounds relating to surface water drainage, and the proposed inclusion of deep borehole soakaways. They identified that part of the development site is at risk of surface water flooding, and wanted the applicant to demonstrate that the proposals do not obstruct the flow of the overland surface water route. It was noted that the existing surface water drainage strategy for the site utilises deep borehole soakaways, and that the proposed development will modestly increase the impermeable area of the site, which in turn will increase the volume of surface water runoff generated from the site. Due to this increase in impermeable area then mitigation will have to be provided. The initial drainage strategy was not supported, and greater consideration of a range of sustainable drainage measures (SuDS) was required, as well as further justification for the drainage strategy in respect of deep bore soakaways

9.4 Subsequent to the receipt of these comments, the applicant has submitted revised and additional information to address these concerns, and there have been subsequent discussions between parties to resolve matters. The Lead Local Flood Authority has confirmed in their further response dated 31.01.19 that they are satisfied and remove their objection, subject to recommended conditions.

### **Designing to reduce crime**

10.1 Local Plan policy GC1 and Core Strategy policy CS30 make it clear that development should be designed and laid out to reduce the opportunity for crime, and should be aimed at improving community safety. The supporting DAS confirms that crime prevention advice was sought at pre-application stage. The Crime Prevention Advisor (CPA) was consulted about this application, and initially questioned some of the access arrangements internally, as well as the lack of opportunities for natural surveillance of external facilities. Details pertaining to the internal layout of the building and how access within the building is managed/controlled are not a material planning consideration. Notwithstanding this the applicant has subsequently provided further clarification which has addressed many of the points raised by the CPA, and it has been confirmed that both play areas will include areas for young and older play to prevent parental

guardianship from being absent. The CPA has been requested that a more detailed security strategy for the building be provided once there is a known operator, and that this be secured through a Security Management Plan condition. This shall also include details of CCTV provision to address comments made relating to lack of surveillance. Subject to an appropriately worded condition being secured there would be no concerns.

## **Sustainability**

11.1 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, and to go some way to achieving this development shall mitigate and adapt to climate change, and support a reduction in carbon emissions.

11.2 Core Strategy Policy CS4 seeks to ensure that development is sustainable, and that it helps contribute towards national targets to reduce overall CO2 emissions. It refers to a range of 'Sustainability Principles' which this can be judged against. Policy CS5 requires that for new development of more than 1000sqm of non-residential floorspace at least 10% of the energy requirements are from decentralised and renewable or low carbon sources. Guidance is also provided within the Sustainable Construction and Renewable Energy SPD (2015).

11.3 Supporting the application is the Sustainability and Energy Statement, setting out the energy strategy proposed for the building. This strategy has been informed by the Council's SPD. The energy strategy for the building is based on the hierarchy of, first delivering a building that is energy efficient, it then considers the building fabric from the perspective of saving energy, and finally it considers what energy efficient services and renewable and low and zero carbon technologies might be practical and feasible.

11.4 The building form and orientation have been designed very much with consideration for the impacts these can have on energy consumption. The design, proportion of glass and the location of the pool area glazing maximise solar gain.

11.5 The building fabric has been selected with a view to saving energy, making the building more energy efficient, which impacts on the size and requirement of the heating systems. The proposed fabric 'U' values will better the current standards. The glazed areas are also beneficial from the point of view that these will maximise the amount of natural light into the building and reduce peak cooling loads.

11.6 Integral to the energy strategy is the appropriate selection of energy efficient systems, services and equipment. For example, the building will have high efficiency condensing boilers which will provide an energy efficient solution to the relatively low heat load of a building of this nature. The use of a ventilation heat recovery system as well will also help to reduce heat loss, which can be a factor for large open swimming pool areas.

11.7 The energy strategy has considered the feasibility of a range of renewable technologies, along with zero and low carbon technologies, mindful of the requirements of the NPPF and policies CS4 and CS5. A number of technologies were considered, but subsequently discounted as either being impractical, unsuitable for this location or commercially non-viable, and these are set out in the submitted Sustainability and Energy Statement. It has been judged that a combination of Air Source Heat Pumps and Water Source Heat Pumps would best suit the requirements of a building of this nature, which it has been confirmed is in excess of the 10% policy requirement of energy from renewable or low carbon technologies. Furthermore, the use of Photovoltaics (PV) is identified as being possible on the roof of the sports hall element, and at this stage the viability of this is still being considered. It is therefore recommended that a condition be attached to any permission requiring the submission of a feasibility study for the use of PV panels, and if found to be feasible further details of the amount and location of PV panels to be provided on the building.

11.8 The proposed energy strategy will represent a significant enhancement, and will significantly reduce the carbon footprint when compared to the existing Chiltern Pools building, which is considered to be highly inefficient. The replacement building will be materially more energy efficient, and would achieve a BREEAM rating of 'Very Good'. Overall the strategy would be in line with the requirements of the NPPF, Core Strategy policies, and the Council's SPD.

11.9 Finally it is also relevant to note that the proposed building is in a highly sustainable location, and the intention is that building materials will be locally sourced (where possible), which will further reduce the development's carbon footprint.

### **Healthy Communities**

12.1 National planning policy states that planning decisions should aim to achieve healthy places which enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address well-being needs. Planning decisions should plan positively for the provision of and use of shared spaces, community facilities, sports facilities and open space, and support development that improves health and well-being.

12.2 The Core Strategy supports healthy, active and inclusive communities, and policy CS28 supports the retention of existing sports and recreation facilities, as well as their improvements and new facilities where need is identified, recognising their vital role in enhancing people's quality of life and for promoting healthy living and social inclusion. This is entirely consistent with the NPPF which in promoting healthy and safe communities seeks places that promote social interaction, and enable and support healthy lifestyles.

12.3 The Council recognises the positive impact that increased participation in sport can have on health and well-being as well as encouraging social interaction, and the provision of enhanced modern sports and community facilities on this site would be supportive of policy aims. This proposal represents a long-term investment into the well-being of the local community, and is supportive of Core Strategy policies that seek to achieve greater accessibility, increased participation and greater opportunities for physical activity, and to improve levels of performance in sport and activity. The Council estimates the proposed facility would generate considerable improvements in participation, including an 85% increase in swimming lessons per week, capacity for up to 4,400 health and fitness members, with up to 800,000 users of the facility per annum. Such improvements in participation would not be possible with the current, ageing buildings on site.

12.4 The Indoor Sport & Leisure Facilities Strategy (IS&LFs) for Chiltern District Council (2016) has assessed need and considers what facilities will be needed now, as well as in the future to support growth. The strategy aims to:-

- develop and improve facilities that encourage active lifestyles;
- provide high quality indoor sports facilities, that support increased participation

12.5 The proposal would contribute very significantly to these aims and objectives, providing a high quality, modern facility to be enjoyed by residents in the local and wider area, and will make effective use of the site. Strategically the delivery of this facility would assist the Council in improving the health and well-being of its residents and facilitate a healthier, more active population, and it would also be supportive of national Government aims to increase participation levels in physical activity. The proposal benefits from Sport England support, who comment that the proposal will "significantly increase the sporting and recreational offer currently provided", and note that this will support the Council's IS&LFS.

12.6 There would also be a positive economic impact in terms of employment opportunities, with it estimated that approximately 55 full-time employment opportunities would be created for the leisure and sports uses alone. This figure would increase further when the wider community facilities are accounted for.



## Noise

13.1 Core Strategy policy CS4 seeks minimal disruption from new development in terms of noise pollution upon the wider environment. Saved Local Plan policy GC7 states that noise-generating development will not be permitted where the noise levels and/or the noise characteristics which would result from that development would cause an unacceptable degree of disturbance to the occupants of any residential or other noise-sensitive development in the vicinity of the application site. Noise includes vibrations. Policy GC8 requires that noise levels and characteristics be assessed as part of new noise generating development.

13.2 The site is currently in use as a leisure facility, and other uses. This has been established for a significant period of time, therefore nearby residential properties will be familiar with the noise associated. However, the proposal would result in a larger building, the re-location of the building and car park, as well as an expansion of uses on site. An Environmental Noise Assessment supports the application, within this are the results of noise surveys undertaken to establish the existing noise conditions and likely noise generated from the proposed development, and use of the site. The report makes some recommendation to help safeguard nearby residential amenity. This assessment has been reviewed by the Council's Environmental Health Officer, who recommends conditions to mitigate potential noise impacts.

13.3 Recommended conditions include a restriction on hours of operation on site during demolition and construction, a requirement for approval of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and a Noise Management Plan (NMP).

## Ecology

14.1 The NPPF requires that planning decisions contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. Protection should be given to sites of biodiversity value and decisions should minimise impacts on and provide net gains for biodiversity.

14.2 Core Strategy policy CS24 aims to conserve and enhance biodiversity within the District. Proposals should protect biodiversity, and if possible, improve biodiversity.

14.3 The application is supported by an Ecological Impact Assessment. The Assessment details the ecological surveys and desk studies undertaken in respect of protected species. It notes that the site is dominated by amenity grassland, areas of hardstanding and a collection of buildings, which are considered to be of limited ecological importance. There are no statutory designations on, or close to the site. The three managed hedgerows on site are considered to qualify as Habitats of Principal Importance, though these are of limited ecological importance. The on-site buildings, trees and hedgerows are considered suitable for nesting birds, therefore if vegetation clearance and/or building demolition is required within the period March to mid-September (inclusive), a check for nesting birds must be conducted by a suitably experienced ecologist, before clearance/demolition commences. This is addressed through an Informative, as can the provision of new on-site hedgerows which can help compensate for the loss of any existing on-site nesting habitat.

14.4 No further survey work is recommended in respect of great crested newts, reptiles, birds, badgers, otters, or bats.

14.5 The Council's Ecology consultant has reviewed the submitted information, and is satisfied that potential presence of protected species and habitats has been given due consideration. The proposed development area on the whole largely comprises habitats of low ecological value. Conditions are recommended in respect of securing ecological enhancements, a wildlife sensitive lighting scheme and construction safeguards.

14.6 Ecological mitigation measures are also set out in the submitted Design & Access Statement. It is proposed that new hedgerows will be planted across the site, areas within King George V Field will be encouraged to be areas of taller grass and wildflower meadows, habitat creation will be encouraged by introducing dead wood into parts of the site, bat and bird boxes will also be provided. The provision of these measures will satisfy policy CS24 and further details will be secured through condition.

### **Land Contamination**

15.1 Paragraph 178 of the NPPF states that a site should be suitable for its proposed use taking account of ground conditions and any risks arising from land instability and contamination. Planning decisions should take account of any proposals for mitigation, including land remediation, following adequate site investigations.

15.2 Core Strategy policy CS4, and saved Local Plan policy GC9 support the remediation of contaminated land.

15.3 The application is supported by a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment. This identifies the site's former use as a farm and identifies some potential for made ground deposits. A more intrusive, Phase II assessment is recommended, which has been carried out. This recommends that additional soil sampling is undertaken due the limited analysis undertaken to date.

15.4 Having reviewed the supporting Phase I / Phase II assessments the Environmental Health Officer has recommended a condition be secured, requiring (following demolition of buildings) that a further site investigation scheme be carried out, and based on the results of this an options appraisal and remediation strategy (if necessary). No objection has been raised, subject to the recommended condition.

### **Other matters**

#### **Lighting:**

16.1 As set out in the NPPF (paragraph 180) planning decisions should limit the impact from artificial light for amenity reasons. Core Strategy policy CS4 says that regard should be had to minimising light pollution and saved Local Plan policy R6 does not support the use of floodlighting for outdoor sports in the already built up areas.

16.2 A lighting strategy supports the proposal, this has carried out modelling to predict the light spread from the new sources of luminance. Lighting will be from 4m high lighting posts spread across the site, and it has been demonstrated that this concentrates the illumination where it is required most, in the car park area. All lighting will use a narrow spectrum gauge, and will be directed towards the ground. Consequently there will be minimal light spread to the surrounding area, King George V open space, or nearby housing. Though this was raised as a concern in some of the representations received the modelling results do not raise a concern in respect of the glazed area serving the swimming pool, and no concerns are raised by the Environmental Health Officer. Given the nature of the location, the presence of existing street lighting along Chiltern Avenue and King George V Road it is not considered that this proposal would result in unacceptable light pollution. This is an urban area that is already well served by ambient/street lighting.

#### **Accessibility:**

16.3 The NPPF, Core Strategy policies CS4, CS20 and saved Local Plan policy GC14 have been duly considered with the aim of making this a well designed and inviting place for users. Accessibility has been an integral part of this.

16.4 The external areas, internal layout and main routes to the building have been designed with a view to being accessible and to all users and inclusive. Dedicated disabled parking bays (x12) are provided for close to

the main entrance, also provided is a dedicated set-down and drop-off point. Level and unhindered access will be provided from these areas to the main entrance. Level access is also provided from the car park area, and the main pedestrian route to the main entrance. Highways officers have requested that the stepped pedestrian access point on Chiltern Avenue, which is line with the existing zebra crossing be amended to be fully wheelchair accessible. This minor change can be dealt with through condition with the submission of revised details.

16.5 Internally the building has been designed with consideration for all user groups in order to ensure the facilities are fully inclusive. Level access is provided into the building, and throughout the ground floor. Upper and lower floors are served by wheelchair accessible lifts, including sports wheelchair accessible lifts to lower ground floor (i.e. for the sports hall). All changing facilities have been designed to comply with Accessible Sports Facilities recommendations, and the swimming pool is provided with a means of access for wheelchair users. The first floor nursery is served by two lifts, providing access for wheelchair users and buggies. Due to the site level changes along King George V Road it has not been possible to provide fully step free access along this side of the building, however the main entrance does achieve this.

16.6 In summary there would be no concerns relating to access. The building and external areas have been designed to give suitable access for all users, and the internal environment achieves this also with level and step free access. The design and layout appropriately responds to CABE's comments on making this an inclusive environment, and it is noted that Building Control do consider the proposal will comply with Part M of the Building Regulations.

#### **Waste Management:**

16.7 The waste strategy is addressed in the submitted DAS. In summary, the main service area is located on the north eastern side of the building, and will be accessed via Chiltern Avenue, through the car park area. This area is where bin storage is accommodated, and the main servicing of the plant room and filtration chemical stores will take place. Highways have not raised any concerns to the access arrangements. A condition is recommended requiring some form of fencing/enclosure so that the public do not have free access to this area.

#### **Conclusions**

17.1 The application has been assessed against the NPPF, Chiltern District Local Plan and Chiltern District Core Strategy, and fundamental to this has been consideration of whether the proposals deliver sustainable development. Fundamentally the application is to replace existing D1/D2 uses and facilities on site, that are accommodated in buildings which are ageing and no longer cost effective to continue to invest in and maintain. It is proposed to provide replacement and much enhanced D1/D2 uses on the site, the enhancement in facility and in the range of uses and activities that can be accommodated on the site will allow for greater participation, and encourage people to become more active, which will be beneficial to people's health and well-being. Council feasibility studies undertaken identified that there would be a need to provide new leisure facilities to meet future growth, and there was evidence of a shortfall in multi-activity spaces in the Amersham area. Due to this identified need and in recognition of the ageing facilities/buildings on site the Council, in conjunction with stakeholders and the local community developed these proposals that will allow for co-location, multi-use and encourage social interaction.

17.2 There is conflict with Local Plan policies that do not support the change of use of designated public open space, notwithstanding this NPPF exception tests for developing on existing open space are considered to be met, due to the betterment in terms of sports provision and the benefits of the proposed alternative provision. The principle of the site's re-development for the replacement of D1/D2 uses with an improved and enhanced facility is not therefore considered to be objectionable. Improving and enhancing facilities such as this is consistent with local and national policy.

17.3 The Highway Authority have no objection to the proposed development, and the level of parking provision is considered appropriate in this highly sustainable location, located close to Amersham railway station and within easy walking distance of other public car parks in Amersham. The NPPF states that development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. In this instance the proposed development is not considered to result in unacceptable or severe impacts, and will promote sustainable travel firstly due to its sustainable location, but also owing to the inclusion of adequate cycle parking, electronic vehicle charging provision, and the securing of a Travel Plan

17.4 The proposal is of modern design and the siting, scale and mass of the proposed building development will represent a marked change in the streetscene. This is undoubtedly a large building, but there are other notable large buildings further south along Chiltern Avenue, including the Council offices on the opposite side of King George V Road. The enhancement in facilities to be provided on site for the benefit of the local community requires a built form that is larger than existing buildings. The design has taken on board the need to articulate the building and break down the mass. The scale and heights respect the adjacent office development on the opposite side of King George V Road. A detailed landscaping scheme has been advanced, which will be required to be provided by condition to assist in the appearance in the street scene and contributing positively to the public realm.

17.5 It is noted that objectors have raised objection to the proposal on a wide range of planning issues, all of which have been covered. Some have questioned the costs involved, they do not support the land swap, and question what is planned for the 'future development zone' (as illustrated on submitted plans). These are not material planning considerations that can be afforded weight in the determination of the current application, and it is important to re-iterate the 'future development zone' is outside of the application site and not part of the application.

17.6 This is a sustainable location, close to Amersham-on-the Hill and is an appropriate location, improving on the existing facilities on site. It is considered that a fair balance would be struck between the interests of the community and the human rights of individuals in the event of planning permission being granted in this instance, subject to conditions as set out.

### **Working with the applicant**

In accordance with Section 4 National Planning Policy Framework, the Council, in dealing with this application, has worked in a positive and proactive way with the Applicant / Agent and has focused on seeking solutions to the issues arising from the development proposal.

Chiltern District Council worked with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by:

- offering a pre-application advice service;
- updating applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application as appropriate and, where possible and appropriate, suggesting solutions.

In this case, Chiltern District Council has considered the details as submitted which were considered acceptable, following the pre-application that was undertaken with the applicant.

The following recommendation is made having regard to the above and also to the content of the Human Rights Act 1998.

### **Human Rights**

The following recommendation is made having regard to the above and also to the content of the Human Rights Act 1998.

**RECOMMENDATION: Resolve to recommend Council to approve own development**

**Subject to the following conditions:-**

1 C108A General Time Limit

2 Prior to the commencement of development (save for demolition) (or such other date or stage in development as may be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority), a detailed scheme of ecological enhancements (including a timetable for implementation of the scheme) shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include but not be limited to details of native landscape planting, including species of known benefit to wildlife, and provision of artificial roost features, including bird and bat boxes, details of the ecological mitigation measures included within the submitted Design & Access Statement. The ecological enhancements shall be implemented fully in accordance with the approved details and timescales thereafter, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of improving biodiversity in accordance with NPPF and policy C24 of the Chiltern District Core Strategy and to ensure the survival of protected and notable species protected by legislation that may otherwise be affected by the development.

3 Prior to first occupation, a "lighting design strategy for biodiversity" for buildings, features or areas to be lit shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The strategy shall:

a) identify those areas/features on site that are particularly sensitive for wildlife and that are likely to cause disturbance in or around breeding sites and resting places or along important routes used to access key areas of their territory, for example, for foraging;

b) show how and where external lighting will be installed (through the provision of appropriate lighting contour plans and technical specifications) so that it can be clearly demonstrated that areas to be lit will not disturb or prevent the above species using their territory or having access to their breeding sites and resting places.

All external lighting shall be installed fully in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the approved strategy, and these shall be maintained thereafter in accordance with the strategy. Under no circumstances should any other external lighting be installed without prior consent from the local planning authority.

Reason: The prevention of disturbance to species within the site during operation in accordance with policy 24 of the Chiltern District Core Strategy.

4 Prior to commencement of development (including demolition, ground works, vegetation clearance) a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP: Biodiversity) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The CEMP (Biodiversity) shall include the following:

- a) Risk assessment of potentially damaging construction activities;
- b) Identification of "biodiversity protection zones" including off-site receptors;
- c) Practical measures (both physical measures and sensitive working practices) to avoid or reduce impacts during construction (may be provided as a set of method statements);
- d) The location and timing of sensitive works to avoid harm to biodiversity features;
- e) The times during construction when specialist ecologists need to be present on site to oversee works;
- f) Responsible persons and lines of communication;
- g) The role and responsibilities on site of an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) or similarly competent person; and
- h) Use of protective fences, exclusion barriers and warning signs.

The approved CEMP shall be adhered to and fully implemented throughout the construction period strictly in accordance with the approved details, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: The prevention of harm to species and habitats within and outside the site during construction in accordance with Core Strategy Policy 24: Biodiversity of the Chiltern District Core Strategy.

5 Prior to the commencement of works above ground level a landscaping scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority including details, of proposed planting heights, spacing and species. The submitted details shall include provision for replacement hedgerows, trees and revised landscaping details for the frontage treatment of King George V Road, Chiltern Avenue as well as the pedestrian route to the north of the building hereby approved.

The development shall be carried out fully in accordance with the approved details thereafter, in accordance with an agreed timescale and shall be fully maintained in accordance with approved maintenance and management details, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding season following the occupation of the development hereby permitted or the substantial completion of the development, whichever is the sooner, and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: To maintain the visual amenity of the area.

6 Prior to the commencement of works above ground level a hard landscaping scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority including specification, of all finishing materials to be used in any hardsurfacing within the application site, including details of their permeable qualities. Details of any signboards and external seating shall also be provided. The development shall be carried out fully in accordance with the approved details thereafter and prior to first occupation of the building hereby approved, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To maintain the visual amenity of the area and in the interests of sustainable drainage.

7 Prior to installation on site further details of the children's play areas, outdoor gym and skate park shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, such details shall include but not be limited to the following:-

- a) Layout details
- b) Details of equipment
- c) Hardsurfacing
- d) Fencing or other means of enclosure

Thereafter the development shall be carried out and maintained fully in accordance with the approved details, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure appropriate children's play space provision and in the interests of the visual amenities of the area

8 Prior to first occupation of the development, or other such timescale as agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority the existing vehicle access onto King George V Road shall be permanently closed and stopped up in general accordance with the approved plans.

Reason: In order to minimise danger, obstruction and inconvenience to users of the highway and of the development.

9 Prior to first occupation of the development hereby approved an amended scheme for cycle parking and pedestrian access shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority following consultation with the Highway Authority. The amended scheme shall include and demonstrate covered and lighting provision for the proposed cycle parking and appropriate level pedestrian access from Chiltern Avenue for all users of the highway. The approved scheme shall be fully implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to first occupation of the development and shall thereafter be permanently maintained.

Reason: In the interests of pedestrian and highway safety.

10 Prior to commencement of the development a Construction Traffic and Logistics Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority. The Plan shall include details of (but not be limited to the following):

- Details of construction phasing, including timescales and hours;
- Details of where public parking lost during construction will take place;
- Details of public notices to be displayed in advance of works;
- Construction access;
- Management and timing of deliveries;
- Routing of construction traffic;
- Vehicle parking for site operatives and visitors;
- Loading / off-loading and turning areas;
- Details of site construction compound, siting and layout;
- Storage of materials;
- Precautions to prevent the deposit of mud and debris on the adjacent highway;
- Proposed mitigation for dust;
- Proposed mitigation for noise;
- Swept path analysis of construction vehicles required to access the site for each phase of development

The development hereby permitted shall thereafter be carried out fully in accordance with the approved Construction Management Plan, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To minimise danger and inconvenience to highway users and to mitigate impacts on residential amenity.

11 Prior to first occupation of the development a Full Travel Plan and Car Parking and Vehicle Management Plan (including for planned coach and mini bus drop off/collection) shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The submitted Travel Plan shall be in general accordance with the 'Buckinghamshire County Council Travel Plan Good Practice Guidance'.

The approved Travel Plan and Car Parking and Vehicle Management Plan shall be implemented in full upon occupation of the development and subject to annual review thereafter (or to be implemented within a timescale otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority).

Reason: In order to influence modal choice and to reduce single occupancy private car journeys and comply with National and Local Transport Policy, and to ensure safe and suitable access for embarking and disembarking from coaches and minibuses.

12 Prior to first occupation of the development details of servicing arrangements for deliveries to and from the site including:

- a) Specifications for parking and turning for service vehicles
- b) Specifications of types of vehicles and hours of operation

shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and only the approved details shall be implemented thereafter, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To enable vehicles to draw off, park and turn clear of the highway to minimise danger, obstruction and inconvenience to users of the adjoining highway.

13 The scheme for parking and manoeuvring indicated on the submitted plans shall be laid out fully in accordance with the approved details prior to first occupation of the development hereby permitted and that area shall not thereafter be used for any other purpose.

Reason: To enable vehicles to draw off, park and turn clear of the highway to minimise danger, obstruction and inconvenience to users of the adjoining highway.

14 Prior to first occupation of the development hereby approved cycle parking provision on site shall be fully in accordance with the approved details. The quantum of cycle parking shall thereafter be permanently maintained for the lifetime of the development, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to influence modal choice and to reduce single occupancy private car journeys and comply with national and local transport policy.

15 Following the demolition of the library, the youth centre, Drake Hall and Chiltern Pools buildings and prior to the commencement of each relevant phase of the development (as described in the submitted phasing plan) approved by this planning permission (or such other date or stage in development as may be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority), the following components of a scheme to deal with the risks associated with contamination of the site shall each be submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority:

- i) A preliminary risk assessment which has identified:
  - all previous uses
  - potential contaminants associated with those uses
  - a conceptual model of the site indicating sources, pathways and receptors
  - potentially unacceptable risks arising from contamination at the site.

ii) A site investigation scheme, based on (i) to provide information for a detailed assessment of the risk to all receptors that may be affected, including those off site. This should include an assessment of the potential risks to: human health, property (existing or proposed) including buildings, crops, pests, woodland and service lines and pipes, adjoining land, ground waters and surface waters, ecological systems, archaeological sites and ancient monuments.

iii) The site investigation results and the detailed risk assessment (ii) and, based on these, an options appraisal and remediation strategy giving full details of the remediation measures required and how they are to be undertaken.

iv) A verification plan providing details of the data that will be collected in order to demonstrate that the works set out in (iii) are complete and identifying any requirements for longer term monitoring of pollutant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action. Any changes to these components require the express consent of the local planning authority. The scheme shall be implemented as approved.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors.



16 Before any construction work commences above ground, named types including samples of all the facing materials, as well as roofing materials to be used for the external construction of the development hereby permitted shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall be fully implemented in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the external appearance of the development is not detrimental to the character of the locality.

17 Before any site works commence on the development hereby permitted, tree protection fencing shall be erected around the trees and hedges to be retained in accordance with both British Standard 5837:2012 and the submitted Tree Protection Plan Drawing No 4773-LLB-XX-XX-DR-Ab-006 Rev P01 dated 19.12.2018 by Lloydbore landscape ecology arboriculture. The fencing shall then be retained in the positions shown on the Tree Protection Plan until the development is completed. Within the enclosed areas there shall be no construction works, no storage of materials, no fires and no excavation or changes to ground levels.

Reason: To ensure that the existing established trees and hedgerows within and around the site that are proposed to be retained are safeguarded during building operations, in accordance with Policy GC4 of the Chiltern District Local Plan Adopted 1 September 1997 (including alterations adopted 29 May 2001) Consolidated September 2007 and November 2011.

18 The proposed café to be introduced within the building shall not be brought into operation until suitable ventilation and filtration equipment has been installed to suppress and disperse odour in accordance with details that shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The equipment approved shall be effectively operated and maintained in accordance with manufacturer's instructions and in accordance with the approved details for as long as the cafe use continues.

Reason: To ensure that unsatisfactory cooking odours outside the premises are minimised and to ensure that any external apparatus does not detract from the visual appearance of the building

19 Prior to installation further details, including the specification and means of control of any gate or barrier to be used to control vehicle access to the car park, as well as details of any security bollards shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter these shall be installed fully in accordance with the approved details, and installed prior to the use of the building commencing.

Reason: To ensure appropriate and safe access to the site is maintained.

20 Following the appointment of an operator for the centre, a Security Needs and Operational Requirement Assessment shall be conducted and a Security Management Plan submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval in writing. Following approval in writing the resulting security Plan, including any CCTV systems shall be implemented in full prior to the building being operational. The system should address any areas lacking natural surveillance both internally and externally.

Reason: To minimise potential criminal activity and improve community safety, in accordance with Core Strategy CS30.

21 No floodlighting or other form of external lighting to serve the external play and sports facilities shall be installed unless it is in accordance with details which have been previously been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such details shall include location, height, type and direction of light sources and intensity of illumination. Any lighting which is so installed shall not thereafter be altered without the prior consent in writing of the Local Planning Authority other than for routine maintenance which does not change its details.

Reason: In the interest of safeguarding the visual amenities of the locality and nearby residential properties.

22 Prior to the commencement of works above ground level a feasibility study for the use of PV panels shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for consideration. Subject to the scheme proving to be feasible further details of the amount and location of PV panels to be provided on the building shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to installation, and thereafter shall be installed fully in accordance with such details prior to the use commencing.

Reason: To ensure appropriate provision for renewable technologies in accordance with Core Strategy policy CS5.

23 Demolition and construction works, including start up and close down activities, shall not be carried out other than within the following hours:

07:30 to 19:00 Monday to Friday;

08:00 to 13:00 Saturdays

No working on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

Any proposed works outside of those hours to be approved by the District Planning Authority and proportionate mitigation measures proposed.

Reason: In the interests of local amenity and to comply with Policy GC3 of the Chiltern District Council Local Plan 1997/2001.

24 Prior to the external play areas and sports facilities being installed on site a Noise Management Plan (NMP) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the facilities are brought into use. The NMP shall set out a strategy for the management of noise from the external facilities, and how any complaints in relation to noise associated with these will be recorded and dealt with, including details of any mitigation measures necessary. This strategy shall be reviewed annually, and if as part of any review it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority that the NMP is no longer necessary the requirement for a NMP can be removed.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of nearby residential occupiers.

25 When in normal operation on the site, the rating level from all fixed plant (boilers, mechanical ventilation plant, air conditioning equipment and the like) minus the existing background level shall not exceed +5dB at the boundary with the nearest residential receptor, when determined in accordance with BS4142:2014.

Reason: To protect the amenities of nearby residential properties and prevent noise disturbance.

26 Prior to commencement of development (save for demolition) a surface water drainage scheme for the site, based on sustainable drainage principles and an assessment of the hydrological and hydro-geological context of the development, shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall subsequently be implemented fully in accordance with the approved details before the development is completed. The scheme shall also include:

- Increase in the attenuation storage before discharging to the deep borehole to ensure that a 24 hour half drain down time for the 1 in 30 year rainfall event is achieved
- Assessment of SuDS components as listed in the CIRIA SuDS Manual (C753) and provide justification for exclusion if necessary, including green roofs and active rainwater harvesting
- Demonstrate that water quality, ecological and amenity benefits have been considered
- Infiltration rate testing
- Full construction details of all SuDS and drainage components
- Detailed drainage layout with pipe numbers, gradients and pipe sizes complete, together with storage volumes of all SuDS components

- Calculations to demonstrate that the proposed drainage system can contain up to the 1 in 30 storm event without flooding. Any onsite flooding between the 1 in 30 and the 1 in 100 plus climate change storm event should be safely contained on site.

- Details of how and when the full drainage system will be maintained, this should also include details of who will be responsible for the maintenance

- Details of proposed overland flood flow routes in the event of system exceedance or failure, with demonstration that such flows can be appropriately managed on site without increasing flood risk to occupants, or to adjacent or downstream sites.

- Flow depth
- Flow volume
- Flow direction

Reason: The reason for this pre-start condition is to ensure that a sustainable drainage strategy has been agreed prior to construction in accordance with Paragraph 163 of the National Planning Policy Framework to ensure that there is a satisfactory solution to managing flood risk.

27 Prior to commencement of development (save for demolition) a "whole-life" maintenance plan for the site shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Plan shall set out how and when to maintain the full drainage system (e.g. a maintenance schedule for each drainage/SuDS component) during and following construction, with details of who is to be responsible for carrying out the maintenance. The approved Plan shall subsequently be implemented fully in accordance with the approved details thereafter.

Reason: The reason for this being a pre-start condition is to ensure that maintenance arrangements have been arranged and agreed before any works commence on site that might otherwise be left unaccounted for.

28 Prior to the first occupation of the development, a demonstration (such as as-built drawings and/or photographic evidence) of the as-built surface water drainage scheme carried out by a suitably qualified person must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority to demonstrate that the Sustainable Drainage System has been constructed as per the agreed scheme.

Reason: The reason for this pre-occupation condition is to ensure the Sustainable Drainage System has been constructed as per the approved is designed to the technical standards

29 AP01 Approved Plans

## INFORMATIVES

1 Trees and other vegetation may offer suitable habitat for nesting birds. All wild birds, their nests and young are protected during the nesting period under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Any works to suitable vegetation shall be undertaken outside of bird nesting season. This is weather dependent but generally extends between March and August inclusive. If this is not possible then a suitably qualified ecologist shall check the areas concerned immediately prior to the clearance works to ensure that no nesting, or nest-building birds, are present. If any nesting birds are present then the vegetation shall not be removed until the fledglings have left the nest.

2 The permission hereby granted shall not be construed as authority to obstruct the public highway by the erection of scaffolding, hoarding, skip or any other device or apparatus for which a licence must be sought from the Highway Authority. A period of 10 days must be allowed for the issuing of the licence, please contact the Streetworks team at the following address for information.

Streetworks  
10th Floor, New County Offices  
Walton Street, Aylesbury,  
Buckinghamshire  
HP20 1UY  
Telephone 0845 2302882  
<https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/transport-and-roads/licences-and-permits/>

3 The applicant is advised that the off-site works will need to be constructed under a Section 184 of the Highways Act legal agreement. This Small Works Agreement must be obtained from the Highway Authority before any works are carried out on any footway, carriageway, verge or other land forming part of the highway. A minimum period of 3 weeks is required to process the agreement following the receipt by the Highway Authority of a written request. Please contact Development Management at the following address for information or apply online via Buckinghamshire County Council's website at;

[www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/transport-and-roads/highways-development-management/apply-online/section-184-licence/](http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/transport-and-roads/highways-development-management/apply-online/section-184-licence/)

Highways Development Management  
6th Floor, County Hall  
Walton Street, Aylesbury,  
Buckinghamshire  
HP20 1UY  
Telephone 0845 230 2882

4 Thames Water advise that a Trade Effluent Consent will be required for any Effluent discharge other than a 'Domestic Discharge'. Any discharge without this consent is illegal and may result in prosecution. (Domestic usage for example includes - toilets, showers, washbasins, baths, private swimming pools and canteens). Typical Trade Effluent processes include: commercial swimming pools. Pre-treatment, separate metering, sampling access etc, may be required before the Company can give its consent. Applications should be made to Thames water.

5 The deep borehole soakaways associated with this development will require an Environmental Permit under the Environmental Permitting Regulations 2010, from the Environment Agency, unless an exemption applies. The applicant is advised to contact the Environment Agency on 08708 506 506 for further advice and to discuss the issues likely to be raised. You should be aware that the permit may not be granted.

**The End**