



Strategic Sites Committee agenda

Date: Thursday 21 April 2022

Time: 2.00 pm

Venue: The Oculus, The Gateway, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, HP19 8FF

Membership:

P Bass, A Bond, N Brown, P Cooper, M Fayyaz, P Fealey, R Newcombe, J Ng, A Turner (Chairman), P Turner, J Waters (Vice-Chairman) and A Wheelhouse

Agenda Item	Page No
1 Apologies for absence	
2 Declarations of interest	
3 Minutes To agree the minutes of the strategic sites committee meeting held on 24 March 2022.	3 - 6
4 PL/21/4632/OA - Land Between Lodge Lane and Burtons Lane, Little Chalfont, Buckinghamshire	7 - 342

If you would like to attend a meeting, but need extra help to do so, for example because of a disability, please contact us as early as possible, so that we can try to put the right support in place.

For further information please contact: Sally Taylor on 01296 531024, email democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.

This page is intentionally left blank



Strategic Sites Committee minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the Strategic Sites Committee held on Thursday 24 March 2022 in The Oculus, The Gateway, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, HP19 8FF, commencing at 2.00 pm and concluding at 4.48 pm.

Members present

P Bass, A Bond, P Cooper, T Egleton, P Fealey, R Newcombe, A Turner (Chairman), P Turner, J Waters (Vice-Chairman) and A Wheelhouse

Agenda Item

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Nic Brown, Councillor Jackson Ng and Councillor Mohammad Fayyaz. Councillor Trevor Egleton attended as a substitute for Councillor Ng.

2 Minutes

Resolved: the minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2022 were **agreed** as an accurate record and were signed by the Chairman.

3 Declarations of interest

The following personal interests were declared:

Councillor Patrick Fealey stated that he lived in Grendon Underwood and, as Chairman of the North Area Planning Committee, he was well aware of the importance of not having any involvement in applications which came to the Strategic Sites Committee. Councillor Fealey declared that he had not been involved in the application, he would listen to the evidence and come to a decision. Councillor Fealey also declared that his wife had recently joined Grendon Underwood Parish Council.

At 15.36 pm, during the discussion on item 4, Councillor Peter Cooper commented that he knew Mr Phil Cronshaw as Mr Cronshaw was a member of the Parish Council in Councillor Cooper's ward. Councillor Ashley Bond also declared that he knew Mr Cronshaw.

At 15.38 pm, Councillor Richard Newcombe declared that he represented Buckinghamshire Council on the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel and the Chilterns Conservation Board.

4 Application Number 21/02851/AOP - HM Prison Grendon, Springhill Road, Grendon Underwood, Buckinghamshire, HP18 0TL

Proposal: Outline Planning Application with all matters reserved except for access, layout and scale for the construction of a new Category C prison (up to 67,000 sqm GEA) within a secure perimeter fence together with access, parking, landscaping and associated engineering works.

Danika Hird, Senior Planner, advised that an update had been circulated. The matters relating to great crested newts had been addressed resulting in the matter being removed from reason for refusal 6 which could be found on page 67 of the agenda pack.

[6. Insufficient information has been submitted regarding species specific assessments and mitigation relating to ~~Great Crested Newts~~, Bats and Black Hair Streak butterflies. Had the above overarching reasons for refusal not applied, the Local Planning Authority would have sought further information in relation to the potential impact of the proposal in order to ensure that any harm would be satisfactorily assessed and mitigated if necessary. In the absence of this information the proposal the Local Planning Authority is unable to determine the full effects of the proposal on these species, including a European Protected Species. The proposal has failed to demonstrate that there would not be an adverse impact to these species and as such is contrary to the requirements of NE1 of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan and paragraph 180 of the National Planning Policy Framework.]

Therefore, the recommendation was that the proposal be refused for the reasons outlined in Section 21 of the report which started on page 66 of the agenda pack and subject to the proposed change outlined within the update.

A site visit was carried out on 22 March 2022.

Speaking as local member, Councillor Frank Mahon.

Speaking as local member, Councillor Angela Macpherson.

Speaking as local member, Councillor Michael Rand.

Speaking as a representative of Edgcott Parish Council, Councillor Peter Harper.

Speaking as a representative of Grendon Underwood Parish Council, Councillor Paul Jackman.

Speaking as an objector, Greg Smith, MP for Buckingham.

Speaking as an objector, Rod Baker.

Speaking as the agent, Clare Lucey.

It was proposed by Councillor Bond and seconded by Councillor Newcombe and agreed at a vote

Resolved:

that permission be **refused**.

Note 1: A break was taken between 16.20 and 16.30 pm.

This page is intentionally left blank



Buckinghamshire Council

www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Report to Strategic Sites Planning Committee

Application Number:	PL/21/4632/OA
Proposal:	Outline application for the demolition of all existing buildings and the erection of residential dwellings including affordable housing, custom build (Use Class C3), retirement homes and care home (Use Class C2), new vehicular access point off Burtons Lane, improvements to existing Lodge Lane access including works to Lodge Lane and Church Grove, new pedestrian and cycle access at Oakington Avenue including construction of new pedestrian and cycle bridge and associated highway works, a local centre including a community building (Use Classes E(a)(b)(e), F2(b)), land safeguarded for educational use (Use Classes E(f) and F1(a)), public open space and associated infrastructure (matters to be considered at this stage: Burtons Lane and Lodge Lane access).
Site location:	Land Between Lodge Lane and Burtons Lane, Little Chalfont, Buckinghamshire
Applicant:	Biddulph (Buckinghamshire) Ltd (Mr D Cox)
Case Officer:	Laura Peplow
Ward affected:	Little Chalfont & Amersham Common
Parish-Town Council:	Little Chalfont
Valid date:	7 December 2021
Determination date:	25 April 2022
Recommendation:	Delegate the application to the Director of Planning and Environment to refuse permission.

1.0 Summary & Recommendation

The Planning Application

- 1.1 The application seeks Outline planning permission, with all matters reserved except for means of access from Lodge Lane and Burtons Lane, for a residential-led development scheme. The proposals are for 380 dwellings,

retirement accommodation and a care home, a local centre with a mix of uses including safeguarded land for education and community use and open space and landscaping.

- 1.2 The site is approximately 29 hectares in area with the majority of the site most recently used as a golf course. Parts of the site are in agricultural/paddock/residential use. There is woodland including ancient woodland within the site and the site is bounded by mature trees. There are eight buildings across the site of which three are residential dwellings (Homestead Farm and the dwellings 13 and 15 Oakington Avenue) and the golf club building which is also in residential use. The site is located to the south and south east of the settlement of Little Chalfont. The railway marks the northern boundary with residential development located beyond the railway to the north on Oakington Avenue. The site has frontage to Burtons Lane to the west with residential development located along the lane, with residential development to the south on Loudhams Wood Lane (although the development site itself does not extend to Loudhams Wood Lane). An area of ancient woodland, Netherground Spring, is located to the south east extent of the site and with an industrial site 'Honors Yard' adjacent to this boundary. The site is bounded by Lodge Lane to the east with the Chilterns AONB beyond this.

Councillor Call-in

- 1.3 Councillors Tett, Culverhouse, Williams and Matthews have requested that the application be considered by committee for the reason that it warrants discussion by planning committee due to the location of the proposed development in the Green Belt, exceptional circumstances not being demonstrated, proposed accesses being unsuitable and damaging to the character of the village centre and rural lane, harm to setting of the Chilterns AONB, the railway line being considered a defensible Green Belt boundary and encroachment from out of borough development.

Green Belt and other harm

- 1.4 The proposed development would constitute 'inappropriate development' in the Green Belt. It would result in the loss of agricultural land and a significant scale of urbanising development that will encroach into the open countryside. Given the open character of the site and the existing mature tree belts and woodland it is considered that the development would result in substantial spatial and visual harm to the openness of the Green Belt. It would also conflict with three out of the five purposes of including land in the Green Belt. Overall, the harm to the Green Belt will be very substantial.
- 1.5 Paragraph 147 of the National Planning Policy Framework ('the NPPF') states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in 'very special circumstances'. Paragraph 148 confirms that when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. It goes on to state that 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness,

and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

- 1.6 The layout of the development represents poor design quality. Harm would result to the landscape character of the area and ecologically valuable priority habitats which would be put under increased recreational pressure as a result of the parameter plans. Concern is raised regarding density of development on the site being too great in some areas resulting in harm to landscape characteristics and views whilst simultaneously not providing adequate commitment to a density of development that would be acceptable in urban design terms. The street network proposed is considered disconnected and the proposal does not respond to the surrounding character including the adjacent area of exceptional residential character.
- 1.7 The supporting transport assessment is inadequate and it is therefore it is not possible to conclude that the additional traffic likely to be generated by the proposal would not adversely affect the safety and flow of users of the existing road network. Similarly, the proposed development will not achieve safe and suitable access. The proposed development fails to make adequate provision to allow accessibility to the site by non-car modes of travel.
- 1.8 The assessment of the development on ecology is deficient and lacks necessary information on protected species and priority habitats including ancient woodland. It has not been demonstrated that the proposed development would not have an unacceptable impact on the natural environment. Necessary mitigation of the impact on the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC has not been secured and in the absence of this the development would be harmful.
- 1.9 Other harm includes: loss of BMV agricultural land; flood risk; air quality and, the absence of a legal agreement and a mechanism to secure the provision of affordable housing and education contributions.

Benefits

- 1.10 The applicant has put forward a case for 'very special circumstances' (or benefits of the proposal) to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and other harm. The proposed benefits include housing delivery where the Council cannot demonstrate a 5 years' supply of housing land. The housing would include 40% affordable homes, provision for self-build and custom build homes and provision of retirement accommodation. It is considered that significant weight can be attributed to the delivery of affordable housing, moderate weight to the provision of retirement accommodation and limited weight to self-build and custom build homes as benefits of the scheme. Moderate weight is to be given to the delivery of housing.
- 1.11 The scheme will deliver some other benefits including local facilities and open space. The benefits are limited and that only limited weight can be afforded in the planning balance. Providing infrastructure to meet its own needs and compliance with sustainability and planning policies against which all applications for development are assessed as part of the decision-making process, is not considered to be a significant benefit. The benefits are limited

and tempered by this to the extent that only limited weight can be afforded for the planning balance.

Planning balance

- 1.12 The applicants' case relies heavily on the site's proposed allocation within the withdrawn Draft Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan 2036 (Site Allocation Policy SP BP6 – Building Little Chalfont) as justification for why the principle of development should be considered acceptable. However the Draft Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan 2036 was never examined, as it was withdrawn. Therefore the policies contained within it hold no material weight in planning decision-making. Notwithstanding this, the application site covers a smaller area than the draft site allocation SP BP9; the Draft Local Plan intended that this site would be delivered as part of a wider strategic allocation with 'an integrated, co-ordinated and comprehensive planning approach' taken on the site.
- 1.13 The proposal will lead to significant harm such as the loss of openness to the Green Belt, encroachment into the countryside, and significant permanent built development in the Green Belt which will also adversely affect the character of the area. The impact on the environment is substantially negative. Overall, notwithstanding the benefits of the scheme taken together, it is considered that the benefits do not "clearly outweigh" the harms. The applicant has not demonstrated 'very special circumstances' to justify inappropriate development in the Green Belt for the purposes of paragraph 148 of the NPPF.
- 1.14 It is considered that the conflict with Green Belt, flood risk and biodiversity policy provide a "clear reason for refusing" the development proposal. It is concluded that the proposals represent unsustainable development and overall are in conflict with the development plan. It is recommended that permission be refused for the reasons set out at the end of this report.
- 1.15 **Recommendation:** Delegate the application to the Director of Planning and Environment to **refuse permission**.

2.0 Description of Site & Proposed Development

Site and context

- 2.1 The site is located to the south and south east of the settlement of Little Chalfont, bounded by the London Underground metropolitan line to the north, Lodge Lane to the east, and Burtons Lane to the west. Part of the southern boundary of the site is Honors Yard, which is an industrial employment site occupied by a variety of different businesses.
- 2.2 The site is approximately 29 ha in area with the eastern, larger portion of the site previously used as a golf course and the western parcel associated with use of Homestead Farm, a residential property with outbuildings.
- 2.3 The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) lies to the east of the site, with Lodge Lane marking the boundary. Two areas of Ancient Woodland

are located within the site, with one area relatively central and the other to the south eastern boundary. In addition, various other areas of woodland are identified and the site contains scattered trees. The site is bounded by mature trees.

- 2.4 There are a number of strategic routes in the vicinity of the application site which are as follows. The site sits to the south of the A404 Amersham Road, linking Amersham and Little Chalfont to the M25 motorway and Chorleywood. The A404 is reached from the site by Burtons Lane to the West and Lodge Lane to the east. These roads that are of semi-rural/rural residential in character and provide links through the road network to the A413 in Chalfont St Peter and on to the M40 motorway. Within the centre of Little Chalfont there is the confluence of Burtons Lane, the A404 and the B4443, Cokes Lane. Lodge Lane joins the A404 through a staggered crossroad junction on the eastern boundary of Little Chalfont passing under a railway bridge to the north of the Lodge Lane site access. There are no public rights of way through the site.
- 2.5 Little Chalfont village centre features an Edwardian shopping parade. The area is also defined by other distinctive features such as areas of semi-rural streetscape character with greenery, the low density development with large plots in the style of 20th century garden suburbs and detached villas in the Arts and Crafts style, typical of metro land developments. Key, valued townscape characteristics in Little Chalfont are considered to be: low density development of detached, high quality houses of individual character, residential areas without street lighting and footpaths, mature trees and hedgerows separating properties with open driveways off road parking and limited boundary treatment.

Proposed development

- 2.6 The application seeks Outline planning permission, with all matters reserved except for 'Means of Access'.

The description of development is:

“Outline application for the demolition of all existing buildings and the erection of residential dwellings including affordable housing, custom build (Use Class C3), retirement homes and care home (Use Class C2), new vehicular access point off Burtons Lane, improvements to existing Lodge Lane access including works to Lodge Lane and Church Grove, new pedestrian and cycle access at Oakington Avenue including construction of new pedestrian and cycle bridge and associated highway works, a local centre including a community building (Use Classes E(a)(b)(e), F2(b)), land safeguarded for educational use (Use Classes E(f) and F1(a)), public open space and associated infrastructure (matters to be considered at this stage: Burtons Lane and Lodge Lane access).”

- 2.7 The proposed development will include the following:

- Up to 380 residential dwellings (Class C3);
- Up to 100 units - retirement village (Class C2);
- Up to 60 bed care home (Class C2);

- Up to 1,000m² Community Hub (Flexible uses E(a) (b) (e), F2(b));
- 1.4 ha safeguarded for a new primary school or primary school expansion with nursery;
- Retention of Lodge Lane vehicular access;
- Creation of main vehicular access from Burtons Lane;
- Creation of two secondary access points for footways/cycleways at the north-eastern corner of the site via Burtons Lane, and to the north via Oakington Avenue;
- Open space, formal areas of play and associated facilities and amenity space including, landscaping, green infrastructure and provision of a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA);
- Car and cycle parking; and
- Landscaping works.

2.8 To facilitate the proposed development eight buildings are to be demolished across the site. Four of these buildings are residential dwellings (including the building previously used as a golf course club house). Two of the dwellings to be demolished are on Oakington Avenue and will be removed to allow provision of a bridge to the site over the railway line.

2.9 The non-residential element, which is a proposed Community Hub, will include small scale retail of less than 1,000m² and community uses, and this element would be located relatively centrally within the site. The residential and other uses are broken down as follows:

Total dwellings		380 houses
	C3 Market housing:	213
	Affordable housing units	152
	Self-build and Custom-build:	15
Retirement Village and Care Home		
	C2 Retirement Village	100
	C2 Care home	60 beds
Other uses		Up to 1,000 sq m
	E(a) (Display or retail sale of goods, other than hot food)	
	E(b) Food and drink which is mostly consumed on the premises	
	E(e) Medical services not attached to the residence of the practitioner	
	F2(b) Halls or meeting places for the principal	

2.10 Open space of 11.74 ha is proposed. This would be comprised of a 1.24ha public park and garden, 8.30ha of natural and semi-natural green space, 1.35ha of amenity space, 0.28ha of play space (1x Locally Equipped Area of Play, 1x Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play, 3x incidental play or Locally Areas of Play), 0.29ha allotments (2 allotments, 3 community orchards) and a 0.28 Multi Use Games Area/bike and skate park.

2.11 The proposals include Parameter Plans for approval which set out the key components of the development:

- Land Use and Green Infrastructure – illustrates maximum extent for land use and green infrastructure. The land uses are residential use, retirement living and care home, safeguarded land for educational use, mixed use community building, public open spaces.
- Building Heights – building heights vary in four categories for residential dwellings: up to 2, up to 2.5, up to 3 and up to 3.5 storeys, mixed use development up to 3.5 storeys and land safeguarded for educational use up to 2 storeys.
- Access and Movement – identifies the principles of vehicular and pedestrian access to the site and through it.
- Demolition Plan – identifies buildings and structures proposed for demolition within the application site.

2.12 The development proposal is accompanied by an Environmental Statement (ES). The ES provides an overview of the likely environmental impact of the proposals and assesses “likely significant effects” with a summary of mitigation measures proposed and contains a methodology for assessing the significance of the environmental effects and the cumulative impact. A series of technical chapters within the ES consider the range of environmental factors. The ES contains the following chapters addressing each of the following topics:

- EIA Methodology
- Existing Land Uses and Activities
- Alternatives and Design Evolution
- The Development
- Development Programme, Demolition and Construction
- Socio Economics
- Transport and Access
- Air Quality
- Noise and Vibration
- Water Resources and Flood Risk
- Ecology

- Landscape and Visual Impacts
- Historic Environment
- Cumulative Effects

2.13 During the course of the application an ES addendum was submitted. The ES addendum was provided to ensure all land within the red edge has been assessed within the Environmental Statement. The omission from the original ES was the assessment of the highway works proposed to facilitate the development. Subsequently further consultation was undertaken.

2.14 The applicant has undertaken their own public consultation on the scheme.

3.0 Relevant Planning History

3.1 Planning applications relating to the change of use of the golf club to a residential dwelling are as follows:

3.2 CH/2008/1209/FA Change of use of existing clubhouse to form detached residential dwelling with first floor side, single storey side and roof extensions, front porch and excavation of land to the rear, served by existing vehicular access (Refused Permission)

3.3 CH/2009/0194/FA Change of use of existing clubhouse to form detached residential dwelling with excavation of land to the rear to create light wells to north elevation, served by existing vehicular access and change of use of remaining land for equestrian use (Refused Permission, Allowed at Appeal)

3.4 Other external alterations relating to the club house and an non-material amendment to CH/2009/0194/FA have been considered and approved.

3.5 A scoping opinion was requested in relation to the development site: PL/21/3073/EIASO EIA scoping opinion in accordance with Regulation 15 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 for proposed development comprising demolition of existing buildings on site and construction of up to 380 homes (including 40% Affordable Units), 100 unit Retirement Village (Use Class C2/C3), 60 bed Care Home (Use Class C2), safeguarded land for a 1FE Primary School/ Primary School Expansion with nursery, Community Centre (possibly including retail use, flexible office space, satellite GP surgery) and new public parkland.

3.6 The residential properties at 13 and 15 Oakington Avenue and Homestead Farm (proposed to be demolished) have been subject to applications for householder extensions and alterations. The agricultural outbuildings associated with Homestead Farm are also subject to various agricultural permitted development applications, some of which prior approval has been granted for and others were prior approval has been refused. The detail of these application is not considered to be material to the current application.

Summary of Representations

3.7 The application was subject to the relevant consultation, notification and publicity. A second round of consultation was undertaken due to the submission of an ES addendum relating to the proposed highway works.

- 3.8 Over 1100 individual letters of objection from the local community and letters from other bodies have been received. Approximately 110 letters of support have also been received. Appendix A of the Committee Report provides a summary of these representations.
- 3.9 All representations received from statutory consultees, non-statutory consultees and other interested individuals, groups and organisations are also set out in Appendix A of the Committee Report.

4.0 Policy & Guidance

- 4.1 The key policy documents and guidance for consideration are set out below.

The Development Plan:

- 4.2 The adopted development plan for the area comprises the Chiltern Core Strategy (2011) and the Saved Policies of the Chiltern District Local Plan (1997, incorporating alterations adopted in 2001), are listed below. Commentary is provided against those Core Strategy and Local Plan policies of particular relevance to the proposals.

- 4.3 Local Plan policies relevant to the proposals include:

- Policy GC1 – Design of Development Throughout the District
- Policy GC2 – Sunlighting and Daylighting Throughout the District
- Policy GC3 – Protection of Amenities Throughout the District
- Policy GC4 – Landscaping Throughout the District
- Policy GC9 – Prevention of Pollution Throughout the District
- Policy GB1 – Extent of Green Belt in the Chiltern District
- Policy GB2– Development in General in the Green Belt
- Policy GB30 – Conservation and Enhancement of Rural Landscape in parts of the Green Belt
- Policy LSQ1 – Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty as Defined on the Proposals Map
- Policy TR2 – Highway Aspects of Planning Applications Throughout the District
- Policy TR15 – Design of Parking Areas Throughout the District Policy
- Policy TR16 – Parking and Manoeuvring Standards Throughout the District
- Policy CSF1 – Provision of Community Services and Facilities in the Built-up Areas Excluded from the Green Belt
- Policy AS2 – Other Unscheduled Archaeological Remains Throughout the District
- Policy TW6 – Resistance to Loss of Woodland Throughout the District
- Policy NC1 – Safeguarding of Nature Conservation Interests throughout the District

- 4.4 The Core Strategy sets out the Spatial strategy which aims to protect the Green Belt by focussing new development on previously developed land within existing settlements. The policies relevant to the proposals include:

- Policy CS1 – The Spatial Strategy
- Policy CS2 – Amount and Distribution of Residential Development 2006-2026

- Policy CS4 – Ensuring That Development is Sustainable
- Policy CS8 – Affordable Housing Policy
- Policy CS10 – Affordable Housing Type
- Policy CS11 – Affordable Housing Size
- Policy CS12 – Specialist Housing
- Policy CS20 – Design and Environmental Quality
- Policy CS22 – Chiltern AONB
- Policy CS24 – Biodiversity
- Policy CS25 – Dealing with the Impact of New Development on the Transport Network
- Policy CS26 – Requirements of New Development Site: Area South East of Little Chalfont 4
- Policy CS29 – Community
- Policy CS30 – Reducing Crime And The Fear of Crime
- Policy CS31 - Infrastructure
- Policy CS32 – Green Infrastructure

4.5 Minerals and Waste plan policies relevant to the proposals include:

Policy 10 Waste prevention and minimisation

4.6 Key policy and guidance documents include:

- Affordable Housing SPD 2012
- Landscape Capacity Assessment for Green Belt Development Options in the emerging Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan November 2017
- Chiltern and South Bucks Townscape Character Study 2017
- Chiltern and South Bucks Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (2020)
- Chiltern District Council Sustainable Construction and Renewable Energy SPD (2015)
- Local Transport Plan: Buckinghamshire Local Transport Plan 4, (April 2016)
- Chiltern and South Bucks Economic Development Strategy: Chiltern District Council & South Bucks District Council (August 2017)

4.7 Other key material considerations:

- National Planning Policy Framework (2021) (NPPF)
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
- National Design Guide (2019)
- Chiltern and South Bucks Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (2020)

Withdrawn Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan (2020)

4.8 On 21 October 2020 Buckinghamshire Council resolved to withdraw the Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan 2036. There is currently no set timetable for the preparation of a new local plan although the Council has stated its intention to have a Buckinghamshire-wide local plan in place by April 2025.

- 4.9 The site of the proposed development formed part of a wider draft allocation (Policy SP BP6) in the withdrawn Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan for a residential-led mixed use development of 700 dwellings, with primary school as part of multi-functioning community hub and 15 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers. Associated highways improvements, sustainable transport options and the retention of employment uses on the part of the site used for employment land were also specified.

5.0 Green Belt

Core Strategy Policies:

CS1 Spatial Strategy

CS2 Amount and distribution of Residential Development 2006-2026

CS3 Amount and Distribution of Non Residential Development

Local Plan Saved Policies:

GB1 Extent of Green Belt in the Chiltern District

GB2 Development in General in the Green Belt

GB30 Conservation and Enhancement of Rural Landscape in parts of the Green Belt

- 5.1 The site lies in the Green Belt. The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. NPPF paragraph 137 states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.
- 5.2 Paragraph 138 of the NPPF 2021 sets out that Green Belt serves the following five purposes:
- (a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas;
 - (b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
 - (c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - (d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and,
 - (e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 5.3 NPPF paragraph 147 states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 148 confirms that when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
- 5.4 The NPPF states that that development should be regarded as inappropriate in the Green Belt except in specified exceptions as set out in Paragraph 149 (a – g). The proposed development does not fall within any of the exceptions (a – g) listed in paragraph 149. The proposals are therefore inappropriate development based on this paragraph of the NPPF.

- 5.5 Local Plan Policy GB2 states that most development in the Green Belt is inappropriate. There is a general presumption against inappropriate development. The policy then goes on to set out categories of development (a – f) in Green Belt that would not be considered to be inappropriate. The proposed development is not referred to within any of these exceptions and is therefore contrary to this policy.
- 5.6 It is considered that policy GB2 of the Local Plan is consistent with the NPPF relating to development in the Green Belt. The level of consistency between Policy GB2 and the NPPF is sufficient to enable the saved policy to continue to be applied. Paragraph 213 of the NPPF states that existing policies should not be considered out-of-date simply because they were adopted or made prior to the publication of the Framework. As such moderate weight is afforded to Policy GB2. Policy GB30 requires development proposals within the Green Belt to be “well integrated into its rural setting and conserve the scenic beauty and amenity of the landscape in the locality of the development”. GB30 is also afforded moderate weight.
- 5.7 The Spatial Strategy for Chiltern set out in Core Strategy Policy CS1 provides the context for shaping the future of the District. It sets out the way in which necessary development will be accommodated and sets the context for achieving the strategic objectives and provides a framework for Core Strategy Policies. The overall approach of the Spatial Strategy is to protect the Chilterns AONB and Green Belt by focusing new development on land within existing settlements not covered by those designations. The proposal would be for a large scale development outside of the existing settlements and within the Green Belt. As such, the proposal would be contrary to the aims of the Spatial Strategy and is contrary to Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy.
- 5.8 As the proposed development amounts to inappropriate development within the Green Belt the applicant has provided a case for very special circumstances. This is considered in detail at section 19 in this report.
- 5.9 The factors that can be taken into account when assessing the impact of a proposal on the openness of the Green Belt can include the spatial and visual aspects of the development (PPG update June 2021, 001 Ref ID: 64-001-20190722).
- 5.10 Background documents to the withdrawn Local Plan include analyses which help inform the assessment of the impact on openness. As part of that evidence it was determined that insufficient land outside the Green Belt was available to meet identified housing and economic development needs. Therefore, the Councils undertook a Green Belt review in two parts. The first was countywide and this recommended that a number of areas be further considered for Green Belt release. These areas were selected for further consideration because they least met the purposes of including land in the Green Belt. The second part of the Green Belt review focused on those areas in Chiltern and South Bucks which had been recommended for further assessment. While the Chiltern and South Bucks Local plan has been

withdrawn and carries no weight, the evidence base can be considered material where relevant.

Part 1: The Buckinghamshire Authorities Buckinghamshire Green Belt Assessment Report: Methodology and Assessment of General Areas, 7 March 2016.

- 5.11 The Green Belt Assessment Part 1 (Arup 2016), assessed strategic land parcels, 'General Areas', against the purposes of the Green Belt as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This assessment identified the relative performance of the General Areas against the NPPF defined purposes of the Green Belt. It included a series of recommendations for further consideration through the local plan process, including whether there might be the potential for the demonstration of 'exceptional circumstances' to justify any alteration to the Green Belt boundary.
- 5.12 The recommendation in respect of RSA-10: 'General Areas 29 and 35 meet the Green Belt purposes, but there is scope to collectively consider an identified broad area further, bounded by Lodge Lane, Roughwood Lane and the B442 (Nightingales Lane) and collectively identified as RSA-10; this area may score weakly and could be considered further.'

Green Belt Assessment Part 2 2019 (Chiltern & South Bucks Stage 2 Green Belt Assessment Strategic Role of the Metropolitan Green Belt in Chiltern & South Bucks 2019)

- 5.13 The Part 2 assessment (April 2019) formed part of the evidence base for the Local Plan to be taken into account alongside other evidence in making decisions about possible changes to Green Belt boundaries. The assessment overall summary for the area in question (Ref No. 1.08, Parcel RSA 10 in which Site 35 was located) was 'Moderate' in terms of scoring against the 5 Green Belt purposes (NPPF). The Regulation 18 Built Area Extension Options includes a pro forma for Site 35 with a summary of the Green Belt Assessment.
- 5.14 The Chiltern and South Bucks District Council – Green Belt Exceptional Circumstances Report (May 2019) set out specific exceptional circumstances for the release of draft allocation site SP BP6 (Little Chalfont – Area West of Lodge Lane, 2.10) from the Green Belt. This was not examined prior to the withdrawal of the Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan. The site was justified for inclusion for, amongst other reasons, the ability to maintain a strong defensible Green Belt boundary. The assessment details that the site performs poorly against three purposes of including land in the Green Belt (purposes a, c and d) and moderately against one purpose (purpose b).

Landscape Capacity Assessment for Green Belt Development Options in the emerging Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan November 2017

- 5.15 The Landscape Capacity Assessment was carried out to appraise in landscape and visual terms the 15 strategic sites which could potentially be released from the Green Belt, subject to other evidence. It is important to note that the purpose of the capacity assessment was not to establish the acceptability of development, but to mitigate harm resulting from development of sites, that could potentially arise from being released from the Green Belt for

development. It states that full Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) would need to inform specific development proposals to establish the potential harm and to demonstrate that harm can be minimised or mitigated against through scale of development, layout, provision of strategically placed open space, landscaping or built form design constraints.

5.16 The site is located within Little Chalfont Rolling Farmland character area and was assessed: Moderate strength of character / intactness, and the Overall strategy / vision: to conserve and enhance the woodland, farmland and historic parkland which is retained between settlements and which contributes to the rural, peaceful character.

5.17 Key characteristics and sensitivities identified as well as the relevant Landscape Guidelines include:

- Conserve and manage the mosaic of woodland and farmland which is key to retaining a rural character between settlements.
- Promote appropriate management of farmland, to help generate a wildlife rich habitat, and visually attractive landscape.
- Conserve the areas of woodland and manage to enhance biodiversity value and as a recreational resource.
- Conserve sweeping open views across farmland and seek to avoid locating detracting or interrupting features.
- Conserve the character of rural roads.
- Seek to avoid further expansion of settlement which leads to suburbanisation along roads.
- Conserve and restore small fields of pre 18th century irregular enclosures.

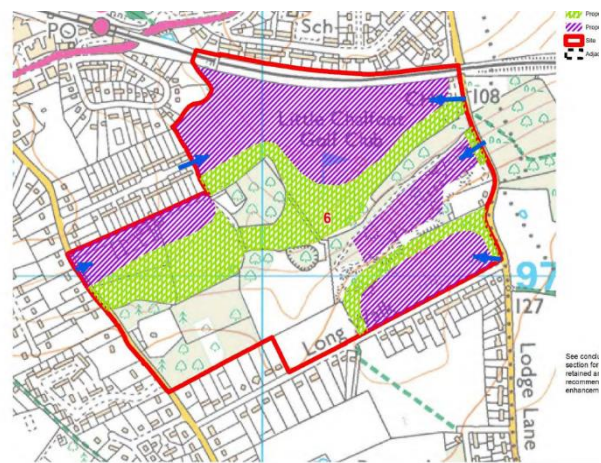
5.18 Site specific considerations included the site being constrained by the need to protect existing trees and woodlands, to protect views from the edge of the AONB and the rural character of Lodge Lane, and to keep built form out of the dry valley landscape, in line with identified special qualities of the AONB. The assessment stated that *'Within these constraints, and subject to the recommendations set out below, much of the higher ground within the former golf course could be developed, leaving the lower dry valleys undeveloped as distinctive landforms and buffer to protect the areas of ancient woodland. An area of development could be accommodated on higher ground to the south-east of properties on Loudhams Wood Lane, within the curtilage of the existing residential property (which is being redeveloped at the time fieldwork was undertaken). A further area of development could be accommodated in the south-east, leaving the dry valley open. The industrial estate has capacity to take intensified development, subject to the protection of the woodland setting and adjacent ancient woodland and the protection of the rural character of Lodge Lane.'*

5.19 The strategic level assessment concluded that the site (6) had a landscape capacity of medium. It is important to note that LCA 2017 was based on development across the site having a density range of 30-35 dwellings per hectare with heights between 2-3 storeys. In contrast to the current application, which proposes a significantly higher density range of 35-65 dph (density parameter plan 00973E-S02 Rev.P1) along with building heights between 2-3.5 storeys (building heights parameter plan 00973E-PP02 Rev. P1). Furthermore, it did not identify or consider the Burtons Lane to Doggetts Wood Lane Established Residential Area of Special Character adjacent to the west of the site (Policy H4, Established Residential Area of Special Character, Chiltern District Local Plan, consolidated 2011). The study noted that detailed landscape and visual assessment would be essential to inform the final capacity of the site in landscape terms.

5.20 For comparison the land use and green infrastructure parameter plan submitted in support of the development is presented alongside the recommended development areas within the Landscape Capacity Assessment.



Land use and green infrastructure parameter plan



Recommended development area

- Pink: Care Home C2*
- Red: Mixed Use*
- Purple: Safeguarded Education*
- Orange: Retirement Living*
- Pink: Care Home*
- Green: Public open space/green infrastructure*

- Green: Landscape buffer*
- Purple: Development Area*

Openness - Spatial and visual impacts

5.21 A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has been undertaken as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). This reports the outcome of the assessment of likely significant environmental effects arising from the proposed development in relation to landscape and visual amenity. This is addressed at section 7 of this report below. The proposed development and associated highway works would be highly visible from several locations

including the surrounding roads. The change to the site would be substantial and the impact on green belt openness would be very substantial.

Green Belt purposes

5.22 The Green Belt purposes are listed in paragraph 138 of the NPPF and are considered in turn below.

Purpose a) To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas

5.23 Little Chalfont is identified as a main settlement within the Core Strategy, however as detailed within the Arup Green Belt Assessment Part 1 the site is not at considered to be at the edge of a large built up area. Development of the site would not conflict with Purpose a.

Purpose b) To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

5.24 The site forms a small part of the wider gap between the non-Green Belt settlements of Little Chalfont and Chorleywood as noted within the 2016 Arup study and although the scale of the land parcel contributes to this gap, it is noted in the study that development in this land parcel is unlikely to cause merging between settlements.

5.25 Further assessment is provided within the Green Belt Part 2 Assessment with the gap between Little Chalfont and Chalfont St Giles also considered. Whilst the northern part of the site is judged as performing less strongly the contribution made to the overall openness and scale of the gap is acknowledged.

5.26 It is considered that the site meets this purpose and development of the site would therefore be in conflict with Purpose b.

Purpose c) To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

5.27 The Stage 2 Green Belt Assessment 2018 finds that this site meets the purpose relatively weakly in terms of wider Green Belt objectives. The openness and scale of the fields contributes to the wider landscape and visual amenity. The public right of way to the north supports public accessibility.

5.28 The proposed development will result in the loss of 24 ha of agricultural land and land open land which was most recently used as a Golf Course. The proposed development will be a significant scale of urbanising development that will encroach into the open countryside. Given the open character of the agricultural fields and the existing mature tree belts and woodland it is considered that the development would result in significant spatial and visual impact detrimental to this purpose.

Purpose d) To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

5.29 The proposed development does not abut an identified historic settlement and does not meet this Green Belt purpose.

Purpose e) To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

- 5.30 As this purpose is to encourage the development of brownfield land, any proposal would be in conflict with this purpose.
- 5.31 The proposed development would constitute inappropriate development and will result in very substantial spatial and visual harm to the openness of the Green Belt. In addition, the proposals will lead to a conflict with three out of the five purposes of including land in the Green Belt. The proposal would be contrary to policy GB2 of the Local Plan. In accordance with NPPF paragraph 148 substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt and ‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. The ‘other harm’ is identified in subsequent sections and the very special circumstances in the Planning Balance are assessed at the end of the report.

6.0 Landscape, Visual and Trees

Core Strategy Policies:

CS1 (Spatial Strategy)

CS4 (Ensuring that Development is Sustainable)

CS20 (Design and Environmental Quality)

CS22 (Chilterns Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty)

Local Plan Saved Policies:

GC1 (Design of Development Throughout the District)

GC4 (Landscaping Throughout the District)

GB2 (Development in General in the Green Belt)

GB30 (Conservation and Enhancement of Rural Landscapes in parts of the Green Belt)

LSQ1 (Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)

H4 Provision of New Dwellings in Established Residential Areas of Special Character as Defined on the Proposals Map

TW6 Resistance to Loss of Woodland Throughout the District

- 6.1 The NPPF at Paragraph 174 advises that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, and by recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. Paragraph 130 c) emphasises the importance of ensuring new developments are sympathetic to local character, including the landscape setting. Paragraph 131 states that trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change and that existing trees should be retained wherever possible.
- 6.2 Policy CS4 seeks to ensure that development preserves and enhances nature conservation interests and important features of the natural environment, including, trees and hedgerows.
- 6.3 Policy GB30 requires development proposals within the Green Belt to be “well integrated into its rural setting and conserve the scenic beauty and amenity of the landscape in the locality of the development” and where appropriate, the

development should “provide for the improvement of degraded landscape within the application site”.

- 6.4 The Site falls within Landscape Character Area 18.3 Little Chalfont Rolling Farmland as per The Chiltern District Landscape Character Assessment 2011 which sets out the Strategy/ Vision to conserve and protect the mosaic of woodland, open farmland and parkland, and to maintain the remaining areas of tranquillity. Guidelines of relevance to the site include:
- Conserve the woodland (including ancient woodland) which provide enclosure in the landscape and forms an important landscape pattern and feature, and invaluable biodiversity benefit.
 - Promote appropriate management of arable farmland, to help generate a wildlife rich habitat, and visually attractive landscape.
 - Conserve and manage hedgerow boundaries, which provide visual unity and intactness and increase biodiversity, linking areas of woodland and agricultural farmland.
 - Consider opportunities for further tree and woodland planting to contain and reduce visual and audible impact of modern development, such as busy roads.
 - Maintain open views across fields, and monitor the introduction of vertical infrastructure, which would adversely affect views within the landscape.
 - Conserve the low density of dispersed settlement.
- 6.5 The Environmental Statement at Chapter 13 Landscape and Visual Impacts, includes a landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) of the proposed development. This reports the outcome of the assessment of likely significant environmental effects arising from the proposed development in relation to landscape and visual amenity.
- 6.6 The Landscape Officer has reviewed the application and provides a summary of their assessment:

‘1.1 The proposal represents an over development of this sensitive site. Proposed housing densities and spread of development across this sensitive site goes significantly beyond that outlined in the 2017 Landscape Capacity Study, produced by Terra Firma as evidence for the withdrawn local plan 2036.

1.2. The effects of the proposal on the landscape character of the site have been wholly underestimated. For instance, the LVIA underestimates the landscape Value by not appropriately considering important natural, cultural and functional features of the site, as required by recent new guidance published by the Landscape Institute in Technical Guidance Note TGN 02-21. Its assessment of landscape Sensitivity is unsound as it mixes up Low and Medium values in the assessment. It also fails to recognise the Landscape Guidelines for Development, set out in the Council’s Landscape Character Assessment (Landscape Character Area 18.3 Little Chalfont Rolling Farmland), which aim to

protect sensitive features of the landscape. Proposed mitigation has been inaccurately described in the Year 1 and Year 15 assessment of effects on the Landscape Character of the site (Table 7) and suggests the development would, for instance, 'conserve the network of hedgerows and hedgerow trees' and 'take account of the Root Protection Areas for existing trees', which is not true. The proposal would cause Significant Moderate/Major harm to the landscape character of the site.

1.3. The proposed development encroaches over the northern side of the dry valley, to below the 110m contour AOD. The legibility of the dry valley would be lost, causing Significant Moderate/Major harm to this key characteristic.

1.4. Given the limited information provided about mitigation, the effects on both ancient woodland, trees and general woodland would be Neutral, in landscape terms. The implied benefits of new planting and management are not detailed or controllable enough to be considered a reliable balance to weigh against the identified harms.

1.5. The removal of 70% of the Grade A2 woodland (W13) from along Lodge Lane, and replacement with an engineered retaining structure, would cause Significant Major harm to both the rural character of the lane, and the woodland itself. The ES confirms this harm cannot be mitigated.

1.6. The effects of introducing lighting across two thirds of this dark, unlit site has not been considered in any of the assessments of landscape or visual impact. This is a critical omission as the lighting (which would include flood lighting for the sports pitches and lighting for commercial premises, as well as street lighting and domestic lighting) would cause Significant Moderate/Major harm to the character of the site, as well as Significant Moderate/Major harm to a number of views from outside the site.

1.7. The proposed 45-55 dph would not allow for the level of green space, planting and size of trees required to provide an appropriate landscape design response to the adjacent Burtons Lane to Doggetts Wood Lane Area of Special Character and would cause Significant Moderate harm to it and its setting.

1.8. None of the Visual Effects assessments (detailed in Table 8, appendix 13.8, LVIA) have included a consideration of lighting across the site (which includes potential flood lighting for sports pitches) and are therefore inaccurate and unreliable. Other impacts have also been underestimated. The proposal would cause Significant Moderate/Major harm to a number of views from outside the site.

1.9. Insufficient detail of proposed mitigation has been provided. It is not considered appropriate that unquantified secondary mitigation and enhancement proposals be relied on so heavily in the assessment of landscape and visual effects of the development. It is also considered inappropriate that the future management of these important and irreplaceable landscape features (which is relied upon to provide benefits) be consigned to being dealt with by condition.

1.10. Any future proposals for development on this site must accurately identify the landscape sensitivities of this valued site and its surroundings and seek to protect and enhance them as required by the NPPF. The spread and density of development should be greatly reduced to more closely reflect Terra Firma's Landscape and Capacity Assessment 2017 but also be informed by an LVIA. It should identify and retain the characteristic dry valley topography.

1.11. Housing densities should be kept lower to reflect the sensitivities of the site and local landscape and to allow for greater retention of important trees and hedgerows. There should be greater opportunities for sizable tree planting throughout the development on streets and incidental open space to provide a high quality landscape for future residents. Lighting should be considered as part of the design stage to ensure development that requires heavy lighting is not located adjacent to sensitive landscape features. All lighting should be designed to the Institute of Lighting Professional's requirements for Environmental Zones E1.'

- 6.7 Further to the publication of the Landscape Officer response the Agent has sought to provide a number of clarifications. This submission reiterates conclusions within the LVIA and does not alter the Landscape Officer assessment of the proposed development.
- 6.8 The site is considered to be a 'valued' landscape in terms of para 174(a) of the NPPF and the proposed development would fail to protect and enhance this valued landscape. The proposed development also fails to achieve Landscape Guidelines for development in Landscape Character Area 18.3 by requiring the removal of important and valued trees, hedgerow and farmland; harming the rural character of Lodge Lane and proposing development that would change the character of surrounding roads.

Trees

- 6.9 Tree Preservation Order No 5 of 1984 protects Netherground Spring on the south-eastern edge of the site adjacent to Honours Yard in Lodge Lane. This is also classified as an area of ancient semi-natural woodland. Tree Preservation Order No. 10 of 1986 protects Loudhams Wood at Pucks Paigles in Burtons Lane, just outside the southern boundary of the site. Stonydean Wood in the centre of the site is classified as another area of ancient semi-natural woodland.
- 6.10 During the course of the application an ES Addendum was submitted to include additional information relating to the proposed highway works with the result being an increase in the number of arboricultural features across the site (from 69 to 73 features).
- 6.11 The application submitted is considered in outline only, however, the trees shown to be removed on the most recently updated revision detail that 19 trees within woodland W13 (beside Lodge Lane) would be removed, which is most of this section of woodland. The report describes woodland W13 as being in good physiological and structural condition and lists it in the highest Category of A2. The Arboricultural Officer considers that 'the removal of most of the trees in this woodland would have a dramatic adverse effect on the

appearance and rural character of the sunken section of Lodge Lane just to the north of the railway bridge’.

- 6.12 The submitted Land Use and Green Infrastructure plan shows woodland to be retained within the site, however no allowance is made to retain other Category A and B trees. The Tree Officer suggests that they hope these trees could be retained within future reserved matters applications, however, given the detail provided in support of the outline planning application it is considered that greater reassurance is required in relation to retention of these trees. An insufficient level of information has been submitted to demonstrate that the development will retain other category A and B trees within the site.
- 6.13 Notwithstanding the concerns raised relating to the tree loss associated with widening of Lodge Lane and suggested removal of trees within the site, the indicative proposal suggests that the applicant intends to comply with Natural England/Forestry Commission Standing advice relating to the buffers for ancient and veteran trees as required.
- 6.14 The proposed development would give rise to significant detrimental impacts on the landscape character of the area. The proposed development and landscape strategy would be harmful to the landscape setting and contrary to the objectives set out in the Landscape Capacity Assessment with the proposed spread and density of development being too great and failing to adequately take account of the existing landscape character and site features including the characteristic dry valley topology. The character of Lodge Lane and Burtons Lane and their relationship to the adjoining landscape including the Chilterns AONB would be fundamentally changed. The proposed tree removal on Lodge Lane with associated replacement retaining structure is harmful and would result in harm to the character of Lodge Lane and the woodland itself. Harm to the Burtons Lane to Doggetts Wood Lane Area of Special Character is noted with the landscape design failing to appropriately respond to this character. Insufficient detail relating to mitigation and the effect of lighting across the site including in relation to sensitive landscape features has been provided and it is considered that harm to a number of views from outside the site are underestimated. The proposed development is therefore considered to be in conflict with NPPF paragraphs 130, 131 and 174, with Core Strategy policies CS22 and CS32, and Saved Local Plan policies GC4, GB30, H4, LSQ1 and TW6.

7.0 Design (Raising the quality of place making and design) and amenity

Core Strategy Policies:

CS4 (Ensuring that Development is Sustainable)

CS20 (Design and Environmental Quality)

CS26 (Requirements of New Development)

Local Plan Saved Policies:

GC1 (Design of Development)

GC4 (Landscaping Throughout the District)

- 7.1 The NPPF (2021) at paragraph 126 states that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Paragraph 130 states that developments should, among other requirements, function well and add to the overall quality of the area, be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and landscaping, and be sympathetic to local character and history. Paragraph 134 states that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards or style guides in plans or supplementary planning documents. The National Design Guide has been introduced and this places great importance on context and detailing, stating, for example that 'well-designed new development responds positively to the features of the site itself and the surrounding context beyond the site boundary. It enhances positive qualities and improves negative ones'.
- 7.2 Policy CS20 requires that new development is of a high standard of design which reflects and respects the character of the surrounding area and those features that contribute to local distinctiveness. Policy GC1 also requires that development is designed to a high standard and sets out that design includes both the appearance of the proposed development and its relationship to its surroundings including scale, height, siting and adjoining buildings and highways; appearance of car parking and servicing areas; building materials; and design against crime. Local Plan Policy H3 also states that new dwellings should be compatible with the character of the area in respect of scale, siting and height. These good design principles are also reflected within the NPPF which states that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. The NPPF also states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.
- 7.3 The application is in outline form, with all matters reserved except for 'Means of Access'. The scheme design is for consideration at the Reserved Matters Stage. However, the proposals include development parameters for approval, these are:
- Land Use and Green Infrastructure – This includes residential and a local centre, primary schools, open space, existing woodland and associated woodland and ecological buffers
 - Building heights – building heights vary in four categories for residential dwellings: up to 2, up to 2.5, up to 3 and up to 3.5 storeys, mixed use development up to 3.5 storeys and land safeguarded for educational use up to 2 storeys
 - Access and movement – a network of streets, vehicle, cycle and pedestrian routes
 - Demolition Plan – Buildings to be demolished

- 7.4 A Design and Access Statement includes an illustrative masterplan which shows how the design of the scheme has developed and the application of the Parameter Plans. The layout is structured around retained woodland ‘Stonydean Wood’ and a primary route / street network comprising access from Burtons Lane and Lodge Lane, with bus/ emergency access only route running across the centre of the site.
- 7.5 The Urban Design Officer has been consulted and raises a number of concerns. It is considered that the design principles, in the form of parameter plans are unsatisfactory as they do not provide a robust basis for any future reserved matters submission as they would permit a disconnected street network, poor resolution of the interface with existing homes and would allow development to come forward at a uniform scale. Concerns relating to the density parameters are also shared by the Landscape Officer who objects to the height and density of development within sensitive parts of the site. The proposals as submitted would limit the ability to secure a well designed scheme. Insufficient information has been provided to ensure that key design principles will be adhered to at reserved matters stage.
- 7.6 The proposed vehicular route located centrally across the site (to the south of Stonydean Wood) and connecting the two halves of the development is annotated as being a vehicular route for bus and emergency vehicles only. Concern is raised with regard to the operation of this link, and information has not been provided to demonstrate that a bus service is viable. Concern is raised that the link may not be delivered in any form.
- 7.7 Other urban design weaknesses relate to the assessment of off-site walking and cycling infrastructure, internal layout with particular concerns about building orientation and street network. Insufficient information relating to surface water drainage features is provided to allow assessment in urban design terms.
- 7.8 As detailed within Section 7 of this report, the proposal does not appreciate local character and the Council’s Townscape Character Study has not been utilised. The National Design Guide emphasises the importance of context within which a site is located. As such, the failure to respond to this existing character is considered a critical oversight.

Open space, sports and recreation

- 7.9 The proposals include public open space, provided for in reference to the ‘Fields in Trust’ standards and Chiltern District Council (CDC) Open Space Strategy.

Open space typology	CDC Open Space Strategy/Fields in Trust Guidance (set out in DAS)	Open Space proposed
Amenity Green Space	0.55	1.35ha
Parks & Gardens	0.87ha	1.24ha

Natural / Semi Natural Space	1.64	8.30ha
Allotments / Community Grow	0.18	0.29ha
Equipped play (on-site)	0.23ha	0.28ha
MUGA/Bike and Skate Park	1.7ha	0.28
TOTAL PROVISION	3.33ha	11.74ha

- 7.10 Sport England notes that the proposal includes provision of a new primary school with associated playing field and sports facilities. It is encouraged that these are opened up for the use of the wider community. Information relating to the ground conditions and standard of pitches to be provided would have been requested by condition had the application been recommended for approval.
- 7.11 The comments made by Sports England are noted with regard to loss of the golf course, however it is considered that the principle of the change of use of this land to a residential dwelling with the rest of the land associated with equestrian use was established under application CH/2009/0194/FA, which was refused by the former Chiltern District Council and subsequently allowed at appeal.
- 7.12 Though noted that 'Stonydean Wood' is to be fenced off to prevent harm from recreational pressure it is considered likely that this would be subject to such pressures given its location surrounded by residential development and that this would give rise to conflict between amenity/recreation and biodiversity (as detailed within section 14 of this report).
- 7.13 The provision of open space and publicly accessible walking routes through the site is of benefit particularly where that can assist in meeting requirements beyond the needs of the scheme, however located at the edge of the settlement it is not necessarily best located to meet need and it otherwise does not constitute a great benefit when considered against existing infrastructure (in qualitative as well as quantitative terms). The weight to be attributed to green infrastructure as a benefit would be tempered in this context.

Amenity

- 7.14 This is an outline application with the scheme design including separation distances and daylight/sunlight for consideration at the Reserved Matters Stage. Matters relating to amenity for future residents would be adequately dealt with as part of the detailed design stage had the application been recommended for approval. In terms of the amenity of existing residents the separation distances to the new housing are sufficient and would not give rise

to detrimental outlook and light impacts, any loss of privacy, noise or disturbance.

- 7.15 The proposals include development parameters for approval. The layout of the development as framed by these parameters gives rise to concerns as they are not considered to result in a high quality outcome. The comments of the landscape and urban design officers highlight concerns relating to the potential for the development to harm the character and appearance of the area and that it lacks good place making qualities. Concerns relating to disconnected street networks are also raised, with the proposed development effectively operating as two large cul-de-sacs and insufficient clarity provided regarding use of the central access road. Provision of natural/semi natural green space well in excess of requirements is noted, and whilst this may mitigate some pressure on 'Stonydean Wood' (an area of Ancient Woodland) concern is raised regarding the mechanisms to be put in place with regard to preventing access and the development parameters are likely to give rise to conflict between amenity/recreation and biodiversity which could be addressed through better design.
- 7.16 The development is therefore considered to represent poor design contrary to policy CS20 of the Core Strategy for Chiltern District (Adopted November 2011), policies GC1 and GC4 of the Chiltern District Local Plan Adopted 1 September 1997 (including alterations adopted 29 May 2001) Consolidated September 2007 and November 2011, guidance set out within the Chiltern and South Bucks Townscape Character Study (November 2017) as well as paragraphs 124 and 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021), and the National Design Guide (2019).

8.0 Housing and Affordable Housing

Core Strategy Policies:

Core Policy CS1 The Spatial Strategy

Core Policy CS2 Amount and Distribution of Residential Development 2006-2026

Core Policy CS8 Affordable Housing Policy

Core Policy CS12 Specialist Housing

Local Plan Saved Policies:

H9 Residential development and layout

- 8.1 The NPPF supports the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes and at paragraph 60 states it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed. The NPPF at paragraph 63 (affordable housing) specifies *"Where a need for affordable housing is identified, planning policies should specify the type of affordable housing required, and expect it to be met on-site unless:*

- *off-site provision or an appropriate financial contribution in lieu can be robustly justified; and*
- *the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities"*

- 8.2 The NPPF at paragraph 65 seeks at least 10% of the total number of homes to be available for affordable home ownership. Exemptions to this requirement include where the proposed development is to be developed by people who wish to build or commission their own homes. Affordable housing is defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF as *“Housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions’*
- *Affordable Housing for Rent*
 - *Starter Homes*
 - *Discount Market Sales Housing (DMSH)*
 - *Other Affordable Routes to Home Ownership”*
- 8.3 Policy CS1 The Spatial Strategy, details that within the district it will be aimed to protect the Chilterns AONB and Green Belt by focusing new development between 2006 and 2026 on land within existing settlements not covered by those designations. The built-up areas of the most accessible of these settlements: Chesham; Amersham/Amersham-on-the-Hill; Chalfont St Peter and Little Chalfont will be the main focus for development.
- 8.4 Policy CS2 sets out the proposed distribution of development including the built-up area of Little Chalfont. Identifying Chesham, Amersham/Amersham-on-the-Hill, Little Chalfont and Chalfont St Peter as the four principal growth locations to deliver the Core Strategy (2011) target of between 1,685 – 1,935 new homes.
- 8.5 Policy CS8 provides a target for the provision of affordable housing (in new developments which contain 15 dwellings or more), of at least 40%.
- 8.6 Policy CS12 (Specialist Housing) states that within Amersham/Amersham-on-the-Hill, Little Chalfont, Chesham and Chalfont St Peter, the Council and its partners will encourage the provision of extra-care homes, specialist housing for the elderly and housing
- 8.7 The Council is currently unable to demonstrate the five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. As set out within the Chiltern and South Bucks Interim Five-Year Housing Land Supply Calculation (at 1st April 2020, published 11th September 2020) the Chiltern Area can demonstrate 4.18 years supply.
- 8.8 The proposed development is residential-led for up to 380 dwellings. Self-build plots would be included and 40% affordable housing is proposed. The indicative mix of housing is provided in the table below, but the final mix would be determined at Reserved Matters stage.

Total dwellings: 380	Private		Affordable	
Market housing (inc self	4 bed +	75 (20%)	4 bed	23 (15%)

build) : 228	3 bed	135 (36%)	3 bed	44 (29%)
Affordable housing of which: 152	2 bed	154 (41%)	2 bed	82(54%)
Affordable home ownership: 106	1 bed	16 (4%)	1 bed	3 (2%)
Intermediate tenures (inc First Homes):46				
Retirement Living 100	3 bed	10 (10%)		
	2 bed	80 (80%)		
	1 bed	10 (10%)		
Care Home	60 (Beds)			

Affordable Housing

- 8.9 It is proposed that 40% of the scheme will be affordable housing with a split of 70% rented accommodation and 30% intermediate housing. The Housing Officer notes the breakdown of affordable housing properties into sizes, however the split between rented and intermediate housing is not provided. The Officer suggests that a good mix and even spread of properties within both tenures is required and would not want to see a disproportionately higher number of larger family homes (3 and 4 bedroom) in the intermediate housing units compared to the rented units. The number of one bedroom properties is low and it would be preferable to have a higher proportion of 1 bedroom affordable homes to better reflect the demands on the Council's Housing Register.
- 8.10 In terms of affordable housing provision 40% affordable housing provision would meet Core Strategy Policies CS8 and CS10. A good mix of property sizes across all affordable housing tenures would be required and not have larger properties concentrated in affordable home ownership, such matters would have been addressed at the detailed stage had the application been recommended for approval.

Care Home and Retirement Village

- 8.11 Elderly Care in the form of a 100 home retirement village and a 60 bed care home are proposed.
- 8.12 As detailed within Policy CS12 within the built up areas of towns, including Little Chalfont, specialist housing will be supported with locations needing to have regard to the proximity to shops, health and community facilities. Whilst the need to such facilities is acknowledged it is considered that such development should be focussed on the identified locations rather than in the Green Belt.

9.0 Mix of uses: Community uses

Core Strategy Policies:

CS1 The Spatial Strategy

CS3 Amount and Distribution of Non-Residential Development 2006-2026

CS27 Working for a Healthier Community

CS29 Community

CS31 Infrastructure

Local Plan policies:

GB1 Extent of the Green Belt in Chiltern District

GB2 Development in General in the Green Belt

GB23 Limited Infilling Including Local Community Facilities in the Green Belt in the Areas Defined In Policies GB4 and GB5

- 9.1 NPPF Paragraph 92 states that planning decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which promote social interaction, are safe and accessible and enable and support healthy lifestyles. Mixed use developments with strong neighbourhood centres and provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling, are cited by way of example. NPPF Paragraph 93 supports the provision of social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs.
- 9.2 Policy 29 details that community facilities should be provided in areas of identified need and that this should be located within proximity of existing community infrastructure. Priorities should be delivered with the local community.
- 9.3 Policy 31 relates to the provision of infrastructure to serve residents and businesses and that new development must ensure that adequate capacity is maintained to meet the needs of future occupiers and would not worsen existing deficiencies.

Community Hub

- 9.4 The application proposes the inclusion of a 'Community Hub' with flexible retail, community and health uses E(a)(b)(e), F2(b) up to a maximum of 1,000sqm. The planning statement details that any retail provision would be limited in size to avoid harming the existing centre. Additional information/evidence of need for the community hub has not been provided in support of the application and it appears that this proposal has come about as a result of the community consultation and desire for an inside venue for use by older and younger residents.
- 9.5 Policy GB23 allows for community shops as limited infilling in the Green Belt, however this the proposed development is not part of an identified Green Belt Settlement and as such the policy is not applicable. As such there is no local policy threshold for these uses, and given their scale it is not considered that harm to the vitality of the 'Little Chalfont' centre. Notwithstanding this the

proposed inclusion of these facilities within the Green Belt is inappropriate development given that their need has not been adequately justified.

- 9.6 It is noted that Policy SP BP6 of the Local Plan detailed that a primary school would be provided as part of a multi-functioning community hub, however site specific requirements were to be agreed through the masterplanning process. It is not clear how the size or uses proposed would support the proposed development.
- 9.7 No substantive or quantitative information has been provided in relation to the need for community uses to serve the existing Little Chalfont community as well as the new dwellings proposed, therefore it is only possible to attribute this element of the proposal limited weight.

Health

- 9.8 The additional population of 1,132 generated by the proposed Development would increase demand for primary healthcare facilities. Primary Healthcare is considered within Chapter 7 of the Environmental Statement. NHS data has been assessed and it is detailed that surplus capacity exists within surgeries within one mile of the site to absorb new patients. The Clinical Commissioning Group was consulted but have not provided any comment on the application.
- 9.9 With regard to acute and community health care Buckinghamshire Healthcare Trust have been consulted but have not provided comment on the application.

Education

- 9.10 Land (1.4ha) for a 1-Form Entry primary school or Primary school expansion with nursery is proposed to be safeguarded. Alternatively the applicant details that expansion of Little Chalfont School may be considered more appropriate.
- 9.11 Comments have been provided by the Education Officer who details that schools in the area are close to capacity. The scheme would generate a little over 0.5 forms of entry with the minimum size of school that would be approved by the Department of Education being 1 form entry. It would therefore be expected that the applicants would meet the full cost of building a new primary school. Secondary schools are currently at capacity, therefore financial contributions towards infrastructure costs per dwelling would be required to be secured via legal agreement had the application been recommended for approval.

10.0 Heritage

Core Strategy Policies:

CS4 Ensuring that Development is Sustainable

CA2 Views Within, out of, or into the Conservation Areas as Defined on the Proposals Map

AS1 Scheduled Monuments and Other Nationally Important Unscheduled Archaeological Remains Throughout the District

AS2 Other Unscheduled Archaeological Remains Throughout the District

LB1 Protection of Special Architectural of Historic Interest of Listed Buildings Throughout the District

LB2 Protection of Setting of Listed Buildings Throughout the District

- 10.1 The application proposals have been assessed in relation to the relevant statutory duties, including the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the National Planning Policy Framework and development plan policies.
- 10.2 The NPPF at paragraph 199 states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. Paragraph 202 states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
- 10.3 Policies LB1 and LB2 set out the approach to heritage protection. These policies refer to the protection of the historic environment buildings and their setting and contribution to the local scene, and whether the proposed works would bring substantial planning benefits for the community. It is recognised that this is not entirely consistent with the 'language' of paragraphs 193 and 196 of the NPPF, as the Framework refers to 'significance' and levels of 'harm' to heritage assets. However, the Local Plan policies are still relevant to the determination of the application.
- 10.4 No designated heritage assets are located within or immediately adjacent to the area. To the north of the application site is the registered Grade II listed park and garden Latimer Park and the Chenies and Latimer Conservation area.
- 10.5 The wider residential area surrounding the application site contains listed buildings, the nearest being the Grade II listed Loudhams farmhouse and barn. There are a number of other Grade II listed buildings, namely Snells Farmhouse, Sheep Cottages and a milepost south of the junction with Chessfield Park within the village. However, these are all separated from the application site by the existing landscape of residential dwellings, trees and the developed settlement. As such, their settings would not be affected by the proposed development.
- 10.6 Whilst Listed Buildings within Chenies and Latimer are in excess of the 1km from the application site and do not require further consideration it is necessary to consider Listed Buildings of a larger scale and greater significance. Latimer House is located in an elevated position on the southern edge of Latimer Village within the Registered Park and Garden (RPG) at Latimer Park. The Heritage Officer considers that these assets would not be affected given that mutual visibility is not possible given that extensive woodland impedes any direct views between the application site and the open character of the park and garden. The setting of the woodland within the RPG would not be

impacted given the existing modern development to the north of the application site.

- 10.7 The Chenies and Latimer Conservation Area follows a similar boundary to the Latimer Park RPG and it is not considered that the setting of this Conservation Area would be affected.
- 10.8 The proposal includes the demolition of the buildings which form 'Homestead'. This building has been assessed for its potential to be considered as a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA). The complex of buildings at Homestead are more removed from the typical suburban development of semi-detached rows of development synonymous with 'Metroland' given its scale and isolated location, however Homestead features a collection of early twentieth century buildings in the Arts and Crafts architectural style featuring characteristics such as over scaled gables, steep roof slopes and timber detailing that was common at this time. It is considered that extensions and alterations have significantly undermined the original architectural integrity and setting of the buildings and the building does not appear to have been built by an important architect nor for a notable owner. Despite this, the collection of buildings at Homesteads is an important collection of buildings built around the time of major development to the village and the site offers some historic interest. As such a condition relating to the recording of the buildings prior to demolition is required to be attached had the application been recommended for approval.
- 10.9 It is considered that the proposal would preserve the architectural and historic interest of listed buildings and the character and appearance of the conservation areas in accordance with sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 . In accordance with local policy requirements and the NPPF, the proposal would cause no harm to the significance of the identified heritage assets.
- 10.10 Policy AS2 is of relevance to proposed development where there is the potential to affect archaeological remains. The proposed site lies within a wider landscape with limited recorded archaeology, however as detailed within the submitted documentation this may be due to the lack of archaeological fieldwork undertaken. It is noted that where works have been undertaken such as at Raans Farm Carpenters & Hillas Woodland, artefact scatters of Mesolithic and Neolithic Date have been identified. Also, Lidar coverage of the area reveals new earthwork sites for example a possible Roman Road route to the south. The site has been subject to disturbance through landscaping, quarrying, services and the installation of the golf course, therefore any archaeology remaining in situ would be affected by the proposed development and as such the significance of any archaeological remains within the proposed development site cannot be known until further investigation has been undertaken. Had the application been recommended for approval then conditions would have been imposed that would require the developer to secure appropriate investigation, recording, publication and archiving of results in order to satisfy paragraph 199 of the NPPF, and Local Plan policy AS2.

11.0 Highway Safety, Transport and Access

Core Strategy Policies:

CS4 Ensuring That Development Is Sustainable

CS25 Dealing With The Impact Of New Development On The Transport Network

CS26 Requirements Of New Development

Local Plan Saved Policies:

GC1 Development Throughout the District

TR2 Highway Aspects of Planning Applications Throughout the District

TR3 Access and Road Layout Throughout the District

TR11 Provision of Off-Street Parking for Developments Throughout the District

TR15 Design of Parking Areas Throughout the District

TR16 Parking and Manoeuvring Standards Throughout the District

11.1 NPPF Paragraph 110 advises the following: *“In assessing specific applications for development, it should be ensured that:*

- a) appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport can be, or have been taken up, given the type of development and its location;*
- b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users; and*
- c) the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code; and*
- d) any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree”*

11.2 Paragraph 111 of the NPPF states that: *“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.”* Paragraph 113 states that *“All developments that will generate significant amounts of movement should be required to provide a travel plan, and the application should be supported by a transport statement or transport assessment so that the likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed.”*

11.3 Policy CS25 relates to dealing with the impact of new development on the transport network. It is necessary to ensure that development will not adversely affect the transport network and that provision is made to mitigate any negative impacts. Policy CS26 requires that new developments provide safe and convenient access on foot and by cycle whilst supporting connections with the existing network and integrating with the local public transport network. Development should not materially increase existing traffic problems with mitigation/improvements secured as necessary. Appropriate and effective vehicular and cycle parking should be provided.

11.4 Policy TR2 sets out a number of principles that proposed developments should accord with. Of relevance to the proposal are the requirements to provide satisfactory access onto the existing highway network; the highway network in

the vicinity of the site should have capacity to accommodate any additional flow of traffic generated by that development without significantly exacerbating any existing overloading or other traffic related problems; traffic of excessive volume size or weight will not be accepted on unsuitable roads, and standards of road safety for all users should, at minimum, be maintained and where appropriate, improved.

- 11.5 Policy TR3 requires highway access and layout arrangements of proposed development to be in accordance with standards adopted by Buckinghamshire County Council and any current policy guidance from the Department for Transport. Also, off-site highway improvements may be required in some circumstances.
- 11.6 Policy TR16 is applicable to off-street parking provision, with vehicle parking standards set out for different forms of development. Suitable provision shall also be made for disabled drivers, motorcycles and cycle parking. Provision should accord with Standards in Policy TR16. Policy TR15 is relevant to the design and layout of car parking areas, with a number of criteria cited.
- 11.7 The site sits to the south of the A404 Amersham Road, linking Amersham and Little Chalfont to the M25 and Chorleywood. The A404 is reached from the site by Burtons Lane to the West and Lodge Lane to the East. These roads provide links through the rural road network to the A413 in Chalfont St Peter and on to the M40 motorway. Within the centre of little Chalfont there is the confluence of Burtons Lane, the A404 and the B4443, Cokes Lane. This confluence takes the form of two junctions in very close proximity, a mini roundabout and a priority junction. There are a number of constraints and limitations around this junction that shall be elaborated on further later in this section of the report. Lodge Lane joins the A404 through a staggered crossroad junction on the eastern boundary of Little Chalfont. It should be noted that Lodge Lane passes under a railway bridge to the north of the site access location, and this forms a constraint on Lodge Lane.

Impact on capacity of roads

- 11.8 The Highways Network Impact Assessment has not been carried out using strategic modelling of the site and surrounding areas or agreed with the Highway Authority and is therefore considered to be insufficient. Given the scale and location of the development it should be subject to strategic modelling in order to assess the changes that would be anticipated as a result of re-routing of traffic and different choices that would be made by new and existing users of the network but also to determine the acceptability of any necessary mitigation. Additionally, the applicant has not taken into consideration any committed or potential significant developments in the area. The Highway Authority raise a number of concerns with regard to local junction modelling and conclude that it is not possible to draw definitive locations from the outputs given the comments raised. Concern is also raised in relation to the appropriateness of the year 2026 being used in future assessments. Therefore, it has not been demonstrated that the development would result in an acceptable impact on the free flow and safety of the road network.

Design Impacts

- 11.9 The proposed access arrangements to the site comprise of two priority junctions, one on Burtons Lane and one on Lodge Lane. Both of these junctions are at the bottom of dips, however they are able to achieve the visibility requirements in both directions (120m on Lodge Lane and 90m on Burtons Lane). Notwithstanding this, the Highway Authority notes that additional information is required in the form of Stage One Safety Audits. Concern is also raised relating to the safe access of large vehicles including buses from Lodge Lane and Burtons Lane. Road widening on Lodge lane is noted with the proposed width considered to be acceptable, however additional information is required relating to forward visibility and the width of the carriageway to demonstrate that two vehicles can pass.
- 11.10A new footbridge is proposed for pedestrian and cycle access over the railway line to the north of the site. Connection to Oakington Avenue and onward to the A404 is considered acceptable in principle, however in order to assess fully details of the pedestrian trips the Highway Authority requires more information from a sustainability perspective. Additional information is also required relating to the passing of traffic through the site, as the proposal details that this would only be possible for service vehicles such as buses to gain access. There is a lack of information as to how service vehicles will be managed along the main route into the site.
- 11.11 With regard to road safety, the area for assessment should be extended by a small amount as this identifies that within the last 5 years a number of accidents have occurred and this requires further investigation.
- 11.12 The deficiencies identified within the Transport Assessment prevent the Highway Authority from assessing the mitigation package proposed.
- 11.13 The internal layout of the site as indicated on the 'Access and Movement Parameter Plan' contains a number of no-through routes that would require refuse and deliver service vehicles to turn and reverse within the site. Consideration should also have been given to the cycle design infrastructure Government guidance (LTN 1/20).

Sustainable travel

- 11.14 Sustainable transport provision for the site has not been assessed against Buckinghamshire Standards and Guidance and is therefore not considered to be a comprehensive assessment. It is also noted that detail relating to the topography of the site has not been included. As such, the Highway Authority considers that walking and cycling provision requires further assessment and review to demonstrate acceptability with respect to the distance, levels and appropriateness of the provision. Insufficient information relating to the capacity of rail services has been provided to ascertain whether this is an attractive sustainable transport option for future residents and this insufficiency, as well as inaccuracies within quoted train and bus frequency data in the TA, is noted by Transport for London in its comments on the application.

- 11.15 In terms of the draft Travel Plan a number of deficiencies are identified. A suite of Travel Plans within an overarching Travel Plan would be required. The detail within the draft plan does not suggest that any additional measures to encourage walking and cycling beyond natural take up would be proposed. Benefit of the provision of high speed internet connections is limited and the correlation with reduced vehicle trips questionable. Clearly defined travel plan targets are required to allow judgement of whether or not a plan is successful. The information within the draft Travel Plan is insufficient and should be fails to consider Buckinghamshire Council requirements.
- 11.16 The Strategic Access Officer identifies that there are no public rights of way within or close to the site that would contribute to walking and cycling for new residents resulting in no improvements to provide better links to local facilities on the network. Despite this, footpath LCI/11/1 commences near the proposed vehicular access on Lodge Lane and this provides a recreational link to the wider Chess Valley for which there will be more demand. The 'Access and Movement' parameter plan proposes a linking pedestrian route from the internal site layout to a point opposite Footpath LCF/11/1. As such this connection is considered to be acceptable.
- 11.17 Following issuing of consultee comments clarifications were provided by the Agent. In the absence of the required information to properly assess the impacts of the development the Highway Authority's position remains unchanged.
- 11.18 It is considered that insufficient information has been submitted with the planning application to enable the highways, traffic and transportation implications of the proposed development to be fully assessed. The site has not been fully demonstrated to have safe and suitable access, an impact on the highway network that is less than severe, and that appropriate sustainable travel provision can be achieved. The proposed development is contrary to paragraphs 110, 111 and 112 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Core Policies 25 and 26 of the Core Strategy for Chiltern District, Buckinghamshire Council's Highways Development Management Guidance (2018) and the aims of Buckinghamshire's Local Transport Plan 4.

12.0 Agricultural Land

Core Strategy Policies:

Policy CS4 Ensuring that Development is Sustainable

- 12.1 The NPPF, at paragraph 174 b) notes the benefits of protecting the best and most versatile agricultural land (BMV). The footnote to paragraph 171 also states "where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of a higher quality". The glossary of the NPPF gives the following definition "*Best and most versatile agricultural land: Land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification.*" In assessing the effects of the development on agricultural land it is necessary to have given consideration to the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC), devised by Ministry of Agriculture

Fisheries and Food (1988). This is the standard method used for determining the quality of agricultural land.

- 12.2 Policy CS4 of the Chiltern's Core Strategy (2011) requires development to comply with the sustainable development principles as set out in Table 1. Criteria P of these principles requires development to take into account *"the presence of the best and most versatile agricultural land when siting new development"*.
- 12.3 Sections of the application site which comprise Homestead Farm, to the south and west of the site, are categorised as Grade 3 Agricultural Land in accordance with the National Landscape Character Area assessment (110 The Chilterns) and Natural England data sets. Existing data does not provide clarification as to the sub-category of this ALC. It is therefore not possible to ascertain whether the agricultural elements of the site fall within Grade 3a or 3b.
- 12.4 Whilst it is accepted that soil and agricultural land quality was scoped out of the Environmental Statement as not being a significant EIA matter there is insufficient information available within the application submission to accurately assess the impact of development proposals on the loss of agricultural land. As outlined above, if the site falls within Grade 3a, it is considered best and most versatile agricultural land in accordance with the Framework. The stated lack of viable agricultural land also needs to be evidenced further through commercial viability reports. Although it is acknowledged that only a small segment of the site comprises agricultural land, the unknown quality of this land and lack of rationale provided to support its permanent loss remains a significant consideration in the assessment of the development proposal.
- 12.5 It is therefore considered that there is insufficient information submitted to assess the impact of development proposals on the best and most versatile agricultural land, in accordance with the paragraph 174 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) and Policy CS4 of the Chilterns Core Strategy (2011).

13.0 Ecology and Biodiversity

Core Strategy Policies:

CS4 Ensuring that Development is Sustainable

CS24 Biodiversity

CS32 Green Infrastructure

Local Plan Policies:

GC4 Landscaping Throughout the District

GC9 Prevention of Pollution Throughout the District

GB30 Conservation and Enhancement of Rural Landscape in Parts of the Green Belt

NC1 Safeguarding of Nature Conservation Interests Throughout the District

TW6 Resistance to Loss of Woodland Throughout the District

- 13.1 Paragraph 174 of the NPPF emphasises the importance of development that contributes to and enhances the natural and local environment, with paragraph 174 (d) emphasising the importance of minimising impacts and

providing net gains for biodiversity. Paragraph 180 states that when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should refuse planning permission if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for. Paragraph 181 states that SACs should be given the same protection as habitats sites.

- 13.2 Core Strategy Policy CS24 states that the Council will aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity within the District. Legally protected species and sites will be protected and enhanced, suitable semi natural habitats and networks will be restored or created, provision will be made to safeguard and enhance ecological interest. Core Strategy policy CS32 aims to identify, protect and enhance strategic green infrastructure assets.
- 13.3 Saved Local Plan policy GC4 states that trees, hedgerows of sound condition and of good amenity and wildlife value, together with any other important landscape features should be retained.
- 13.4 Local Plan policy TW3 resists the loss of trees covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). Trees of good quality, or landscape significance, or amenity value, will be expected to be retained in good condition even where this will restrict, or prevent, development.
- 13.5 Local Plan policy NC1 seeks to safeguard nature conservation interests. Development will be refused where it will significantly harm an acknowledged nature conservation interest of established importance.
- 13.6 The application is supported by an Environmental Statement (ES) and Chapter 12 Ecology, provides an assessment of the proposed development in relation to the effects it would have on ecology and nature conservation. A preliminary ecological appraisal was undertaken in 2019 and subsequently updated in 2021. A variety of other surveys were also undertaken and the results of these submitted as appendices to the ES.
- 13.7 The site is approximately 29 hectares and comprises the disused Little Chalfont Golf Club, the former clubhouse and other buildings, two areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland, and Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland areas, grassland fields and hedgerows, with Homestead farm and associated buildings located within the west of the site. The site is bordered to the north by a railway line.
- 13.8 Two areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland, 'Stonydean Wood' referred in the ES and Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) as 'W5' and 'Netherground Spring' referred in the ES and PEA as 'W1' exist within the site boundary. Another seven areas of ancient woodland are located within 1km of the site. Most of the rest of the woodland areas located within the site boundary are designated Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act Section 41 Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland, including the hawthorn scrub area to the north-west of the site. Within a 10km zone of influence from the site ten Local Nature Reserves are located, twelve Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)

and one SSSI that is also a designated National Nature Reserve (NNR) 'Ruislip Wood'. Three Local Wildlife Sites are also present within 3km of the site: 'Lane Wood, Ladies' Arbour', 'West Wood LWS, Place house Copse' and 'Meadow adjacent to Lower Water, Latimer'. The site is also located partially within the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) 12.6km zone of influence.

Sites of importance

- 13.9 Natural England has been consulted on this application and raises concerns regarding the impact on the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation. In respect of two constituent SSSIs, these being the Ashridge Commons and Woods and Tring Woodlands. Natural England considers that when there is sufficient scientific uncertainty about the likely effects of the planning application under consideration, the precautionary principle is applied to fully protect the qualifying features of the European Site designated under the Habitats Directive.
- 13.10 New evidence has been published by Dacorum Borough Council (March 2022) on the impacts of recreational and urban growth at Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation. Natural England support the conclusions and recognises that new net residential development within 12.6km of the Ashridge Commons and Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest can be expected to result in an increase in recreation pressure. The 12.6km zone of influence represents the core area around the Special Area of Conservation where increases in the number of residential properties will require a Habitats Regulations Assessment. Mitigation measures will be necessary to rule out adverse effects on the integrity of the SAC from the cumulative impacts of development. There is also a 500m avoidance zone around the Ashridge Commons and Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest where no net increase in residential units or accommodation will be permitted.
- 13.11 Part of the application site lies within the 12.6km zone of influence and outside the 500m avoidance zone.
- 13.12 The main impacts of this recreational disturbance include trampling, which has led to the widening of footpaths, compacting soils and churning the ground along the most 'attractive' desire lines. Other disturbance includes, mountain biking damage leading to exposed and damaged tree roots, den building, informal parking, and eutrophication from dog fouling.
- 13.13 Natural England confirm that, in light of the new evidence relating to the recreation impact zone of influence, planning authorities must apply the requirements of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), to housing development within 12.6km of the Special Area of Conservation boundary. The authority must decide whether a particular proposal, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, would be likely to have a significant effect on the Special Area of Conservation.
- 13.14 Given the above, the Council has carried out an Appropriate Assessment for the proposed development, which has been included as an appendix to the

report. This concludes that without mitigation measures the development is likely to have a significant effect upon the integrity of the SAC with the result that the Council would be required to refuse this planning application. The proposals are therefore contrary to paragraphs 180 and 181 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Core Strategy Policy CS24.

13.15 Two areas of Ancient Woodland are located within the assessment area.

Standing advice from Natural England and the Forestry Commission detail that protective buffer zones between development of at least 15m of semi-natural habitat (ie. woodland, scrub, grassland or wetland planting) which forms part of the green infrastructure, ie. is not developed land that must be provided. The parameter plans submitted show the location of the 15m buffer zone around the ancient woodland boundary. Impacts on the ancient woodland could also arise from increase in lighting, disturbance from increased recreation and noise disturbance. Particular concern is raised that the indicative layout and parameter plans would result in the area of Ancient Woodland 'Stonydean Wood' being isolated and its connective linear corridor (hedgerow) to the south Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland removed, due to the location of the proposed development including access road. Enhancements to the Priority Habitat Lowland measure will be a recreational public open space resulting in increased access. It is noted that the Landscape Capacity Study (2017) would have more successfully achieved protection of ancient woodland and habitat connectivity that would contribute to improved and more joined up areas of biodiversity.

Priority habitats

13.16 Apart from the areas of ancient woodland other woodland areas within the site are Priority Habitat/Section 41 Habitat of Principal Importance, including the hawthorn scrub area to the north-west of the site. Mature hedgerows are of intrinsic ecological value and whilst some are to be retained, some are proposed for removal. Where retained, buffers to these habitats are unclear and hinder assessment of acceptability of the scheme. Insufficient information is provided to demonstrate that priority habitats have been fully considered.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

13.17 The development will result in the loss of existing habitats and the creation of habitat within the outline scheme, which include sustainable drainage, areas of open space, amenity grassland, built development / hardstanding, gardens, and tree planting. The proposals would need to demonstrate a net gain in biodiversity, in line with the NPPF and Core Strategy Policy CS24. The submitted Biodiversity Metric details that the development will result in a biodiversity net gain of 25.21%, however the Ecology Officer questions the inputs used for the metric and considers that the proposed development is likely to result in a significant biodiversity loss which is contrary to the NPPF. An insufficient level of information has been submitted to demonstrate that the development will result in an overall biodiversity net gain, in line with the NPPF (2021).

Protected species

- 13.18 Protected and notable species which have been identified as being affected by the development include bats, badger, reptiles, great crested newt and other amphibians, nesting birds, dormouse and invertebrates.
- 13.19 In terms of protected species, bat activity survey work has not been submitted in accordance with best practice guidance. These surveys are required to determine the impacts of the proposals on bats which is used by 11 bat species including the Barbastelle Bat (a county value species). An insufficient level of information has been submitted to understand the impact of the proposals on bats. Notwithstanding the lack of information provided, it is considered that the proposed mitigation is unlikely sufficient to mitigate harm to bats given that the poor layout of the development would destroy the majority of bat foraging habitat and community routes with increased disturbance. It would be important to maintain connectivity through dark corridors and in areas of high bat activity.
- 13.20 The development falls within the amber risk zone for Great Crested Newt (GCN) where there is suitable habitat and a high likelihood of GCN presence. The Newt Officer concludes that the submitted information is insufficient to allow the likely absence of GCN to be accepted. Surveys have been undertaken outside of the appropriate season and a number of ponds have not been surveyed.
- 13.21 The ES has assessed the impact on breeding birds and concludes that the breeding bird assemblage of the site is of less than local value owing to the bird species assemblage (apart from Red Kite). Red Kite is identified as nesting to the north east of 'Stonydean Wood' in 2019 and 2021 survey years. Whilst it is stated that a 50m buffer will be maintained around the nest this appears to contradict the 20/30m buffer to be retained to this woodland on the parameter plans. Further consideration should be given to the site layout and larger buffers and habitat creation surrounding this woodland. Proposed nesting box provision is currently inadequate given the scale of development proposed. Bird surveys have not been provided for Autumn and Winter seasons.
- 13.22 Nesting birds may be impacted by the removal of scrub, hedgerows and trees during the construction period, and through increased predation by cats and increased recreational disturbance of habitats in the occupation phase. Mitigation measures for long-term habitat creation and management of suitable habitat for nesting birds would be covered within a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) – the details of which would have been secured by condition had the application been recommended for approval.
- 13.23 Reptile surveys were carried out in 2019 and updated in 2021 with three species of reptile recorded on site; slow-worm, common toad and grass snake. The population sizes indicate that the site supports a low population of slow worm and grass snake. The site is therefore of significant value for these species. The ES concludes that the proposals will have a less than local value.

However, there is a lack of clarity in terms of the information has been submitted in respect of reptile receptors.

13.24 Dormouse surveys were carried out in 2019 and 2021 with no activity found on site. A precautionary approach should be taken and fully addressed within a CEMP (Construction and Environmental Management Plan) document usually secured had the application been recommended for approval.

13.25 Insufficient survey work has been submitted in relation to badger activity at the site.

Lighting

13.26 There is insufficient information to assess the impact on bats and priority woodland arising from lighting.

ES Addendum and Clarifications

13.27 Additional information was submitted in the form of an ES Addendum relating to the proposed highways works and a statement of clarification provided in response to the original Ecology Officer response. The clarifications provided do not address any concerns raised within the original response and further comments made raising concern relating to the Lodge Lane Tree removal and absence of associated ecological survey work (particularly due to the potential bat population implications).

13.28 The assessment of the impact of the proposed development on ecology is deficient. Insufficient information has been submitted with regard to protected species. Insufficient information is provided to demonstrate that priority habitats including ancient woodland have been fully considered and to assess the impacts on bats and priority woodland arising from lighting. A Habitats Regulation Assessment has been undertaken and this concludes that without mitigation measures the development is likely to have a significant effect upon the integrity of the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC.

13.29 It has not been demonstrated that the proposed development would not have an unacceptable impact on the natural environment and it has not demonstrated that there would be satisfactory biodiversity enhancements, contrary to Core Strategy Policy CS24 and NPPF paragraphs 8, 174, 180 and 181.

14.0 Flooding and drainage

Policies:

CS4 Ensuring That Development Is Sustainable

GC10 Protection from Flooding In The Areas as Defined on the Proposals Map And Throughout the District

14.1 NPPF paragraph 159 advises that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk. Where appropriate, applications should be supported by a site specific flood risk assessment (paragraph 167) and when determining applications LPAs should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere.

NPPF paragraph 169 requires that major developments incorporate sustainable drainage systems, unless there is clear evidence this would be inappropriate. Planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by preventing new development from contributing to, or adversely affecting, water resources (paragraph 174).

- 14.2 Policy CS4 of the Core Strategy seeks to ensure the long-term sustainability of development and all new developments are expected to have regard to the sustainability principles set out in Table 1 of Policy CS4. This includes the assessment of surface water drainage impacts and the inclusion of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS).
- 14.3 The site is located in Flood Zone 1, and at the lowest risk of fluvial flooding. The Flood Map for Surface Water flooding shows that the majority of the site lies in an area of very low risk of surface water flooding, however due to the natural topography of the site there are two flow routes which divide the site. One is a high risk flow route, west to east with ponding occurring along the eastern boundary of the site with Lodge Lane. The second flows north to south and is at low risk of flooding, converging with the first flow route in the centre of the site.
- 14.4 During the course of the application additional information has been provided and reviewed by the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA). Additional information relating to Surface Water Hydraulic modelling has been provided on site, however does not extend beyond the red line boundary of the site therefore it is not possible to conclude that the risk of offsite flooding would not be increased. Sequentially modelling has been updated to ensure that the buildings indicatively proposed would not be located in areas at risk of surface water flooding.
- 14.5 The surface water drainage strategy proposed is for an infiltration based approach with runoff attenuated within basins before being discharged to soakaways beneath the basins. Despite this, the testing completed does not demonstrate that all of the proposed soakaways will function as necessary and therefore it is not possible to conclude that the scheme will function as intended. Concern is also raised that the location of some of the basins appears to be at risk of surface water flooding. An inaccuracy relating to the drainage layout drawings is noted and the sets of calculations submitted relating to the basins are unclear with information only submitted for three out of four basins.
- 14.6 In the absence of sufficient evidence that infiltration is a viable method of surface water disposal and insufficient information relating to the impact of the proposed development to surface water flooding offsite and to the dry valleys, it is not possible to conclude that the proposals would be able to manage surface water runoff generated by the proposed development or not increase flood risk elsewhere and to future site occupants. As such, the proposal is contrary to Policy CS4 of the Core Strategy for Chiltern District, Adopted November 2011 and guidance contained within the Sustainable Construction and Renewable Energy Supplementary Planning Document,

Adopted 25 February 2015, and the provisions of the paragraphs 167 and 169 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).

15.0 Environmental issues

Core Strategy Policies:

Policy CS4: Ensuring that Development is Sustainable

Policy CS25: Dealing with the impact of new development on the transport network

Policy CS26: Requirements of new development

Local Plan Policies:

GC9 Noise Generating Development

GC9 Prevention Of Pollution Throughout The District

GC13 Hazardous Substances Consent Throughout the District

Minerals and Waste Local Plan:

Policy 10 Waste Prevention and Minimisation in New Development

Ground Conditions, Minerals Safeguarding, Waste

15.1 The NPPF paragraph 183 advises that planning decisions should ensure that “a site is suitable for its proposed use taking account of ground conditions and any risks arising from land instability and contamination”. Paragraph 184 of the NPPF advises that where a site is affected by contamination or land stability issues, responsibility for securing a safe development rests with the developer and/or landowner.

15.2 A Preliminary Risk Assessment has been submitted in support of the application and identifies a number of plausible contaminant linkages that require intrusive investigation. The Environmental Protection Officer considers that were the application to be approved this could be dealt with by way of condition.

15.3 The application site is not located within a Minerals Safeguarding Area and therefore further consideration is not required in this respect. Policy 10: Waste Prevention and Minimisation in New Development is relevant as it requires major development to demonstrate how the efficient use and recovery of resource will be undertaken. Chapter 6: Development Programme, Demolition and Construction of the Environmental Statement details at paragraph 6.30 that the development will utilise re-use and recycling principles with the detail provided within a Site Waste Management Plan and Construction Environmental Management Plan. As such it is considered that compliance with Policy 10 could be achieved.

Air Quality

15.4 NPPF paragraph 174 states that decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by amongst other things, preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of air pollution. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality. Paragraph 186 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.

- 15.5 Local Plan policy GC9 states that development likely to generate unacceptable levels of air pollution will not be permitted.
- 15.6 The ES Chapter 9 considers the construction and operational effects associated with air quality. During construction, there is a risk that existing receptors may be affected by dust generated. The proposed development will generate traffic and the effects of vehicle emissions has been considered.
- 15.7 Whilst the application as submitted would be acceptable subject to condition the integrity of the results produced by Air Quality modelling is reliant on the accuracy of the input data used. Traffic data used in the Air Quality Assessment is based on the transport data submitted in support of the application. The Highway Authority has expressed concerns over the transport data including the use of outdated baseline data. An underestimation of trip rates from the developments would result in an inaccurate assessment of the development on Air Quality.

Noise & Vibration

- 15.8 NPPF paragraph 174 states that decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by amongst other things, preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of noise pollution. Paragraph 185 states that planning decisions should ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should identify and protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise.
- 15.9 Core Strategy 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.
- 15.10 ES Chapter 10 assesses the potential noise and vibration impacts of the proposed development. The impacts of construction noise and vibration on existing and prospective residential properties would be mitigated through a CEMP. It is concluded that any moderate impact would be short term. Environmental noise and vibration issues would require further consideration at reserved matters stage when design and layout is confirmed.

Utilities

- 15.11 Paragraph 8 of the Framework (2021) stipulates that the economic objective of achieving sustainable development requires identification and coordination of infrastructure provision. Policy CS31 of The Chiltern's Core Strategy (2011)

requires that new development ensures “adequate infrastructure capacity is available to meet the needs of future occupiers and not intensify existing deficiencies”.

15.12 Development proposals are accompanied by a utility statement dating November 2021. This statement demonstrates that the application site is serviced by Cadent Gas low/medium pressure mains adjacent to the site with no infrastructure provision available within the site itself. Proposals for diverting/ lowering the existing gas mains in order to facilitate connections into the site have not yet been devised, and are subject to further detail required by a heating strategy, to be submitted at Reserved Matters stage. Cadent Gas Ltd have raised no objection to the proposal on this grounds, subject to a recommended informative had the recommendation been to grant planning permission.

15.13 Scottish and Southern Networks are the distribution network operator for the application site area, again, a network of high voltage (HV) and low voltage (LV) cables service the vicinity of the application site, but not the site itself. New electricity connections are therefore required. The Climate Change Officer has reviewed the Utilities Statement and details that an adequately sized grid connection for the development is required due to the increasing move to electrify new build housing for both transport and heating. Had the application been recommended for approval it would have been appropriate to secure this requirement via condition.

15.14 Overreach telecommunication cables are located in the vicinity of the site, with the potential for connections into the site. Superfast broadband speeds are also available within the area. The application site does not currently have a connection to a potable water supply. The strategy submitted identifies that there will be connection to potable water supply and the applicant has sought input from Affinity Water relating to the provision of a new main and connections to serve the site.

15.15 Connection to Foul Water drainage has been included within drainage strategy documents, with a new foul pumping station proposed to serve the development and eastern catchment of the site. Thames Water do not have any objection to the planning application, based on this information provided.

15.16 Given the above information, and the fact the application is at outline stage, the infrastructure provision assessed and proposed is considered adequate; in-line with paragraphs 8 and 124 of the Framework (2021) and Policy CS31 of the Chilterns Core Strategy (2011).

16.0 Climate change and sustainability

Core Strategy Policies:

CS4 Ensuring That Development Is Sustainable

CS5 Encouraging Renewable Energy Schemes

Sustainable Construction and Renewable Energy Supplementary Planning Document, Adopted Feb 2015

- 16.1 The NPPF at paragraph 152 states that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, and it should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.
- 16.2 Core Strategy Policy CS4 sets out sustainable energy requirements for new development, with all new major development expected to have regard to this policy, to ensure long-term sustainability of development and help contribute towards national targets to reduce overall CO2 emissions. Policy CS5 encourages the use of renewable energy in schemes. In developments of more than 10 dwellings or 1,000 square metres of non-residential floorspace, the Council will require that at least 10% of their energy requirements are from decentralised and renewable or low-carbon sources. Other relevant guidance is provided in the Sustainable Construction and Renewable Energy Supplementary Planning Document.
- 16.3 The application is supported by an Energy and Sustainability Statement and Climate Change with specific matters considered within the relevant technical chapters of the Environmental Statement. In line with the energy hierarchy a tiered approach is taken to carbon emissions within the submission.
- 16.4 The Climate Change Officer considers that the approach taken within the energy strategy is broadly reasonable, with more detail to either come forward at reserved matters stage or to be secured by condition were the application to be determined favourably.
- 16.5 Concerns have been raised by the Officer relating to the Environmental Statement and the whole life cumulative carbon emissions resulting from the proposed development including construction and operation. Further to the publication of Officer comments the Agent provided clarification relating to this issue and it is accepted that the need for further information could be appropriately dealt with by condition had the application been recommended for approval.

17.0 Infrastructure and developer contributions

Core Strategy Policies:

CP6 (Local infrastructure needs)

Local Plan Saved Policies:

COM1 (Provision of community facilities)

- 17.1 Core Policy 6 states that the Council will use obligations where appropriate to secure provision of essential infrastructure directly and reasonably related to the development. Any agreement would be subject to having regard to the statutory tests for planning obligations in the Community Infrastructure Levy regulations and the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 17.2 The applicant states they are willing to enter into a S106 agreement to deliver relevant planning obligations, subject to the required justification, and has submitted draft Heads of Terms. Were the development considered acceptable

further consideration would be given to the whether the proposed obligations are CIL compliant and any additional items required to make the development acceptable.

17.3 The development is a type of development where CIL would be chargeable. This would include £150 per square metre for C3 (dwellings), £35 per square metre for C2 (Residential Institutions including care homes), £150 per meter squared for E(a), E(b) (retail and food and drink) uses, £35 for E(e) medical services and £35 per square metre for other uses including F2(b) community halls and meeting places.

18.0 Weighing and balancing of issues / Overall Assessment

18.1 This section brings together the assessment that has so far been set out in order to weigh and balance the relevant planning considerations in order to reach a conclusion on the application.

18.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) requires that applications are determined in accordance with the development plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. In addition, Section 143 of the Localism Act amends Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act relating to the determination of planning applications and states that in dealing with planning applications, the authority shall have regard to:

- a. Provision of the development plan insofar as they are material,
- b. Any local finance considerations, so far as they are material to the application (such as CIL if applicable), and,
- c. Any other material considerations

18.3 Local Planning Authorities, when making decisions of a strategic nature, must have due regard, to the Equalities Act, to reducing the inequalities which may result from socio-economic disadvantage. In this instance, it is not considered that this proposal would disadvantage any sector of society to a harmful extent.

18.4 Human Rights: In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty the LPA must have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity, as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. In making this recommendation, regard has been given to the Public Sector Equality Duty and the relevant protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation). The application provides for housing and associated development. It is not considered that discrimination or inequality would arise from the proposal.

18.5 The Human Rights Act 1998 does not impair the right of the state to make decisions and enforce laws as deemed necessary in the public interest. The recommendation is considered appropriate in upholding the Council's adopted policies and is not outweighed by any engaged rights.

18.6 The Council is currently unable to demonstrate the five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. As set out within the Chiltern and South Bucks Interim Five-Year Housing Land Supply Calculation (at 1st April 2020, published

11th September 2020) the Chiltern Area can demonstrate 4.18 years supply. In the absence of an up to date five-year supply of housing land, and in accordance with NPPF paragraph 11 there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. As the site lies within the Green Belt, is at risk of flooding and affects the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation paragraph 11d) i) of the NPPF is engaged. This requires that planning permission should be granted unless *'the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed'*. It is necessary to apply the development control tests relating to the Green Belt in particular to ascertain whether these provide a clear reason for refusal.

- 18.7 The NPPF sets out in paragraph 147 that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in 'Very Special Circumstances'. Paragraph 148 of the NPPF states that when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt and that 'Very Special Circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
- 18.8 Development should be regarded as inappropriate in the Green Belt except in specified exceptions as set out in NPPF Paragraph 149 (a – g). Saved Local Plan policy GB1 similarly identifies categories of development that may be considered appropriate. The proposed development does not fall within any of the exceptions listed in paragraph 149 or GB1. The proposals are therefore inappropriate development based on this paragraph of the NPPF and contrary to development plan policy.

Green Belt and other harm

- 18.9 The assessment of the proposals against the Green Belt purposes concludes that there are clear conflicts. Given the open character of the agricultural fields, golf course and the existing mature tree belts and woodland it is considered that the development would result in significant spatial and visual impact on the openness of the Green Belt. The proposal would conflict with three out of the five purposes of including land in the Green Belt. The proposal would not accord with policy GB2 of the Local Plan and the NPPF. The harm to the Green Belt is very substantial and this harm is afforded very substantial weight. As a result, it is necessary to establish whether there are any 'Very Special Circumstances'. The NPPF states at paragraph 148 that VSC will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any 'other harm' resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. The assessment of 'other harm' is considered further below.
- 18.10 The proposed development and landscape strategy would give rise to significant detrimental harm to impacts on the landscape setting and character of the area. The proposal is contrary to the Landscape Capacity Assessment for the site provided in the withdrawn Local Plan Evidence base with the proposed

spread and density of development failing to adequately consider the landscape character and site features including the dry valley topography. The relationship with the Chilterns AONB would be fundamentally changed with harm to its setting. Tree removal on Lodge Lane and the associated retaining wall structure to facilitate the proposed highway works to widen Lodge Lane are harmful and would result in harm to the character of Lodge Lane and the woodland itself. Harm to the Burtons Lane to Doggetts Wood Lane Area of Special Character is noted with the landscape design failing to appropriately respond to this character. Insufficient detail relating to mitigation and the effect of lighting across the site including in relation to sensitive landscape features has been provided and it is considered that harm to a number of views from outside the site are underestimated. This results in further harm which would be afforded substantial negative weight.

18.11 The layout of the proposed development as framed by the parameter plans gives rise to concerns as they are not considered to result in a high quality outcome. The comments of the landscape and urban design officers highlight concerns relating to the potential for the development to either be too intensive in some locations resulting in harm to landscape character or not intensive enough in other locations preventing an appropriate urban design response. Concerns relating to disconnected street networks are also raised, with the proposed development effectively operating as two large cul-de-sacs and insufficient clarity provided regarding use of the central access road. Provision of natural/semi natural green space well in excess of requirements is noted, and whilst this may mitigate some pressure on 'Stonydean Wood' (an area of Ancient Woodland) concern is raised regarding the mechanisms to be put in place with regard to preventing access and the development parameters are likely to give rise to conflict between amenity/recreation and biodiversity which could be addressed through better design. The proposals also fail to consider and respond to the character in this location with no regard given to the Townscape Character Study and Residential Area of Exceptional character. This results in further harm which would be afforded moderate negative weight.

18.12 It is considered that insufficient information has been submitted with the planning application to enable the highways, traffic and transportation implications of the proposed development to be fully assessed. The site has not been fully demonstrated to have safe and suitable access, that the impact on the highway network that is less than severe, and that appropriate sustainable travel provision can be achieved. This results in further harm which would be afforded moderate negative weight.

18.13 The assessment of the development on ecology is deficient and lacks necessary information on protected species. It has not been demonstrated that the proposed development would not have an unacceptable impact on the natural environment including on the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC or result in biodiversity enhancements. This results in further harm which would be afforded significant negative weight.

18.14 It has not been possible to conclude that the development would not result in loss of BMV agricultural land which would be afforded negative weight as the permanent loss of agricultural land cannot be mitigated. This results in further harm which would be afforded limited negative weight.

18.15 It has not been demonstrated that the air quality impacts of the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on human health or biodiversity including on the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC. This results in further harm which would be afforded moderate negative weight.

18.16 It is not possible to conclude that the proposals would ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere and to future site occupants. This results in further harm which would be afforded limited negative weight.

Benefits

18.17 The benefits put forward to support Very Special Circumstances (VSC) include:

- Lack of suitable alternative sites/strategy to meet need
- Housing Need
- Meeting acute affordable housing need
- Contributing to custom build need
- Meeting the needs of an ageing population
- Economic benefits
- Open space benefits
- Community infrastructure provision

18.18 The case for Very Special Circumstances is supported by an assessment of the lack of alternative sites/strategy to meet the need. The provision of housing given the need is a benefit and where the Council cannot demonstrate a 5 years' supply of housing. Chiltern can demonstrate a 4.18 year supply of housing between 2020-2025. Whilst suggested no alternative sites within the Chiltern area are available a material factor in meeting housing need is the adoption of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) in September 2021 which makes provision for unmet need from the former Wycombe, Chiltern and South Bucks Districts. A total of 5,725 dwellings from the former Chiltern and South Bucks areas will be accommodated by the plan over the plan period to 2033. This inclusion effectively reduces the housing target for the Chiltern area and as such impacts on the 5 year housing supply calculation for this area. The Council is in the process of updating the 5 year housing supply position statement in light of the adoption of VALP and to incorporate the most up to date housing delivery data. As such it is considered that this dilutes the weight that can be attributed to the delivery of housing as a benefit of the scheme. It is considered that housing delivery is a benefit that can be attributed moderate weight.

18.19 The provision of affordable housing is a benefit of the scheme. The adopted VALP provision for unmet need in the former Bucks Districts (estimated at

5,725 dwellings) would be subject to Policy H1 which seeks 25% affordable housing on qualifying development sites. The affordable housing provision would merely be policy compliant at 40%. It is considered that significant weight can be attributed to the delivery of affordable housing as a benefit of the scheme.

18.20 Provision for self-build / custom build homes is a benefit of the scheme. It is noted that there are 154 applications that have been approved for inclusion on Parts 1 and 2 of the Council's Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register, however the Council only has a duty to grant permission for enough suitable serviced plots of land to meet the demand of entries on Part 1 of the Register. Part 1 of the Register contains just 36 applications for the period 2019-2021. The applicant references an appeal decision in Chiltern District and details that the provision of self-build housing was attributed substantial weight. It appears that the entirety of the scheme was for provision of 31 affordable self-build plots and given the generous supply of self-build housing on a site this was attributed significant weight. This scheme for outline planning consent does not detail the number of self-build plots to be provided and whether these will be affordable or market housing. The provision of plots for self-build / custom homes is a benefit of the scheme that can be attributed limited weight as a benefit of the scheme.

18.21 Development Plan policy requires Specialist Housing to be provided within the existing built up areas including Little Chalfont within proximity of shops, health and community facilities. A number of arguments are advanced by the applicant in respect of why the proposed elderly care provision is a VSC. The growth in the older population above 85 years is accepted. That 5 existing care homes within a five mile radius of the site require improvement as assessed by the Care Quality Commission is not considered to weigh in favour of the proposal as there would be greater benefit in the modernisation and improvement of existing facilities. The potential contribution to the housing market is noted, and that provision of such a facility has the potential to free up housing. Information relating to delayed transfers from hospital are noted as being marginally higher in Buckinghamshire than the national average. Of these delayed transfers 13% of delays were due to 'awaiting residential home placement or availability' and 11% due to 'awaiting nursing home placement or availability'. Whilst it is accepted that this issue accounts for a quarter of bed blocking, the addition of care facilities associated with the development is not considered likely to result in a significant improvement. Whilst the information provided within the submission and in relation to Buckinghamshire suggests that bed blocking could be an issue at the Amersham hospital the specific data provided does not give further certainty in relation to this potential benefit. It is considered that the provision of accommodation to meet the needs of an ageing population could be attributed moderate weight.

18.22 The inclusion of community infrastructure provision in the form of a 'Community Hub' is noted, however, justification of the need for this facility and how the proposed uses would serve the existing community of Little Chalfont and future residents of the site has not been provided. In this context

it is considered that the community hub could only be attributed limited weight as a benefit of the scheme.

18.23 It is proposed to provide circa 11.74ha of public open space whereas the Fields for Trust requirement would be 3.33ha. It is noted that the majority of this is Natural / Semi Natural space (8.30ha). The amenity green space proposed is 1.35 ha against a need (Fields for Trust) of 0.55ha. There is also provision of 0.23ha of allotments / Community Grow space. Public space provision is a benefit that could only be attributed only limited weight as it primarily serves the development itself.

18.24 In support of the application an Economic Benefits Statement has been provided. It is detailed that the development will support 439 construction workers and £48 million Gross Value Added per annum over the four year construction period, deliver 380 homes including affordable housing, generate £11.5million per year in additional spend as a result of residents living in new homes and retirement units, support 118 gross jobs on site adding £4.9m in GVA to the economy each year as a result of people working in the retirement units, care home and community facility and generate revenue to Buckinghamshire Council in Council tax each year. The economic benefits of construction would be short term only. This and benefits including income via the Council Tax revenues are considered to be relatively minor. The creation of additional jobs on site can be considered a benefit. It is considered that the economic benefits of the scheme should be attributed limited weight in the planning balance.

Conclusion

18.25 The applicants' case relies heavily on the site's proposed allocation within the withdrawn Draft Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan 2036 (Site Allocation Policy SP BP6 – Land Little Chalfont) as justification for why the principle of development should be considered acceptable. However the Draft Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan 2036 was never examined as it was withdrawn. Therefore the policies contained within it hold no material weight in planning decision-making. Notwithstanding this, the application site covers a smaller area than draft site allocation SP BP6 which the Draft Local Plan intended would be delivered as part of a wider strategic allocation, together with necessary infrastructure to mitigate the impacts of the development.

18.26 The Very Special Circumstances case in effect seeks to translate the Exceptional Circumstances case put forward to support the proposal to remove the application site from the Green Belt, through the now withdrawn Local Plan. However that case and the supporting evidence base was derived from the context of strategic plan-making. NPPF paragraph 140 states that "*Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans.*" Individual planning applications for development within the Green Belt cannot rely on the policy provisions for altering Green Belt boundaries.

18.27 The NPPF reiterates that inappropriate development is, by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 148 confirms that when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. *‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.*

18.28 The Green Belt balance has set out all of the harms on one side and all of the benefits and other material considerations on the other side of the balance and officers have concluded that all of the harms are not clearly outweighed by all of the benefits. ‘Very Special Circumstances’ do not exist in this case.

18.29 It is considered that the application of policies in the National Planning Policy Framework provides a “clear reason for refusing” the development proposal under NPPF paragraph 11(d)(i). It is concluded that the proposals are in conflict with the development plan policies in so far as they relate to the Green Belt, design and the built environment, the natural environment, accessibility, sustainability and transport. There are no other material considerations that have a bearing on the planning balance. The proposals represent unsustainable development and it is recommended that permission be refused for the reasons set out.

19.0 Working with the applicant / agent

19.1 The Council notes paragraph 38 of the NPPF (2021). Pre application advice was sought on the principle of the proposed development prior to the submission of the application. In this instance the application was determined without delay, following a brief extension on time to allow consultation on the submitted ES addendum.

19.2 A number of meetings and discussions were held with the applicant during the determination of the application. The applicant was advised that the proposal did not accord with the development plan, that no material considerations are apparent to outweigh these matters and provided the opportunity to withdraw the application.

20.0 RECOMMENDATION: Refuse permission for the following reasons:

Green Belt

1. The proposed development would constitute inappropriate development and will result in spatial and visual harm to the openness of the Green Belt. In addition, the proposals will lead to a conflict with the Green Belt purposes. The benefits of the scheme taken together do not clearly outweigh the harm and other harm (identified in the subsequent reasons for refusal). ‘Very special circumstances’ have not been demonstrated to justify this inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy GB2 of the Chiltern District Local Plan Adopted 1 September 1997 (including alterations adopted 29 May 2001) consolidated September 2007 and November 2011 ('the Local Plan'), Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy for Chiltern

District (Adopted November 2011) ('the Core Strategy'), and paragraphs 137, 138, 147, 148, 149 and 150 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).

Landscape and visual character

2. The proposed development would give rise to significant detrimental impacts on the landscape character of the area and the views from outside the site are underestimated. Harm would result to the landscape setting with the proposed spread and density of development being too great and failing to adequately take account of the existing landscape character and site features including the characteristic dry valley topology. The character of Lodge Lane and Burtons Lane and their relationship to the adjoining landscape including the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty would be fundamentally changed with the setting of this feature harmed. The proposed tree removal on Lodge Lane with associated replacement retaining structure would result in harm to the character of Lodge Lane and the woodland itself. Insufficient information has been provided regarding to retention of category of A and B trees within the site. Harm to the Burtons Lane to Doggetts Wood Lane Area of Special Character is noted with the landscape design failing to appropriately respond to this character. Insufficient detail relating to the effect of lighting across the site including in relation to sensitive landscape features has been provided and the implied benefits of new planting and management are not detailed or controllable enough to be considered a reliable balance to weigh against the identified harms. The proposal is therefore considered to be in conflict with Policies CS22 and CS32 of the Adopted Core Strategy for Chiltern District (November 2011) and Policies GC4, GB30, H4, LSQ1 and TW6 of the Adopted Chiltern Local Plan 1997 (including alterations adopted May 2001), Consolidated September 2007 & November 2011, the Chiltern and South Bucks Townscape Character Study (November 2017) and paragraphs 130, 131 and 174 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).

Design and Layout

3. The development parameters and layout represent poor design which would fail to relate positively to the site and local context. The parameters plans would result in a layout which would give rise to harm to landscape and ecological features on the site and in design terms would not give the Council sufficient control to secure high quality design outcomes at reserved matters stage. Priority habitat is to be removed, retained ancient woodland would be subject to adverse recreational pressure, the street network is disconnected and there is the potential for harmful high density development within sensitive locations on the site. The application submission does not consider the characteristics and context of this site in relation to the settlement Little Chalfont and fails to address the Burtons Lane to Doggetts Wood Lane Area of Special Character. The development is therefore considered to represent poor design contrary to policy CS20 of the Core Strategy for Chiltern District (Adopted November 2011), policies GC1 and GC4 of the Chiltern District Local Plan Adopted 1 September 1997 (including alterations adopted 29 May 2001) Consolidated September 2007 and November 2011, the Chiltern and South

Bucks Townscape Character Study (November 2017), as well as paragraphs 124 and 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021), and the National Design Guide (2019).

Impact on the highways

4. It is considered that insufficient information has been submitted with the planning application to enable the highways, traffic and transportation implications of the proposed development to be fully assessed. It has not been satisfactorily demonstrated that there would not be an unacceptable impact on the capacity of the road network, that there would be safe and suitable access, that the impact on the highways network would be less than severe, and that appropriate sustainable travel provision can be achieved. The proposed development is contrary to the Core Policies 25 and 26 of the Core Strategy for Chiltern District, Buckinghamshire Council's Highways Development Management Guidance (2018) and the aims of Buckinghamshire's Local Transport Plan 4 and paragraphs 110, 111 and 112 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).

Ecology

5. The assessment of the development on ecology is deficient and lacks the necessary information relating to protected species and priority habitats. It has not been demonstrated that the proposed development would not have an unacceptable impact on the natural environment. Lastly, it has not demonstrated that there would be satisfactory biodiversity enhancements. The proposals are therefore contrary to Policy CS24 of the Core Strategy for Chiltern District, Paragraphs 8, 174, 180 and 181 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021), ODPM Circular 06/2005 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Chiltern Beechwoods SAC

6. The Council considers that the proposed development would by reason of its proximity lying within a 12.6k metre linear distance of the Ashridge Commons and Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest within the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation would add to the recreational disturbance in this area likely to harm the integrity of the conservation purposes of the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation. In the absence of a legal obligation to secure an appropriate mitigation strategy to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority, the proposal would be contrary to the Habitat Regulations and paragraphs 180 and 181 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy CS4 of the Core Strategy for Chiltern District.

Affordable Housing

7. For developments of this scale, Core Strategy Policy CS8 seeks to secure at least 40% of dwellings to be provided in the form of units of affordable accommodation on site, unless it is clearly demonstrated that this is not economically viable. The application proposes that 40% of the units subject to

viability shall be for affordable accommodation. In the absence of a suitable and completed legal agreement and a mechanism to secure the provision of this affordable housing, the proposed development would be contrary to policy CS8 of the Core Strategy for Chiltern District (2011) as well as the aims of section 5 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).

BMV Agricultural Land

8. There is insufficient information submitted to assess the impact of the development proposals on agricultural land including 'best and most versatile' use of agricultural land, contrary to Policy CS4 of the Core Strategy for Chiltern District, Adopted November 2011 and paragraph 174 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

Education

9. In the absence of a suitable and completed legal agreement and a mechanism to secure the provision of a school and financial contributions, the proposed development would be contrary to policy CS31 of the Core Strategy for Chiltern District (2011) as well as the aims of section 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).

Air Quality

10. The integrity of the Air Quality modelling undertaken to support the proposals is reliant on traffic modelling which is not up to date. It has not been satisfactorily demonstrated that the air quality impacts of the proposal would be acceptable in terms of human health or biodiversity including on the Chiltern Beechwood SAC, contrary to Policy GC9 of the Chiltern District Local Plan Adopted 1997 (including alterations adopted 29 May 2001) and paragraph 174, 180 and 181 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).

Flood Risk

11. It has not been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the LPA that there would not be an unacceptable impact upon surface water flood risk. As such, the proposal is contrary to Policy CS4 of the Core Strategy for Chiltern District, Adopted November 2011 and guidance contained within the Sustainable Construction and Renewable Energy Supplementary Planning Document, Adopted 25 February 2015, and the provisions of the paragraphs 167 and 169 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).

APPENDIX A: Consultation responses and Representations

Councillor Comments

Cllr Martin Tett (Little Chalfont and Amersham Common Ward)

I object strongly to this application. The land is Green Belt and the Buckinghamshire Council has a Corporate policy of protecting and maintaining the Green Belt. Another housing estate does not constitute 'exceptional circumstances'. In addition, the access and egress proposed would not be acceptable. The changes to the Burtons Lane/A404 junction would destroy much of the character of Little Chalfont's Village centre and the proposed widening of Lodge lane would lose the special character of this rural lane and its setting adjacent to the Chiltern AONB. The existing Metropolitan Railway line constitutes a clear physical and defensible Green Belt boundary and should not be breached. Should it be, then I would expect this to lead to further steady encroachment on the Green Belt in the area which is already under threat from the Hertfordshire direction. As a local member I request that this application is called in to Committee.

Cllr Emily Culverhouse (Chess Valley Ward)

I object strongly to this application. The land is Green Belt and the Buckinghamshire Council has a Corporate policy of protecting and maintaining the Green Belt. Another housing estate does not constitute 'exceptional circumstances'. In addition, the access and egress proposed would not be acceptable. The changes to the Burtons Lane/A404 junction would destroy much of the character of Little Chalfont's Village centre and the proposed widening of Lodge lane would lose the special character of this rural lane and its setting adjacent to the Chiltern AONB. The existing Metropolitan Railway line constitutes a clear physical and defensible Green Belt boundary and should not be breached. Should it be, then I would expect this to lead to further steady encroachment on the Green Belt in the area which is already under threat from the Hertfordshire direction. As a local member I request that this application is called in to Committee.

Cllr Gareth Williams (Chess Valley Ward)

Along with my fellow local Councillors, I object strongly to this application. The land is Green Belt and the Buckinghamshire Council has a Corporate policy of protecting and maintaining the Green Belt. I do not believe that the proposed development, which is not in the Local Plan, constitutes 'exceptional circumstances'. As has been noted by my colleagues, the Highways access is also completely unsuitable for a development of this scale. The changes to the Burtons Lane/A404 junction would destroy much of the character of Little Chalfont's Village centre and the proposed widening of Lodge lane would lose the special character of this rural lane and its setting adjacent to the Chiltern AONB. The existing Metropolitan Railway line constitutes a clear physical and defensible Green Belt boundary and should not be breached. Should it be, then I would expect this to lead to further steady encroachment on the Green Belt in the area which is already under threat from the Hertfordshire direction. As a local member I request that this application is called in to Committee if the officers are minded to approve.

Cllr Rachael Matthews (Little Chalfont and Amersham Common Ward)

I strongly object to this application. This land is Green Belt and Buckinghamshire Council has a corporate policy of protecting and maintaining the Green Belt. Another housing estate does not constitute exceptional circumstances. In addition, the access and egress proposed would be unacceptable. The changes to the Burtons Lane/A404 junction would destroy much of the special character of Little Chalfont's Village centre and the proposed widening of Lodge Lane would lose the special character of this rural lane and its setting adjacent to the Chiltern AONB. The existing Metropolitan Railway line constitutes a clear physical and defensible Green Belt boundary and should not be breached. Should it be, then I would expect this to lead to further steady encroachment on the Green Belt in the area which is already under threat from the Hertfordshire direction. As a local member, if officers are minded to approve this application I would like to request it to be called into committee

Cllr Joseph Baum (Chess Valley Ward)

Having reviewed the outline application in detail, there are four key reasons why I object to this application:

1. A premature and inappropriate application Many of us, myself included, accept the need to deliver new homes for local people and for future generations. However, it is also the case that Local Plans are the best means by which those homes, as well as infrastructure, facilities and much more, are delivered.

As the developer is aware, Buckinghamshire Council is currently in the process of preparing a Local Plan which will cover the entire county. This work is ongoing, with the Council stressing the need for a "brownfield first" approach. This application on the green belt is not only contrary to that approach, but it is also a premature application which does not respect the Local Plan process. This site has not benefited from the proper scrutiny which will come through the formulation of a Local Plan for Buckinghamshire.

Approving this application prior to the adoption of a Local Plan would set a dangerous precedent for our area and send a signal to developers that they do not need to respect the Local Plan process in order for them to succeed in building homes. Instead, this application (if consented) would lead to more uncontrolled and speculative applications being submitted in the county. This is bad for local communities and bad for democracy.

2. Building on the green belt is not the only option

The developer will no doubt argue that very special circumstances exist which justify the building of new homes on the green belt. This ignores, of course, the alternative sites that exist here in Little Chalfont (and the wider area) which can deliver the homes that are needed without the need to build on our precious green belt.

A number of these sites have already been put forward as part of the call for sites process, and I understand that there is the potential for others to come forward in the future. Again,

I would urge the Council to acknowledge these alternatives and uphold the "brownfield first" approach, without resorting to building on the green belt which this application asks us to do.

We have seen in Little Chalfont, not to mention our entire country, the extent to which our residents value and cherish our green spaces, and we have seen through initiatives such as the Little Chalfont Nature Park how seemingly redundant areas of land can be transformed to truly benefit a community. I do not believe that this area of green belt is worth sacrificing for housing and I do not believe that very special circumstances exist to justify this premature course of action.

3. The proposed access is, on its own, grounds for refusal

Even if one accepts the argument from the developer that the Local Plan does not matter, and even if one accepts their argument that very special circumstances exist to build on the green belt, the inescapable truth remains that the proposed access to the site is not acceptable. This is not only my conclusion, but the conclusion of independent experts commissioned by "Save Little Chalfont" community group, not to mention the many hundreds of local residents who use the roads in the village on a daily basis.

As the Independent Highways Assessment states, "Access to the site at both proposed locations are likely to be unviable as they have sightline issues. Lodge Lane and Burtons Lane are also problematic due to narrow road widths and questionable benefits of road widening. In addition, required Road Safety Auditing has not been carried out/reported."

The absence of adequate, sustainable vehicle and pedestrian access to the larger eastern part of the site, should, alone, lead to refusal of the application.

We have seen the devastation that HS2 has caused to our community, not only on the impact that this has had on our environment but also on local roads as the construction continues to move ahead. This application proposes to do the same to our community here in Little Chalfont and I believe that this would be a mistake, compromising the safety, security and connectivity that village currently enjoys.

4. The questions that cannot be answered and the uncertainty that this poses for local people

If new homes are to be delivered then residents in Little Chalfont, not to mention communities across Buckinghamshire, deserve the best - homes that are designed with character and beauty, places that are in keeping with the surrounding area and respect the landscape, developments that are designed with real quality and developers who are held to some of the highest environmental standards in the country.

This application, even at an outline stage, provides no certainty on any of those issues. As a promoter of the land, rather than the developer, this application cannot answer some of the most fundamental questions that residents in Little Chalfont need to know if this development were to come forward - who will build the new homes and what is their track record? Who will operate the care home and look after our elderly? Who will manage and

maintain the open spaces? Who will be responsible for the maintenance of the new roads?

Without clear answers to these questions, then neither existing nor future residents have any certainty about the quality of the new development.

It is clear from reviewing the representations on the Planning Portal that, despite the developer's claims that this development will be of benefit to local people, little support exists in the community for what is being proposed. Were this application to be approved, therefore, then I would urge the developer to seek a genuine programme of meaningful engagement with the local community - one that truly tries to make this development the best that it can possibly be and something that we can be proud of.

I hope, however, that this engagement is not required and that this application is refused. Thank you.

Sarah Green MP for Amersham and Chesham

I am writing on behalf of several constituents who have contacted me regarding their objections to the proposed development of up to 380 new homes in Little Chalfont known as Little Chalfont Park.

My constituents have raised with me a number of different objections to this proposed development which I include below:

- The proposed development borders an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and would destroy a natural dry valley and registered ancient woodlands which are valued parts of the Chiltern landscape.
- It will lead to the destruction of trees that are subject to tree preservation orders as well as the loss of wildlife.
- Local infrastructure is unable to support the increase in traffic and houses. Specifically residents are concerned the impact on schools, medical services, road safety, and parking.
- The proposed development is a disproportionate size in comparison to the existing village.
- Building the proposed development on green belt land will cause irreversible changes to the feel and character of the area.

I share their concerns, particularly the fact that this proposed development would be on the Green Belt. I appreciate I do not have locus over planning but would like to ensure that all representations of the people that live locally and object to this overdevelopment are taken into consideration. I therefore ask that these objections be registered and considered as part of any decision made regarding this development.

Parish / Town Council Comments

Little Chalfont Parish Council and Little Chalfont Community Association

08/04/22 Further comment on Highways and Access

Little Chalfont Parish Council and Community Association ask for the following comments to

be taken into account in the LPA's consideration of the "Technical Note: Response to Buckinghamshire Highways" provided by the applicant and dated 16 March 2022. Access issues are a crucial part of this planning application.

The comments below supplement but do not replace or amend the contents of our main joint objection, posted on 19 January 2022.

We remain of the view that there is no viable and sustainable road access to the development proposed, and that the proposed pedestrian/cycle access is not viable.

In their letter of 1 March 2022 the Highway Authority recommended refusal of this application. In our view the "Technical Note" contains nothing to change that recommendation, and although we consider that the application should be refused on other grounds too, we hope Buckinghamshire Council will make clear that the access proposals are unacceptable.

Please consider the following points (a) to (e), which refer to numbered sections in the "Technical Note":

- a) 3.1. Our understanding from Highways' letter of 1 March is that the viability of access points from Lodge Lane and Burtons Lane was not agreed by the Highway Authority in pre-planning discussions, is subject to supporting evidence to be provided by the applicant, and that satisfactory evidence had not been provided.
- b) 3.2 states that the current application is in outline only. However, this is not so for access, where the applicant has asked for full permission ("matters to be considered at this stage: Burtons Lane and Lodge Lane access"). It is wrong for the applicant to claim that crucial access issues raised by the Highway Authority, such as a Stage 1 and 2 Road Safety Audit, arrangements for preventing through-route movements for private vehicles between the western and eastern parts of the site, and the problems of additional traffic in the village centre, can be addressed in planning conditions and left for Reserved Matters. The applicant is trying to "have it both ways".
- c) The applicant persists (4.1 to 4.4) in claiming wrongly that the withdrawn Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan is relevant. The applicant also presents his proposal as being for 380 dwellings, whereas it is for 540 including the proposed 100-unit retirement village and 60-bed care home. The traffic consequences of these are very significant.
- d) In view of the unresolved road safety objections to siting of the proposed new bus stops on the A404 near the Oakington Avenue junction (6.3), we would expect the LPA to refuse the application for agreement to the proposed pedestrian/cycle access there. It is surprising that the application has been made without consulting the highway authority and bus operator about bus-stop location.
- e) Nothing new has been presented to address our concerns that the above mixed pedestrian and cycle access would lead to dangerously overcrowded pavements near the proposed toucan crossing and elsewhere. The applicant has not addressed the Highway Authority's comment that "details of pedestrian trips through this access should be provided and agreed".

10/03/22



APPLICATION PL/21/4632/OA, LAND BETWEEN BURTONS LANE AND LODGE LANE LITTLE CHALFONT

OBJECTION BY LITTLE CHALFONT PARISH COUNCIL AND LITTLE CHALFONT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION. RESPONSE TO FURTHER INFORMATION SUBMITTED BY THE APPLICANT IN FEBRUARY 2022

Thank you for Ms Peplow's letter of 10 February inviting comments on the further information submitted by the applicant.

The comments below supplement but do not replace or amend the contents of our main joint objection, posted on 19 January 2022.

Ecology

We have considered the addendum ecological information submitted by the applicant and uploaded to Buckinghamshire Council's planning portal on 8 and 9 February 2022. **The attached review of this addendum by Bioscan**, whose first review of submitted ecological information was provided as Appendix C to our objection posted on 19 January, represents our views. Bioscan's conclusions on the addendum are as follows.

4.1.1 The conclusions provided in the January 2022 Bioscan report remain unchanged. As noted in the introduction of this report, the above serves as a 'high level' review of the submitted addendum ecological information; and once the relevant information has been provided by the Applicant then the ecology reports can be subject to further detailed examination. Further, it would appear that the Applicant has not addressed the comments provided in the January 2022 Bioscan report, or the response by Buckinghamshire Council's ecology officer. Consequently, based on the information provided by the Applicant thus far, a full and robust assessment of all the submitted ecological documents cannot be made.

4.1.2 In respect of the Applicant's updated BNG report, the net gain proclaimed by the Applicant appears to be incorrect, by some margin, and on the contrary, it appears that the proposals would result in a negative situation (i.e. a considerable loss of biodiversity, quantified as approaching -18%). Such a loss would be contrary to the Environment Act 2021, and local and national policy. In order to allow for these figures to be examined further, the Applicant should supply the raw spreadsheet calculations to allow for full transparency and public scrutiny, and before any determination of the application is considered.

Highways improvement works, loss of landscape features.

We deplore the proposed additional losses of 4 trees at the Oakington Avenue and Amersham Road/Way junction, and 14 trees on the western side of Lodge Lane north of the railway bridge (page 5 of the Environmental Statement Addendum). These losses would do

further harm to the green environment of the village, and particularly to the rural, sylvan nature of Lodge Lane as a typical Chiltern country lane and border of the AONB.

Other material in the further information submitted

We have no comments to make on the rest of the additional information submitted by the applicant in February, which is already covered by the objections in our original submission. In our view the whole proposal remains completely unacceptable and should be refused.

**Little Chalfont Parish Council
Little Chalfont Community Association**

10 March 2022

ATTACHMENT: REVIEW OF SUBMITTED ADDENDUM ECOLOGICAL INFORMATION, MARCH 2022



**LAND BETWEEN BURTONS LANE AND
LODGE LANE, LITTLE CHALFONT**

Planning Reference: PL/21/4632/OA

REVIEW OF SUBMITTED ADDENDUM
ECOLOGICAL INFORMATION

March 2022

E2096R2/V1



COMMISSIONED BY:

Little Chalfont Community Association and
Little Chalfont Parish Council

**LAND BETWEEN BURTONS LANE AND LODGE LANE
LITTLE CHALFONT
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

Planning Reference: PL/21/4632/OA

Review of submitted addendum ecological information
(as uploaded to Buckinghamshire Council's planning portal on the 8th and 9th February 2022)

March 2022

Bioscan Report No.
E2096R2/V1

BIOSCAN (UK) Ltd
The Old Parlour
Little Baldon Farm
Little Baldon
Oxford OX44 9PU

Tel: (01865) 341321
E-mail: bioscan@bioscanuk.com



CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	METHODOLOGY	3
3	CRITIQUE/COMMENTS ON THE SUBMITTED ECOLOGICAL REPORTING	4
4	CONCLUSIONS	12

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 In October 2021, Bioscan (UK) Ltd was appointed by Mr Michael Parker on behalf of Little Chalfont Community Association and Little Chalfont Parish Council, to provide an independent review of the ecological information submitted to Buckinghamshire Council (Chiltern Area) in support of outline planning application PL/21/4632/OA, for land between Lodge Lane and Burtons Lane, in Little Chalfont, Buckinghamshire, HP8 4AJ. The findings of this review were presented within a report¹ (dated January 2022), and were included in a package of documents submitted to Buckinghamshire Council by Little Chalfont Community Association and Little Chalfont Parish Council². The Bioscan report concluded that:

“...the ecological reports submitted may not accurately represent the ecological interest present on the application site and it is advised that extreme caution is applied in using it to inform decision making. The safeguards and mitigation proposals offered in the report are founded on an incomplete understanding and/or conveyance of the baseline position and cannot therefore be relied upon by decision makers as a means to avoid significant net loss of biodiversity. This is in contradiction to national and local planning policy. It is recommended that clarity be sought from the Applicant, including justification for deviations from industry standard survey methodologies, to enable a more robust impact assessment to be conducted.”

1.1.2 On the 25th January 2022, Buckinghamshire Council’s ecology officer provided a consultation response to the planning application, and summarised their response as follows:

“I have reviewed the [...] application regarding its ecological implications and we would recommend refusal owing to the biodiversity loss resulting from this development and the impacts of the development of County value habitats (ancient woodland and ‘Important’ hedgerow), County value species (barbastelle) and on other protected species”.

1.1.3 Buckinghamshire Council’s ecology officer goes on to state:

“Objection. From the information provided it is recommended that the application is refused or deferred at this stage due to the impacts on biodiversity, being contrary to NPPF and ODPM Circular 06/2005.”

1.1.4 In early February 2022, the Applicant provided additional submission documents as an addendum to the original planning application. It is understood that this addendum information was required due to minor changes to the application boundary arising from proposed highway improvements works in two locations: 1) along Lodge Lane and Church Grove; and 2) between Oakington Avenue and Amersham Road. As this modification to the application boundary occurred after the production of the original planning application documents (in November 2021), further assessments were subsequently undertaken to accommodate the latest changes to the application boundary (with these addendum documents uploaded to Buckinghamshire’s Council’s planning portal on the 8th and 9th of February 2022).

1.1.5 In February 2022, Bioscan (UK) Ltd was re-appointed by Mr Michael Parker on behalf of Little Chalfont Community Association and Little Chalfont Parish Council to review the submitted addendum ecology information.

¹ Bioscan (UK) Ltd (January 2022). Land at Former Little Chalfont Golf Course, Buckinghamshire: Review of Submitted Ecological Information (Report reference E2096R1/V1)

² Uploaded to Buckinghamshire Council’s planning portal on the 19th January 2022.

1.2 Site context

1.2.1 The application site (with recent addendum modifications) is approximately 30ha in size, and is dominated by a former golf course. The central grid reference is TQ000972. Figure 1 below provides an extract of a plan provided with the planning application identifying the application boundary (red line).

Figure 1. Application boundary (as provided with the planning application).



1.3 Submitted information

1.3.1 The submitted addendum documents relating to ecology comprise the following:

- **Environmental Statement Addendum** (Waterman I&E, February 2022)
- **Appendix 12.2A** - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal: Technical Note update (combining findings from June 2021 and January 2022) (Waterman I&E, February 2022)
- **Appendix 12.3A** - Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (Waterman I&E, 2022)

1.3.2 As per Bioscan's January 2022 review, the veracity of the above reports, and the robustness of the data and suitability of the surveys undertaken, have been the focus of this review. Conclusions are offered on whether the submitted addendum ecological information provides an adequate level of detail on ecological matters sufficient for the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to discharge its duties to have regard to all relevant material considerations, and its statutory duties in relation to protected and 'Priority' habitats and species.



2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Review of submitted documents

- 2.1.1 The relevant addendum documents submitted with the planning application (as listed above in paragraph 1.3.1) were given a 'high-level' review by Bioscan.
- 2.1.2 The ecology reports were reviewed and assessed for their adequacy, including in respect of any limitations to the survey methodology, the validity of the stated results, and robustness of the related assessments. This is set out at Chapter 3 of this report (below).
- 2.1.3 Statutory consultees' comments on the submission documents (including specifically those from Buckinghamshire Council's ecologist) were also reviewed where relevant to do so.

3 CRITIQUE/COMMENTS ON THE ADDENDUM ECOLOGY REPORTING

3.1 Document review process

3.1.1 The following provides a list of the reports that have been subject to review, and identifies where they appear to fall short of accepted industry-standards or where additional information is likely to be required in order for the LPA to come to an informed planning decision.

3.1.2 It should be noted that the issues and shortfalls in the survey methods, and the subsequent assessments of the ecology reports submitted originally, as highlighted in the January 2022 Bioscan report (E2096R1/V1), and by Buckinghamshire Council's ecology officer³, do not appear to have been addressed by the Applicant in their addendum reports.

3.1.3 For brevity, this section does not repeat the comments made in the previous Bioscan report, but they should nevertheless be read in tandem, with the Applicant still needing to address the identified significant shortfalls before a robust planning decision can be made by the LPA.

3.2 Environmental Statement Addendum (Waterman I&E, February 2022)

- 1) Table 12.1: It is noted that Table 12.1 only relates to Buckinghamshire Council's ecology scoping response (dated 26th August 2021) and does not address the significant shortfalls in the reporting, methodologies and subsequent assessments as outlined by Buckinghamshire Council's ecology officer and those outlined in Bioscan's January 2022 report. Nevertheless, the following highlights some points that should be addressed or clarified by the Applicant:
 - i) Bats. The report states in Table 12.1: *"Bat activity surveys were completed in 2019 and 2021 (Appendix 12.16 and 12.17, ES Volume 3 of the November 2021 ES). These surveys were completed in accordance with current best practice which took account of the assessment that the site supports moderate potential habitat for foraging and commuting bats."* As stated within Bioscan's January 2022 report, the surveys undertaken fell short of best practice set out within the Bat Conservation Trust's (BCT) Survey Guidelines (2016)⁴ due to *inter alia*: a) the level of survey work undertaken for a site considered by the Applicant to be of high value for foraging and commuting bats; b) the early curtailment of each survey visit; and c) the lack of a pre-dawn survey.
 - ii) Lighting. Further information (such as additional surveys for rarer bats, and an indicative lighting strategy) is required regarding the impacts of lighting on bats, particularly due to the presence of species such as barbastelle.
 - iii) Invertebrates. Whilst the scoping opinion stated: *"Invertebrate survey work should be considered and contribute to the retention and enhancement of the B-lines network"*, the Applicant has failed to state how the B-Lines network has been addressed or considered in the ES.
- 2) Section 12.2.1. The second paragraph in this statement states: *"No access to land containing ponds within 500m has been given to survey the suitability of the ponds for GCN"*. However, two ponds are immediately adjacent to public highways, and could have been assessed for their suitability to support great crested newts by the Applicant. This point is addressed at (4) below.

³ As provided within the ecology officer's response uploaded to the planning portal on the 26th January 2022.

⁴ Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

- 3) Section 12.3- Bats. This section states: *“a large Oak tree is located within the Modified Grassland located at the top of Lodge Lane. The tree is in good condition and no visible signs of deterioration during the Survey in 2022. A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) for bats was carried out during the survey with no potential roosting features (PRFs) seen at the time of survey. At the time of writing this report, it is assessed that the tree has a negligible bat roosting potential rating...”*. However, photographs taken of this tree by a local resident, and photographic information available via Google Street View, appear to show that the trunk of the tree is clad in ivy, with possible bat roosting features visible in the canopy. Indeed, the BCT’s Survey Guidelines⁵ states that *“A tree of sufficient size and age to contain PRFs but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited roosting potential”* would fall into the ‘Low’ bat roost suitability category. On this basis, the “large oak tree” should be considered to fall within the ‘low’ category as a minimum, or within the ‘medium’ category as a precaution.

This section goes onto state: *“No other habitat within the Site has potential for roosting bats and no trees adjacent to the Site have bat roosting potential (for example, no suitable features including rot holes, limb breaks, crevices). Therefore, the Site is considered to be not Significant for roosting bats.”* This text is misleading. As stated in the bat survey reports submitted with the original application⁶, a number of bat roosts have been noted on the site. Alternatively, the reference to ‘site’ should be changed to the ‘Highways Improvement Works area’.

Section 12.3 also states: *“All other habitats associated with the Highways Improvements Works are suboptimal for bats. It is possible that bats may use adjacent habitat for commuting and foraging (such as hedgerow and woodland) but these habitats are unlikely to be significantly affected by the works.”* Nevertheless, the ES addendum states (on page 5) that there is a *“loss of 14no. additional trees along the western side of Lodge Lane for the shorth [sic] length of Lodge Lane north of the Chilterns/Metropolitan Railway Line and the junction of Lodge Lane with Church Grove”*. It is considered that the loss of these trees could affect foraging and commuting bats and should be assessed within the ES. Further, this statement does not meet that provided in Table 12.3122 [Note: the formatting of the Applicant’s table numbering appears to be incorrect; this should probably state ‘Table 12.3’], which states: *“Direct effects to bats are not anticipated but Indirect effects to local bat populations and their roosts may occur if there are indirect impacts to foraging and commuting habitats.”*

- 4) Section 12.3- Great Crested Newt. This section states: *“[...] Pond 5 (P5) is located approximately 140m north of the Site within the grounds of the Little Chalfont Primary School. This pond was subject to eDNA sampling in 2021 as part of the November 2021 ES and found GCN to be absent.”* However, the Applicant has failed to acknowledge the limitations to the reliability of this survey data, arising from having undertaken the sampling outside of the eDNA seasonal survey window (which falls between mid-April and June)⁷, and therefore this result cannot and should not be relied upon.

This section goes onto state: *“No previous surveys or Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessments have been carried out on the ponds (apart from eDNA on P5) due to access*

⁵ Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

⁶ Including: **Appendix 12.18** - Bat Surveys – Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PRA) Report – 13 and 15 Oakington Avenue & Trees Along Lodge Lane (Ridgeway Ecology Ltd, 2021) and **Appendix 12.15** - Bat Surveys – Emergence Surveys on Buildings (report reference ASW/BDBL/065/25/2021) (ASW Ecology Ltd, 2021).

⁷ Biggs, J., Ewald, N., Valentini, A., Gaboriaud, C., Griffiths, R.A., Foster, J., Wilkinson, J., Arnett, A., Williams, P. and Dunn, F. (2014). Analytical and methodological development for improved surveillance of the Great Crested Newt. Appendix 5. Technical advice note for field and laboratory sampling of great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) environmental DNA. Freshwater Habitats Trust, Oxford.

restrictions". However, two of the ponds are located immediately adjacent to public highways and would allow for the Applicant to undertake HSI assessments. This was confirmed by a member of the Little Chalfont Community Association who was able to view, and take photographs of, these two waterbodies. The two photographs below show Pond P1 (adjacent to the railway line) and Pond P4 (near the junction of Church Grove and Amersham Road). Based on a review of these photographs, relevant aerial photography, and Ordnance Survey maps, Bioscan undertook desk-based HSI assessments of these two ponds. Although the ideal time of year to be undertaking these assessments is generally during the spring and summer⁸, and it is preferable to view the ponds 'on the ground', the resulting scores nevertheless give an approximate suitability score for these waterbodies to support great crested newts. Entering the various parameters to the HSI 'calculator', and taking a conservative approach to scoring the various indices, the resulting score for P1 was calculated to be 0.55, with P4 returning a result of 0.58. These scores place these two waterbodies within the 'Below average' category for great crested newt suitability. However, as previously stated, the scores are based on conservative parameters being entered, and without the assessor viewing the ponds on the ground, and consequently the score may be higher. Furthermore, it is unclear why the Applicant did not undertake a HSI assessment of the pond that was accessed for the eDNA sampling (P5), especially given the limitations imposed by having undertaken that sampling outside of the optimal season.



Photograph 1: Pond P1 (photograph taken 16/02/2022).

⁸ Various dates are given by a range of publications (e.g. Oldham *et al.* (2000) states 'between May and end of September', and ARG UK (2010) states 'between March and the end of September'), but generally the assessment period falls within the time of year when newts would be in waterbodies.



Photograph 2: Pond P4 (photograph taken 15/02/2022).

- 5) Section 12.3- Reptiles. This section states: *“No records of reptiles were returned from the data search undertaken in 2021, and none were seen during the survey in 2022.”* Reptiles are generally active between March and October⁹, and therefore the likelihood that a reptile would have been encountered during a survey in January is consequently very low. Consequently, this statement either indicates a lack of basic reptile knowledge by the Applicant’s ecologist or it is an attempt to mislead the reader.
- 6) Section 12.5.1. This section states: *“The Development including the Highways Improvements Works are also expected to achieve a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) of at least 10%, a requirement of the Environment Act 2021 which will come into force through Regulations expected in late 2023”*. However, as detailed below, it does not appear that the development would achieve biodiversity net gain on the basis of the plans submitted.

3.3 Appendix 12.2A - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal: Technical Note update (combining findings from June 2021 and January 2022) (Waterman I&E, 8th February 2022)

- 1) This report is largely similar to the June 2021 Appendix 12.2. Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) report, a review of which is set out in the January 2022 Bioscan report (E2096R1/V1). Given that text from the update PEA is used in the ES addendum (with Bioscan providing comments on this above), no further comments are provided on this report at this stage.

3.4 Appendix 12.3A- Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (Waterman I&E, 2022)

- 1) As per the comments in Bioscan’s January 2022 report, significantly greater clarity and transparency would be afforded to the LPA if the populated Metric 3.0 calculation tool were to be provided in full by the Applicant, along with the existing (baseline) and

⁹ Froglife (1999) Reptile survey: an introduction to planning, conducting and interpreting surveys for snake and lizard conservation. Froglife Advice Sheet 10. Froglife, Halesworth.

proposed geo-referenced plans from which the Applicant's metric is derived. In the absence of this information, the following comments are made in relation to the details provided within (or omitted from) the Applicant's 2022 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) report¹⁰.

- 2) In order to verify the Applicant's revised BNG calculation, Bioscan entered the parameters as provided within BNG report into a blank Biodiversity Metric 3.0 spreadsheet. However, despite the same figures being entered, the resulting net % change score did not exactly match that provided within the report. The errors appear to be due to the following:
 - a) within the Applicant's report for habitat creation, an area of 1.55ha is given for the modified grassland; however, the resulting habitat units delivered when entering this figure into the metric is 6.18 units, as opposed to the 6.06 units in the Applicant's report. In order for the metric to provide a figure of 6.06 units, an area of 1.51ha needs to be entered; and
 - b) in the Applicant's report for Hedgerows, the length of H4 is given as 0.136km, and entering the given length to be removed gives a resulting lost unit figure of 1.45, as opposed to the 1.37 stated in the report. In order for the metric to provide 1.37, the length retained should be entered as 0.07km.

Although these apparent errors only marginally produce a different net gain score, it highlights that they could be as yet undiscovered but more significant errors within the Applicant's BNG calculations.

- 3) One such apparent significant error noted by Bioscan was the condition assessment of the baseline modified grassland. On Page 22 of the Applicant's 2022 PEA report (Appendix 12.2A), under the section entitled 'Modified Grassland with Scattered Scrub and Scattered Trees' it states: "*The habitat [modified grassland with scattered scrub and scattered trees] is of low distinctiveness and in moderate condition.*" [our underlining]. However, within the Applicant's BNG report, this habitat is shown as being in 'poor' condition. Based on the text for this habitat within the PEA report, and the condition assessment criteria for a low distinctiveness grassland¹¹, Bioscan would agree with the assessment in the PEA report that the grassland is likely to fall within the 'moderate' condition category.
- 4) As stated in the January 2022 Bioscan report, it is difficult to envisage that the Applicant would be able to deliver the Priority habitat 'Lowland Meadow' on the site (particularly as it is likely to be the main dog-walking area for the residents of the development, with potential impacts arising from *inter alia* nutrient enrichment and trampling). Nevertheless, if the Applicant is persistent in stating that this habitat is achievable on the site then further information should be provided, in particular:
 - a) the previous/current land-use of the proposed meadow;
 - b) the plant species currently present (although the Applicant's soil report does provide some, albeit limited, information "*the [...] field is currently unoccupied and is covered in tall grass*", this is significantly insufficient to understand the current status of this field); and
 - c) the management that is proposed to enable the field to become lowland meadow.
- 5) Further, it is noted that the Applicant has stated that the proposed 'high distinctiveness' Lowland Meadow habitat would be in 'Good' condition. However, a review of the soil phosphorus levels within the relevant field, as shown in the Applicant's soil analysis report¹², would indicate that these levels are too high to warrant a 'Good' score for this habitat. The following table (Figure 2) provides the results of the soil analysis (extract taken from the Applicant's report), with the top row providing a broad copy of the soil

¹⁰ Waterman report reference: WIE15569-101-2-2-3-BNG (dated February 2022)

¹¹ Natural England (July 2021). *Biodiversity Metric 3.0: Auditing and accounting for biodiversity – Technical Supplement*

¹² Waterman Report Reference: WIE15569-112-TN-1-2-1 (dated January 2022)

parameters that are suitable for lowland neutral grassland establishment, as set out in Best Practice Guidance Note 17 (BPG N 17) published by Forest Research¹³.

Figure 2. Copy of Table 3 from the Applicant’s Soil Assessment report (dated January 2022).

Table 3: Analytical Results vs. Ideal Topsoil Characteristics for LNG

Location	pH (pH units)	Available Phosphorus (mg/l)	Organic Matter (%)	Total Nitrogen (%)
BPG N 17 Criteria	5.5-6.5	4-25	2-14	0.2-0.7
SA1	7.05	12.2	4.5	0.34
SA2	6.26	8.9	3.9	0.28
SA3	5.73	32.4	6.0	0.34

The samples were also analysed for available potassium, which is not an analyte detailed within the criteria table set out in BPG N 17 but is mentioned. Test Results are included in Appendix C.

- 6) The main body of the Applicant’s 2022 BNG report states the following in respect of the soil analysis: *“Samples were taken from three different locations [SA1, SA2, SA3 in the table above] within the area of grassland proposed to be enhanced. The findings determined that the majority of topsoil characteristics from the three locations matched or were very close to the soil parameters suitable to create Lowland Meadow habitat and therefore the enhancement is likely to be successful and the meadow thrive in this area”*. However, the Applicant has failed to highlight footnotes that accompany the criteria as provided in the source BPG N 17 document. For reference, Figure 3 below is a copy the relevant table provided within BPG N 17 (with selectively chosen figures from this table used by the Applicant in their Table 3 above).

Figure 3. Copy of Table 3 from BPG N 17¹³.

Parameter	Level
Topsoil depth	200–300 mm
Drainage	Slow
pH	Acid to slightly acid (pH 5.5–6.5)
Available phosphorus ^a	25 mg l ⁻¹ (4–12 mg l ⁻¹)
Organic matter ^b	4% [5–14%]
Total nitrogen ^b	0.2% [0.30–0.70%]

Pertinent to the Applicant’s stated ‘Good’ condition of the proposed lowland meadow (as stated in paragraph 6.4 of the Applicant’s Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment report¹⁴) is footnote ‘a’ adjacent to ‘Available phosphorus’ in the above table (Figure 3). Footnote ‘a’ states: *“Acceptable upper limit [i.e. 25 mg l⁻¹]. A level of available phosphorus of less than 10 mg kg⁻¹ is ideal to maximise floristic diversity within unimproved, semi-natural grassland communities (Marrs and Gough, 1989). While values of 11 to 25 mg kg⁻¹ have potential, expect reduced floral diversity and increased risk of competition from rank and pioneer species.”* The values from the site range from 8.9 mg l⁻¹ to 32.4 mg l⁻¹, and

¹³ Harris, P. Brearley, A. and Doick, K. (2014) Lowland neutral grassland- Creation and management in land regeneration. BPG Note 17. Forest Research.

¹⁴ Waterman report reference: WIE15569-101-2-2-3-BNG (dated February 2022)



therefore it can be expected, based on the figures provided in the footnote, that the proposed Lowland Meadow would certainly not fall within the 'Good' condition category. A realistically achievable proposed habitat and condition for the 'Lowland Meadow' field would instead be (at best) 'Other neutral grassland' in 'Moderate' condition.

- 7) Bioscan re-ran the metric based on this more realistic approach (i.e. changing the 'Poor' habitat condition for the baseline modified grassland to 'Moderate' as per (3) above; changing the proposed 2.7ha of 'lowland meadow' to 'other neutral grassland' as per (7) above; and changing the condition of this habitat from 'Good' to 'Moderate' also as per (7) above). Figure 4 below provides the result of this potentially more realistic approach.

On-site baseline	<i>Habitat units</i>	182.39
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	11.63
	<i>River units</i>	0.00
On-site post-intervention <small>(Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)</small>	<i>Habitat units</i>	150.12
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	14.34
	<i>River units</i>	0.00
On-site net % change <small>(Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)</small>	<i>Habitat units</i>	-17.69%
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	23.28%
	<i>River units</i>	0.00%

Figure 4. Results of Bioscan re-running of the metric calculation based on more pragmatic and realistic condition parameters.

- 8) Figure 4 above indicates that the likely actual percentage biodiversity net change on the site is (at best) minus 17.69% (with the hedgerow percentage change remaining the same). However, it should be noted that the Metric indicated that Trading Rules were not satisfied using these parameters.
- 9) It should also be noted that it would appear the numbering of the proposed new hedgerows on Figure 2 (Illustrative Landscape Plan) as provided within the Applicant's BNG 2022 report appear to be incorrect (by cross-reference to Table 11 of the BNG 2022 report, and Figure 1 of the same report). Specifically, it would appear that H8 should be H9, H9=H10, and H10=H11.
- 10) Staying with hedgerows, Paragraph 4.4 of the Applicant's BNG report states: "*The retention of woodland and hedgerow habitats will maintain the green corridors throughout the Site and connectivity with the surrounding habitats and the proposed hedgerow and buffer planting will increase the connectivity throughout the Site by creating corridors between retained habitats.*" However, in contradiction to this statement, it is noted that a likely key hedgerow (H2 on Figure 1 of the Applicant's 2022 BNG report) has been identified for removal as part of the proposals. This hedgerow is highly likely to be providing a green corridor between Stonydean Wood and Netherground Spring (it is also of note here that the original ES, in Table 12.7, scopes hedgerows out of further assessment, but as H2 has been assessed as 'Important' (further to the Hedgerows Regulations 1997)¹⁵, further details are required from the Applicant to understand how hedgerows have been scoped out of further assessment). Based on the masterplan, it would appear that Stonydean Wood will become isolated from the wider landscape as a result of the proposals, which could lead to fragmentation for a range of species. Further, although Paragraph 4.4 states that the proposed hedgerows (and buffer planting) will increase connectivity through the site; the main areas of hedgerow planting are largely located adjacent to the existing woodlands, and would therefore unlikely increase

¹⁵ As stated in **Appendix 12.7** - Hedgerow Assessment Report (Ecology and Land Management, 2021)



connectivity to allow a range of species to permeate through the site and into surrounding habitats.

- 11) It should be noted that all the above calculations have been made in the absence of the full tables used by the Applicant, and the relevant plans to verify the area and length measurements. If these tables and plans were to be made available, then this would permit Bioscan to verify the results of the Metric calculations.

4 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The conclusions provided in the January 2022 Bioscan report remain unchanged. As noted in the introduction of this report, the above serves as a 'high level' review of the submitted addendum ecological information; and once the relevant information has been provided by the Applicant then the ecology reports can be subject to further detailed examination. Further, it would appear that the Applicant has not addressed the comments provided in the January 2022 Bioscan report, or the response by Buckinghamshire Council's ecology officer¹⁶. Consequently, based on the information provided by the Applicant thus far, a full and robust assessment of all the submitted ecological documents cannot be made.
- 4.1.2 In respect of the Applicant's updated BNG report, the net gain proclaimed by the Applicant appears to be incorrect, by some margin, and on the contrary, it appears that the proposals would result in a negative situation (i.e. a considerable loss of biodiversity, quantified as approaching -18%). Such a loss would be contrary to the Environment Act 2021, and local and national policy. In order to allow for these figures to be examined further, the Applicant should supply the raw spreadsheet calculations to allow for full transparency and public scrutiny, and before any determination of the application is considered.

¹⁶ Buckinghamshire Council's ecology officer's response dated 25th January 2022.



Bioscan (UK) Ltd
The Old Parlour
Little Baldon Farm
Oxford
OX44 9PU

Tel: +44 (0) 1865 341321
Fax: +44 (0) 1865 343674

bioscan@bioscanuk.com
www.bioscanuk.com

24/02/22 Little Chalfont Parish Council and Little Chalfont Community Association continue to object strongly to this application. The new material submitted by the applicant neither answers nor changes the objections in our submission posted on 19 January. We are considering whether to submit comments on some of the new material by the deadline of 12 March.

06/01/22 The parish council strongly objects to this application for a large development in the Green Belt. Details of the objection will be submitted separately.

19/01/22 (see next page)



Planning Application – PL/21/4632/OA

**Full approval of access proposals and demolitions,
plus outline approval for land between Burtons Lane
and Lodge Lane in Little Chalfont**

Joint Objection

Submitted by:

Little Chalfont Parish Council

and

Little Chalfont Community Association

19 January 2022

a)

Statement

The Little Chalfont Parish Council and Little Chalfont Community Association work together on major planning applications for the village, involving the community views in formulating a response that is submitted jointly.

The Little Chalfont Community Association is involved in many community projects, and has a membership approaching 700 households, plus businesses and voluntary organisations.

-----00000000-----



CONTENTS

	Page
Key Points	1
Introduction	4
<u>Objections based on:</u>	
Green Belt and Local Planning Policy	4
Green Belt and National Planning Policy	8
Chilterns AONB	11
Area of Special Character	12
Access and Transport	12
Natural Environment and Ecology	18
Sewage	21
Disproportionate Growth	21
Affordable Housing	22
Brownfield Sites	22
Demolition	23
Risk of Change to Proposals	23

b)

**APPLICATION PL/21/4632/OA, LAND BETWEEN BURTONS LANE AND LODGE LANE
LITTLE CHALFONT**

**OBJECTION BY LITTLE CHALFONT PARISH COUNCIL AND LITTLE CHALFONT
COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION.**

KEY POINTS

- Little Chalfont Parish Council and Little Chalfont Community Association (LCCA) object strongly. Our objection is supported by three professional studies, at appendices: A Independent Highways Assessment; B Landscape Briefing Note; and C Review of Submitted Ecological Information. We shall submit separately material on Reserved Matters. (Paras 1- 2)
- **Green Belt**
 - The applicant cites a withdrawn draft local plan in support of development in the Green Belt, but this now carries no weight. The applicant also cites the Green Belt Assessment in the evidence base for the withdrawn draft local plan, but we have shown evidence that the Assessment was flawed and unsound in its treatment of the area containing the application site. (Paras 3-10)
 - Contrary to the impression given in some of the applicant’s publicity, the site is not the same as the one proposed for development in the withdrawn local plan. The local plan site included an existing industrial area. The application site does not, so is purer Green Belt. (Para 4)
 - The proposals contravene Green Belt policies in the Adopted Local Plan, the Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The claimed *very special circumstances* do not outweigh the harm to the Green Belt from this proposed inappropriate development. (Paras 11-31)
 - The application site performs strongly in NPPF Green Belt purposes (b) to prevent coalescence (with Chorleywood) and (c) to safeguard the countryside from encroachment. (Paras 32-38)
 - Green Belt alongside a settlement is not weaker than other Green Belt. (Para 37)
- **AONB AND AoSC**
 - The development would harm the setting of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), which is adjacent to the site at its boundary with Lodge Lane. (Paras 39-41)
 - The site is sandwiched between the AONB to its east and an Area of Special Character (AoSC) to its west, and provides a positive setting to both. (Para 42)
- **Access and Transport**
 - The professional report at Appendix A challenges the applicant’s assertions on vehicular access and sustainable travel, provides evidence

of omissions and unjustified claims in the applicant's documentation, and recommends refusal on highways grounds. (Para 43). A separate independent study is noted at Para 44.

- The applicant's claim that an access strategy was agreed with the former county council, in relation to the withdrawn Chiltern and South Bucks draft plan, is not based on published evidence, and should be regarded as of no material significance. (Paras 45-46)
- The vehicle access proposals are unsustainable, unacceptable, and should cause refusal of the application. Harm caused by use of Lodge Lane, Church Grove East and Burtons Lane would be excessive, to those lanes, to the chalk dry valley, to the setting of the AONB, and to surrounding narrow lanes. (Paras 47-74)
- The former Bucks County Council was opposed to use of Lodge Lane as a main entrance to a development on this land. (Para 54)
- The narrow gap under the railway bridge in Lodge Lane would require a priority operating system (confirmed by the above professional report). This would be a further major obstacle to use of Lodge Lane as the main access road, and a source of air pollution from waiting vehicles. (Paras 55-56)
- Danger to the hikers and other pedestrians who use Lodge Lane would be greater than the Environmental Statement suggests. (Para 58)
- Without a direct pedestrian access to Little Chalfont centre, the development would not be sustainable. The pedestrian/cycle route proposed across a new railway bridge, to meet Oakington Avenue, would not be fit for its purpose. It would bring hazards to pedestrians, including schoolchildren. (Paras 59-62)
- Bus stops on the A404 could not be relocated near the proposed new Oakington Avenue exit for road safety reasons, some already identified in appeal decisions. (Paras 63-64)
- It is claimed that traffic flow would be restricted between the western and eastern parts of the site. The exact use of the link road between the two parts, and the capacity to enforce any restrictions, is an access issue which should be decided with the outline application. (Paras 65-68)
- Likely heavy car use by residents on the proposed development would conflict with climate change policy. (Para 69)
- Little Chalfont has no bypass. A Strategic Inter-Urban Route (A404) runs through the village centre. The development would create more traffic on the A404, worsening existing congestion, parking problems and danger to pedestrians including many children who walk through the centre to attend a large high school, crossing a busy road where there is no zebra crossing. (Paras 70-72)
- We conclude, as does the report at Appendix A, that this application should be refused on highways grounds. (paras 73-74)

- **Harm to natural environment, and pollution**
 - The professional report at Appendix B points out important omissions and failings in the applicant's Landscape Visual Impact Study (LVIA) and adds evidence to our case against inappropriate development in the Green Belt. (Paras 76-77)
 - The many high buildings proposed would worsen urbanisation in the rural environment. (Paras 20 and 80)
 - In a letter to the community the applicants stated that there would be no housing in the chalk dry valley. However, the Design and Access Statement shows that there would be extensive housing in the dry valley, and roads on the valley floor, spoiling a rare and valued Chiltern landscape feature which extends over most of the site. (Paras 81-83)
 - Buffers proposed for ancient woodland do not meet Woodland Trust standards and are inadequate. (Paras 84-85)
- **Ecology**
 - The professional report at Appendix C shows that the ecological information provided by the applicant is inadequate. The net gain in biodiversity proclaimed by the applicant appears to be incorrect, by some margin, and it appears that the proposals would result in a negative biodiversity outcome. (Para 86)
 - There would be possible overload of the existing sewage works at Maple Cross leading to further pollution of local rivers. (Para 87)
- **Infrastructure**
 - The development would harm Little Chalfont's physical and social infrastructure, which has already absorbed two large estates totalling 300 homes in recent years. It would overwhelm local services, including GPs, through an abrupt increase of at least 17% in housing. (Paras 88-90)
- **Affordable housing**
 - There is always a shortage, but Little Chalfont is relatively well supplied with housing association properties (over 450). The applicant offers affordable housing, but has not completed any legal agreement with a mechanism to secure this. (Para 91)
- **Brownfield sites**
 - 4 brownfield sites are registered now, with 2 more "possibles" in future, including a big one. (Paras 92-93)
- **Demolition**
 - The proposed demolition of certain buildings should not be permitted if the access proposals, or outline permission, are refused. (Paras 994-95)
- **Application lacks detail**
 - The application contains insufficient firm proposals. Too much scope is left for different proposals by a future owner. (Para 96)

INTRODUCTION

1. Little Chalfont Parish Council and Little Chalfont Community Association (LCCA) object strongly to this application.

Supporting documents

2. Our case below is supported by the following appendices.
 - Appendix A: an Independent Highways Assessment by Paul Mew Associates.
 - Appendix B: a Landscape Briefing Note by Michelle Bolger Expert Landscape Consultancy.
 - Appendix C: a Review of Submitted Ecological Information by Bioscan (UK).
 - Appendix D: a map showing the location of the chalk dry valley (previously appended to our response to the Regulation 19 consultation on the, since withdrawn, draft Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan).

We shall submit a separate document with our views on reserved matters as soon as possible.

GREEN BELT AND LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

3. Harm to the Green Belt is a major objection to this application.
4. Section 7 of the Planning Statement repeatedly refers to the application site (e.g. in 7.35 and 7.36) as if it is the same as the Green Belt site proposed for development in Policy SP BP6 in the withdrawn Chiltern and South Bucks (CSB) draft local plan. The applicant's "message to the community" letter of 30 December 2021 makes the same assertion. This is not so. The SP BP6 site was about a third bigger than the application site and contained the Honours Yard industrial area. The application site does not include Honours Yard and is, therefore, much purer Green Belt, containing less than 1% built form.
5. The applicant places emphasis and weight on the site being put forward as part of policy SP BP6 in the above plan. However, it is important that at Secretary of State level the soundness of that plan was challenged and it was withdrawn.
6. The Buckinghamshire Council case officer's report on a recent application to develop a Green Belt site elsewhere in Little Chalfont, PL/20/3239/OA, stated: *Much of the Applicant's submitted Planning Statement relies on the provisions of the Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan 2036. However, this only had an emerging status, had not been to Examination and was withdrawn by the Council in November 2020. As such the former unadopted and emerging Local Plan carries no weight.* The case officer's report of November 2021 on application PL/21/3151/OA for a development in the Green Belt at Beaconsfield, similar in size to the application site, noted that: *...the Draft Chiltern and South Bucks Local*

Plan 2036 was never examined as it was withdrawn. Therefore, the policies contained within it hold no material weight in planning decision-making.

7. In section 7.18 of the Planning Statement it is claimed that the evidence base for the withdrawn plan remains a material consideration in assessment of the site. In our Regulation 19 submission of 16 August 2019 on that plan we drew attention to two serious flaws in the evidence base relating to the Green Belt Assessment of the site.

8. First, we showed that the assessments made in that evidence of site SP BP6's contribution to the Green Belt purposes defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) were inaccurately low, because they did not follow the methodology prescribed for the study. The same flaw was independently demonstrated by Michelle Bolger Expert Landscape Consultancy in their Site Appraisal (section 6.2.4-5) appended to our above submission. Both analyses showed that, had the methodology been followed, General Area 35 (later SP BP6) would not have been proposed for removal from the Green Belt.

9. Secondly, we referred to paragraphs 137 and 123 of the NPPF. Those sections place new emphasis on the need to protect Green Belt land and to review densities to make optimal use of the potential of each non-Green Belt site. There was also a perception in the NPPF that some brownfield sites may have been overlooked. Our submission stated that these changes to the NPPF occurred after the Council had completed its selection of sites and preferred options to meet the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN). However, there was no evidence that the Council carried out any review of those preferred options against the changes in the NPPF. That failure to reflect on the changes was, in our opinion a serious flaw in the evidence base. A review of the NPPF changes would have led to a greater contribution to the OAN from other sites and made it possible for site SP BP6 to remain in the Green Belt.

10. Buckinghamshire Council has indicated that it will not produce a new draft local plan covering Chiltern and South Bucks until about 2024, after government policy has been more clearly established following debate initiated by the white paper 'Planning for the Future'.

Adopted local plan policies: Harm to the Green Belt and to the surroundings

11. In the absence of a new adopted local plan, the local policies relevant to the present application are those saved from the Adopted Chiltern District Local Plan of 1997, principally Policies GC1 and GB2, also Policy GB30 (which refers specifically to areas of Green Belt not within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), and those in the Adopted Core Strategy for Chiltern District of November 2011, principally Policy CS1, the 'Spatial Strategy'.

General Criteria for Development.

12. Policy GC1 in the Adopted Local Plan sets out that development needs to be designed to a high standard that complies with the other policies in the Plan. Design is not just about appearance but also its relationship to its surroundings. Important criteria can be summarised as follows.

- Scale of development. Development should be in scale with its surroundings, relating well in terms of overall dimensions to all features of the townscape and landscape.
- Height. New buildings and structures should generally conform with the height of adjoining buildings and structures.
- Relationship of Development to its site. Development should relate well to the characteristics of the site on which it is to be located.

13. Our concern is that the siting, not only of residential development, but also of residential development on this scale in this location, does not relate well to its surroundings, and is inappropriate and insensitive in the landscape, the Green Belt location, and in the setting of the AONB and an Area of Special Character (AoSC).

Saved Policy GB2 in the Adopted Chiltern District Local Plan of 1997 states:

Most development in the Green Belt is inappropriate and there is a general presumption against such development. Development which is not inappropriate is set out in this Policy. Planning permission will be refused for inappropriate development in the Green Belt, but may be given for the categories of development set out in clauses (a) to (f) below.

- a) New buildings which are reasonably required for agricultural or forestry purposes. "Agriculture" has the meaning given in section 336 (1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended):*
- b) New buildings to provide essential facilities for (i) outdoor sport and (ii) outdoor recreation; for (iii) cemeteries and for (iv) other uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and which do not conflict with the purposes of including land in it.*
- c) The limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings in accordance with Policies GB6, GB7, GB12, GB13 and GB15 in this Local Plan.*
- d) Limited infilling within the areas identified in Policies GB4 and GB5 in accordance with Policies GB4, GB5, GB22A and GB23 in this Local Plan.*
- e) Change of use of existing permanent and substantial buildings, in accordance with Policies GB10, GB11, GB22A and GB29.*
- f) Engineering and other operations and the making of material changes in the use of land (as distinct from buildings) which maintain openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt. The granting of planning permission is subject to other Policies in this Local plan being complied with.*

The granting of planning permission is subject to other Policies in this Local plan being complied with."

Saved Policy GB30 states:

Where development would be acceptable in accordance with other Policies in this chapter, it will be permitted if it would be well integrated into its rural setting and so conserve the scenic beauty and amenity of the landscape in the locality of the development. In addition, where considered appropriate and practicable by the Council,

the development should provide for the improvement of degraded landscape within the application site. This Policy applies to all land within the Green Belt which is not included within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Area of Attractive Landscape, Locally Important Landscape Areas and Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest

14. Objection under GB2 and GB30: harm to the Green Belt. The proposal in the application does not fall within any of the exceptions (a) to (f) in Adopted Local Plan Policy GB2 above. The proposal would introduce built form onto the greater part of the site, with a significant proportion of the site being occupied by buildings, roads and parking areas. The proposal would completely alter views across the site, resulting in the loss of the open and rural character of the site to the detriment of the character and amenity of the area. The proposal would not conserve the scenic beauty and amenity of the landscape in the locality of the development, especially that beauty and amenity in the AONB which begins at Lodge Lane, immediately adjacent to the application site. The development would be highly visible from homes in the adjacent residential roads: Burtons Lane, Loudhams Wood Lane, Village Way, Oakington Avenue and The Retreat; also from Lodge Lane and from public footpath LCF/11/1 through New Hanging Wood (AONB) opposite the proposed site entrance. The proposal is therefore contrary to policies GB2 and GB30 of the Adopted Chiltern District Local Plan of 1997.

Policy CS1, The Spatial Strategy, in the Adopted Core Strategy for Chiltern District, states:

The spatial strategy for Chiltern District aims to protect the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Green Belt by focusing new development between 2006 and 2026 on land within existing settlements not covered by those designations. The built-up areas of the most accessible of these settlements: Chesham; Amersham/Amersham-on-the-Hill; Chalfont St Peter and Little Chalfont will be the main focus for development. Limited development will take place in other villages excluded from the Green Belt, namely Chalfont St Giles; Great Missenden; Prestwood and Heath End; Holmer Green; Penn and Knotty Green; Chesham Bois and Seer Green. Some redevelopment and infilling is planned for identified developed sites in the Green Belt. Very little development is intended elsewhere.

Core Strategy note 7.4 on the Spatial Strategy states:

88% of Chiltern District (and all of its countryside) lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt. National planning policy on Green Belts aims to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open and establishes a presumption against inappropriate development on designated land. The Coalition Government has stressed the continuing importance of protecting Green Belt. The development needs of the District can be met without encroaching into undeveloped parts of the Green Belt and there are no exceptional reasons for departing from national policy. Accordingly, it is neither

necessary nor appropriate to consider large-scale building on undeveloped countryside in the Green Belt.

15. **Objection under CS1: harm to the Green Belt.** The proposal is contrary to Policy CS1, the Spatial Strategy, of the Adopted Core Strategy for Chiltern District (November 2011), which decided to focus new development on land within existing settlements which is neither Green Belt nor AONB.

Built form: harm to the Green Belt

16. The Applicant's Planning Statement seeks to argue that the site includes built form and existing development. By our reckoning the existing built form covers less than 1% of the land area of the site and therefore has no significant impact on the openness of the site. In comparison to the built form proposed in the scheme the current built form is negligible. In spatial terms the proposed development introduces a high level of built form where currently there is none.

17. The applicant stresses that a certain proportion of the development will remain open space and compares this with the proportion of proposed built form. We do not consider this comparison to be relevant. The comparison which should be made is between the proportion of open space now, and that which will remain after the development.

18. The proposed development would introduce built development into what is currently open countryside in the Green Belt. It would create a feeling of over-urbanisation in what is currently a large expanse of countryside contributing to the landscape.

19. There is no doubt that the proposal is for inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Therefore, it would fall to be considered under NPPF paragraphs 147-150 (see below).

Building Heights

20. The building heights parameter plan at 5.3 of the Design and Access Statement shows about fifteen large buildings of three, "up to three", or "up to three and a half" storeys for flats and mixed use purposes, all at the northern side of the site. This is excessive for this boundary of the urban area. Such high buildings are out of keeping with the nearby residential roads in Little Chalfont, which are characterised by bungalows and two-storey detached houses.

GREEN BELT AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

Objections under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), July 2021.

Green Belt boundaries

21. No existing local plan or draft local plan makes provision for changing Green Belt boundaries in Chiltern District under the procedure in NPPF paragraph 140. Therefore, the proposal to build in the Green Belt is not justifiable under paragraph 140. The Green Belt's extent cannot be altered through the approval of a planning application.

Inappropriate development

22. NPPF paragraphs 147 and 148 state:

147. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

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

23. Paragraphs 149 and 150 then list types of building and other activities which are exceptions, not considered inappropriate, to the above policy. The applicant's proposal does not match any of these exceptions, as the Planning Statement acknowledges at section 7.5.

No 'very special circumstances'

24. The applicant's case under the NPPF must thus rest on whether 'very special circumstances' can be identified to justify inappropriate development on the site.

25. We are not aware of any comprehensive, up-to-date, report on the housing requirement in Buckinghamshire, of the kind which will be needed for preparation of the next local plan. We understand from paragraph 6.21 of the case officer's report on application PL/21/3151/OA that the Council is in the process of updating the 5 year housing supply position statement in the light of the adoption of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan, and to incorporate the most up to date housing delivery data. The case officer continues: "*As such it is considered that this dilutes the weight can be attributed to the delivery of housing as a benefit of the scheme. It is considered that housing delivery is a benefit that can be attributed moderate weight.*" We assume that this statement would also apply to the present application. There is no evidence that the local need for new housing in Little Chalfont is exceptional enough to amount to very special circumstances. While we acknowledge a general need for affordable housing, Little Chalfont is relatively well supplied with low-cost housing through housing associations. (See below under Affordable Housing).

26. Furthermore, it is not the case that generic factors, such as housing need, can be applied as exceptional circumstances without consideration of the circumstances at individual sites. Paragraph 51 of Mr Justice Hay's judgment of 24 March 2015 in the Calverton case shows that the nature and extent of harm to a particular Green Belt site should be 'grappled with'.

27. Very Special Circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt (by virtue of the development being inappropriate) and any other harm (landscape, highways and biodiversity) is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

28. Housing need does not justify development in the Green Belt in and of itself. The applicant accepts that the proposed development is, by definition, inappropriate development in the Green Belt. We consider the harm to the openness of the Green Belt *significant*, not *moderate to limited*. We consider the impact on the Green Belt purposes significantly worse than 'moderate'.

29. The majority of the benefits of the proposal are in terms of delivering housing and those benefits do not outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and the other harm to the locality as set out within this submission.

30. When considering this application, the local planning authority should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. That harm is identified in the paragraphs above. The harm identified is that which introduces a scheme of residential development into the Green Belt. The scheme does not preserve the purposes of maintaining Green Belt land. The harm will be both in terms of spatial and visual harm to the openness of the Green Belt. It does not satisfy any of the exceptions to development in the Green Belt set out in the NPPF. The harm to the Green Belt and its openness is significant.

31. The appended professional studies set out the harm in relation to landscape, highways and ecology. The harm which would be caused by this development is not only in Green Belt terms.

Green Belt Purposes

32. It is stated in the Applicant's planning statement that the overall contribution of the site to the Green Belt purposes is moderate. We do not accept that view and consider that the contribution the site makes to the Green Belt is being 'played down' and under-valued in the application.

33. Paragraph 137 of the NPPF of July 2021 sets out that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open, and that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. The proposed site consists almost entirely of open Green Belt, containing less than 1% built form.

34. The application site meets strongly the Green Belt purposes in paragraph 138 of the NPPF as follows.

35. Purpose (b) *"To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another"*. The site constitutes an important part of the Green Belt separating Little Chalfont from Chorleywood. There is no housing directly between the site and Chorleywood except for Lodge Farm. It is also important to note that the housing to the south of the site on Long Walk and Lodge Lane is designated on the Adopted Local Plan Policies Map as 'Rows of Dwellings in the Green Belt'. The limitations on development imposed by that designation mean that the area south of the site also fulfils a role under Purpose (b). Outline application 20/0898/OUT to Three Rivers District Council for a development at Green Street, west of Chorleywood, already threatens to urbanise further Green Belt between Chorleywood and Little Chalfont, and the proposal in PL/21/4632/OA would worsen this. Therefore, Buckinghamshire Council should take account of Three Rivers application 20/0898/OUT in considering PL/21/4632/OA in relation to NPPF paragraph 138 Purpose (b).

36. Purpose (c) *"To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment"*. The site performs strongly because it contains less than 1% built form, is closely linked to the wider Green Belt, and provides openness and tranquillity close to the centre of Little Chalfont. The proposal would destroy the site's role under purpose (c) and would damage the setting of the wider Green Belt.

37. The NPPF does not distinguish between different categories of Green Belt but treats all Green Belt as the same. It would be false to suggest that Green Belt adjacent to a settlement is somehow less valuable than other Green Belt. On the contrary, it provides a firm boundary to residential development and is a particular amenity for the many who have views across it, as do residents of Burtons Lane, Loudhams Wood Lane, Village Way, Oakington Avenue and The Retreat, as well as walkers in Lodge Lane and local Public Rights of Way (PROW). Moreover, the logical consequence of such a false idea is that all Green Belt would be gradually but inevitably eroded away.

38. The applicant over-emphasises the existing built form on the site and downplays the character of the site and its performance against the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. The whole application site should remain Green Belt without further development.

CHILTERNS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)

39. The site is in the setting of the AONB, which begins immediately adjacent to the site at its boundary with Lodge Lane. Development of the site would:

- Harm both the setting of the AONB and views from the AONB by removing the buffer of open land that separates the AONB from Little Chalfont, and which provides an appropriate setting for the AONB through the continuity of landscape character across the AONB boundary into the application site. See the attached professional report at Appendix B.
- Buildings proposed on the site, especially those three storeys high, would damage the view from the AONB. Contrary to the claim in sections 7.45 to 7.49 of the Planning Statement, the estate and its tall buildings would be highly visible from AONB land near the site entrance in Lodge Lane, including the popular PROW path LCF/11/1 through New Hanging Wood towards Chenies.
- Harm the character of Lodge Lane, a quiet, rural lane characteristic of the Chilterns AONB, by widening, by the lane's close proximity to the development, also by noise and pollution from increased traffic from the larger, busier, eastern part of the site, which it is proposed would include the retirement village, the care home, and possibly a school.
- Result in the loss of an attractive, rural landscape which contributes positively to the setting of Little Chalfont, the AONB and the wider countryside.

40. Policy LSQ1 in the Adopted Local Plan set out clearly that the primary objective is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape. Conservation and enhancement of the AONB is key, and, where development is not consistent with these objectives, permission should be refused unless there are very exceptional circumstances that outweigh those landscape objectives.

41. The criteria set out in policy LSQ1 point directly to what needs to be assessed as to whether a development meets the test of conservation and enhancement. These include the size, scale, siting and design of the development in relation to existing screening vegetation and landscape features with particular reference to screening effects. The high buildings proposed in the application would be

visible from the AONB above existing screening. Most of the development would be visible from Lodge Lane and the nearby PROW in the AONB.

AREA OF SPECIAL CHARACTER (AoSC)

42. The site is sandwiched between the AONB to its east and an Area of Special Character (Burtons Lane to Doggetts Wood Lane) to its west. The AoSC appears on the Adopted Local Plan Policies Map as an 'Established Residential Area of Special Character' under Saved Policy H4. The characteristics of the application site are consistent with those found within the AONB, and supportive of both the AONB and the AoSC, providing a positive setting for both.

ACCESS AND TRANSPORT

Proposed access roads

43. We ask the LPA to consider the Independent Highways Assessment report by Paul Mew and Associates at Appendix A, which draws attention to serious omissions and incorrect statements in the applicant's Transport Statement and Framework Travel Plan, as well as to the inadequacy of the Framework Construction Traffic Management Plan which is for Reserved Matters. The report provides overwhelming evidence to challenge the applicant's assertions that *'Safe and suitable vehicular access to the proposed development will be provided from Lodge Lane and Burtons Lane'* and that *'the site is accessible by sustainable modes of travel including foot, cycle and public transport'*. The report's conclusions are as follows.

5.2 Assessment of the Transport Statement submitted in support of the application concludes that the site has limited access to sustainable transport with a poor levels of local bus services, pedestrian links that are not lit during hours of darkness and rail services that are at an extended walk distance. In addition, analysis of personal injury accident data has not considered the most recent 5 year period and has not fully assessed pedestrian and cyclist injury accidents.

5.3 Access to the site at both proposed locations are likely to be unviable as they have sightline issues. Lodge Lane and Burtons Lane are also problematic due to narrow road widths and questionable benefits of road widening. In addition, required Road Safety Auditing has not been carried out / reported.

5.4 The impact of anticipated increases in vehicular activity cannot be fully assessed as questions remain over trip generation forecasts, the assignment / distribution of these to the local road network, and the over estimation of the use of sustainable modes of transport. A series of thorough / robust Travel Plans would be required across all proposed land uses, not just residential, to achieve a reduction in car based trips.

5.5 The Framework Construction Traffic Management Plan should contain a greater level of detail for the proposed scheme such than an informed decision can be taken by highways / planning officers. This should include an assessment of the impact of construction traffic on the village centre which is already subject

to congestion and parking issues. The provision of detailed construction information should not wholly be deferred to post consent condition discharge.

5.6 In conclusion, the proposed development should not be permitted on highways grounds.

44. We also draw the LPA's attention to a highly relevant study, covering, in particular, Lodge Lane and Church Grove East, submitted independently as an objection by a local resident, Mr Kamran Haider, who is a professional transport consultant.
45. It is claimed in 4.3 of the applicant's Transport Statement that *"A safe and suitable access strategy for the site was agreed during pre-planning discussions with Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) for a larger potential development than that proposed"*. This appears to relate to discussions mentioned in a letter of 21 February 2020 from CBRE to the Inspectors appointed to conduct the Examination in Public of the draft CSB draft local plan, discussions said to have taken place in July 2018 and June 2019. Prolonged attempts by the parish council to obtain details of these discussions from Buckinghamshire Council were refused. Our understanding from the replies received was that only preliminary discussions had taken place, and that detailed design drawings had not been provided to the Highways Authority to enable them to test the position. A subsequent request for the documents relating to these meetings, made by a local resident under the Environmental Information Regulations, was refused on grounds of confidentiality.
46. In our view, since the above discussions were held with a council since abolished, on a draft plan subsequently withdrawn, and since no minutes, report or other details of the meetings have ever been published, the applicant's claim that an access strategy was agreed should be regarded as of no material planning significance whatsoever.
47. Policy TR2 of the Adopted Local Plan sets out clear principles if planning permission is to be granted. Those can be summarised as:
 - Satisfactory access onto the existing highway network. Where possible access should be taken from the lowest category road. In general access will not be permitted onto the primary road network.
 - The Highway Network in the vicinity of the development should have the capacity to accept the additional flow of traffic generated by the development without significantly exacerbating any existing overloading or other traffic-related problems.
 - Traffic of excessive volume, size or weight will not be accepted on unsuitable roads, including rural lanes or in conservation areas or residential areas.
 - Standards of road safety for all users should be at a minimum maintained and, where appropriate, improved.

Burttons Lane

48. An entrance to the site where proposed, on the floor of a highly visible part of the chalk dry valley, a valued Chiltern landscape feature, would be unacceptable on environmental grounds. It is also questionable whether an access could be placed on the narrow floor of the dry valley with adequate braking distances (particularly in icy conditions) on the steep slopes at both sides.

49. The following local traffic problems would be caused by an entrance in Burttons Lane. To access the M25 and Rickmansworth, residents of the western part of the development would use the very narrow section of Burttons Lane east of the site, towards Lodge Lane (for the A404) or Chorleywood, or they would take Burttons Lane to the A404 in the village centre, adding to the heavy congestion which already affects the junctions there. To access the A413, often regarded as the best route to London, rather than travel three sides of a square via the village centre and Cokes Lane, drivers would use the very narrow eastern section of Burttons Lane and then the single-track residential Roughwood Lane – which is completely unsuitable for such traffic.

Lodge Lane and Church Grove East.

50. Lodge Lane, and Church Grove East, which connects Lodge Lane to the A404, are the borders of the AONB and form an important part of its setting. Both are narrow, with limited vision in places, and have no footways. Church Grove West, which provides a longer alternative route from Lodge Lane to the A404, also has a very narrow section without footways.

51. The proposed widening of Lodge Lane would change its quiet rural nature, as would the additional traffic from its use as the access to the larger part of the site, with the associated noise and pollution. No traffic survey appears to have been carried out to assist in measuring these effects.

52. The proposed widening of Church Grove East would presumably take place on the eastern (AONB) side of road to avoid harm to the houses on the western side and verges.

53. The Chilterns Conservation Board has described Lodge Lane as *“a very attractive sunken lane, characteristic of the Chilterns AONB woodland and unsuitable for additional traffic or upgrade.”* During preparation of the former Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan, the Chilterns Conservation Board expressed concern that *“.....development would add traffic and air pollution to the AONB at Lodge Lane (and wider)”*.

54. The former Buckinghamshire County Council said, in response to the Green Belt Preferred Options Consultation of Oct 2016, that development on the land between Lodge Lane and Burttons Lane was *“unlikely to be supported by the Highway Authority unless a suitable access can be achieved from Burttons Lane”*. Because of the present applicant’s claim that traffic flow between the western and eastern parts of the development would be restricted to *“bus and sustainable transport”* (Transport Statement 4.8) and emergency vehicles, no exit to Burttons Lane is intended serve the larger eastern part of the development. We would expect the

Highway Authority of Buckinghamshire Council to maintain the objection of its predecessor to the use of Lodge Lane as a primary entrance.

55. The railway bridge in Lodge Lane between the A404 and the site entrance has a clearance of only 3.96m, so tall vehicles and machinery could not pass.

56. The bridge already acts as a traffic pinch point, which would become more serious if the carriageway nearby is widened to take more traffic. The carriageway under the bridge is 6.1m wide. A 0.5m median strip is usually required adjacent to a vertical surface alongside a carriageway. This would reduce the width under the bridge to 5.1m, which, as the professional report at Appendix A confirms, would require some form of priority operating system with vehicles from one direction being required to give way to vehicles approaching from the other direction. This would cause substantial delay and inconvenience at busy times, increased air pollution from waiting vehicles (dispersing slowly in this sheltered dip), and would be a further major drawback to use of Lodge Lane as the main access.

57. In addition, long steep slopes in Lodge Lane both north and south of the proposed site entrance can be impassable in frozen conditions and could prevent vehicle access, including emergency vehicles.

Increased risk to hikers and pedestrians using Lodge Lane

58. The Environmental Statement (ES) describes Lodge Lane as a road without footways used by pedestrians, and rightly expects serious adverse effects from much increased traffic, including increased fear and intimidation for pedestrians. However, this would be worse than suggested, because the ES wrongly assumes that desired access to the PROW network is mainly near, or south of, the site entrance in Lodge Lane (so could be accessed from the village across the proposed railway bridge and through the development). It is true that there is a popular PROW access there (LCF/11/1), but the most popular PROWs are in the Chess Valley off Stoney Lane, meaning that the number of walkers who now head north up Lodge Lane and Church Grove East to reach those PROWs would be increased by walkers from the new development. Pedestrian use of those lanes would increase even more if the bus stops on the A404 remained where they are now (see below). The proposed pedestrian path across the railway would do nothing to mitigate these flows, which would face substantial deterioration in pedestrian safety.

Pedestrian footway between the site and the village centre

59. Without a direct pedestrian access to the village centre the proposed development would not be sustainable. Pedestrian use of Lodge Lane to reach the village centre from the site is not viable (too long, no footway or lighting, long steep hill), and a route from the Burtons Lane exit in the west would be too long to serve the larger eastern part of the site as its primary pedestrian access. Consequently, it is proposed that the primary pedestrian access would be via a new railway bridge and Oakington Avenue. For the road safety reasons given below it is unlikely that bus-stops could be sited near this exit, which would greatly reduce its convenience for pedestrians.

60. Busy use of the proposed railway bridge pedestrian/cycle route at peak times would create danger and inconvenience for the many schoolchildren and their parents, sometimes with prams or toddlers, who use the narrow A404 pavements and/or the present zebra crossing (proposed to become a toucan crossing) to access the primary school in Oakington Avenue from the centre and other parts of the village. The mingling of cyclists and pedestrians on footways near the toucan crossing could also cause danger.

61. Furthermore, if a school was provided on the proposed development, the Oakington Avenue exit from the path across the railway bridge would become the unauthorised drop-off point for children not resident on the development. There is no space for such parking on Oakington Avenue, and the drop-off traffic would create additional congestion, with hazard for children walking to the existing school and poorer local air quality caused by exhaust fumes.

62. For the above reasons the proposed railway bridge path to Oakington Avenue would not be fit for its purpose. Therefore, given the problems of Lodge Lane, Church Grove and Burtons Lane outlined above, there is no viable means of direct pedestrian access between the proposed site and the village centre. In our view this renders the proposed development unsustainable in modern planning conditions, where the limitation of car use is most important.

Access to bus-stops, consequences for Lodge Lane and Church Grove East

63. Neither Lodge Lane nor Church Grove East has any pedestrian footway. Church Grove West lacks a footway on its narrowest section. The applicant proposes moving the present bus-stops on the A404 to positions close to the western end of Oakington Avenue, to be convenient for pedestrians walking to and from the proposed new footway across the railway. However, it does not appear that a stop for westbound buses could be sited west of the Oakington Avenue junction without severe risk to road safety – see the Appeals Inspector’s reports on two refused applications for a domestic vehicle entrance in that section of the A 404 (application CH/2017/2197/FA, appeal ref APP/X0415/W/18/3203607; and application PL/20/0689/FA, appeal ref: APP/X0415/D/20/3253104). A new westbound bus stop placed east of the Oakington Avenue junction would be on a sharply curving part of the A404 with limited vision, creating a hazard. It would also be necessary to construct an access path, and the bus-stop itself, on an old and popular ‘green space’ tended by local residents, who value it as recreational space and a visual amenity. Bushes and trees on that space would have to be destroyed to provide pedestrian access to the bus-stop. Therefore, it appears unlikely that any bus-stop could be placed in a position to make the footway across the railway convenient for access to buses. We are surprised that, before making the application, the applicant did not consult the bus operators and the highway safety authority to establish whether new bus stop positions could be agreed.

64. If the bus-stops had to remain where they are now, at the junction of Church Grove West with the A404, it would be necessary to provide pedestrian footways on Lodge Lane and Church Grove, and street lighting on Lodge Lane, meaning that the

widening would need to be much greater and do more environmental harm. The long distance from the site entrance and the steep hill would also be a strong deterrent to much use for access to bus stops.

Link Road

65. The shape of the proposed development site includes a narrow pinch point alongside the ancient Stonydean Wood. Within the pinch point a link road is shown in the drawings. The proposal accepts, presumably for reasons of landscape and ancient woodland protection, that it should not be possible for vehicles, except, it is claimed, “bus and sustainable transport” and emergency vehicles, to cross between the eastern and western parts of the site on the link road. There is insufficient detail provided in the application on exactly what and when vehicles would be allowed to use the link road between the site’s proposed access points, and no indication of how any restricted use would be enforced. If the proposed restriction could be enforced, this would mean that traffic from the western part would have only one entrance/exit, via Burtons Lane, and traffic from the much larger eastern part would have only one entrance/exit, via Lodge Lane.

66. The professional report at Appendix A foresees (section 2.30) that *“It is inevitable that any access control (gate / barrier / bollard) will be breached and that through vehicular traffic will result.”*

67. There is no room at this pinch point for a 50m buffer zone, which The Woodland Trust advises should be maintained both in the construction phase and for after-uses that generate significant disturbance. With only the proposed 30m buffer zone, it is likely that both the development of, and any excessive use of, the link road would cause significant and permanent damage to Stonydean Wood. This would be contrary to NPPF paragraph 180 c) which requires refusal of developments which would result in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable ancient woodland.

68. In the absence of evidence of appropriate protection of Stonydean Wood alone, the request for formal approval of the proposed vehicular access(es) to the site should be refused.

Car use and sustainability

69. There is no evidence that residents at the site would make significant use of a pedestrian and cycle access to the village outside peak commuter hours, even if a viable one could be created. Residents now living at the same distance from the centre tend to use their cars when shopping in the village. See also paragraphs 2.7, 2.18 and 2.45 to 2.48 of the professional report at Appendix A. The NPPF (paragraph 8 c)) identifies an overarching environmental objective which includes *“...mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.”* The high car use we would expect by residents on the proposed site would not serve that objective.

Traffic congestion and danger to pedestrians in the village centre

70. Traffic on the A404 would be increased by the proposed development. Little Chalfont is unique among the Chiltern District “main settlements for growth” identified in Core Strategy Policy CS2 (Amersham, Chesham, Chalfont St Peter and Little Chalfont) in having no bypass round its centre. Therefore, increased congestion on the A404, a Strategic Inter-Urban Route which passes through the village centre and shopping area, would reduce the amenity of the centre more directly than such main road congestion would do in other local communities. This would include worsening of the already chronic queuing problem on the A404 for entry to the village’s main shopping precinct on Chenies Parade.

71. Congestion on the village centre section of the A404 will increase further when the development of 309 homes is opened at Newland Park, off the B4442 (planning permission CH/2014/1964/FA), the residents of which are expected to use Chalfont and Latimer Station for commuting at Transport for London prices rather than pay the higher prices on Chiltern Rail from Gerrards Cross. The resulting new vehicle flow from the Cokes Lane/A404 junction will meet traffic emerging onto the A404 from Burtons Lane, 30 metres further east on the way to the station. There will inevitably be yet more congestion on the A404 from other developments in the area, such as those proposed at Chorleywood.

72. The applicant has reviewed highway capacity and has, therefore, focussed on car movements. No thought appears to have been given to the additional conflicts in the village centre between motorised vehicles and vulnerable road users - pedestrians and cyclists. No mitigation has been proposed to assist pedestrians. Increased congestion in the village centre would create significant additional danger, for example, to the many pupils who walk from the railway station, or from homes eastwards, to Dr Challoner’s High School for Girls (1140 pupils) crossing Cokes Lane at its junction with the A404 where there is no zebra crossing.

ACCESS AND TRANSPORT: Conclusion

73. The absence of adequate, sustainable vehicle and pedestrian access to the larger eastern part of the site, as demonstrated above, should, alone, lead to refusal of the application. The above objections to an access in Burtons Lane, and to the proposed pedestrian/cycle route across the railway, strengthen the case for refusal on access grounds. As explained above, the use of the link road between the two parts of the site should also be determined as an access issue.

74. **As the attached professional report concludes, the proposed development should be refused on highways grounds.**

CONSERVATION OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

75. The proposal would cause substantial damage to the natural environment.

Landscape

76. We ask the LPA to consider the report at Appendix B by Michelle Bolger Expert Landscape Consultancy. The report provides strong additional evidence for our objection to inappropriate development in the Green Belt, and identifies

important failings in the application, including omissions in the applicant's Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) which:-

- fails to recognise the Burtons Lane - Doggetts Wood Lane Area of Special Character (AoSC), the presence of which would worsen the impact of the development;
- fails to assess whether the development would achieve the Vision or the Guidelines set by the Landscape Assessment 2011 for Landscape Capacity Assessment (LCA) 18.3 (it would not);
- fails to identify the true extent of the chalk dry valley, which extends over nearly the whole site;
- fails to describe the impact on Lodge Lane.

77. The report concludes as follows.

44. The development would adversely impact landscape and visual receptors identified as being sensitive to change and would not achieve the Landscape Guidelines for LCA 18.3. The overall effect upon the local landscape, which includes the AONB and the Burtons Lane to Doggetts Wood Lane AoSC and their settings, would be moderate/major adverse, and significant. The proposals overall would not protect nor enhance a valued landscape contrary to paragraph 174 of the NPPF.

45. The development would result in moderate adverse, and significant effects on the visual amenity of people using Lodge Lane and Burtons Lane and people using a public right of way within the AONB.

46. The development would also have an adverse spatial and visual impact on the openness of the Green Belt and conflict with one of the purposes of including land within the Green Belt contrary to paragraphs 137 and 138 of the NPPF.

78. The proposal fails to address adequately the issues in NPPF Section 15 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment), including those in paragraph 174 a) and b), under both of which it is important to take account of the typical Chiltern character and beauty of the site, chalk dry valley, ancient woodland and deeply rural landscape providing priority habitat in the setting of the AONB.

79. As shown at Appendix B (paragraph 22), the site is a 'valued landscape' in respect of NPPF paragraph 174 a). The site's valued characteristics will not be retained, let alone enhanced, if they are surrounded by development. It is wrong to claim that green infrastructure improvements and the limitation of damage by landscape buffers would fully compensate for the removal of large areas of unspoilt, open land which currently acts as an important Green Corridor. The overall effect within this area of land must be negative.

80. As explained under 'Building Heights' above, the proposed buildings three storeys high would radically urbanise the appearance of the site, and undermine attempts, much vaunted in the applicant's publicity, to preserve a "green landscape and environment."

The Chalk Dry Valley

81. In their “message to the community” letter of 30 December the applicants stated *“We understand the importance of the dry valley. That is why there will be no housing in it.”* This claim is incorrect, as the proposal is to build extensively on the slopes of the dry valley.

82. Both the photo at <https://houseprices.io/lab/lidar/map?ref=SU99569721> and the map at Appendix D, show that the dry valley extends over nearly the whole site. The Parameter Plan on page 90 of the Design and Access Statement shows clearly that it is proposed to build housing extensively on the northern slope of the dry valley in both the eastern and western parts of the site, that a road entrance will occupy the floor of the valley at the western end, and that the link road between the two parts of the development will be on the valley floor. Even if other parts of the narrow valley floor are left open as proposed, the result will not leave anything recognisable as a rural chalk dry valley, which is such a valued feature of the Chiltern countryside and rare in the world.

83. While the Design and Access Statement states that the setting of the dry valley is to be retained and enhanced, this is not possible at the same time as the replacement of fields within the valley with development.

Ancient Woodland

84. A 30m buffer, inadequate in our view, is proposed to protect the site’s ancient woodland. The Woodland Trust recommends that, *“as a precautionary principle, a minimum 50 metre buffer should be maintained between a development and the ancient woodland, including through the construction phase, unless the applicant can demonstrate very clearly how a smaller buffer would suffice. A larger buffer may be required for particularly significant engineering operations, or for after-uses that generate significant disturbance.”*

85. No evidence has been produced that a smaller buffer would suffice, particularly to protect the ancient woodland at Stonydean Wood from the road proposed to link the two sections of the site, both during construction and if, thereafter, the use of that link road cannot be strictly limited to public service vehicles.

Ecology

86. Here we can do no better than quote the conclusions of the professional study by Bioscan (UK) Ltd, at Appendix C.

4.1.1 As noted in the introduction of this report, the above serves as a ‘high level’ review of the submitted ecological information; and once the relevant information has been provided then the ecology reports can be subject to further detailed examination. However, it should be noted that based on the information provided, a full and robust assessment of the submitted ecological documents cannot be made.

4.1.2 Currently, it is considered that due to the paucity of detailed ecological information, and with many of the ecological surveys not appearing to meet industry-standard guidelines/guidance (as outlined above), that this has implications on the

veracity of the impact assessment conclusions offered by the Applicant to the extent that it would be unsafe to apportion the conclusions made to any weight in planning determination.

4.1.3 It should be noted that the presence of scarce and declining 'Priority' species and habitats is material to the discharge of the biodiversity duty imposed on public authorities by the NERC Act 2006, and therefore the omissions outlined above are significant for the robustness of the determination process in a legal sense. There are also significant information gaps in relation to European protected species which fall short of the expectations enshrined in incumbent planning practice guidance and further go to the matter of legal robustness. These shortfalls are particularly acute in respect of bats. It is consequently recommended that the LPA request more detailed ecological information before a planning decision is made.

4.1.4 The Bioscan review of the Biodiversity Net Gain report highlights that the net gain proclaimed by the Applicant appears to be incorrect, by some margin, and on the contrary, it appears that the proposals would result in a negative situation (i.e. a considerable loss of biodiversity, quantified as approaching -40%). Such a loss would be contrary to the Environment Act 2021, and local and national policy. In order to allow for these figures to be examined further, the Applicant should supply the raw spreadsheet calculations to allow for full transparency and public scrutiny, and before any determination of the application is considered.

4.1.5 In conclusion, the ecological reports submitted may not accurately represent the ecological interest present on the application site and it is advised that extreme caution is applied in using it to inform decision making. The safeguards and mitigation proposals offered in the report are founded on an incomplete understanding and/or conveyance of the baseline position and cannot therefore be relied upon by decision makers as a means to avoid significant net loss of biodiversity. This is in contradiction to national and local planning policy. It is recommended that clarity be sought from the Applicant, including justification for deviations from industry standard survey methodologies, to enable a more robust impact assessment to be conducted.

SEWAGE

87. The proposed development would increase usage of the Maple Cross Sewage Treatment Works and increase the risk of foul water discharges into local rivers. We understand that the Maple Cross STW had 83 such spills over 1110 hours in 2020. The LPA is asked to consider how close to capacity this STW is running, and take account of this important issue in consideration of the outline application.

HARM TO AMENITY THROUGH DISPROPORTIONATE GROWTH

88. Little Chalfont, now about 2800 households, is by far the smallest of the four settlements listed in policy CS2 of the Chiltern Core Strategy of 2011 as "major settlements for growth". Nevertheless, since that time Little Chalfont has had to absorb, in addition to normal windfall growth, about 300 new dwellings on two large new estates at Turners Field/Old Mill Place and Harvard Grange, completed in 2017.

These put further strain on already overloaded infrastructure and contributed to the traffic and parking chaos which often prevails in the village centre.

89. The development now proposed of up to 480 households plus a care home and other staffed facilities is disproportionate to the present population size and infrastructure of Little Chalfont, so would damage amenity for all residents. The proposed growth would mean at least a 17% increase in housing stock. The social consequences of such an abrupt and disproportionate step-change in urbanisation would conflict with policy statements in the Chiltern Core Strategy including the “Key Spatial Issue” *How to maintain and improve the high quality environment of our towns, villages and countryside.*

90. A retirement village and care home, as proposed, would need to be accompanied by a significant increase in medical care from the local GP services. It appears unlikely that Little Chalfont surgery could expand any further, or St Giles surgery in Chalfont St Giles. The two practices in Chorleywood are under Hertfordshire Health authority and therefore would not take on the significant increase in workload required across the border in Buckinghamshire. With the current shortage of GPs it seems very unlikely that a new GP could be found to set up in practice on or near the application site.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

91. Although there is always a shortage of affordable housing, Little Chalfont is relatively well provided with housing association properties. We are aware of at least 464 - the total of the numbers supplied to us by housing associations operating in the village, although one association with properties at Turners Field or Old Mill Place has not replied to our enquiry. The two new estates referred to above both brought new affordable housing. We note that although the applicant proposes 40% affordable housing, no suitable and completed legal agreement, with a mechanism to secure the provision of this affordable housing, is included in the application.

BROWNFIELD SITES

92. We acknowledge that there is pressure nationally to find space for more housing, and that the council may lack a five-year land supply for that purpose. In this context we draw attention to the following. There are four sites in Little Chalfont on the Council’s current brownfield register. The parish council is considering listing two more in response to the latest call for brownfield sites, as follows:

- The site in Chalfont Station Road where planning permission CH/2017/2090/FA was given for office units and ten flats.
- It is known that GE Healthcare intends to dispose of its 8.9 hectare industrial site at The Grove Centre, Little Chalfont, which is being decommissioned. We understand that decommissioning is likely to be complete by 2030, when the land could become available. Some may become available earlier. The site is close to the centre of Little Chalfont and has direct access onto the A404. Although now designated for employment use, with the agreement of Buckinghamshire Council and GE Healthcare the land could be made available for housing early in the period of the council’s forthcoming new local plan.

93. It is our view that no more large housing estates can be built in Little Chalfont without severe damage to local amenity and already overloaded infrastructure. However, if such development has to occur, we would prefer it to be on a brownfield site such as the Grove Centre. It would be better to await this brownfield opportunity than to permit, now, the destruction of a piece of beautiful and almost virgin Green Belt in Little Chalfont.

DEMOLITION

94. The Planning Statement states that “Some of the buildings on site are now unusable, inefficient and in a poor state of repair.” This description does not apply to:

- the two bungalows in Oakington Avenue, a sought-after location close to the popular and over-subscribed Little Chalfont Primary School; nor
- to the Homestead Farm residential building, a unique, albeit not listed, arts and craft period building which is very visible along all of Burtons Lane.

95. If either the detailed consent to the proposed access points in Burtons Lane and Lodge Lane, or the requested outline planning permission, is refused, the demolition of these buildings, and the consequent reduction in bat roosting possibilities, would not be justified and should also be refused.

RISK OF CHANGE TO THE PROPOSALS IN THE APPLICATION

96. As we have made clear above, we object to the access details proposed for formal approval. While we understand that the remainder of the outline planning application will not have the detail of a final application, in our view insufficient firm detail is given of the key development parameters. Many aspects are prefaced with the words “illustrative” and “indicative”, meaning that very little would be fixed apart from the proposed access routes. In the unfortunate event that the application should be permitted, wording on page 13 of the Design and Access Statement suggests that some conditions may be imposed at the discretion of the council specifying what, if any, of the features “illustrated” should be adopted inside the development. However, this approach leaves open the possibility that, if the site were to be sold on with the planning permission now sought, a future owner might seek to change in a final application any feature not previously specified by the council. Therefore proposals might be put forward significantly different from those the public have been led to expect. **On these grounds alone the application should be refused.**

CONCLUSION

We consider that our objections, summarised in the Key Points at the head of this submission and then set out in detail, show that this application should be refused, to protect the Green Belt, to prevent two completely unsuitable roads being used for access, and to prevent other harm to the environment, amenity, and infrastructure of our village and its surroundings. We ask Buckinghamshire Council to refuse the application.

19 January 2022



Planning Application – PL/21/4632/OA

Land between Burtons Lane and Lodge Lane in Little Chalfont

Appendix A

Independent Highways Assessment

Paul Mew Associates

Supporting the objection by:

Little Chalfont Parish Council

and

Little Chalfont Community Association

19 January 2022

THIS PAGE IS DELIBERATELY LEFT BLANK



PAUL MEW ASSOCIATES
TRAFFIC CONSULTANTS

LITTLE CHALFONT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION &
LITTLE CHALFONT PARISH COUNCIL

LITTLE CHALFONT GOLF CLUB, LODGE LANE AND ADJACENT
LAND TO THE SOUTH INCLUDING HOMESTEAD, BURTONS
LANE, LITTLE CHALFONT, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE, HP8 4AJ

INDEPENDENT HIGHWAYS ASSESSMENT

January 2022

Contents

- 1.0 INTRODUCTION
- 2.0 TRANSPORT STATEMENT
- 3.0 FRAMEWORK TRAVEL PLAN
- 4.0 FRAMEWORK CONSTRUCTION TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT PLAN
- 5.0 SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

I.0 INTRODUCTION

I.1 Paul Mew Associates have been appointed by the Little Chalfont Community Association & Little Chalfont Parish Council to carry out an independent audit of the transport implications of the proposed development of Little Chalfont Golf Club, Lodge Lane and adjacent land to the south including Homestead, Burtons Lane, Little Chalfont, Buckinghamshire, HP8 4AJ.

I.2 The proposed development that has been submitted to Buckinghamshire Council under Planning Ref: PL/21/4632/OA is for the;

“demolition of all existing buildings and the erection of residential dwellings including affordable housing, custom build (Use Class C3), retirement homes and care home (Use Class C2), new vehicular access point off Burtons Lane, improvements to existing Lodge Lane access including works to Lodge Lane and Church Grove, new pedestrian and cycle access at Oakington Avenue including construction of new pedestrian and cycle bridge and associated highway works, a local centre including a community building (Use Classes E(a)(b)(e), F2(b)), land safeguarded for educational use (Use Classes E(f) and F1(a)), public open space and associated infrastructure (matters to be considered at this stage: Burtons Lane and Lodge Lane access).”

I.3 The Transport Assessment submitted by the applicant includes a more ‘quantitative’ description of the proposed land uses, comprising of:

...380 residential units (Use Class C3), up to 100 Bed Retirement Living (Use Class C2), up to 60 Bed Care Home (Use Class C2), land safeguarding for a IFE primary school and nursery, up to 1,000m² community hub and associated infrastructure delivery including road, cycle, landscaping, reprofiling and bridge link to Oakington Avenue.

I.4 This Independent Highways Assessment has examined the Transport Statement, Framework Travel Plan and Framework Construction Traffic Management Plan submitted in support of the application. A site visit has also been carried out by Paul Mew Associates to assess the site and the potential impact of the proposed development on local conditions.

I.5 The findings of this assessment are set out in the following chapters on a document by document basis, and in the order of contents of each document.

2.0 TRANSPORT STATEMENT

- 2.1 This chapter assesses the Transport Statement submitted in support of the application. It should be noted that the document is entitled Transport Statement but within the document it is referred to as a Transport Assessment. The Department for Transport's guidance on the preparation of Transport Statements and Transport Assessments makes clear that Transport Statements are for small developments which are expected to generate relatively low numbers of trips or traffic flows, with minor transport impacts. As such, the document should have been entitled Transport Assessment. Additionally, the title page of the Transport Statement sets out that the proposed development is 'residential'. It would have been more accurate to describe the development as 'mixed use' as in addition to 380 dwellings, the scheme proposed retirement dwellings, a care home, a IFE primary school and a community hub.

Chapter 1. Introduction

- 2.2 The introduction includes the statement that '*Safe and suitable vehicular access to the proposed development will be provided from Lodge Lane and Burtons Lane*'. There is no evidence in the Transport Statement, or in the application, that the required Road Safety Audit and Non-Motorised User Audit processes have been carried out. Stage 1 Road Safety Audits and Non-Motorised User Audits should have been carried out for any new or amended road junctions to assess the safety implications of changes for motorists, pedestrians, cyclists and other non-motorised users. Until such audits are carried out, the assertion that 'safe' vehicle access will be provided should be rescinded.
- 2.3 The assertion that '*the site is accessible by sustainable modes of travel including foot, cycle and public transport*' is questioned as discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Chapter 2. Transport Policy Context

- 2.4 Chapter 2 of the Transport Statement presents a review of relevant planning policy and with respect to local, regional, and national guidance. It does not however set out how the proposed development complies with these policy requirements, with the exception of parking standards.

Chapter 3. Existing Transport Network

- 2.5 Para 3.6 of the Transport Statement sets out that Lodge Lane is circa 4.8m wide. It does not mention that the road is largely provided in a 'cutting / gully' with steep banks rising on either side and that vegetation / soil encroaches on either side of the tarmac surface – all of which would reduce the effective width of the road. Para 3.6 also does not mention that the railway bridge has a height clearance of 13'0' (3.96m) or that Lodge Lane has sections of considerable gradient of up to 9% (1:11) which could pose safety issues for large vehicles and / or in icy conditions. There are no footways or street lighting on Lodge Lane.

- 2.6 Paragraph 3.6 of the Transport Statement sets out that Burtons Lane is partially lit and provided with footways, while Paragraph 2.2 of the Design & Access Statement claims the footpath from the Burtons Lane entrance to the village centre is 1.5 to 2m wide. Assessment of the section of Burtons Lane adjacent to the site and north to the A404 (a distance of circa 630m) reveals there are just 2 lamp columns. As such during hours of darkness the majority of the footway to the north would be unlit. In addition, the footway is only 1m wide at some points and not in a good state of repair with edges crumbling. The footway is also subject to reduced natural surveillance. Taken in conjunction, the above factors would lead to a reduced feeling of safety for pedestrians.
- 2.7 The Transport Statement presents no data on existing traffic flows on Lodge Lane, Burtons Lane or indeed any other local road. It would have been expected that, as a minimum, automatic traffic count data had been collected / reported so that vehicle speed data could be used to confirm / assess sightline requirements.
- 2.8 Paragraph 3.7 of the Transport Statement, part of the Sustainable Transport Accessibility section, includes the statement that '*Most people will walk to destination that is less than one mile (Planning for Walking, 2015)*'. A quick internet search shows a contradictory assessment from The Independent newspaper (14/06/18) which sets out that a survey in 2018 revealed that "*In a study of 2,000 adults, 40 per cent admitted they would not be willing to walk more than a mile to get somewhere, opting for an alternative form of transport instead*". As such, the other claims made about how far people are willing to walk or cycle in this paragraph and Paragraphs 3.12 to 3.14 of the Transport Statement need to be taken with a degree of scepticism.
- 2.9 A walk catchment figure has been prepared and presented at Appendix A, but it is not clear if the isochrones reflect the current situation, or the proposed development whereby a new pedestrian / cycle bridge link across the railway line will be provided. For example, Oakington Avenue which is to the north of the railway line is shown as being a 10 minute walk from the centre of the site, but at present there is no direct pedestrian route – the walk route via Lodge Lane or Burtons Lane is likely to exceed 10 minutes. As such the walk catchment figure may present an overly optimistic view of the site pedestrian accessibility. It is also noted that Para's 3.12 and 3.13 refer to Drawing I40207/SK1 within Appendix A, but Appendix A only includes a single drawing entitled Figure 3.2 and that the drawing shows local facilities (district centre, community library, primary school, high school, GP surgery and station). These facilities are not shown on the walk catchment map, neither does it show the site boundary. An explicit assessment of road traffic accidents involving pedestrian casualties is not presented.
- 2.10 The Transport Statement does not include any assessment of accessible access to the site for wheelchair users or for those with reduced mobility.
- 2.11 With regards cycle access while Burtons Lane may form part of a local cycle route, the Transport Statement does not mention the gradient on Burtons Lane which may affect how realistic cycle use would be for users of the new development. Neither is an explicit assessment of road traffic accidents involving cyclists

- presented. The use of Lodge Lane by cyclists, given the road's width and the volume of development traffic forecast to use it, could lead to road safety issues.
- 2.12 The Public Transport section of Chapter 3 states that the centre of the site is within 500m of Chalfont and Latimer Station. It should be noted that this is an 'as the crow flies' distance. The minimum walk distance without the proposed new railway bridge is 1.3km, while with the new railway bridge it would be around 700m. Hence, the 500m claim is misleading.
- 2.13 Paragraph 3.19 suggests there are approximately 10 rail services an hour in each direction, which would total 20 services. Assessment of Chiltern Railways and Transport for London timetables shows that during the peak hour (08:00-09:00) there are a total of 15 rail and underground services. During off peak hours, the number of services is lower than this.
- 2.14 The provision of local bus services is poor with just 2 services available at a walk distance of around 700m (with the new footbridge) or 1.3km without, and with service frequencies of just 1 per hour or 1 every 2 hours with limited / no services at weekends.
- 2.15 There is no assessment of step free access at Chalfont and Latimer Station or for local bus services for wheelchair users or for those with reduced mobility.
- 2.16 The Census data presented in Table 3.3 is for journeys to work and will reflect the fact that many local people will commute in to London by rail / underground with 25% of journeys to work being made by this mode. The data does not show how non-journeys to work are made, such as trips to / from school, shopping trips or leisure / travel trips. This would be likely to account for a significant number of trips per day which are unlikely to be made by rail and more likely to be made by car.
- 2.17 The road safety assessment includes what is stated to be the last available 5 year period (2015 to 2019). At the time the Transport Statement was prepared the most recent available Crashmap 5 year period was 2016 to 2020. Map extracts showing the location of road traffic accidents involving pedestrians and cyclists should have been shown.
- 2.18 The summary presented at the end of Chapter 3 suggests that *'the site is extremely accessible by a variety of alternative modes of transport that have the potential to reduce reliance upon the private car, with currently 82% of local residents traveling to work by alternative modes.'*
- 2.19 This claim is contested on the basis of the arguments set out above. The claim that 82% of local residents travel to work by modes of transport other than car is incorrect and misleading. Table 3.3 of the Transport Statement shows that 66% of people in the area travel to work by car (as car driver or passenger), which means that those that travel by modes other than the car account for 34% - not 82%.

Chapter 4. Proposed Development

- 2.20 Paragraph 4.3 of Transport Statement sets out that “*a safe and suitable access strategy for the site was agreed during pre-planning discussions with Buckinghamshire County Council for a larger potential development than that proposed*”. This appears to relate to discussions mentioned in a letter of 21/02/20 from CBRE to the Inspectors appointed to conduct the Examination in Public of the draft CSB draft local plan, said to have taken place in July 2018 and June 2019. It has been reported to Paul Mew Associates that prolonged attempts by the Parish Council to obtain details of these discussions from Buckinghamshire Council were refused, but it is believed that only preliminary discussions had taken place, and that detailed design drawings had not been provided to the Highways Authority to enable them to assess the proposals.
- 2.21 A subsequent request for the documents relating to these meetings, made by a local resident under the Environmental Information Regulations, was refused on grounds of confidentiality. It is suggested that as these discussions were held with a council since abolished, on a draft plan subsequently withdrawn, and since no minutes, report or other details of the meetings were published, the applicant’s claim that an access strategy was agreed should carry no material planning significance.
- 2.22 The proposed access from Lodge Lane will be provided by means of an amended / widened priority junction at the location to the former golf club and will serve the eastern part of the site. Sightlines of 2.4m x 120m are shown but the assessment to the north does not appear to take in to consideration the railway bridge and gradient to the road which rises significantly, such that the railway bridge could obscure the sightline to the north. Indeed, there is no mention of sightlines or visibility assessments in the text of the report. The only reference to visibility assessment is in Appendix H, but again no explanation as to why sightlines of 120m have been assessed.
- 2.23 The sightline figures also present swept path analysis for a large refuse vehicle of height 3.76m approaching / leaving the site to / from the north. It should be noted that the railway bridge to the north has a height clearance of 3.96m.
- 2.24 Proposed widening of Lodge Lane from 4.8m to 5.5m will lead to a considerable loss of local habitat. The road under the railway bridge does appear also to be subject to road widening but it is questioned as to how much additional effective width would realistically be achieved at this location. The site visit revealed that at present the wall-to-wall width of the over-bridge is 6.1m. Allowing for a 0.5m ‘verge’ on either side leaves only circa 5m for the two-way running lane which would require some form of priority operating system with vehicles from one direction being required to give way to vehicles approaching from the other direction.
- 2.25 Access to the south via Lodge Lane, for onward connection to the B4442 and A413, is narrow with single lane only sections with passing places and considerable gradient issues.

- 2.26 It should be noted that during previous consultations for potential development on this site, it was made clear that a substantive access onto Lodge Lane would not be supported by the highway authority - *“Unlikely to be supported by the Highway Authority unless a suitable access can be achieved from Burton’s Lane, as there are likely to be issues with visibility onto Lodge Lane and the width of Lodge Lane itself. Will require Transport Assessment.”* (page 31 of the Post Preferred Green Belt Options Consultation November 2017).
- 2.27 The proposed access from Burtons Lane will be provided by means of a new priority junction to the south of the existing access to Homestead and will serve the western part of the site. Burtons Lane is a narrow two-way single carriageway road with a width of only around 5m, operating with a speed limit of 30mph in the vicinity of the site. There is a broad verge and footway on the eastern side of Burtons Lane adjacent to the site.
- 2.28 Burtons Lane has a blind crest when looking to the south on leaving the site which is due to the fact that the site is in a dry valley that runs east west down the middle of the site. The site visit suggested that this crest to the south could limit visibility to the south. The Transport Statement makes no mention of the crest to the south and its impact on achievable sightlines. Again, there is no mention of sightlines or visibility assessments in the text of the report with regards the proposed Burtons Lane access. The only reference to visibility assessment is in Appendix J, but again no explanation as to why sightlines of 90m have been assessed. Speed surveys should have been carried out to confirm sightline requirements.
- 2.29 Although not ‘all purpose trunk roads’, Lodge Lane and Burtons Lane would be relied on by the development for access / connector roads to local amenities and the wider local road network. As such, general design guidelines set out in Design Manual for Roads and Bridges: CD 127 Cross-sections and Headrooms should be considered. For rural all purpose roads CD 127 suggests lane widths of 3.65m such that a two way road would have a carriageway width of 7.3m. The circa 5.0m width of Lodge Lane and Burtons Lane are considerably less than this design standard.
- 2.30 In addition, CD 127 suggests the minimum (maintained) headroom for bridge structures should be 5.03m plus an additional clearance relating to the ‘sag’ curve radius, which would be required at this location due the road gradients either side of the bridge. The current height clearance of 3.96m on Lodge Lane, again is considerably less than this design standard. It should also be noted that the gradients on Lodge Lane either side of the proposed site access are subject to ice / snow as Lodge Lane is not part of Buckinghamshire Councils winter gritting list.
- 2.31 The Transport Statement sets out that while the vehicle accesses on Lodge Lane and Burtons Lane will be linked, through traffic will be limited to bus and sustainable transport with no access provided for other vehicular traffic. No detail is provided as to how this control will operate. It is inevitable that any access control (gate / barrier / bollard) will be breached and that through vehicular traffic will result.

- 2.32 The proposed servicing strategy and accompanying service vehicle swept path analysis (Appendix M) suggests that refuse vehicles would be able to travel between the two access points. The Transport Statement has previously set out that through traffic will be limited to bus and sustainable transport.
- 2.33 There is no evidence that Road Safety Audits have been carried out for the proposed site access junctions or the internal road layout. Given that full planning consent is being sought for access as part of the outline application, Road Safety Audits for the proposed vehicular accesses should have been supplied.
- 2.34 With the pedestrian / cycle access section of Chapter 4 it is proposed to convert the existing zebra crossing on Amersham Road to a toucan crossing. There is no evidence to confirm that the amended junction meets the design requirements for toucan crossing facilities or that a Road Safety Audit has been carried out for this proposed change.
- 2.35 It is also proposed that the existing Oakington Avenue / Amersham Road junction will be relocated approximately five metres to the east. There is no evidence that a Road Safety Audit has been carried out for this proposed change.
- 2.36 There is no proposal to provide a footway or street lighting on Lodge Lane. Taken in conjunction with the gradient of the road towards the village centre, the use of Lodge Lane by residents of the proposed scheme to access bus stops on Amersham Road (to the west of Church Grove) would raise significant road safety issues.
- 2.37 The proposal includes the provision of a new pedestrian / cycle bridge over the railway linking to the western end of Oakington Avenue. At peak times, this could lead to considerable numbers of pedestrians accessing the narrow footways on Oakington Avenue with up to 150 additional pedestrian / cycle trips during the AM peak hour according to the Transport Statement. These numbers would include parents with prams / toddlers / scooters heading to / from school. Additional vehicular traffic could also be present at this location as parents drop-off or pick-up children attending the new school. The Transport Statement makes no mention of these issues, nor does it present a 'pedestrian level of comfort' assessment for the footway at this location.
- 2.38 The present bus stops on eastern section of the A404 are situated at the two junctions with Church Grove; 680m to 930m from the site centre via the new footbridge and hence inconvenient for site users. The applicant proposes moving the bus stops closer to the new pedestrian bridge location with the westbound bus stop on the hill west of the junction with Oakington Avenue, approximately where there is currently a temporary dropped kerb and entrance to a building site in the rear garden of No.1 Oakington Avenue. Applications to have the temporary entrance made permanent have twice been refused at appeal on road safety grounds (Application Ref: CH/2017/2197/FA, Appeal Ref APP/X0415/W/18/3203607; and Application Ref: PL/20/0689/FA, Appeal Ref: APP/X0415/D/20/3253104). Therefore, the proposed new bus stop location, near a radar trap installed because of accident risk, does not appear suitable.

- 2.39 The alternative relocated westbound bus stop would be placed east of the Oakington Avenue junction on a curved section of the A404 which could lead to forward sightlines issues for cars wanting to overtake a bus waiting at the new bus stop. It would also be necessary to construct an access path, and the bus-stop itself, on an established and popular 'green space' owned by Buckinghamshire Council and tended by local residents, who value it as recreational space and a visual amenity. Bushes and trees on that space would have to be removed to provide pedestrian access to the bus-stop. Therefore, it appears unlikely that any bus-stop could be placed in a position to make the footway across the railway convenient for access to buses.
- 2.40 Local residents have reported that prior to Covid-19 the 487 space car park at Chalfont and Latimer Station was full on most weekdays before 09:00 with standing room only on peak hour services to London. The 'full car parks situation' is expected to return over time. The proposed development would lead to additional car journeys to drop off/pick up commuters at the station, additional stress on car parking and on crowded commuter services. It is also noted that Chalfont and Latimer Station is used by many people who do not live in Little Chalfont but from other settlements, mostly to the north, to keep down their rail travel costs. If parking numbers were increased, it could potentially attract even more cars that would add to the morning rush hour traffic.

Chapter 5. Highway Baseline Conditions

- 2.41 Chapter 5 of the Transport Statement sets out the assessment of current local junction performance for 5 local junctions agreed with the Highways Authority. All 5 junctions assessed are on Amersham Road to the north of the site, which would appear to reflect the supposition that most vehicle trips to / from the site will route to / from Little Chalfont centre which is located to the north of the site.
- 2.42 Turning count data used in the assessments dates from 2017 with updates being discounted due to the effect of Covid-19.
- 2.43 The results suggest that 4 of the 5 junctions assessed were operating satisfactorily but that the mini-roundabout junction of A404 Amersham Road / B4442 Cokes Lane had capacity, delay and 'level of service' issues.
- 2.44 In the current situation, the junction of Burtons Lane with Amersham Road (Chalfont Station Road) operates as a priority T-junction. There are existing "Keep Clear" markings on the junction to facilitate vehicles turning into and out of Burtons Lane. The presence of these markings indicates that there is an existing issue with vehicles queuing back from the Cokes Lane mini-roundabout to the west blocking Burtons Lane. This is supported by local observations which confirm that these junctions become congested during peak periods.
- 2.45 The same general assessment applies to the junctions with background flows growthed to the future year of 2026.

Chapter 6. Vehicle Trip Generation and Traffic Distribution

- 2.46 Chapter 6 initially presents details of TRICS database trip generation forecasts for the proposed development with relevant extracts from the TRICS database included at Appendix Q. It is noted that no explanation is provided as to how TRICS sites have been selected and why they consider them to represent the proposed development. TRICS sites selected should reflect factors such as location, local population, car ownership and public transport and parking provision.
- 2.47 For example, 4 of the 8 'mixed houses and flats' sites for private residential land uses are located in Greater London, while another 3 are located on the edge of city centres / large conurbation centres. In these type of locations, public and other sustainable transport provision is likely to be significantly better than at the proposed development site. This would have the effect of under-estimating vehicle trip rates.
- 2.48 With regards the proposed IFE primary school, the assessment assumes that 50% of trips will be to / from the proposed residential development, but there is no assessment to demonstrate that the proposed residential development population would include the commensurate number of primary school aged children.
- 2.49 Census 'work destination' data has been assumed to assign development trips to the local road network. These proportions have also been applied to school trips which are unlikely to accurately reflect actual school trip origins / routings. In addition, the trip generations from the various land uses will also have included non-work trips, (again including school trips) which have been assumed to have the same origins / destinations / routings as 'journey to work' trips.
- 2.50 The proposed development would have two vehicular access points;
- On to Burtons Lane serving 110 residential units which would need to accommodate 51 vehicle trips in the AM peak hour, 44 in the PM peak hour and 435 over the 12 hour period from 07:00 to 19:00, and,
 - On to Lodge Lane, serving the 271 residential units, a 100 dwelling retirement development, a 60 bed care home and a IFE primary school which would need to accommodate 221 vehicle trips in the AM peak hour, 139 in the PM peak hour and 1,651 over the 12 hour period from 07:00 to 19:00.
- 2.51 Lodge Lane, Burtons Lane, and the proposed vehicle accesses on them are not considered to be suitable to accommodate the level of vehicle trips forecast to be generated by the development. As set out earlier in this chapter, Lodge Lane and Burtons Lane are of restricted widths, 4.8m and circa 5m respectively and even with the widening of Lodge Lane to 5.5m a width restriction at the railway bridge will remain. In addition, there are potential sightline issues at each location due to gradients / level differences. On Lodge Lane, with flows of 1,651 per day there is no discussion over the provision of a right turn ghost island facility in line with general supposition that such facilities are required where flows on the minor arm (site access road) are greater than 500 per day. No such facility is proposed, or even discussed.

- 2.52 The Transport Statement then applies resulting additional flows to the junctions studied and assesses the impact. As set out above there are concerns over the validity / suitability of the trip generation assessment and the assignment / distribution of these flows to local junctions.
- 2.53 Despite this, the junction assessment shows that the mini-roundabout junction of A404 Amersham Road / B4442 Cokes Lane would have significant capacity, delay and 'level of service' issues on multiple junction arms in morning and evening peak periods. Additionally, the A404 Amersham Road / Burtons Lane junction would have delay and 'level of service' issues for the stream of traffic from Burtons Lane to A404 Amersham Road (east). These would result from additional flows from the proposed development's Burtons Lane access.
- 2.54 As a result of additional flows from the proposed development's Lodge Lane access, the junction of A404 Amersham Road / Church Grove / Stoney Lane staggered junction, would have significant capacity, delay and 'level of service' issues on the Stony Lane arm.
- 2.55 While Chapter 6 of the Transport Statement assesses the impact of the proposed development on key local junctions, it does not mention the general impact of such a development on Little Chalfont itself. Congestion on the local road network already leads to the extensive use of 'rat-runs' such as Elizabeth Avenue, to avoid the A404, and illicit use of private roads such as Long Walk. With additional traffic from the development, the use of these and other 'rat-runs' is only likely to increase.
- 2.56 In 2019 average daily traffic flows on Amersham Road (DfT Count Point 47084 north of Elizabeth Avenue) were 14,262. The proposed development has been forecast to generate 1,651 vehicle trips per day – most of which would route via the A404 and which would equate to a 12% increase in vehicle trips. Similarly, in 2019 average daily traffic flows on Burtons Lane (DfT Count Point 951825 north of Long Walk) were 1,802. The proposed development has been forecast to generate 435 vehicle trips per day on Burtons Lane, which would equate to a 24% increase in vehicle trips. Such increases in flows are not insignificant.
- 2.57 The impact of the proposed development also needs to be taken in consideration with the consented development of 309 homes at Newland Park, off the B4442 (planning permission CH/2014/1964/FA) and other proposed developments at Chorleywood, all of which will lead to increased traffic on the A404 through Little Chalfont.
- 2.58 It is noted that Little Chalfont is alone among the Chiltern District "main settlements for growth" identified in Core Strategy Policy CS2 (Amersham, Chesham, Chalfont St Peter and Little Chalfont) in having no bypass around its centre. Therefore, increased congestion on the A404 (a Strategic Inter-Urban Route) which passes through the village centre and shopping area, would have a more direct effect in reducing the amenity of the centre. This would include, in particular, worsening of the already chronic queuing problem on the A404 for entry to the village's main shopping precinct on Chenies Parade.

- 2.59 A significant number of children who attend schools in Little Chalfont, such as Dr Challoner' School and accessed from Cokes Lane, travel to and from the village by rail. There is one zebra crossing on Amersham Road (Chalfont Station Road) west of Station Approach, and an informal crossing facility on Amersham Road (Chalfont Station Road) to the east of Burtons Lane. There are no pedestrian crossing facilities on Burtons Lane and only an informal crossing facility on Cokes Lane for access to Dr Challoner' School. The increase in traffic through the centre of Little Chalfont would give rise to increased road safety concerns for children attending local schools who have to cross roads in the centre of the village.
- 2.60 It is also noted that to route to the M25 (for onward connection to London) residents of the development would use the narrow Burtons Lane or Lodge Lane south and on to Burtons Lane east via Chorleywood, or route north then on to the A404 in the village centre, adding to the heavy congestion which already affects the junctions there. To access the A413, residents would route south via the narrow Burtons Lane or Lodge Lane to the single-track Roughwood Lane, which would not be suitable for such increased traffic flow.

Chapter 7. Mitigation

- 2.61 The Mitigation chapter of the Transport Statement sets out that Lodge Lane will be widened to 5.5m to accommodate the increase in vehicular movements along this length of road generated as a result of the proposals. As discussed above, due to the steep slopes that rise from either side of much of Lodge Lane, it is questioned how effective any road widening would be along with the environmental impact, and practicality of such widening. There is also the issue of the effective width of the road as it passes under the railway bridge which would require some form of priority operating system with vehicles from one direction being required to give way to vehicles approaching from the other direction. There is no evidence that a Road Safety Audit has been presented for these proposed junction amendments. Finally, there are no proposals to provide footways or street lighting on Lodge Lane which would help mitigate road safety concerns over pedestrians using Lodge Lane.
- 2.62 No mitigation measures are proposed for the A404 Amersham Road / Church Grove / Stoney Lane staggered junction.
- 2.63 Mitigation as a result of increased flows on Burtons Lane include widening Burtons Lane to 2 lanes on approach to the A404 Amersham Road, but no evidence is provided to support this statement and again there is no evidence that a Road Safety Audit has been presented for these proposed junction amendments.
- 2.64 With regards the A404 Amersham Road (Chalfont Station Road) / White Lion Road / B4442 Cokes Lane mini-roundabout, mitigation comprises widening the Amersham Road (Chalfont Station Road) and Cokes Lane approaches of the junction. While this would reduce the impact of the development, capacity, delay and 'level of service' issues would still be significant. The RFC's (ratios of flows to capacity) on all 3 arms would be over 0.92 in the AM peak, with the A404 Amersham Road (Chalfont Station Road) and Cokes Lane operating with RFCs

of 0.98. At this level, it only takes minimal additional flows to result in the junction 'breaking down' - minimal additional flows that could result from alternative trip generation and assignment / distribution assessments. Again, there is no evidence that a Road Safety Audit has been presented for these proposed junction amendments.

Chapter 8. Sustainable Transport Trips

- 2.65 Chapter 8 of the Transport Statement includes a table showing the number of forecast trips that would be made to / from the site by a range of sustainable modes. The issue with this assessment is that it is based on Census 'journey to work' data, which will skew the results to rail / underground as many local residents will commute to London by these modes.
- 2.66 The assessment does not consider non-work trips. Residents of the new scheme are unlikely to use rail / underground for school, shopping, leisure or personal business to the same extent at work commuting trips. As such, it is likely that there would be fewer sustainable trips than suggested and hence more car based trips. Additional car based trips and the impact they could have on local junctions / roads have been discussed above.

Chapter 9. Promoting Smarter Choices via Travel Plans

- 2.67 The Framework Travel Plan submitted in support of the scheme is discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 10. Summary and Conclusions

- 2.68 Chapter 10 of the Transport Statement concludes that:
- *The site benefits from access to a sustainable transport network that provides alternatives to the private car;*
 - *An analysis of personal injury accident data records has identified that the local highway network is not subject to an abnormally high accident rate;*
 - *Appropriate provision will be made for access, parking and servicing in accordance with relevant guidance and standards;*
 - *The anticipated increases in vehicular and non-vehicular activity will not lead to a severe impact upon the local transport networks; and,*
 - *The use of more sustainable modes of transport will be actively encouraged by operating a Residential Travel Plan.*
- 2.69 In contrast, this Independent Highways Assessment suggests;
- The site has limited access to sustainable transport with a poor levels of local bus services, pedestrian links that are not lit during hours of darkness and rail services that are at an extended walk distance;
 - An analysis of personal injury accident data has not considered the most recent 5 year period and has not fully assessed pedestrian and cyclist injury accidents;
 - Access to the site at both proposed locations are likely to have sightline issues, while access routes on Lodge Lane and Burtons Lane are problematic

- due to narrow road widths and questionable benefits of road widening. In addition, required Road Safety Auditing has not been carried out / reported
- The impact of anticipated increases in vehicular activity cannot be fully assessed as questions remain over trip generation forecasts, the assignment / distribution of these to the local road network, and the over estimation of the use of sustainable modes of transport.
 - A series of thorough / robust Travel Plans would be required across all proposed land uses, not just residential, to achieve a reduction in car based trips.

3.0 FRAMEWORK TRAVEL PLAN

Title Page & Chapter 1. Introduction

- 3.1 The title page of the Framework Travel Plan sets out that the proposed development is 'residential'. It would have been more accurate to describe the development as 'mixed use' as in addition to 380 dwellings, the scheme proposed retirement dwellings, a care home, a IFE primary school and a community hub. Similarly, the Objectives of the Travel Plan only relate to 'residents' but should also include retirement dwelling residents along with staff of the care home and community hub. It is set out that the primary school would operate their own school travel plan.
- 3.2 'Hard' measures proposed to support the travel plan include access from Burtons Lane for cyclists and pedestrians and the new pedestrian / cycle footbridge over the railway line. As discussed in the preceding chapter, pedestrian access via Burtons Lane would not be encouraged by poor street lighting, lack of natural surveillance and gradient issues. The new footbridge could result in congestion at Oakington Avenue.

Chapter 3. Sustainable Travel

- 3.3 Chapter 3 of the Framework Travel Plan presents an assessment of baseline sustainable transport, copied from the Transport Statement. As such, the comments on the sustainable transport section of the Transport Statement detailed in the preceding chapter of this Independent Highways Assessment apply equally to the Framework Travel Plan, as duplicated below.
- 3.4 Para 3.1 of the Framework Travel Plan includes the statement that '*Most people will walk to destination that is less than one mile (Planning for Walking, 2015)*'. A quick internet search shows a contradictory assessment from The Independent newspaper (14/06/18) which sets out that a survey in 2018 revealed that "*In a study of 2,000 adults, 40 per cent admitted they would not be willing to walk more than a mile to get somewhere, opting for an alternative form of transport instead*". As such, the other claims made about how far people are willing to walk or cycle in this paragraph and other paragraphs of the Framework Travel Plan need to be taken with a degree of scepticism.
- 3.5 A walk catchment figure has been prepared and presented at Appendix A, but it is not clear if the isochrones reflect the current or proposed development. For example, Oakington Avenue which is to the north of the railway line is shown as being a 10 minute walk from the centre of the site, but at present there is no direct pedestrian route – the walk route via Lodge Lane or Burtons Lane is likely to exceed 10 minutes. As such the walk catchment figure may present an overly optimistic view of the site pedestrian accessibility. It is also noted that Para's 3.7 and 3.8 refer to Drawing I40207/SK1 within Appendix A, but Appendix A only includes a single drawing entitled Figure 3.2 and that the drawing shows local facilities (district centre, community library, primary school, high school, GP surgery and station). These facilities are not shown on the walk catchment map, neither does it show the site boundary.

- 3.6 The Framework Travel Plan does not include any assessment of accessible access to the site for wheelchair users or for those with reduced mobility.
- 3.7 With regards cycle access while Burtons Lane may form part of a local cycle route, the Framework Travel Plan does not mention the gradient on Burtons Lane which may affect how realistic cycle use would be for users of the new development. Neither is an explicit assessment of road traffic accidents involving cyclists presented.
- 3.8 The Public Transport section of Chapter 3 states that the centre of the site is within 500m of Chalfont and Latimer Station. It should be noted that this is an 'as the crow flies' distance. The minimum walk distance without the proposed new railway bridge is 1.3km, while with the new railway bridge it would be around 700m. Hence, the 500m claim is misleading.
- 3.9 Paragraph 3.13 suggests there are approximately 10 rail services an hour in each direction, which would total 20 services. Assessment of Chiltern Railways and Transport for London timetables shows that during the peak hour (08:00-09:00) there are a total of 15 rail and underground services. During off peak hours, the number of serviced is lower than this.
- 3.10 The provision of local bus services is poor with just 2 services available at a walk distance of around 700m (with the new footbridge) or 1.3km without, and with service frequencies of just 1 per hour or 1 every 2 hours with limited / no services at weekends.
- 3.11 There is no assessment of step free access at Chalfont and Latimer Station or for local bus services for wheelchair users or for those with reduced mobility.

Chapter 4. Management and Administration

- 3.12 Details relating to the management and administration of the Travel Plan should relate to retirement dwelling residents and staff of the care home and community hub as well as residents of the proposed 'general' housing.

Chapter 5. Measures

- 3.13 Details relating to the Travel Plan's measures should relate to retirement dwelling residents and staff of the care home and community hub as well as residents of the proposed 'general' housing.

Chapter 6. Indicative Targets

- 3.14 The used of Census 'method of travel to work' data does not necessarily reflect the modes of transport used for non-work trips such as school, shopping, leisure or personal business trips. It is acknowledged that actual / site specific targets will be set once initial data collection has been carried out.

- 3.15 Targets of the Travel Plan include achieving increased usage of car-clubs. However, there has been no mention of car club facilities in the Travel Plan up to this point and it is noted that the nearest existing car-club facility is 4 miles away at Chalfont St Peter and as such would not be of practical use of residents of staff at the proposed development. If it is suggested that a car club facility is provided on-site, this would be subject to a feasibility study by car club operators as to whether such a proposition would be financially viable. Given that most, if not all residents of the proposed scheme will own a car, it is questioned as to how effective a car club facility would be.
- 3.16 Targets should also relate to retirement dwelling residents and staff of the care home and community hub as well as residents of the proposed 'general' housing.

Chapter 7. Monitoring and Review

- 3.17 It is set out in Chapter 7 that the Travel Plan will be monitored once 80% occupancy has been reached and then on the third and fifth anniversary of the initial survey.
- 3.18 It is usual / common practice that additional monitoring and reporting is carried out on the first anniversary of the initial survey.
- 3.19 Monitoring and review should also relate to retirement dwelling residents and staff of the care home and community hub as well as residents of the proposed 'general' housing.
- 3.20 In summary, the levels of sustainable travel available to the site are not considered to be as good as the Travel Plan would suggest. The Travel Plan should apply to all users that travel to and from the site, not just residents of the proposed 'general' housing.

4.0 FRAMEWORK CONSTRUCTION TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT PLAN

- 4.1 A Framework Construction Traffic Management Plan sets out initial details of how construction traffic for a development will be managed so as to ensure that the impact of construction work on local residents, other sensitive receptors and the immediate highway is kept to a minimum and that appropriate controls are identified should they be necessary. The applicant sets out that as the construction phase of the development has not, at this point, been finalised, details provide should be considered as interim.

Chapter 2. Construction Site Location

- 4.2 Chapter 2 of the Framework Construction Traffic Management Plan is an extract of the Existing Transport Network chapter of the Transport Statement. No additional information is provided as to the suitability of the local road network to accommodate construction traffic.
- 4.3 As such the comments provided earlier in this Independent Highways Assessment are equally applicable, as reproduced below.
- 4.4 Para 2.5 of the Framework Construction Traffic Management Plan sets out that Lodge Lane is circa 4.8m wide. It does not mention that the road is largely provided in a 'cutting / gully' with steep banks rising on either side and that vegetation / soil encroaches on either side of the tarmac surface – all of which would reduce the effective width of the road. Para 2.5 also does not mention that Lodge Lane has sections of considerable gradient of up to 9% (1:11) which could pose safety issues for large construction vehicles and / or in icy conditions.
- 4.5 Para 2.5 of the Framework Construction Traffic Management Plan also sets out that Burtons Lane is partially lit and provided with footways. Assessment of the section of Burtons Lane adjacent to the site and north to the A404 (a distance of circa 630m) reveal there are just 2 lamp columns. As such during hours of darkness the majority of the footway to the north would be unlit.

Chapter 4. Work and Programme

- 4.6 While it is acknowledged that the construction phase of the development has not, at this point, been finalised, the Work and Programme section of the Framework Construction Traffic Management Plan should provide some information of the phases of construction, what tasks would be carried out in each phase and the number and type of construction vehicles likely to visit the site for each task / phase. As discussed below, routing of construction vehicles to / from the site over the 5 year project duration will include the A404 Chalfont Station Road, which is already subject to congestion, particularly adjacent to the village's main shopping area on Chenies Parade. Some level of detail of these matters should have been provided at this stage to allow planning / highways officers and local residents to assess the general impact of construction traffic on local roads, residents and amenity.

- 4.7 Further to the point above regarding the lack of information on the number of construction vehicles likely to visit the site and impact on the A404 Chalfont Station Road adjacent to Chenies Parade, it should also be considered that construction workers are likely to visit the village's main shopping area during the day to purchase food / beverages, which will generate additional vehicle trips and increase parking demand to the detriment of existing visitors to and residents of the village.

Chapter 5. Traffic and Transport

- 4.8 A number of the 'Initiatives to Minimise Travel' would not in reality appear to be credible measures to reduce travel. Construction workers are unlikely to travel by public transport and it is likely that unlimited construction worker parking will be accommodated on site.
- 4.9 The type of construction vehicles that will visit the site will be more extensive than shown with heavy plant, low-loaders and mobile cranes likely to also require access. Given that the primary construction route access is subject to a 3.96m height restriction, vehicle details should have included vehicle heights.
- 4.10 HGV deliveries should avoid periods when children are travelling to and from local schools. Para 5.8 of the Framework Construction Traffic Management Plan sets out that the morning period of 07:00 to 09:00 will be avoided, but the afternoon HGV ban period of 16:00-19:00 does not cover the end of the day for local schools. For example, Dr Challoner's High School where the school day ends at 15:35.
- 4.11 Road sweeping to keep the highway adjacent to the site access clear of mud and debris should be carried out as a matter of course and not at the request of Buckinghamshire Council.
- 4.12 It is stated that '*All HGV construction traffic will be instructed to access the site via the A404 from the A413 Amersham bypass and junction 18 of the M25 at Chorleywood... All deliveries will use Lodge Lane except for the occasional delivery over 13 feet in height which will access the site from Burtons Lane.*'
- 4.13 From this statement it appears that the primary construction site access will be via Lodge Lane, which as discussed above is a narrow, steep road with a low railway bridge, steep embankments on either side and which is not part of the local winter gritting network.
- 4.14 As there are no details, even preliminary, as to the number and heights of construction vehicles that will visit the site, it is not possible to assess how many vehicles may be required to travel via Burtons Lane. No details are provided of measures to ensure that over-height vehicles do not attempt to access the site via Lodge Lane which could lead to Lodge Lane being blocked or damage to the railway bridge. No details have been provided to suggest that Network Rail have been informed of the construction proposals.

Chapter 7. Monitoring Vehicle Movements

- 4.15 The Monitoring Strategy section of the Framework Construction Traffic Management Plan sets out that '*the number of vehicles visiting the site will be low*'. This statement is questioned as the scale of the proposed development is considerable. Previously with the Framework Construction Traffic Management Plan it was stated that details such as this were not known at this time.
- 4.16 In summary, it is considered that even at this early stage, the Framework Construction Traffic Management Plan should contain a greater level of detail for the proposed scheme such that an informed decision can be taken by highways / planning officers. The provision of detailed construction information should not wholly be deferred to post consent condition discharge.

5.0 SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The proposed development of Little Chalfont Golf Club, Lodge Lane and adjacent land to the south including Homestead, Burtons Lane, Little Chalfont, Buckinghamshire, HP8 4AJ would provide 380 residential units (Use Class C3), up to 100 Bed Retirement Living (Use Class C2), up to 60 Bed Care Home (Use Class C2), land safeguarding for a IFE primary school and nursery, up to 1,000m² community hub and associated infrastructure delivery including road, cycle, landscaping, reprofiling and bridge link to Oakington Avenue.
- 5.2 Assessment of the Transport Statement submitted in support of the application concludes that the site has limited access to sustainable transport with a poor levels of local bus services, pedestrian links that are not lit during hours of darkness and rail services that are at an extended walk distance. In addition, analysis of personal injury accident data has not considered the most recent 5 year period and has not fully assessed pedestrian and cyclist injury accidents.
- 5.3 Access to the site at both proposed locations are likely to be unviable as they have sightline issues. Lodge Lane and Burtons Lane are also problematic due to narrow road widths and questionable benefits of road widening. In addition, required Road Safety Auditing has not been carried out / reported.
- 5.4 The impact of anticipated increases in vehicular activity cannot be fully assessed as questions remain over trip generation forecasts, the assignment / distribution of these to the local road network, and the over estimation of the use of sustainable modes of transport. A series of thorough / robust Travel Plans would be required across all proposed land uses, not just residential, to achieve a reduction in car based trips.
- 5.5 The Framework Construction Traffic Management Plan should contain a greater level of detail for the proposed scheme such that an informed decision can be taken by highways / planning officers. This should include an assessment of the impact of construction traffic on the village centre which is already subject to congestion and parking issues. The provision of detailed construction information should not wholly be deferred to post consent condition discharge.
- 5.6 In conclusion, the proposed development should not be permitted on highways grounds.



Planning Application – PL/21/4632/OA

Land between Burtons Lane and Lodge Lane in Little Chalfont

Appendix B

Review of Landscape and Visual Impacts

Michelle Bolger Expert Landscape Consultancy.

Supporting the objection by:

Little Chalfont Parish Council

and

Little Chalfont Community Association

19 January 2022

THIS PAGE IS DELIBERATELY LEFT BLANK



Landscape Briefing Note 1

Project: 1116 Land South East of Little Chalfont
Date: 18th January 2022
Purpose: Review of application PL/21/4632/OA
Reference: 1116 BN01 Land South East of Little Chalfont 220118.docx
Author: John Jeffcock CMLI

Introduction

1. Michelle Bolger Expert Landscape Consultancy (MBELC) has been instructed jointly by the Little Chalfont Community Association and Little Chalfont Parish Council to review the landscape and visual impacts of outline application ref: PL/21/4632/OA. The application, submitted by Biddulph (Buckinghamshire) Ltd to Buckinghamshire Council, is for residential development on 29 hectares of land east of Little Chalfont (site). The site is bound by Lodge Lane to the east and Burtons Lane to the west. Vehicle access from these roads is proposed and for determination as part of the application.
2. The application is supported by an Environmental Statement (ES) which includes a chapter on landscape and visual impacts and appendices prepared by Barton Wilmore; referred to hereafter as the LVIA (ES Chapter 13 and Appendices 13.1-13.10).
3. This review considers the landscape and visual impacts of the application. As the site is located within the Green Belt (GB), this review also considers the impact of the proposals on GB openness and GB purposes. Figures intended to supplement those within the applicant's ES are included as Appendix 1 to this Note.
4. This review has been prepared by a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute in accordance with the principles established by Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition, 2013. The author has visited the area surrounding the site.

Landscape Character Context

5. The site comprises an area of grassland previously used as a golf course, and pastoral fields and woodland south and west of the former golf course. The site occupies the western part of a dry chalk valley (the valley) immediately west of where the valley is intersected by Lodge Lane (Figures 1 & 2). The valley east of Lodge Lane is within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (the AONB) and Lodge Lane forms the boundary to the AONB. The site is outside the AONB, but it features a mosaic of woodland and grassland which complements that found in the adjacent AONB. Dry chalk valleys are also a characteristic of the AONB¹.
6. Similarities in landscape character east and west of Lodge Lane are reflected in the fact that both the site and the valley east of Lodge Lane (within the AONB) are within the same landscape character area (LCA); LCA 18.3 Little Chalfont Rolling Farmland² (Figure 3) as identified in the Chiltern District Landscape Character Assessment, October 2011. The vision for this LCA is *'To conserve and enhance the woodland, farmland and historic parkland which is retained between settlements and which contributes to the rural, peaceful character of Little Chalfont Rolling Farmland'*.³ Landscape and visual sensitivities within this landscape include⁴:
 - *'The open farmland and woodland cover (large areas of ancient woodland) which provides enclosure, a backdrop to views and biodiversity value.*
 - *The rural farmed and wooded character of the landscape occurring between the settlement of Little Chalfont and Chorley Wood/ Rickmansworth.* (The site is part of this landscape).
 - *Lanes/roads through open farmland or enclosed by woodland which retain a rural character'.*
7. Within the site are two Ancient Woodlands at Netherground Spring and Stoneydean Wood, and part of a third woodland known as Loudham's Wood (Figures 4 & 5). Netherground Spring is a continuation of the beech woodland found within the AONB, where wooded landscapes are an identified special quality⁵. Woodland within the site contributes to the sense of enclosure within the chalk valley and has resulted in a landscape which is representative of the *'secret corners'* described in the AONB Management Plan⁶. It also provides a treed backdrop to the

¹ Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 Page 13

² Chiltern District Landscape Character Assessment, October 2011

³ Chiltern District Landscape Character Assessment, October 2011 Page 95

⁴ Chiltern District Landscape Character Assessment, October 2011 Page 95

⁵ Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 Pages 10 & 11

⁶ Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 Pages 10 & 11

village, including from within the Burtons Lane to Doggetts Wood Lane Area of Special Character which abuts the western site boundary (Figure 4). This townscape area is recognised for its distinctive low-density pattern and mature vegetation, and its character is identified as being '*particularly vulnerable to change*'⁷. A large part of the Burtons Lane to Doggetts Wood Lane Area of Special Character is designated in the Chiltern District Local Plan as an Established Residential Area of Special Character (Policy H4), and the policy is saved (Figure 4).

8. Lodge Lane forms the eastern site boundary and has a narrow width with sunken treed sides which give it a rural character. It is representative of the sunken lanes which are identified as a special quality of the Chilterns AONB⁸. The lane is also representative of one of the 'landscape and visual sensitivities' of LCA 18.3 (see above). Historically it formed part of the route between the Latimer House Estate (a Registered Park and Garden on the northern side of Chess Valley) and the main road to Chalfont St Giles. Today it joins the same road (B4442) to Chalfont St Giles but the route north has been interrupted by the busy A404.
9. The northern boundary of the site is formed by the railway which is a strong settlement boundary. The railway lies on embankment east of Lodge Lane and is in cutting west of the Lane. The western boundary of the site is formed by a combination of residential property boundaries along Village Way, Loudhams Wood Lane and Burtons Lane. Both Village Way and Loudhams Wood Lane are private roads. Built development on these surrounding roads has mostly avoided the mid/lower slopes of the valley in which the site is located and there is limited existing development on land below 115m (Figure 2). The fact that the lower slopes of the valley have remained undeveloped means that an appreciation of a rural dry chalk valley - an attractive landscape characteristic, consistent with the nearby AONB - can be experienced in views from the edge of the village e.g. , Burtons Lane (LVIA Viewpoint 2).
10. The southern site boundary runs along the edge of a small business estate known as Honours Yard. Honours Yard is encircled by woodland which minimises its presence within the landscape (Figure 5). Activities at Honours Yard are at times noisy, and this noise detracts from the otherwise peaceful nature of Lodge Lane/ New Hanging Wood. The southern boundary continues through Loudhams Wood and along a field boundary parallel to Long Walk. Central and eastern parts of Long Walk are outside of the defined Built Up Area and are washed over by the Green Belt. A lack of footways, kerbs and other highway infrastructure e.g. , street lighting gives Long Walk a distinctive and informal character. It is also framed by mature trees and vegetation which assists in integrating the properties into their rural context.

⁷ Chiltern & South Bucks District Councils Chiltern and South Bucks Townscape Character Study Part 3, 2017, Para 2.2.21

⁸ Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 Pages 10 & 11

-
11. Existing buildings within the site include the former golf course clubhouse and buildings at Homestead Farm which include a residential dwelling. In 2017 an application to demolish a barn and erect three detached dwellings at Homestead Farm was dismissed at appeal, due to harm to the Green Belt and to the character and appearance of the area. Barn conversions for residential use have since been approved, as permitted developments, at Homestead Farm, but these have not been implemented.

Landscape Value

12. The following assessment of landscape value is based on the factors and indicators identified in Table 1 of the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note (TGN 2/21) ***Assessing landscape value outside national designations***.⁹
13. Natural heritage: Woodlands within the site and nearby are identified as Priority Habitats (Deciduous Woodland). Stoneydean Wood, Netherground Spring, and New Hanging Wood are Ancient Woodland (Figure 4). The site and land to the east are within the Impact Risk Zone to the Frogmore Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Medium/high
14. Cultural heritage: The site adjoins Burtons Lane which is part of the Burtons Lane to Doggetts Wood Lane Area of Special Character. Two Grade II listed buildings are found at Loudhams along Burton Lane (Figure 4). Medium/high
15. Landscape condition: The landscape structure appears to be in a good condition. Medium/high
16. Associations: No known associations.
17. Distinctiveness: The local landscape is representative of the description of LCA 18.3 Little Chalfont. Almost all the key characteristics are displayed within the site or its immediate context. The 'strength of character' of LCA 18.3 is 'moderate' Medium/high
18. Recreational: There is no public access to the site. Burtons Lane is part of National Cycle Network Route 30. Public footpaths around Little Chalfont include Footpath (Fp) LCF/11/1 which runs from Lodge Lane through New Hanging Wood and Old Hanging Wood to the historic Manor of Chenies. Fp LCF/9/1 runs between New Road and Long Walk. Medium

⁹ Technical Guidance Note 02/21 Assessing landscape value outside national designations, Landscape Institute

-
19. Perceptual (scenic): The mosaic of farmland and woodland within a valley landform is an attractive feature visible from the edge of Little Chalfont. Woodland within the site provides an attractive treed backdrop to the village from Oakington Ave and Burtons Lane. Detractors include buildings at Honours Yard and the security fencing which secures the vehicle entrance into the former golf club. Medium
 20. Perceptual (Wildness and tranquillity): Woodland within the site enhances the valley's sense of enclosure and has resulted in a landscape which is representative of the 'secret corners' described in the AONB Management Plan. Activity at Honours Yard and passing trains disrupt tranquillity. Medium
 21. Functional: The site is sandwiched between the AONB to its east and an Area of Special Character to its west. The site provides a positive setting to both. The characteristics of the site are consistent with those found within the AONB. They are also supportive of both the AONB and the Burtons Lane to Doggetts Wood Lane Area of Special Character. high
 22. Overall, the value of the local landscape including the site is considered to be high due to the presence of the AONB and an Area of Special Character within the local landscape and the site's role in providing a positive and coherent setting to these areas. The local landscape is a valued landscape for the purposes of paragraph 174(a) of the National Planning Policy Framework, July 2021 (NPPF).
 23. The LVIA submitted with the application does not include a specific receptor for local landscape character. However, it does include LCA 18.3 as a receptor, and the value of this area, which includes the site and its local context is assessed in the LVIA as high¹⁰.

Landscape Effects

24. The proposed development would replace the area of grassland and pastoral fields within the dry chalk valley with residential development. This would remove open land that acts as a buffer between the AONB and Little Chalfont (Burtons Lane/Loudhams Wood Lane/Village Way). It would also remove open land which provides an appropriate setting for both the AONB and Little Chalfont. This setting is particularly effective with regard to the AONB because of the continuity of landscape character across the AONB boundary.

¹⁰ ES Appendix 13.7 Table of Landscape Effects

-
25. Although woodland within the site is to be protected as part of the proposals, the characteristic mosaic of woodland and farmland which complements the AONB would be lost. Whilst the Design and Access Statement (DAS) submitted with the application states that the setting of the dry valley is to be retained and enhanced¹¹, this is not possible at the same time as the replacement of fields within the valley with development. Development within the site would extend to the bottom of the valley, below 110m, and the legibility of a rural dry chalk valley from locations such as Burtons Lane would be lost.
26. The vehicle access from Lodge Lane would be in the location of the existing access to the former golf club. To accommodate an increase in vehicle movements, Lodge Lane would be widened from 4.8m width to 5.5m. This widening would occur between the site access and the A404. Widening of the lane would require the construction of a retaining wall up to 2m tall along the western bank of the lane. These works would be focused on the section of lane north of the railway bridge, which, like all of Lodge Lane adjacent to the development site, currently has a strong rural character. Although it is proposed to grow vegetation on the retaining wall, it will still read as a distinctly engineered element which in combination with the widening of the road and the increase in traffic, would have a harmful urbanising effect on an intrinsically rural feature of the AONB. This aspect of the proposal would therefore harm a good example of one of the AONB's special qualities.
27. Previous representations by Natural England on the now withdrawn Local Plan identify Lodge Lane as '*a good example of an AONB laneway*' and state that it '*should not be altered as part of this development*'¹² [referring to the previous draft allocation site BP6]. The Chilterns Conservation Board also raised the potential impacts on this Lane in their representations on the withdrawn Local Plan, stating that '*Lodge Lane is very scenic rural lane in the Chilterns AONB. Any access or highway 'improvements' to Lodge Lane (eg widening, straightening, signage, traffic lights, street lighting) could harm the AONB, and the Chilterns Conservation Board would be likely to object*'.¹³
28. The proposed vehicle access from Burtons Lane would require the removal of a mature sycamore tree (T38) and would open up views across the western parts of the development. The replacement of an attractive, rural valley landscape with a housing development would harm the setting of the Burtons Lane to Doggetts Wood Lane Area of Special Character (AoSC). The AoSC's low-density pattern and treed character are highly distinctive and vulnerable to change. The DAS states that the average density across the site would be 49 dwellings per

¹¹ Design and Access Statement November 2021 Page 87

¹² POREp0227

¹³ POLate005

hectare¹⁴. This is considerably higher than the density of neighbouring parts of Little Chalfont and would be incongruous with the Burtons Lane to Doggetts Wood Lane AoSC.

29. Overall, development of the site would be contrary to the strategy and vision set out in the Landscape Assessment 2011 for LCA 18.3 as it would not conserve and enhance the woodland and farmland *'which contributes to the rural, peaceful character of Little Chalfont Rolling Farmland'*. The development would also affect landscape and visual receptors identified as being sensitive to change, including:

- *'The open farmland and woodland cover (large areas of ancient woodland) which provides enclosure, a backdrop to views and biodiversity value.*
- *The rural farmed and wooded character of the landscape occurring between the settlement of Little Chalfont and Chorley Wood/ Rickmansworth.*
- *Lanes/roads through open farmland or enclosed by woodland which retain a rural character'*.¹⁵

30. The development would result in an adverse change to the baseline situation and would not achieve the Landscape Guidelines for LCA 18.3, as it would not:

- *'Conserve and manage the mosaic of woodland and farmland which is key to retaining a rural character between settlements.*
- *Conserve the character of rural roads.*
- *Seek to avoid further expansion of settlement which leads to suburbanisation along roads'*.¹⁶

31. Additional impacts include those to the fabric of the landscape, and specifically the proposals to remove 69 *'arboricultural features'* i.e., individual trees and tree groups to facilitate the development.¹⁷

¹⁴ Design and Access Statement November 2021 Page 137

¹⁵ Chiltern District Landscape Character Assessment, October 2011 Page 95

¹⁶ Chiltern District Landscape Character Assessment, October 2011 Page 95

¹⁷ Arboricultural Impact Assessment November 2021 Page 1

32. Considering the impacts above, the magnitude of change to the local landscape, which includes the AONB and its setting, would be medium. The susceptibility of this landscape to the change proposed is also medium. The overall sensitivity of the local landscape to the changes proposed (the combination of the judgments about value and susceptibility) is medium/high. With a medium magnitude of change the overall effect upon the local landscape, which includes the AONB and its setting, would be moderate/major adverse. This is a significant effect for the purposes of the EIA Regulations¹⁸.

Visual Effects

33. People on Lodge Lane and Burtons Lane, some of whom are likely to be walkers, would be most affected by this development (medium sensitivity). The replacement of views into the dry chalk valley with a residential development, and the urbanisation of Lodge Lane, would result in a medium magnitude of change. The effects on the views and visual amenity of these viewing audiences would be moderate adverse, and therefore significant
34. Trees east of the site would filter visibility of the development for people using Fp LCF/11/1 within the AONB (high sensitivity). In wintertime, views of the development would be possible and, lighting from the development itself and the headlights of moving vehicles would be noticeable at night, at this otherwise unlit location. The magnitude of change would be small/medium and the effects on the views and visual amenity of these viewing audiences would be moderate adverse, and therefore significant.

Impacts on the Green Belt

35. The site is located within the Green Belt. Openness is one of the essential characteristics of Green Belt. The government's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) identifies relevant matters to be taken into account when considering a proposal's impact upon green belt openness. Relevant points from the PPG include¹⁹:

- *'openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects - in other words, the visual impact of the proposal may be relevant, as could its volume'*
- *'the degree of activity likely to be generated, such as traffic generation'*

¹⁸ The ES considers effects of moderate and major to be significant (para 2.33).

¹⁹ Planning Practice Guidance, Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 64-001-20190722

-
36. Regarding the spatial strand of the first point above, the proposal would result in the demolition of eight small buildings and the replacement of open grassland and fields with built development where previously there was none. The area proposed to be occupied by new buildings amounts to approximately 10 hectares. The volume of this amount of built development would be significantly greater than that associated with the existing eight buildings on site.
37. The proposal would also have an adverse visual impact upon the openness of the Green Belt. The visual appearance of openness would be harmed by:
- New buildings which would replace views across open pasture.
 - The increased degree of activity which would be generated.
38. The current appearance of openness, particularly in the winter months, would be impacted in views from Burtons Lane (LVIA Viewpoint 12) and Lodge Lane (LVIA Viewpoint 2). It is also likely during winter that the development would impact on the appearance of openness in views from Village Way (LVIA Viewpoint 10), Loudhams Wood Lane, and Long Walk (LVIA Viewpoint 14). In this regard, the development also represents an encroachment into the countryside.
39. Overall, the proposals would have an adverse spatial and visual impact on the openness of the Green Belt and conflict with one of the purposes of including land within the Green Belt contrary to paragraphs 137 and 138 of the NPPF. The applicant's Planning Statement states that for the purposes of the NPPF, the development represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt²⁰.

Comments on the Submitted LVIA

40. We disagree with the conclusions of the LVIA, and in particular the finding that the residual effects of the development on the landscape character of LCA 18.3, and the site, would be minor beneficial and moderate beneficial respectively. It is hard to understand how replacing a locally characteristic and valued landscape feature with built development could result in beneficial impacts.

²⁰ Planning Statement, Paragraph 7.5

41. Methodological issues and omissions from the LVIA have led to an underestimation of effects.

Key omissions include:

- A failure to consider the Chiltern and South Bucks Townscape Character Study Part 3, November 2017, prepared by Chris Blandford Associates on behalf of Chiltern & South Bucks District Councils²¹. Having failed to consider this study, the LVIA has not identified that the north-western parts of the site adjoin the Burtons Lane to Doggetts Wood Lane AoSC. Nor does it identify the conclusions of the study with regard to the vulnerability of this area to change '*as a result of its distinctive low density pattern of detached and semi-detached houses ... set within large garden plots associated with mature vegetation*'.²²
- Having failed to identify the Burtons Lane to Doggetts Wood Lane AoSC or its specific characteristics and vulnerabilities, the LVIA incorrectly concludes that the development would '*be a continuation of similar residential development along the eastern edge of Little Chalfont*'²³ and that the '*Development would contribute positively to the built form in the immediate vicinity of the Site*'²⁴. The development would not respect the form or density of the nearby AoSC which is vulnerable to change, because it would include a more urban type and density of development than that which is found in the AoSC. The applicant's Indicative Density Plan indicates that the highest density areas (between 55-65 DPH) would be located immediately next to the AoSC along Loudhams Wood Lane and Village Way. At least some of this development is expected to be in the form of blocks of flats.
- Although the LVIA quotes the Vision and Landscape Guidelines set by the Landscape Assessment 2011 for LCA 18.3 it has failed to assess whether or not the development would achieve the Vision or the Guidelines. As outlined above, the development would not achieve the Vision for LCA 18.3 as it would not conserve and enhance the woodland and farmland '*which contributes to the rural, peaceful character of Little Chalfont Rolling Farmland*'. It would also not achieve Landscape Guidelines, as set out above.

²¹ The LVIA refers to Policy CS21 and the 'Established Residential Areas of Special Character'. These areas were identified as part of the Chiltern District Local Plan adopted in 1997 with alterations in 2001/2004. The Chiltern and South Bucks Townscape Character Study Part 3 is the most recent townscape character assessment (prepared for the emerging local plan) and the Burtons Lane to Doggetts Wood Lane Area of Special Character covers a different area to the Established Residential Areas of Special Character identified in the adopted Local Plan.

²² Chiltern & South Bucks District Councils Chiltern and South Bucks Townscape Character Study Part 3, 2017, Para 2.2.21

²³ ES Appendix 13.7: Table of Landscape Effects

²⁴ ES Paragraph 13.175

-
- The LVIA fails to properly describe the relationship between the site and the dry chalk valley in which it is located. As a result, it has failed to properly describe the impacts on the valley and its contribution to local landscape character. The LVIA inappropriately divides the site between ‘plateau areas’ and a separate ‘dry chalk valley’²⁵ which it implies is restricted to the lowest part of the site/valley. However, the entire site is part of the dry chalk valley and contributes to its legibility as such (Figure 2). Having failed to accurately identify the extent of the valley and the impacts on it, the LVIA concludes that ‘*Construction activities on Site would alter site levels in localised areas on the plateau areas away from the dry chalk valley*’²⁶ and that the ‘*landform of the dry chalk valley would be retained*’.²⁷ As outlined above, the proposals include development within the bottom of the valley, below 110m, and the legibility of a rural dry chalk valley from locations such as Burtons Lane would be lost.

Comments on the Submitted Visualisations

42. The LVIA includes wireline visualisations from four viewpoints. We have been unable to find an explanation for the choice of these locations. Unhelpfully, all the viewpoints are from locations where changes resulting from the proposals are unlikely to be noticeable. It is therefore unclear why these viewpoints were selected. Visualisations should have been prepared from locations where changes resulting from the development would be visible e.g., from Lodge Lane, Burtons Lane and Long Walk.
43. The visualisations have been presented as wide panoramas at A3 with a note that they should be printed at A0. This is impractical. A single frame presented at A3 would have captured the site. This approach to presenting the visualisations would have provided a more practical and accessible representation of the proposed development, in accordance with principle established in TGN 06/19 *Visual Representation of Development Proposals* prepared by the Landscape Institute (September 2019).

²⁵ ES Paragraph 13.149

²⁶ ES Paragraph 13.149

²⁷ ES Paragraph 13.171

Conclusion

44. The development would adversely impact landscape and visual receptors identified as being sensitive to change and would not achieve the Landscape Guidelines for LCA 18.3. The overall effect upon the local landscape, which includes the AONB and the Burtons Lane to Doggetts Wood Lane AoSC and their settings, would be moderate/major adverse, and significant. The proposals overall would not protect nor enhance a valued landscape contrary to paragraph 174 of the NPPF.
45. The development would result in moderate adverse, and significant effects on the visual amenity of people using Lodge Lane and Burtons Lane and people using a public right of way within the AONB.
46. The development would also have an adverse spatial and visual impact on the openness of the Green Belt and conflict with one of the purposes of including land within the Green Belt contrary to paragraphs 137 and 138 of the NPPF.

Appendix 1: Figures

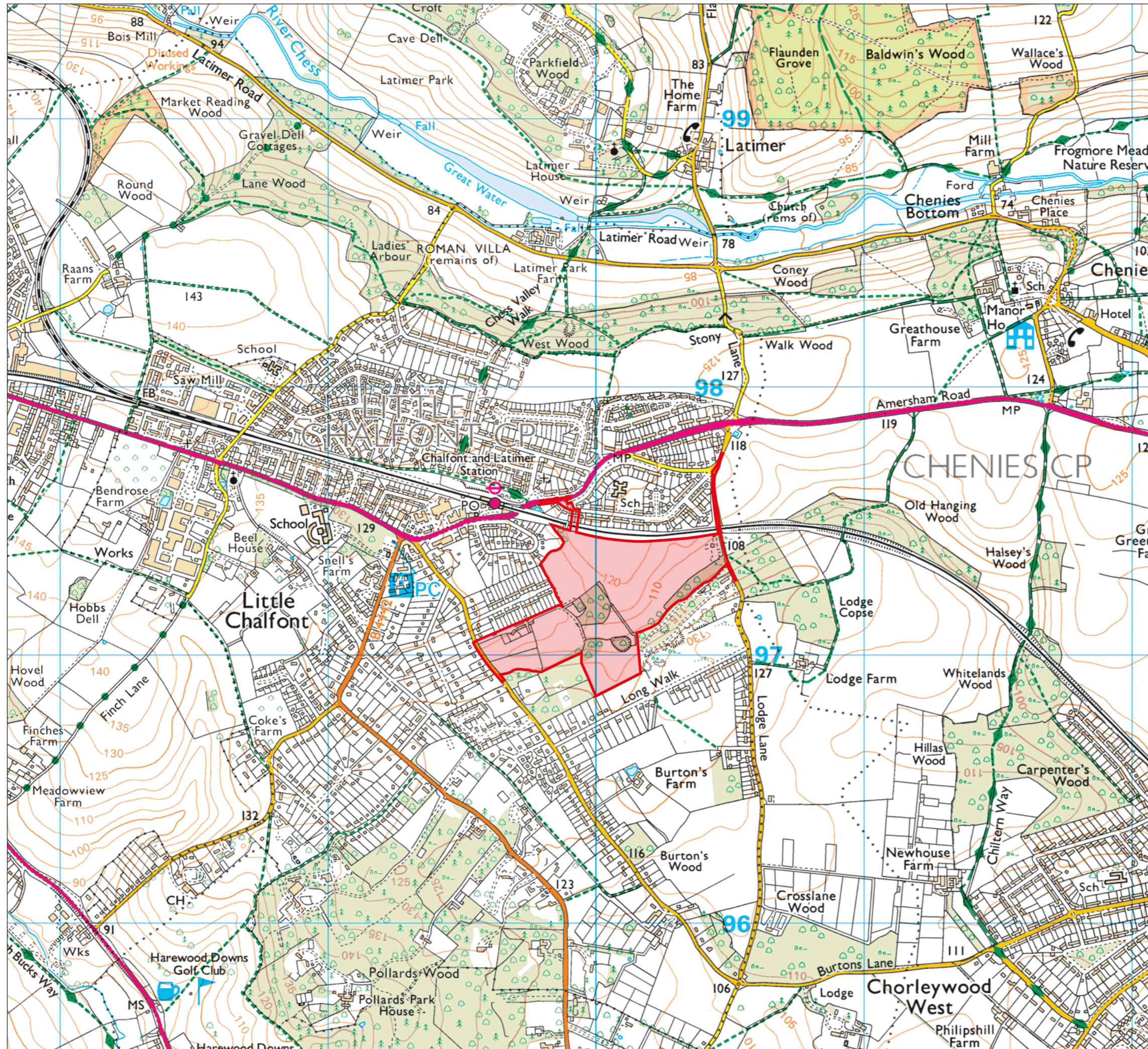


FIGURE 1
Site Location



PROJECT
1116
Little Chalfont

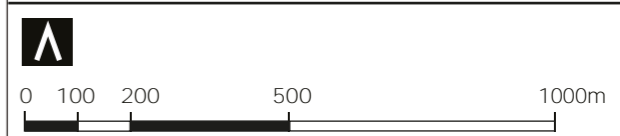
CLIENT
Little Chalfont Community Association & Little
Chalfont Parish Council

DATE
January 2022

Legend

 Site

NOTES



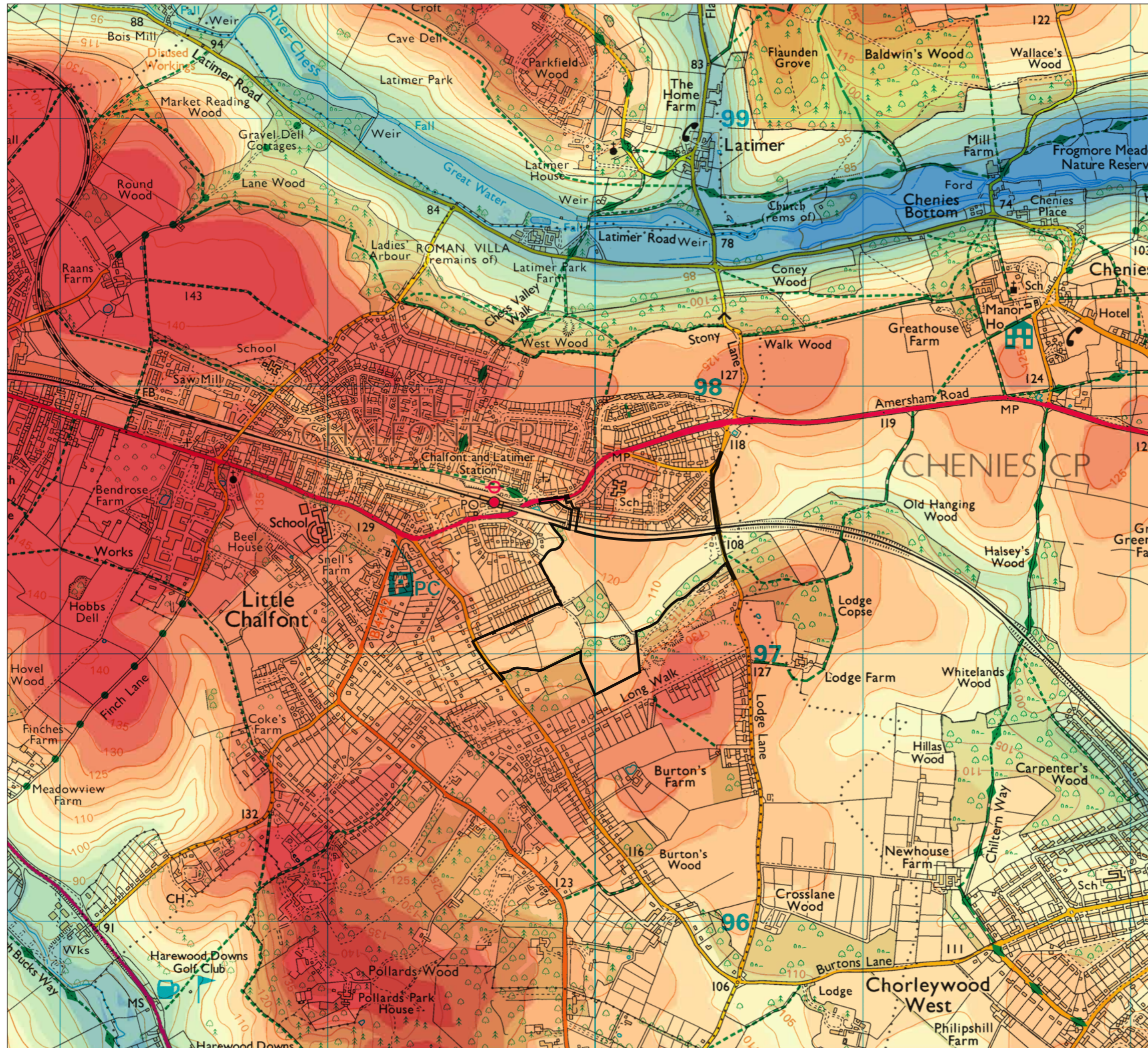


FIGURE 2
Topography





PROJECT
1116
Little Chalfont

CLIENT
Little Chalfont Community Association & Little
Chalfont Parish Council

DATE
January 2022

Legend

-  Site
-  70m AOD
140+m AOD

NOTES

-



0 100 200 500 1000m

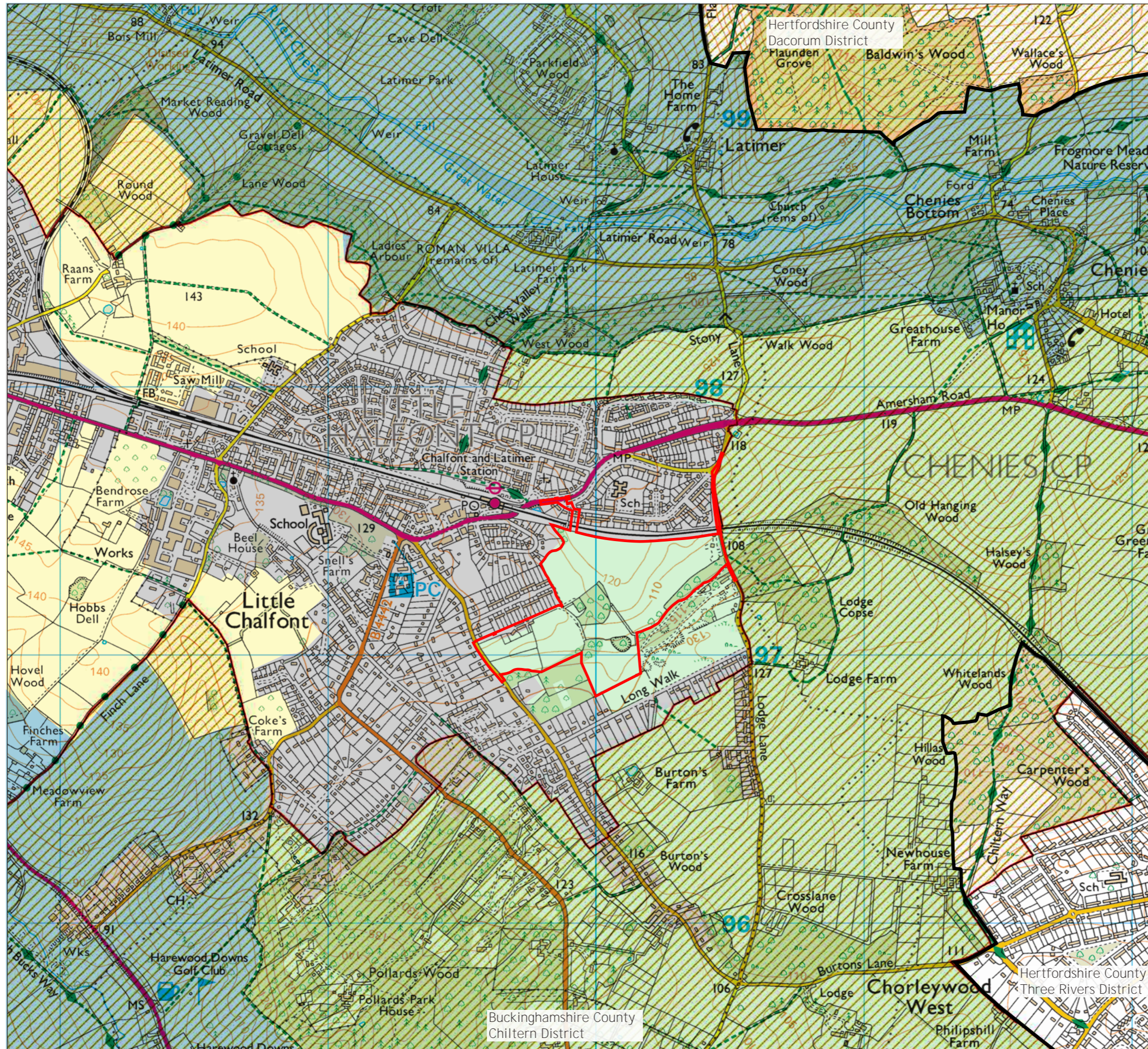


FIGURE 3
Landscape Character Areas






PROJECT
1116
Little Chalfont

CLIENT
Little Chalfont Community Association & Little Chalfont Parish Council

DATE
January 2022

Legend

-  Site
-  County/District Boundary
-  Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

Chiltern District Landscape Character Assessment, 2011
Landscape Character Type (LCT)
Landscape Character Areas (LCA)

-  LCT 13: Chalk River Valley
LCA 13.6: Chess
-  LCT 16: Settled Plateau
LCA 16.4: Hyde Heath
-  LCT 18: Rolling Farmland
LCA 18.3: Little Chalfont
-  Settlement

NOTES

-



0 100 200 500 1000m









FIGURE 4
Designations




PROJECT
1116
Little Chalfont
CLIENT
Little Chalfont Community Association & Little
Chalfont Parish Council

DATE
January 2022

Legend

-  Site
-  London Green Belt
-  Land covered by Policy H4 of Adopted Local Plan (Residential Areas of Special Character)
-  Ancient Woodland
-  Priority Habitat within site and immediate surroundings - Deciduous Woodland
-  Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

Listed Buildings

-  Grade I
-  Grade II*
-  Grade II

Chiltern & South Bucks Townscape Character Study, 2017

-  Burtons Lane to Doggetts Wood Lane Area of Special Character

NOTES

-



0 100 200 500 1000m

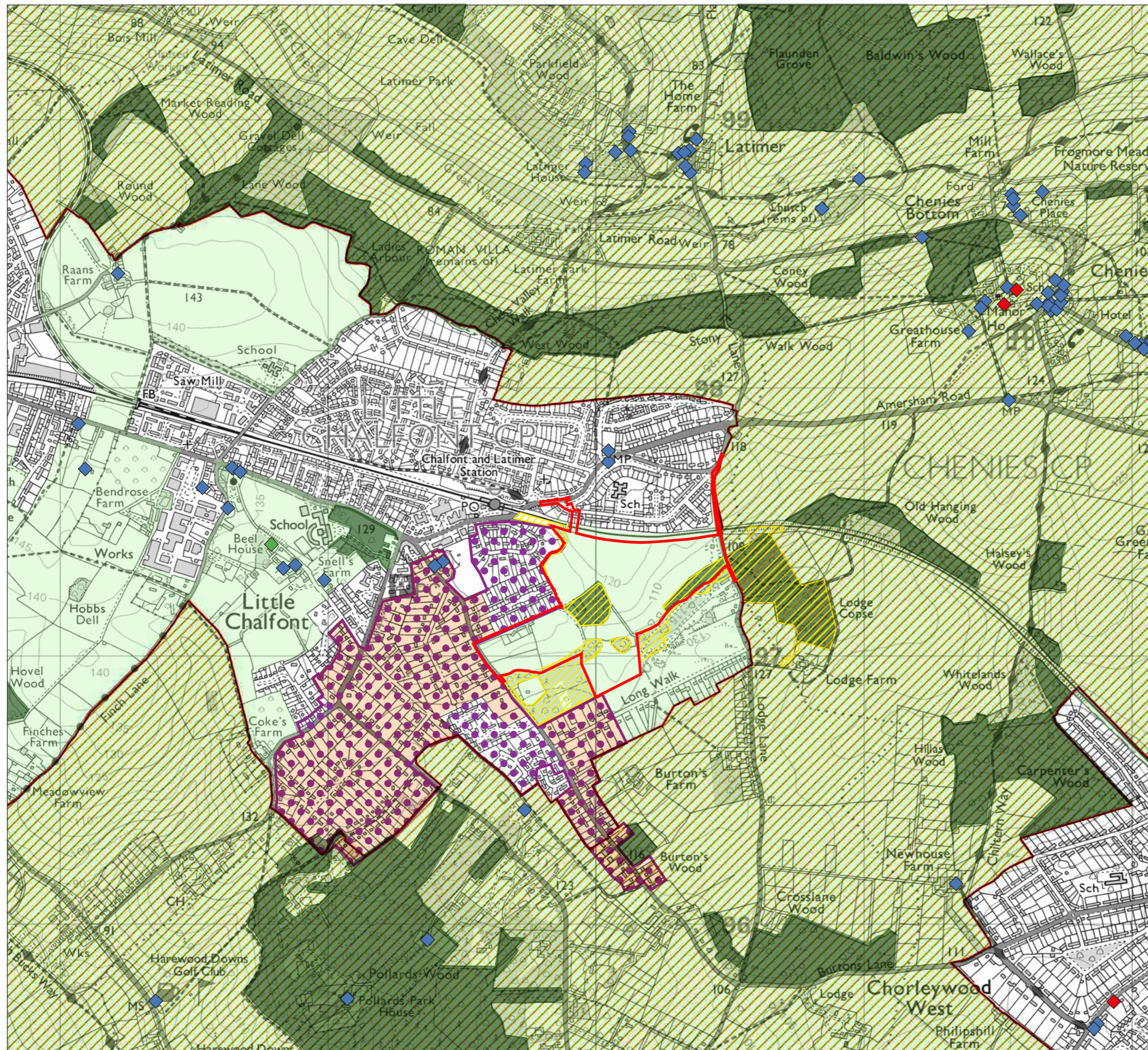




FIGURE 5
Aerial Photograph



PROJECT
 1116
 Little Chalfont

CLIENT
Little Chalfont Community Association & Little Chalfont Parish Council

DATE
 January 2022

Legend

 Site

NOTES
 Aerial photograph from Bing Maps



0 50 100 250 500m



Planning Application – PL/21/4632/OA

Land between Burtons Lane and Lodge Lane in Little Chalfont

Appendix C

Review of Submitted Ecological Information

Bioscan (UK).

Supporting the objection by:

Little Chalfont Parish Council

and

Little Chalfont Community Association

19 January 2022

THIS PAGE IS DELIBERATELY LEFT BLANK



**LAND BETWEEN BURTONS LANE AND
LODGE LANE, LITTLE CHALFONT**

Planning Reference: PL/21/4632/OA

REVIEW OF SUBMITTED ECOLOGICAL INFORMATION

JANUARY 2022

E2096R1/V1



COMMISSIONED BY:

Little Chalfont Community Association and Little Chalfont Parish Council

**LAND BETWEEN BURTONS LANE AND LODGE LANE
LITTLE CHALFONT
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

Planning Reference: PL/21/4632/OA

Review of submitted ecological information

January 2022

Bioscan Report No.
E2096R1/V1

BIOSCAN (UK) Ltd
The Old Parlour
Little Baldon Farm
Little Baldon
Oxford OX44 9PU

Tel: (01865) 341321
E-mail: bioscan@bioscanuk.com



CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	METHODOLOGY	4
3	CRITIQUE/COMMENTS ON THE SUBMITTED ECOLOGICAL REPORTING	5
4	CONCLUSIONS	24

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Bioscan (UK) Ltd was appointed by Mr Michael Parker on behalf of Little Chalfont Community Association and Little Chalfont Parish Council to provide an independent review of the ecological information submitted to Buckinghamshire Council (Chiltern Area) in support of outline planning application PL/21/4632/OA, for land between Lodge Lane and Burtons Lane, in Little Chalfont, Buckinghamshire, HP8 4AJ.

1.1.2 The description of the application is:

“Outline application for the demolition of all existing buildings and the erection of residential dwellings including affordable housing, custom build (Use Class C3), retirement homes and care home (Use Class C2), new vehicular access point off Burtons Lane, improvements to existing Lodge Lane access including works to Lodge Lane and Church Grove, new pedestrian and cycle access at Oakington Avenue including construction of new pedestrian and cycle bridge and associated highway works, a local centre including a community building (Use Classes E(a)(b)(e), F2(b)), land safeguarded for educational use (Use Classes E(f) and F1(a)), public open space and associated infrastructure (matters to be considered at this stage: Burtons Lane and Lodge Lane access).”¹.

1.1.3 The application site is approximately 30ha in size, and is dominated by a former golf course. The central grid reference is TQ000972. Figure 1 below provides an extract of a plan provided with the planning application identifying the application boundary (red line).

Figure 1. Application boundary (as provided with the planning application).



¹ Available via:

<https://pa.chilternandsouthbucks.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=R3JPUKESL0Z00>

1.2 Submitted information

1.2.1 The planning application submission documents included an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Environmental Statement (ES) chapter on ecology, with supporting technical appendices comprising ecology reports prepared by a number of ecological consultancies. These reports, their authors, year of publication, and reference number (where this has been provided), comprise the following:

- **Environmental Statement** – ES Chapter 12 - Ecology (Waterman I&E, 2021)
- **Appendix 12.1** - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Waterman Infrastructure & Environment Ltd, 2019)
- **Appendix 12.2** - Update Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Waterman I&E, 2021)
- **Appendix 12.3** - Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) (Waterman I&E, 2021)
- **Appendix 12.4** - National Vegetation Classification (NVC) Survey Report (Griffin Ecology Ltd, 2019)
- **Appendix 12.5** - National Vegetation Classification (NVC) Survey Report (Griffin Ecology Ltd, 2021)
- **Appendix 12.6** - Hedgerow Assessment Report (Ecology and Land Management, 2019)
- **Appendix 12.7** - Hedgerow Assessment Report (Ecology and Land Management, 2021)
- **Appendix 12.8** - Bat Surveys – Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PRA) Report – Buildings (report reference ASW/BBL/001/23/2019) (ASW Ecology Ltd, 2019)
- **Appendix 12.9** - Bat Surveys – Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PRA) Report – Buildings (report reference ASW/BBL/062/25/2021) (ASW Ecology Ltd, 2021)
- **Appendix 12.10** - Bat Surveys – Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PRA) Report – Trees (Sylvatica Ecology Ltd, 2019)
- **Appendix 12.11** - Bat Surveys – Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PRA) Report – Trees (Sylvatica Ecology Ltd, 2021)
- **Appendix 12.12** - Bat Surveys – Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PRA) Report – Railway Bridge (report reference ASW/BBL/026/23/2019) (ASW Ecology Ltd, 2019)
- **Appendix 12.13** - Bat Surveys – Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PRA) Report – Railway Bridge (report reference ASW/BBL/014/25/2021) (ASW Ecology Ltd, 2021)
- **Appendix 12.14** - Bat Surveys – Emergence Surveys on Buildings (report reference ASW/SHP/037/23/2019) (ASW Ecology Ltd, 2019)
- **Appendix 12.15** - Bat Surveys – Emergence Surveys on Buildings (report reference ASW/BDBL/065/25/2021) (ASW Ecology Ltd, 2021)
- **Appendix 12.16** - Bat Surveys – Transect surveys, static surveys, emergence/re-entry surveys and trapping surveys (Ridgeway Ecology Ltd, 2019)
- **Appendix 12.17** - Bat Surveys – Activity and Static Detector Surveys (Ridgeway Ecology Ltd, 2021)
- **Appendix 12.18** - Bat Surveys – Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PRA) Report – 13 and 15 Oakington Avenue & Trees Along Lodge Lane (Ridgeway Ecology Ltd, 2021)
- **Appendix 12.19** - Breeding Bird Survey Report (report reference ASW/BBL/039/23/2019) (ASW Ecology Ltd, 2019)
- **Appendix 12.20** - Breeding Bird Survey Report (report reference ASW/BBL/088/25/2021) (ASW Ecology Ltd, 2021)
- **Appendix 12.21** - Dormouse Survey Report (Don MacPherson, 2019)
- **Appendix 12.22** - Dormouse Survey Report (Don MacPherson, 2021)
- **Appendix 12.23** - Badger Survey Report (report reference ASW/BBL/025/23/2019) (ASW Ecology Ltd, 2019) [CONFIDENTIAL]
- **Appendix 12.24** - Little Chalfont Technical Note – Badger Survey (report reference WIE15569-101-TN-5-1-4-BS) (Waterman I&E, 2020) [CONFIDENTIAL]



- **Appendix 12.25** - Badger Survey Report (ASW Ecology Ltd, 2021) [CONFIDENTIAL]
- **Appendix 12.26** - Reptile and Terrestrial Amphibian Report (report reference ASW/BBL/034/23/2019) (ASW Ecology Ltd, 2019)
- **Appendix 12.27** - Reptile and Terrestrial Amphibian Report (report reference ASW/BBL/036/25/2021) (ASW Ecology Ltd, 2021)
- **Appendix 12.28** - Great Crested Newt eDNA Report (ADAS, 2021)
- **Appendix 12.29** - Little Chalfont: A Preliminary Invertebrate Assessment (Richard A. Jones, 2019)
- **Appendix 12.30** - Little Chalfont: A Follow-up Invertebrate Assessment (Richard A. Jones, 2021)

1.2.2 The veracity of the above reports, and the robustness of the data and suitability of the surveys undertaken, have been the focus of this review. Conclusions are offered on whether the submitted ecological information provides an adequate level of detail on ecological matters sufficient for the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to discharge its duties to have regard to all relevant material considerations, and its statutory duties in relation to protected and 'Priority' habitats and species.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Review of submitted documents

- 2.1.1 The relevant documents submitted with the planning application were given a 'high-level' review by Bioscan, with particular attention focused on the supporting technical ecology reports (as listed above in paragraph 1.2.1).
- 2.1.2 Each of the ecology reports was reviewed and assessed for its adequacy, including in respect of any limitations to the survey methodology, the validity of the stated results, and robustness of the related assessments. This is set out at Chapter 3 of this report (below).
- 2.1.3 Statutory consultees' comments on the project's Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) scoping report² (including specifically those from Buckinghamshire Council's ecologist) were also reviewed.

2.2 Data search

- 2.2.1 Independently of the above, a desk-based data trawl exercise was conducted using readily available information sources. This included the on-line 'MAGIC' database managed by Natural England³, in order to source data relating to statutory designations, important habitats, agri-environment schemes and European protected species licences.
- 2.2.2 Further background information of relevance was searched for on the NBN Atlas⁴.

² Waterman Infrastructure & Environment Limited (July 2021). *Area South East of Little Chalfont: Request for a Scoping Opinion*.

³ MAGIC (Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside) website. Sourced from:

<http://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

⁴ National Biodiversity Network (NBN). *NBN Atlas*. Via: <https://nbnatlas.org/>

3 CRITIQUE/COMMENTS ON THE ECOLOGY REPORTING

3.1 Document review process

3.1.1 The following provides a list of the reports that have been subject to review, and identifies where they appear to fall short of accepted industry-standards or where additional information is likely to be required in order for the LPA to come to an informed planning decision. In view of the large number of reports, and to keep this report as succinct as possible (and to avoid repetition), and to aid in cross-comparison with the original reports, the comments are numbered, and where reports have been updated, the most recent version has been commented on.

3.1.2 As a general point, some documents have been issued as low-resolution copies which are not text-searchable. In the interests of transparency and accessibility to all, it is recommended that the Applicant provides higher resolution text-searchable versions of all documents.

3.2 Appendix 12.1 and 12.2 - Update Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) – Waterman, 2019 and 2021

- 1) Appendix 12.1, Section 3, paragraphs 3.47-3.48, and the top line of Table 8 (reproduced below), appear to present the sum total of all the preliminary survey and assessment work for great crested newt. For clarity, the Applicant should provide a map showing the locations of the four identified off-site waterbodies, and confirm which of these was subject to eDNA sampling (noting that the ES chapter on ecology references not four, but five ponds; and also states that *“Due to a change in survey area in August/September 2021 distances of ponds do not correlate to what has previously been stated within the PEA reports.”*). Further comments on the survey and assessment work for great crested newt are presented below under the heading of ‘Appendix 12.28’.

Table 8: Potential Important Ecological Features Anticipated to be Affected by the Development

Potential Important Ecological Feature	Category of Importance	Rationale	Potential Effect Pathway	Requirement for Further Ecological Assessment
Amphibians	Legal protection, S41 (certain species)	The Site supports potential terrestrial habitat for amphibians (including GCN). Four ponds located within 500m of the Site have suitable terrestrial habitat connectivity to the Site.	Damage, destroy or obstruct access to any breeding or resting place used by GCN. Disturb, harm or kill GCN.	Yes – Further assessment in the form of environmental DNA (eDNA) analysis of each pond (pending access). Based on the results of these surveys, further survey work may be required in the form of presence/likely absence surveys and population size class assessments.

- 2) Appendix 12.1, Section 3, paragraphs 3.1-3.5 (page 15): Although it is acknowledged that the LPA may choose to redact information relating to badgers for reasons of animal welfare, that information should not be restricted by the Applicant who has a duty to provide this information to the LPA. General information regarding the badger sett should therefore be provided for completeness (e.g. is the sett still present and active? What is its status?)



- 3) Appendix 12.2, Section 3: The Applicant has made comments about the condition of various habitats which appear to correspond with the technical documents supporting the now superseded DEFRA Biodiversity Metric 2.0^{5 6}. The Applicant should assess each habitat against the current technical note⁷, and revise the condition information used to inform the BNG report (Appendix 12.3) accordingly.

3.3 Appendix 12.3 - Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Report – Waterman, 2021

- 1) Significantly greater clarity and transparency would be afforded to the LPA if the populated Metric 3.0 calculation tool were to be provided in full by the Applicant. In the absence of that information, the following comments are made in relation to the details provided within (or omitted from) the BNG report.
- 2) Paragraph 2.5: It would appear that c.20 trees are proposed to be removed from the margins of Lodge Lane, and therefore, more refined habitat categorisation (or re-categorisation) should be carried out (rather than identifying this area as ‘Urban-developed land; sealed surface’).
- 3) Paragraph 3.9, Table 4: For Hedgerow H4, the distinctiveness category for this hedgerow appears to be incorrect. It should be placed in the ‘High’ category (this high distinctiveness is also stated in the ES (paragraph 12.49)). Entering this ‘High’ value gives a greater unit score (12.75 as opposed to the stated 11.37).
- 4) As stated within the review of the 2021 PEA at 3.2 above, it would appear that an old and now outdated technical note document has been used to assess the condition of each habitat on the site (with this information then used in the Applicant’s BNG calculation). The criteria that should be used for Metric 3.0 is provided in ‘Biodiversity Metric 3.0: Auditing and accounting for biodiversity – User Guide’ (2021). Consequently, there are likely to be significant flaws in the Applicant’s BNG calculations.
- 5) In order to verify the Applicant’s BNG calculation, Bioscan entered the parameters as provided within BNG report into a blank Biodiversity Metric 3.0 spreadsheet. However, despite the same figures being entered, the resulting net % change score did not match that provided within the report by a significant margin (and this is without factoring in the errors outlined above (items 2 to 4). Bioscan calculated that the percentage change was a large negative figure (-30.83%); significantly different to that provided in the Applicant’s report (+25.21%). As the full Metric calculations were not provided by the Applicant it was not possible to determine where the discrepancies had occurred to result in such a significant difference. Table 1 below provides the result of Bioscan’s Metric calculation based on the habitat areas and hedgerows lengths provided in the Applicant’s report.

On-site baseline	<i>Habitat units</i>	134.45
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	11.37
	<i>River units</i>	0.00
On-site post-intervention <small>(Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)</small>	<i>Habitat units</i>	92.99
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	13.70
	<i>River units</i>	0.00
On-site net % change <small>(Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)</small>	<i>Habitat units</i>	-30.83%
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	20.41%
	<i>River units</i>	0.00%

Table 1. Results of Bioscan re-running of the metric calculation based on the areas of habitat in the Applicant’s BNG report.

⁵ E.g. by reference to bare ground being less than 10%

⁶ Natural England (July 2019). *Biodiversity Metric 2.0: Auditing and accounting for biodiversity - Technical Supplement*

⁷ Natural England (July 2021). *Biodiversity Metric 3.0: Auditing and accounting for biodiversity - User Guide*

- 6) As the raw tables from the Biodiversity Metric Excel file were not provided by the Applicant in the report (which thus reduces the transparency of the Applicant’s BNG process), Bioscan attempted to work out where this significant discrepancy in the calculation arose. By carefully reviewing the numbers and habitats, it was eventually determined that the error appears to lie in the Applicant’s calculations. By process of elimination, the error appears to be the result of the Applicant double-counting the 6.17ha of proposed ‘Other neutral grassland’ (which is stated in the ‘Site Habitat Creation’ table of the Metric). If this area and habitat is *also* included within the ‘Site Habitat Enhancement’ table, then the resulting figure is near identical to that provided by the Applicant. Table 2 below provides the result of the BNG calculation if the 6.17ha of ‘Other neutral grassland’ is erroneously included in *both* the Habitat Creation and Habitat Enhancement tables in the metric.

On-site baseline	<i>Habitat units</i>	134.45
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	11.37
	<i>River units</i>	0.00
On-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	<i>Habitat units</i>	168.35
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	13.70
	<i>River units</i>	0.00
On-site net % change (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	<i>Habitat units</i>	25.22%
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	20.41%
	<i>River units</i>	0.00%

Table 2. Results of Bioscan re-running of the metric calculation based on counting the area of ‘Other neutral grassland’ in both the Habitat Creation and Habitat Enhancement tables.

- 7) Double-counting areas of proposed habitat will artificially inflate the percentage change of biodiversity net gain on a site (and results in the following error message being raised in the BNG calculator tool: “*Check Areas – Area of development footprint and habitat creation exceeds the area of habitats lost*”). To highlight, habitats proposed at the completion of a development can only be entered into the post-construction calculations once (either into the retained, enhanced or created categories). They should not be entered twice.
- 8) In an attempt to understand the likely BNG score for the site, Bioscan re-ran the Metric calculation based on: (a) placing the area of ‘Other neutral grassland’ into the metric once; and (b) entering the correct habitat distinctiveness for Hedgerow H4. In respect of the former point, it is considered more likely that the ‘Other neutral grassland’ would be an enhancement (by converting the existing modified grassland) rather than removing the existing grassland and then creating new neutral grassland. Consequently, Bioscan removed the area and habitat of the proposed ‘Other neutral grassland’ in the Habitat Creation table, and placed it into the Habitat Enhancement table. Table 3 below provides the result of the re-running of the calculation.



On-site baseline	Habitat units	134.45
	Hedgerow units	12.75
	River units	0.00
On-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	101.17
	Hedgerow units	14.11
	River units	0.00
On-site net % change (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	-24.75%
	Hedgerow units	10.63%
	River units	0.00%

Table 3. Results of Bioscan re-running of the metric calculation based on only counting the area of ‘Other neutral grassland’ once in the metric (in the Habitat Enhancement table), and using the correct habitat distinctiveness for Hedgerow H4.

- 9) Table 3 above indicates that the likely actual percentage biodiversity net change on the site is minus 24.75%, with the hedgerow percentage change reducing to plus 10.63%.
- 10) Further to the above, reviewing some of the condition parameters in the BNG report, it would appear that some elements in the Applicant’s BNG report have been underplayed (in respect of the existing habitats), whilst other elements the opposite has occurred (in respect of the proposed habitats). The following are examples of where this appears to have occurred:
 - i. As outlined above (item 5), the condition scores for the habitats are likely to be incorrect, and based on: (a) a review of the relevant 3.0 Metric User Guide; (b) the 2019 and 2021 PEAs; (c) the hedgerow reports (2019 and 2021); and (d) the site photographs, that the grassland would more likely meet the ‘Moderate’ condition score.
 - ii. Paragraph 4.9 states that the proposed Priority ‘Lowland Meadow’ (High distinctiveness habitat) “*would be expected to achieve an assumed ‘Good’ condition score in 15 years.*” However, it is difficult to envisage that the Applicant would be able to deliver this Priority habitat on the site, and even if this were achievable, that it would reach a ‘Good’ score when it is likely to be the main dog-walking area for the residents of the development. It is considered that a more pragmatic and realistic habitat would be ‘other neutral grassland’ with a realistic condition score of, at best, ‘Fairly Good’. Nevertheless, for the purposes of re-running the calculation (see below), ‘Lowland Meadow’ has been retained within the Metric, but with a condition of ‘Fairly Good’.
- 11) Taking the Metric calculation as used to produce Table 3 above (i.e. taking into account the probable miscalculations by the Applicant), but based on the two revised condition assessments (as outlined in points i and ii above) then the resulting score would be a negative figure of -38.89% for the habitat units, and +9.27% for the hedgerow units. It should be noted, that the Metric calculation has been based on the post-intervention habitats being created/enhanced at the point of construction even though this is considered unlikely (if any habitats to be created/enhanced were to be delayed after the time of construction then the figure in habitat units would be further reduced). Table 4 provides these results as provided by the Metric.
- 12) It should be noted that all the above calculations have been made in the absence of the full tables used by the Applicant. If these were to be made available, then Bioscan would be able to verify the results of the Metric calculations.

On-site baseline	Habitat units	161.06
	Hedgerow units	12.75
	River units	0.00
On-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	98.42
	Hedgerow units	13.94
	River units	0.00
On-site net % change (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	-38.89%
	Hedgerow units	9.27%
	River units	0.00%

Table 4. Results of Bioscan re-running of the metric calculation based on more pragmatic and realistic condition parameters.

3.4 Appendix 12.4 and 12.5 - National Vegetation Classification (NVC) Survey Report – Griffin Ecology Ltd, 2019 & 2021

- 1) As the site was visited twice by an experienced botanist, it is regrettable that the NVC survey focussed entirely on the woodland, and the grassland (the habitat that will be most extensively impacted by the development) was not subject to such a survey or any other detailed botanical survey effort, particularly as the intensive management regime of the golf course appears to have reduced (and thus potentially allowing plant species of interest that were previously suppressed to become evident). Indeed the 2019 hedgerow report states that field scabious, hoary plantain and tormentil were found on the site (the two former species are indicators of calcareous grassland, whilst the latter is an acid grassland indicator species). The comments that follow this relate solely to the woodlands.
- 2) A map identifying the on-site woodlands would have been helpful in the 2021 report, particularly given some ambiguity in the text. For example, Section 4, Second Paragraph: references to “Quarry pit W3” which appears to be a typo for ‘W2’; however, clarification from the Applicant is required to confirm.
- 3) Section 4, Paragraph 5: A review of MAGIC indicates that all of the wooded areas on the site appear to have been identified as occurring on the Priority Habitat Inventory ‘Deciduous Woodland’ by Natural England. See Figure 2 below.

Figure 2. Areas identified by MAGIC as occurring on the Priority Habitat Inventory ‘Deciduous Woodland’ habitat (in green)



- 4) By reference to Figure 1 above, all wooded areas may potentially meet the definition for a Deciduous Woodland Priority Habitat type, and the Applicant should therefore clarify how the conclusion that only W1, W2 and W5 would qualify was reached, by specific reference to the relevant Priority habitat definition/s.

3.5 Appendix 12.8 - Bat Surveys – Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PRA) Report – Buildings (Clubhouse and Stores)- ASW/BBL/001/23/2019 – ASW Ecology Ltd, 2019

- 1) The 2019 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was undertaken in the same month as the bat building inspection undertaken as part of this report. The former report stated that the Clubhouse was assessed to be of 'Moderate' bat roost suitability, whilst the latter stated it was 'Low'. Greater clarity is required from the Applicant to understand how the surveyors came to these differing assessments.

3.6 Appendix 12.9 - Bat Surveys – Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PRA) Report – Buildings (Clubhouse and Stores)- ASW/BBL/062/25/2021 – ASW Ecology Ltd, 2021

- 1) The 2019 bat inspection report noted that the structure known as 'Stores' was assessed to be of 'Moderate' bat roosting potential; however, in this 2021 report it is assessed as 'Low'. Further information from the Applicant is required to understand why this structure has been downgraded.
- 2) It is unclear which structures were surveyed on the dates provided in the report. Clarification is also required from the Applicant regarding which structure was surveyed during each visit.
- 3) The 2019 Homestead Farm bat report (Appendix 12.4) stated under limitations that the roof voids of the Farmhouse were not accessed/inspected. It is not clear from the 2021 report whether these voids were accessed and inspected in 2021 (no mention of lack of access is made in the constraints section in this report). This is of particular relevance given the presence of bat roosts in this structure.

3.7 Appendix 12.10 - Bat Surveys – Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PRA) Report – Trees – Sylvatica Ecology Ltd, 2019

- 1) For robustness and transparency, the Applicant should provide bat roost assessment information for all trees on the site, and which of these are proposed to be removed.
- 2) In Table 2 it states that pipistrelle droppings were found in one tree, but it is unclear which pipistrelle species was present, and how this identification was reached. To provide the LPA with reassurance that the droppings do not belong to a rarer species with potentially similar looking droppings (e.g. whiskered, Alcatheo or Brandt's bat) these droppings should be subject to DNA analysis to confirm the species present.

3.8 Appendix 12.11 - Bat Surveys – Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PRA) Report – Trees – Sylvatica Ecology Ltd, 2021

- 1) Under section 2.1 it states that: *“All of the trees within the redline boundary of the site were previously checked for the potential to support roosting bats...”*. It is unclear where the information on this assessment is presented.
- 2) It is noted from aerial photographs that an area of what appears to be mature trees is located in the north-western corner of the site (near to the bridge over the railway line). The Applicant should confirm whether these trees were assessed for their bat roosting potential and/or if they were subject to an aerial/climbed inspection.
- 3) Further, confirmation is required from the Applicant to understand if the trees adjacent to Lodge Lane were subject to an aerial tree climbing exercise.
- 4) Based on aerial photographs, there appear to be mature trees between the residential properties and the railway line, and between the railway line and the site boundary. It is unclear whether these trees have been assessed for their bat roost suitability. The Applicant should provide such information.

3.9 Appendix 12.12 - Bat Surveys – Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PRA) Report – Railway Bridge - ASW/BBL/026/23/2019 – ASW Ecology Ltd, 2019

- 1) The Applicant should confirm how the existing railway bridge will be affected by the development.
- 2) Section 5.1: This section states: *“It would be possible to assess if any bats are emerging from the bridge structure during the Spring to Autumn months including any bat swarming behaviour during late Summer to the Autumn.”* Given that there were opportunities to carry out such surveys between 2019 and 2021, justification is required from the Applicant why these surveys were not undertaken.

3.10 Appendix 12.13 - Bat Surveys – Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PRA) Report – Railway Bridge - ASW/BBL/014/25/2021 – ASW Ecology Ltd, 2021

- 1) Section 4.1: This states that *“that the bridge still has no obvious bat roosting potential.”* The Applicant should clarify this statement given that the structure could not be accessed in its entirety, and in the absence of emergence/re-entry bat survey results.
- 2) It is difficult to ascertain how the overall bat roosting grading of the railway bridge was given as ‘NIL’ given that the bridge could not be fully accessed and assessed (*“This assessment was though again very much restricted by the lack of access to the interior of the stated bridge and to the northern side, so had to be undertaken from the application side of the railway fenceline.”*). Due to the lack of access, it would have been expected that dusk emergence and/or dawn re-entry bat surveys would have been conducted to gain further information on the possible use of the bridge by bats. Therefore, it is considered that a more appropriate bat roosting grading would be ‘Precautionary moderate’ or similar.
- 3) Given the lack of suitable survey information, the Applicant should demonstrate that the level of bat mitigation is appropriate.

3.11 Appendix 12.14 - Bat Surveys – Emergence Surveys on Buildings - ASW/SHP/037/23/2019 – ASW Ecology Ltd, 2019

- 1) Section 2.1: The Bat Conservation Trust’s Survey Guidelines⁸ state that for a building with moderate bat roost suitability (as has been assessed to be the case for some of the structures) that: *“One dusk emergence and a separate dawn re-entry survey”* should be conducted to be confident that no bat roosts are present. Justification is required from the Applicant to understand why only emergence surveys were undertaken (it should be highlighted that surveys undertaken in 2021 did encounter bat roosts within one of the buildings).
- 2) Section 4.1: This states that *“Bats were clearly roosting at some distance at either buildings or trees at Homestead Farm”*. It is unclear from this sentence whether bat roosts were noted away from this part of the site, or if instead the inference is that no roosting was encountered on the site at all during these surveys.
- 3) It is unclear which structures were surveyed during each visit. The Applicant should provide a plan showing these structures, the location of the surveyors and each surveyor’s coverage of the structures, to aid in understanding whether the surveys were sufficiently comprehensive and robust.
- 4) Section 3.1: For robustness, the Applicant should provide further information regarding the survey timings (e.g. when did the survey visits commence and end?)
- 5) Based on the photographs the bat roosting potential of the House (Building 1) appears to be downplayed in the report. Based on the age of the building, the presence of hanging tiles, the presence of gaps under the ridge tiles, and its location adjacent to suitable bat foraging areas, it would be expected that the structure is of at least moderate suitability (rather than the assessed ‘Low’ in the report). In fact, the 2019 PEA states that this structure is of ‘High’ bat roost suitability. Furthermore, the report is unclear on the comprehensiveness of the internal bat inspection. The report states that: *“There was no access permission into the remaining roof voids at the main house but many of the lofts have been already converted it was noted.”* The Applicant should confirm whether there are any roof voids suitable to be utilised by roosting bats, and if so, why were these not inspected.
- 6) Section 4.1: This states that: *“The bat roosting potential of the nine buildings at Homestead Farm were identified as being between Nil to Moderate/High”*; however, no mention of ‘High’ is made in the table provided at section 3.2. The Applicant should confirm which structure is assessed as ‘Moderate/High’.

3.12 Appendix 12.15 - Bat Surveys – Emergence Surveys on Buildings - ASW/BDBL/065/25/2021 – ASW Ecology Ltd, 2021

- 1) Section 2.1: As stated above, the BCT survey guidelines state that for a building with moderate roost suitability: *“One dusk emergence and a separate dawn re-entry survey”* should be carried out to have confidence that no bat roosts are present. Justification is required from the Applicant to understand why the surveys do not accord with the industry-standard survey guidelines.
- 2) Section 3.1: The Applicant should provide further information regarding the survey timings to aid the LPA in understanding whether the surveys meet the timing requirements as provided in the BCT guidelines (e.g. the timings of the commencement and completion of the survey visits).

⁸ Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

- 3) Greater transparency from the Applicant is required to understand which structures were surveyed on which dates. Furthermore, a plan showing the structures and the location of the surveyors, and their coverage, would aid in understanding whether the surveys were sufficiently comprehensive to comply with best practice guidance.

3.13 Appendix 12.16 - Bat Surveys – Transect surveys, static surveys, emergence/re-entry surveys and trapping surveys– Ridgeway Ecology Ltd, 2019

- 1) Section 3.2.5: This section states: *“Barbastelles were encountered in the woodland at the eastern end of the site in April, in the woodland in the centre of the site in May and along the woodland edge in the western part of the site in August. It is likely that the sites woodland is of low significance for this species.”* Justification from the Applicant is required to understand how it was assessed that the woodland on the site is of low significance for barbastelle.
- 2) Section 2.3.4: Additional justification is required from the Applicant to understand why the one bat trapping survey was considered suitable/acceptable, especially given the known barbastelle use of the site and the possibility of the presence of Bechstein’s bat. Indeed, the BCT survey guidelines state in respect of this latter species: *“To determine the presence/likely absence of Bechstein’s bat on a site, the lure and net/harp trap method should be used and trapping surveys conducted for a minimum of six trap nights over the active bat season”*.
- 3) Justification is required to understand why Stonydean Wood was not covered by the transect surveys given the significant indirect impacts that are likely to occur. Conversely, it is noted that there is a lack of coverage of the more open aspects of the site during the static detector survey element (e.g. almost the entire north-western quarter of the site was not covered, and this is where a large proportion of the housing is proposed).

3.14 Appendix 12.17 - Bat Surveys – Activity and Static Detector Surveys – Ridgeway Ecology Ltd, 2021

- 1) Section 2.3.1: Although the woodland habitats are not proposed for development, impacts on these features (such as lighting) would nonetheless likely arise as a consequence of the development. Therefore, the entirety of the site should be considered for its bat foraging habitat. Indeed the 2019 PEA states: *“The scattered trees, scrub, tall ruderal, hedgerows and woodlands and semi-improved grassland offer potential for commuting and foraging bats. Given the extent of this habitat, lack of artificial lighting and the connectivity with suitable habitats in the surrounding areas, the Site is assessed to be of **high** foraging and commuting value for bats.”* (Our emphasis). In accordance with the BCT survey guidelines, a site of high value for bats requires two surveys a month to be undertaken (which is also the recommendation in the 2019 PEA). Greater justification is required from the Applicant to understand the rationale behind the level of transect survey work undertaken on the site (particularly given the high numbers of barbastelle records for the site).
- 2) Section 2.3.1: The BCT survey guidelines states that the recommended start and end times for bat activity surveys are as follows: *“Start time- ‘Sunset’, End time- ‘2-3 hours’.”* With a footnote for ‘Sunset’ stating *“Adjust to earlier if in darker habitats such as woodland...”*. Reviewing the timings of the surveys in the report the surveys commenced around sunset, but were concluded around 90 minutes after sunset. The report stated that the length of the surveys (one and half hours) *‘was considered adequate as the majority of woodland bats emerge early.’* Given the statement in the BCT survey

guidelines, justification is required to understand why the surveys were not commenced earlier than sunset given the potential for early-emergence from roosts under the canopy cover of the on-site woodlands, and why each survey visit was curtailed prior to that recommended in the BCT survey guidelines.

- 3) Section 2.3.1: Given that there were two surveyors on the site during each survey visit, and that the survey could have been continued until two hours after sunset (as per the BCT survey guidelines), it would have been expected that the transects would have included: (a) more comprehensive coverage of Stonydean Wood at the centre of the site (especially given the likely significant indirect impacts on this feature as a result of the development, and the presence of barbastelle bats); (b) greater coverage of the hedgerow linking Stonydean Wood to the woodland to the south-east (with this habitat link proposed to be removed according to the masterplan); and (c) greater coverage of Lodge Lane (a tree-lined road where c.20 trees are proposed to be removed). Justification from the Applicant is required to understand why these significant habitat features were not subject to greater survey coverage.
- 4) Section 2.3.2: For a site of moderate suitability habitat for bats, the BCT survey guidelines state in respect of transect surveys: *“One survey visit per month (April to October) in appropriate weather conditions for bats. At least one of the surveys should comprise dusk and pre-dawn (or dusk to dawn) within one 24-hour period.”* No pre-dawn bat surveys appear to have been undertaken, therefore justification is required to understand why the BCT survey guidelines were again not followed (pre-dawn surveys can also be very useful in recording bat roosting/swarming).
- 5) Section 2.3.2: In this section it is stated: *“Calls were analysed and identified to species using Anabat Insight software and BatSound v4.40”*. Additional information is required to understand how the calls were analysed- manually or using the AutoID function in Anabat Insight. If the latter, it calls into question the results obtained as AutoID is not always reliable. Details should also be provided in respect of potential limitations of the survey equipment used, particularly with regards the ability of the bat detectors to pick up calls from quieter bat species (e.g. *Myotis* sp. bats and barbastelle).
- 6) Section 3.2.3: It is notable that relatively high numbers of barbastelle were recorded on the site. The report appears to downplay the site’s importance for this Annex II species. Section 3.2.3 states that: *“The majority of the encounters occurred quite late after sunset (5-6 hours), which is around 2 hours before sunrise in July, indicating that bats are not roosting within these areas but are passing through and/or foraging”*. However, a study undertaken in southern England in 2012⁹ found that the mean time of final return to day roosts for barbastelles was highly variable but they returned consistently well before sunrise (194 ± 59.1 minutes). These timings would meet the stated timings in the report and therefore it is considered that barbastelle roosts on the site cannot be ruled out. It would be useful for the Applicant to provide a graph (as per Figure 30) of the frequency of the barbastelle calls relative to sunrise to aid in providing further information on the potential for roosting by this species on the site. Use of an analysis tool such as that provided by the ‘Ecobat’¹⁰ service may also be beneficial; as this tool offers a standardised means of analysis that could assist in identifying where the timing of first/last bat calls could indicate the presence of a nearby roost.
- 7) In respect of the automated bat detectors, it is surprising that Stonydean Wood did not receive greater survey coverage, given the known usage of the site by barbastelle and

⁹ Zeale, M.R.K., Davidson-Watts, I. & Jones, G. (2012) Home Range Use and Habitat Selection by Barbastelle Bats (*Barbastella barbastellus*): Implications for Conservation. *Journal of Mammalogy*, 93 (4):1110-1118.

¹⁰ The Mammal Society (2017). *Ecobat tool*. Available from: <http://www.ecobat.org.uk/>. Ecobat is a web-based tool supporting evidence-based decision-making by offering a standardised method of interpreting bat activity data.

the potential for impacts (e.g. lighting from the development) to arise (albeit indirectly) as a result of the proposals.

- 8) No assessment of the importance of bat assemblage on the site has been provided in this report. It is therefore recommended that the Applicant provides such an assessment (e.g. using the methodology suggested by Wray *et al.*¹¹ or emerging best practice guidance published by CIEEM¹²). Although the ES states that the site is of local value for all foraging and commuting bats (except barbastelle), no rationale or assessment has been provided to understand how this valuation was reached.
- 9) Section 4.2: Given the presence of species sensitive to lighting (e.g. barbastelle) it is recommended that an outline lighting scheme is provided with the application in order that the potential impacts of the scheme on light-sensitive bat species can be adequately assessed.
- 10) Section 4.2: The Applicant refers to measures to improve foraging opportunities for bats in this section of the report. An illustrated plan should be provided to demonstrate how these will be incorporated within the scheme.

3.15 Appendix 12.18 - Bat Surveys – Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PRA) Report – 13 and 15 Oakington Avenue & Trees Along Lodge Lane - Ridgeway Ecology Ltd, 2021

- 1) In the BCT guidelines it states that “Where [...] evidence of bats is found during a preliminary roost assessment, then further surveys (such as [...] roost characterisation surveys) are likely to be necessary if impacts on the roosting habitat are predicted”. The guidelines go on to state “Roost characterisation surveys include emergence/re-entry surveys. They also include the collection of information about the physical characteristics of the roost and surrounding area. The aim of these surveys is to [...] ascertain the features and characteristics of the roost (for example size, perching points, aspect, orientation, temperature, humidity, lighting) and the surrounding area (for example proximity of vegetation to exit points, availability of foraging areas locally) that are important. All of this information can then be used to assess the potential impacts of the proposed developments activity and design suitable mitigation and monitoring strategies. For example, information on roost characteristics may be required to inform the construction of a like-for-like replacement roost where the original roost will be lost. This information is essential when applying for planning permission or an EPS licence.” However, no emergence/re-entry surveys have been undertaken of 13 and 15 Oakington Avenue, and therefore a robust assessment of the status of the roosts cannot be made.
- 2) Consequently, it cannot be fully ascertained if the stated mitigation is appropriate for the bat roosting status of these structures, and whether it would be sufficient for the Favourable Conservation Status of the relevant species to be maintained. Nevertheless, reviewing the Bat Mitigation Guidelines¹³ in respect of the level of mitigation required, it states that for ‘Maternity sites of common species’ (as has been reported), the mitigation/ compensation required is: “Timing constraints. More or less like-for-like replacement. Bats not to be left without a roost and must be given time to find the replacement. Monitoring for 2 years preferred”. Based on the stated mitigation in the report, it is questionable that the measures stated provide like-for-like replacement (i.e. under hanging tiles). Further, no indications on timings are provided to offer the LPA reassurance that the bats would not be left without a roost at any point in the

¹¹ Wray, S., Wells, D., Long, E. and Mitchell-Jones, T. (2010). *Valuing Bats in Ecological Impact Assessment*. In Practice. CIEEM.

¹² CIEEM (June 2021). *Bat Mitigation Guidelines: A guide to impacts assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats. Beta version.*

¹³ Mitchell-Jones, A.J. (2004). *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*. English Nature, Peterborough.

programme. Finally, it is uncertain how the Applicant will ensure the long-term retention of the replacement bat roosting features, especially as the new roosts appear to be proposed on private dwelling houses.

- 3) Due to the absence of roost characterisation surveys, it is difficult to understand how the planning application would meet Paragraph 99 of Circular 06/2005 which states: *“It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision. The need to ensure ecological surveys are carried out should therefore only be left to coverage under planning conditions in exceptional circumstances, with the result that the surveys are carried out after planning permission has been granted.”*
- 4) It is noted that the report states that the site could be registered under the Bat Low Impact Class Licence (BLICL) scheme; however, this scheme cannot be applied in this situation as it does not cover the destruction of maternity roosts.

3.16 Appendix (12.19 and) 12.20 - Breeding Bird Survey Report – ASW/BBL/088/25/2021 - ASW Ecology Ltd, 2021

- 1) Given the presence of potentially suitable habitat on the site, and given the relatively high number of survey visits conducted, it would have been prudent for the Applicant to have carried out at least one dusk survey to understand if the site is used by crepuscular bird species such as barn owl.
- 2) Section 2.2: This section states that the *“survey was [...] undertaken to determine breeding bird status and the number of active territories at the application site.”* However, the report does not readily supply the breeding status of each species, or the number of active territories. In order to aid in coming to an informed assessment of the breeding birds on the site, the Applicant should provide a simple table providing each species, the assessed number of territories and their breeding status, along with the conservation status/Species of Principal Importance¹⁴ status.
- 3) Section 2.2: The section states: *“The main constraint to the bird survey is that this investigation could not be undertaken during the Winter or the Autumn period, due to the commissioning of this new study.”* Given that the first breeding bird survey was undertaken in 2019, there has been ample scope to undertake such surveys during the subsequent winter and autumn periods, and this does not adequately explain why the application is data deficient in this respect.
- 4) Section 3: Given the habitats present, along with the site’s location, the number of individuals recorded for some species is considered to be lower than would be expected (e.g. three singing male wrens and one singing song thrush in May).
- 5) It is notable that this report does not provide an assessment of the breeding birds of the site. Greater information is required in order to aid in coming to an informed assessment regarding the potential impacts of the proposals onto breeding birds. It would be prudent for the Applicant to provide information regarding whether there are areas of the site that are more species diverse or support Birds of Conservation Concern species or Species of Principal Importance¹⁵ and whether they areas been retained as part of the scheme.) Further, although the ES states that the site is of less than local value for birds (except red kite), no rationale or assessment has been provided to understand how this valuation was reached.

¹⁴ Further to Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006).

¹⁵ Further to Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006).

3.17 Appendix (12.21 and) 12.22 - Dormouse Survey Report - Don MacPherson, 2021

- 1) The 2021 report (and the 2019 document) does not contain sufficient detail to permit the LPA to determine whether the surveys were undertaken in accordance with industry-standard guidelines (in this case the Dormouse Conservation Handbook¹⁶). Specifically, the following information is required before an informed assessment of these surveys can be undertaken:
 - i) A map of the locations of the nest tubes to understand where these were distributed across the site.
 - ii) The number of nest tubes deployed.
 - iii) The dates of each survey visit.
 - iv) The date of tube deployment; and
 - v) The date of tube collection (it is noted that the 2021 report states that the survey was complete in September, but no date is provided. This month is typically fruitful in finding dormice. If the tubes were not deployed for the entire month, the month should not be included within the index of probability score.)

3.18 Appendix 12.23, 12.24 and 12.25 – Badger Survey Reports

- 1) These reports have not been included within the supporting documents for this planning application as available for on the Buckinghamshire Council website, and therefore no review of these documents has been conducted.
- 2) However, it is noted that the PEA (Appendix 12.1, paragraph 3.5, page 15) describes potential setts that could not be accessed for survey, and given that the PEA also (paragraph 5.14) refers to a badger ‘hibernation season’ (in respect of a species that does not hibernate), it is recommended that caution be exercised in any review of these confidential documents.

3.19 Appendix (12.26 and) 12.27 - Reptile and Terrestrial Amphibian Report - ASW/BBL/036/25/2021 – ASW Ecology Ltd, 2021

- 1) The 2021 report (and the 2019 document) does not contain sufficient detail to permit the LPA to determine whether surveys were undertaken in accordance with industry-standard guidelines. Specifically, the following information is required before an informed assessment can be undertaken:
 - i. The date of refugia deployment to understand the number of days the refugia were left to bed in.
 - ii. The start and end time of each survey visit, and the start and end temperatures.
 - iii. A map of the locations of each refugia to understand their distribution across the site.
 - iv. The density of refugia (per hectare) across the site
- 2) It is considered that it would have been prudent to have undertaken some of the visits during the afternoon in order to capture different parts of the day (rather than just morning visits).
- 3) The stated temperatures, which include surveys undertaken even at 8°C, are below the range suitable for surveying for reptiles. Although reptiles were found during some of these surveys, it is reasonable to expect that they would have been found in greater numbers during more suitable weather conditions.

¹⁶ Bright, P., Morris, P. and Mitchell-Jones, T. (2006). *The Dormouse Conservation Handbook, 2nd Edition*. English Nature, Peterborough.

- 4) As stated in the report, the site is becoming more suitable for reptiles, and therefore depending on when the works commence an update survey is likely to be required to ensure the receptor site/s is sufficient to accommodate more reptiles.
- 5) Very little information is provided regarding the reptile receptor site/s. The Applicant should provide sufficient information to enable the LPA to assess whether this is deliverable on the site (or off-site), the condition of the habitats, and to confirm whether there is a reptile population already present within the identified receptor/s.

3.20 Appendix 12.28 - Great Crested Newt Survey Report – ADAS, 2021

- 1) The top line of Appendix 12.1 Table 8 (reproduced at 3.2 above states a requirement for: *“Further assessment in the form of environmental DNA (eDNA) analysis of each pond (pending access)”* but this eDNA survey information appears to be missing for four of the five ponds identified.
- 2) The Appendix 12.28 survey report comprises a generic two-page lab print-out describing the results of eDNA analysis for one (unidentified) pond, with no contextual information. However, by reference to baseline survey information embedded in the ES chapter itself (as reproduced below), it is assumed that the eDNA result relates to pond P5 alone. For clarity, the Applicant should provide a map showing the locations of the five identified off-site waterbodies and confirm which of these was subject to eDNA sampling, especially in view of the stated limitation that *“Due to a change in survey area in August/September 2021 distances of ponds do not correlate to what has previously been stated within the PEA reports.”*

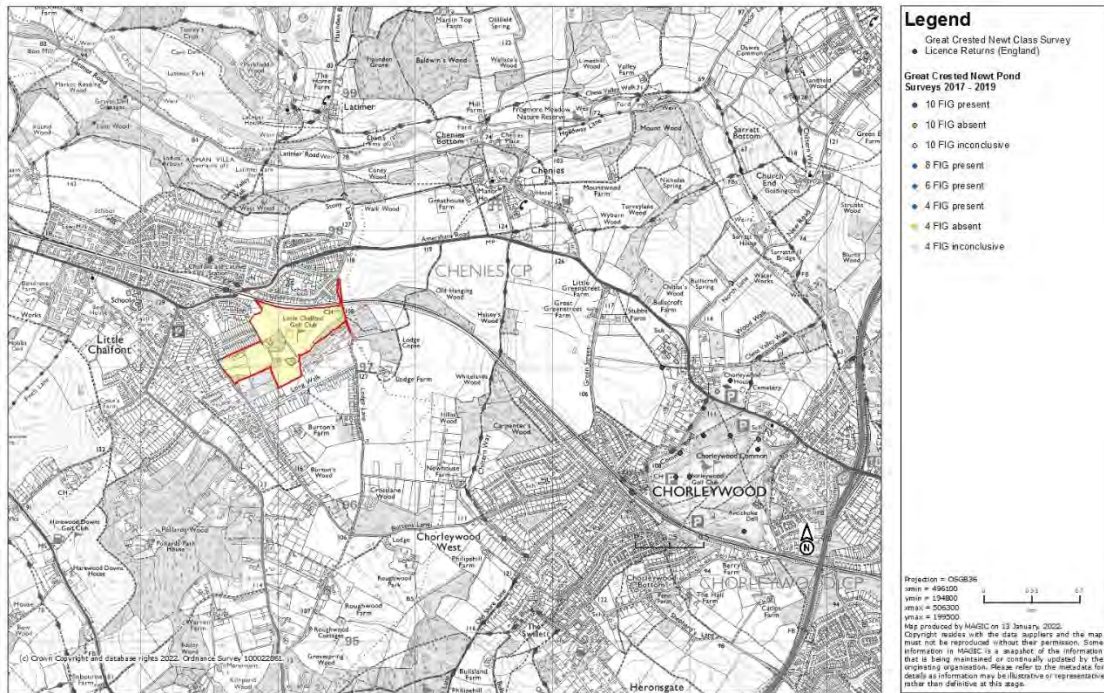
12.131. Ponds P1, P2, P3 and P4 (see **Figure 12.1, Appendix 12.2**) could not be surveyed (see limitations section) but pond P5 located at the school approximately 150m north of the Site was surveyed by ADAS as part of this assessment. Although no Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) surveys were undertaken at the ponds (again see limitation sections), an eDNA assessment of pond P5 was carried out in July 2021 with a negative result.

- 3) The limitations section of the ES states that *“All four of these ponds could not be surveyed due to access restrictions in 2019 and 2021”* and the assessment is therefore data deficient in respect of great crested newt. Government planning practice guidance¹⁷ states that *“The presence of a protected species is a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal that, if carried out, would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat... It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision.”*
- 4) Whilst it is acknowledged that sometimes access cannot always be secured to off-site land, in those situations it is best practice to undertake an assessment as far as possible based on the information available, and application of the precautionary principle. This may include: (a) undertaking a more comprehensive desk study, with reference to data freely available via the NBN Atlas and survey information such as that presented within the MAGIC extract at Figure 3 below, (b) preparing a Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment based upon information gleaned about off-site ponds as viewed from roads, public rights of way and aerial photographs, (c) supplying written evidence that access permission has been refused for every year in which surveys were attempted, and (d) making a ‘worst case’ assessment by application of the precautionary principle.

¹⁷ ODPM, (16 August 2005). *Government Circular: Biodiversity & Geological Conservation – Statutory obligations and their impact within the planning system*. Paragraphs 98-99. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7692/147570.pdf

- 5) By reference to the extract at Figure 3 below, great crested newts have been found in numerous ponds over multiple years at the nearby Chorleywood golf course. Whilst these ponds are more than 500m from the site and therefore outside of the scope of the Applicant’s current surveys, this data is nonetheless provided here to demonstrate that great crested newts are present locally, being apparently confirmed as present in almost all ponds that were subject to survey. It is therefore reasonable to expect that this species may be present in many other ponds locally, including those adjacent to the site.

Figure 3. Extract from MAGIC showing numerous records for GCN on nearby Chorleywood golf course



- 6) By reference to ES paragraph 12.2 *“The eDNA surveys were undertaken outside of the optimal survey period with the receipt date shown as the 5th of July 2021 within the survey results report (Appendix 12.28). The eDNA of GCN only lasts approximately 20 days within a pond, therefore, water samples must be taken in the optimal season (mid-April and late-June) to determine presence or absence and it is possible due to the timing of survey that presence of GCN could have been missed within this pond.”* The Applicant therefore acknowledges that for the sole pond where the survey was undertaken, the timing renders the results unreliable.
- 7) In summary, whilst the applicant stated that *“suitable terrestrial habitat (including hibernation opportunities) is present on Site... with suitable terrestrial connectivity with no significant barriers to dispersal existing between off-site ponds and the Site”*, four out of five ponds have been completely omitted from any form of survey, the eDNA sampling undertaken for a single pond is unreliable due to the July survey date, no Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment has been undertaken for any pond, and no surveys have been undertaken using conventional/traditional methods¹⁸. As such, any conclusions drawn in respect of great crested newt cannot be considered robust or reliable.

¹⁸ Noting that egg-searching and netting could readily be undertaken alongside eDNA sampling visits.

3.21 Environmental Statement - Chapter 12 - Ecology - Waterman, 2021

- 1) Paragraph 12.5 states: *“After the assessments detailed in this Environmental Statement (ES) were carried out, the red line boundary for the purposes of the planning application was extended slightly to include a series of highways improvements works along Lodge Lane and Church Grove, as well as improvements to the junction between Oakington Avenue and Amersham Way/Road.”* Due to the apparent significant amount of tree removal along Lodge Lane (c.20 trees), the possibility of impacts on dormice and bats cannot be ruled out (especially as this area was not surveyed).
- 2) Paragraph 12.92: This states: *“No bat swarming, or hibernation surveys have been carried out on Site to date and it is not known whether there are any structures/ buildings suitable for these types of roosts located within the Site”*. Given the bat survey work undertaken on the site, it is unclear why such surveys have not been carried out, if they have been identified as potentially necessary.
- 3) Paragraph 12.93: This states: *“Although only half of the survey effort was carried out for advanced survey techniques in 2019. Due to the findings from the single nights survey, it was considered by the surveyor that no update surveys using these techniques would be carried out in 2021.”* Clarification as to how this assessment was reached should be provided, with an explanation as to why a reduced survey effort was applied in 2019 and in 2021. Due to the number of barbastelle records noted on the site, plus the possibility of Bechstein’s bat, it would be reasonable to expect that *more* survey effort should have been employed, rather than instead falling short of the best practice standards.
- 4) Paragraph 12.1 [Note: at this point the paragraph numbering in the Ecology Chapter of the ES changes/has been reformatted, and consequently some paragraph numbers appear twice]. This paragraph states: *“Due to a change in survey area in August/September 2021 distances of ponds do not correlate to what has previously been stated within the PEA reports.”* The Applicant should provide the revised distances for avoidance of doubt.
- 5) Paragraph 12.1 and 12.2: More clarity is needed here; on the one hand the text states that the four waterbodies could not be surveyed due to access restrictions in 2021, but paragraph 12.2 states *“eDNA surveys were undertaken”* in 2021 [emphasis to highlight that ‘surveys’ is stated as plural]. Further, it is unclear which waterbodies were surveyed, and if any were surveyed, it would be useful for Habitat Suitability Index information to be provided. Finally, four waterbodies are referred to in this paragraph, whilst Paragraph 12.131 mentions five waterbodies. Refer also to comments made at 3.20 above in respect of Appendix 12.28.
- 6) Paragraph 12.20: The hedgerow survey identified field scabious, hoary plantain and tormentil with this possibly indicating that the site is of higher ecological interest than has been stated in this paragraph.
- 7) Paragraph 12.32-12.44: No information regarding whether these woodlands meet the relevant Priority habitat criteria (e.g. “Broadleaved, Mixed & Yew Woodland”) has been provided. It should be noted that MAGIC identifies nearly all of the wooded areas on the site as the Priority Habitat ‘Deciduous Woodland’. As these wooded areas have been identified as Priority Habitat, they would also be Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI)¹⁹. Consequently, in order for the LPA to fully discharge its biodiversity duty in respect of this habitat, further information from the Applicant is required.
- 8) Paragraph 12.45-12.52: As part of a robust assessment, the Applicant should assess whether any of the site’s hedgerows meet the criteria for the Priority Habitat ‘Hedgerows’.

¹⁹ Further to Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006).

- 9) Paragraph 12.60- Table 12.4: Although it is noted that the table states that the status of B1 (the former Clubhouse) has been reduced from Moderate to Low; the 2019 PEA report states that this structure is of 'Moderate Potential' with the 2021 PEA report stating: "*The building B1-B14 are still present on Site and have not deteriorated or changed significantly to result in a change in bat roosting potential*". Therefore, justification and confirmation is required regarding the bat roost suitability of this structure. Also, for transparency and ease of reference, it would have been prudent for the Applicant to have included reference to the common pipistrelle roost recorded within B6.
- 10) Paragraph 12.84: Justification is required as to why the BCT survey guidelines were not followed, and why only emergence surveys were undertaken. It is not clear whether additional bat roosts may have been found if guidance-compliant surveys had been undertaken.
- 11) Paragraph 12.93: A study undertaken in southern England in 2012 found that the mean time of final return to day roosts for barbastelles was highly variable but they returned consistently well before sunrise (194 ± 59.1 minutes, or around three hours plus or minus an hour). These timings would meet the stated timings in the report and therefore it is considered that barbastelle roosts on the site cannot be ruled out.
- 12) Paragraph 12.96: The Applicant should provide information regarding the value of the site for bats (e.g. using the methodology suggested by Wray *et al.*²⁰ or emerging guidance from CIEEM²¹).
- 13) Paragraph 12.131: Although this paragraph implies that Figure 12.1 of Appendix 12.2 provides a map showing the location of the waterbodies near to the site, such a map does not appear to have been included. It is noted that P1 to P4 were not accessed and therefore no Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) could be carried out; however, P5 was accessed but no HSI information has been provided. Further, the weight that can be placed on the negative great crested newt eDNA result of P5 is reduced due to the sampling having been undertaken outside of the sampling window for this technique (which falls between mid-April to June)²².
- 14) Paragraph 12.141: This paragraph states "*Woodland habitat on Site is to be retained and so no significant adverse impacts are anticipated as a result of the proposed Development*". However, further information is required from the Applicant in respect of the likely impacts arising from roadkill due to hedgehogs having to cross the new roads to access the woodlands.
- 15) Paragraph 12.145: 'Bats- foraging and commuting' are stated within Table 12.7; however, they are omitted from this paragraph.
- 16) Paragraph 12.148- Table 12.8: Justification is required to understand how 'Bats (foraging and commuting)' are assessed as 'Moderate' when there is likely to be a reduction of feeding habitat due to increased lighting and disturbance at the site, and loss of commuting routes.
- 17) Paragraph 12.155: Clarity is required to understand if the mitigation hierarchy has been followed e.g. can the removal of the buildings containing the maternity roosts be avoided?
- 18) Paragraph 12.180: This states "*The monitoring of barbastelle and red kite activity before, during and after construction at a frequency to be agreed with the Local Planning*

²⁰ Wray, S., Wells, D., Long, E. and Mitchell-Jones, T. (2010). *Valuing Bats in Ecological Impact Assessment*. In Practice. CIEEM.

²¹ CIEEM (June 2021). *Bat Mitigation Guidelines: A guide to impacts assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats. Beta version*

²² Biggs J, Ewald N, Valentini A, Gaboriaud C, Griffiths RA, Foster J, Wilkinson J, Arnett A, Williams P and Dunn F 2014. Analytical and methodological development for improved surveillance of the Great Crested Newt. Appendix 5. Technical advice note for field and laboratory sampling of great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) environmental DNA. Freshwater Habitats Trust, Oxford.

Authority". However, the Applicant has not provided information about what would occur as a result of this monitoring.

- 19) Paragraph 181: This paragraph states: *"All woodland is to be retained as part of the Development and a 20m buffer zone around all woodland habitat..."* However, the 2021 bat activity report²³ states *"The buffers must be based on the level of likely importance of the woodland to bats and based on the results the following guide to the buffer is recommended: - Around the central area of woodland and the southern, eastern and western edges of the woodland a 30m buffer must be employed"*. Justification is required to understand why the buffer has reduced. It is recommended that an outline Landscape Habitat Management Plan is produced to aid the LPA in understanding how the management of the site will occur. Further, it would appear, based on the Drainage Strategy, that some upgrading of the sewer pipework through Stonydean Wood (an area of ancient semi-natural woodland) would be required, and it is likely that this would detrimentally affect the woodland. The Drainage Strategy also appears to indicate that earthworks (possibly cut and fill) will be required adjacent to Stonydean Wood for the construction of the primary road. Clarification is required from the Applicant to aid the LPA in understanding the potential impacts from these works on the areas of ancient semi-natural woodland.
- 20) Paragraph 12.186: As per Paragraph 99 of Circular 06/2005, protected species surveys should be carried out prior to the planning application being determined. This information is required to allow the LPA to come to an informed decision on the impacts of the proposals. The mitigation proposed here do not meet the Bat Mitigation Guidelines (i.e. provision of roosting opportunities prior to loss of roost). As there is a paucity of survey data, it cannot be ascertained for the mitigation proposed whether: (a) it is sufficient; (b) it offers a like-for-like replacement; and (c) whether bat boxes would be sufficiently protected from being blocked or removed by owners of the residential properties on which the boxes will be erected.
- 21) Paragraph 12.190: The Applicant should provide evidence to demonstrate that the proposed 20m buffers along all woodland edges would remain dark.
- 22) Paragraph 12.206: This paragraph states: *"All captured reptiles would be carefully and humanely removed from the area and released in-situ into retained habitats either on Site or into adjacent habitats such as the railway corridor. All translocation work would be undertaken by experienced reptile ecologists."* Significantly more information is required in order for the LPA to be able to understand where the receptor site is to be located and whether management is proposed that would benefit the translocated reptiles. Further, the Applicant should demonstrate the long-term viability of the receptor site, and how the translocated reptiles would be protected from development if individuals are to be placed into off-site habitats (such as the adjoining railway corridor, if indeed this does not already have an attendant reptile population).
- 23) Paragraph 12.212: It is considered that an outline LHMP should be produced for the outline application in order to ensure the key ecological receptors have been included and have been factored into the scheme.
- 24) Paragraph 12.213: Significantly more information is required to permit the LPA to understand how the Applicant will ensure that the ancient woodland will not be detrimentally affected by the development. E.g. how will it be ensured that informal footpaths will not be created through the woodland. This information should be provided prior to the determination of the planning application.
- 25) Paragraph 12.219: The Applicant should provide details regarding how the proposals will ensure that the Stonydean Wood will not become isolated from the surrounding

²³ Report reference: RE2022-122

woodlands. Additional ecological measures are likely to be required and these should be detailed in the chapter.

- 26) Paragraph 12.221: An indicative/outline lighting strategy would aid the LPA in understanding the impacts of lighting onto the surrounding habitats (and consequently on some of the key ecological receptors such the ancient woodland and bats).
- 27) Table 12.9 should be updated and revised based on the comments above.
- 28) Paragraph 12.236: It is noted that monitoring for barbastelle would be undertaken, but there is no indication regarding what would occur if the monitoring identified that the barbastelle use of the site declined.
- 29) Other general points are listed below:
 - i. The Applicant has failed to mention that the site falls within a B-Lines corridor²⁴. The proposed management plan for the site should identify how it will contribute to this corridor.
 - ii. The woodlands on the site have been identified by MAGIC as falling within a 'High Spatial Priority' for 'Woodland Improvement' and for 'Woodland Priority Habitat Network'. A review of the National Habitat Network map (via MAGIC) identifies that the woodlands on the site fall within the 'Ancient Woodland' and 'Priority Habitat Inventory' categories. The Applicant should highlight how the proposed management of the site will meet these identified areas.
 - iii. The site has been identified by the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) on their Nature Recovery Network map²⁵ as falling within a "recovery zone". BBOWT defines recovery zones as: "*buffers the core zone, and includes the best places to restore and create new habitats and improve connectivity across the landscape.*" The Applicant should identify how the management plan for the site accords with this identified area.
 - iv. The Applicant should provide further information regarding how the proposals accord or meet relevant national and local planning policies.

²⁴ Buglife states that "*B-Lines are a series of 'insect pathways' running through our countryside and towns, along which we are restoring and creating a series of wildflower-rich habitat stepping stones. They link existing wildlife areas together, creating a network, like a railway, that will weave across the British landscape*".

²⁵ Accessed via: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/f4fa3ae631854d129230ce8719c079b3>

4 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 As noted in the introduction of this report, the above serves as a 'high level' review of the submitted ecological information; and once the relevant information has been provided then the ecology reports can be subject to further detailed examination. However, it should be noted that based on the information provided, a full and robust assessment of the submitted ecological documents cannot be made.
- 4.1.2 Currently, it is considered that due to the paucity of detailed ecological information, and with many of the ecological surveys not appearing to meet industry-standard guidelines/guidance (as outlined above), that this has implications on the veracity of the impact assessment conclusions offered by the Applicant to the extent that it would be unsafe to apportion the conclusions made to any weight in planning determination.
- 4.1.3 It should be noted that the presence of scarce and declining 'Priority' species and habitats is material to the discharge of the biodiversity duty imposed on public authorities by the NERC Act 2006, and therefore the omissions outlined above are significant for the robustness of the determination process in a legal sense. There are also significant information gaps in relation to European protected species which fall short of the expectations enshrined in incumbent planning practice guidance and further go to the matter of legal robustness. These shortfalls are particularly acute in respect of bats. It is consequently recommended that the LPA request more detailed ecological information before a planning decision is made.
- 4.1.4 The Bioscan review of the Biodiversity Net Gain report highlights that the net gain proclaimed by the Applicant appears to be incorrect, by some margin, and on the contrary, it appears that the proposals would result in a negative situation (i.e. a considerable loss of biodiversity, quantified as approaching -40%). Such a loss would be contrary to the Environment Act 2021, and local and national policy. In order to allow for these figures to be examined further, the Applicant should supply the raw spreadsheet calculations to allow for full transparency and public scrutiny, and before any determination of the application is considered.
- 4.1.5 In conclusion, the ecological reports submitted may not accurately represent the ecological interest present on the application site and it is advised that extreme caution is applied in using it to inform decision making. The safeguards and mitigation proposals offered in the report are founded on an incomplete understanding and/or conveyance of the baseline position and cannot therefore be relied upon by decision makers as a means to avoid significant net loss of biodiversity. This is in contradiction to national and local planning policy. It is recommended that clarity be sought from the Applicant, including justification for deviations from industry standard survey methodologies, to enable a more robust impact assessment to be conducted.



Bioscan (UK) Ltd
The Old Parlour
Little Baldon Farm
Oxford
OX44 9PU

Tel: +44 (0) 1865 341321
Fax: +44 (0) 1865 343674

bioscan@bioscanuk.com
www.bioscanuk.com



Planning Application – PL/21/4632/OA

Land between Burtons Lane and Lodge Lane in Little Chalfont

Appendix D

Map showing the location of the chalk dry valley

(Michelle Bolger)

Supporting the objection by:

Little Chalfont Parish Council

and

Little Chalfont Community Association

19 January 2022

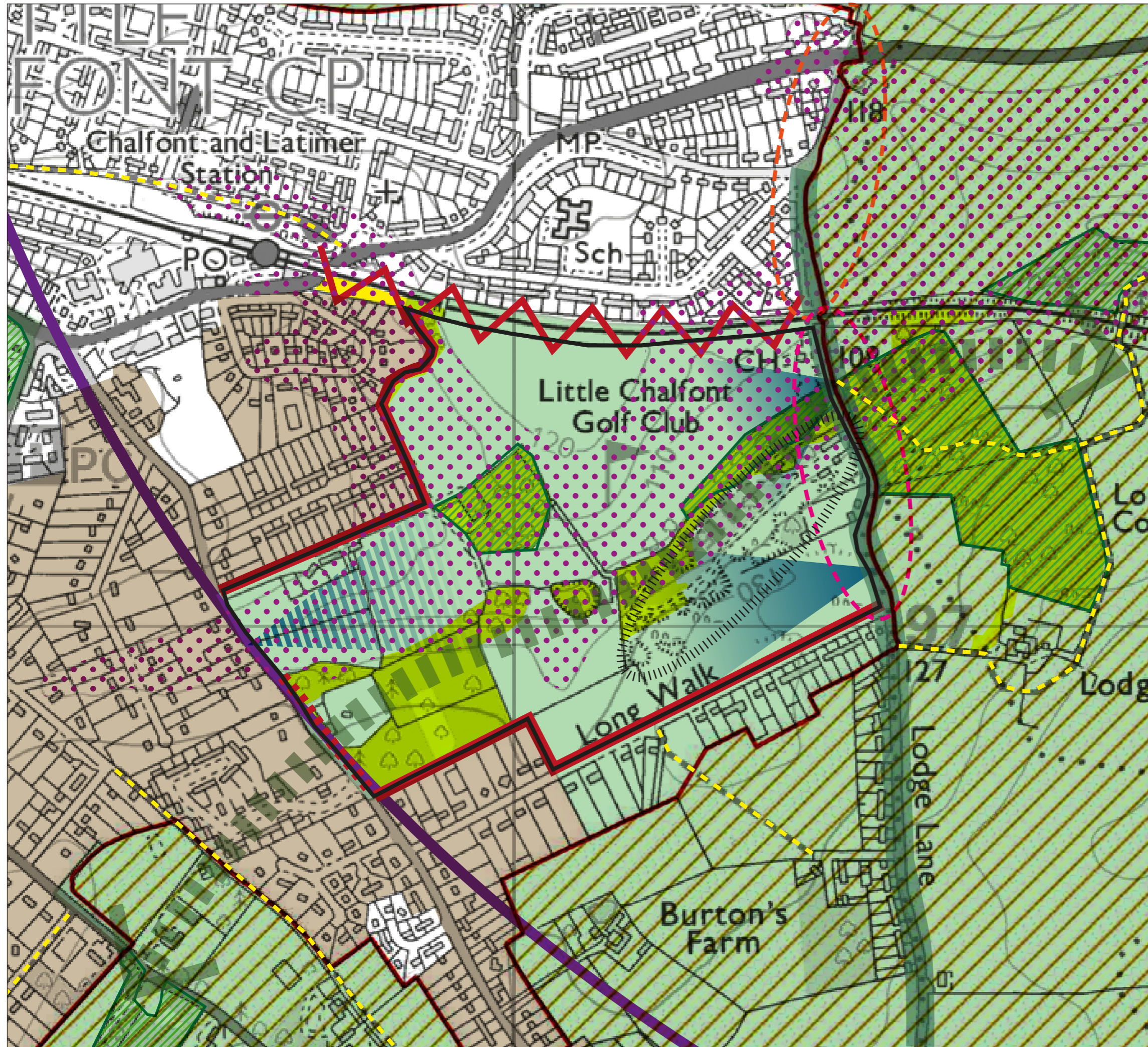


FIGURE 6
Constraints: Composite



PROJECT
1116
Little Chalfont

CLIENT
Little Chalfont Parish Council

DATE
June 2019

Legend

- BP 6 Site
 - Green Belt
 - Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
 - Ancient Woodland (also sensitive HLC type)
 - Priority Habitat within site and immediate surroundings - Deciduous Woodland
 - 3km Impact Risk Zone to Frogmore Meadows SSSI
 - Public Rights of Way
- Chiltern and South Bucks Townscape Character Study
- Burtons Lane to Doggetts Wood Lane Area of Special Character
 - Particularly sensitive edge
- MBELC Appraisal
- Lower parts of dry chalk valley (up to 120m)
 - Sensitive narrow rural lane (Lodge Lane)
 - Additional sensitive edge
 - Woodland/ AONB connectivity across BP6 & village
 - Private roads (barriers to access)
 - Private land (potential barrier to access)
 - Railway (barrier to access and connectivity)
 - Attractive rural views (approx. public locations)
 - Filtered rural views (approx. public locations)
 - Noise from Honours Yard (potential detractor to future residential amenity)



Consultation Responses

Natural England

05/04/22 NATURAL ENGLAND'S ADVICE OBJECTION - FURTHER INFORMATION REQUIRED TO DETERMINE IMPACTS ON DESIGNATED SITES - DEVELOPMENT WITHIN 12.6 KILOMETRES OF BURNHAM BEECHES SPECIAL AREA OF CONSERVATION (SAC) WITHIN 12.6 KILOMETRES Between 500 metres to 12.6km from Chilterns Beechwoods SAC, a Habitats Regulations Assessment is required to determine Likely Significant Effect. Mitigation measures will be necessary to rule out adverse effects on integrity.

Natural England requires further information in order to determine the significance of these impacts and the scope for mitigation.

Please re-consult Natural England once this information has been obtained.

When there is sufficient scientific uncertainty about the likely effects of the planning application under consideration, the precautionary principle is applied to fully protect the qualifying features of the European Site designated under the Habitats Directive.

Footprint Ecology carried out research in 2021 on the impacts of recreational and urban growth at Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC), in particular Ashridge Commons and Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Due to this new evidence, Natural England recognises that new housing within 12.6km of the internationally designated Chilterns Beechwoods SAC can be expected to result in an increase in recreation pressure.

The 12.6km zone proposed within the evidence base¹ carried out by Footprint Ecology represents the core area around Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI where increases in the number of residential properties will require Habitats Regulations Assessment. Mitigation measures will be necessary to rule out adverse effects on the integrity of the SAC from the cumulative impacts of development.

In addition Footprint Ecology identified that an exclusion zone of within 500m of the SAC boundary was necessary as evidence indicates that mitigation measures are unlikely to protect the integrity of the SAC.

Impacts to the SAC as a result of increasing recreation pressure are varied and have long been a concern. The report identified several ways in which public access and disturbance can have an impact upon the conservation interest of the site, these included:

- Damage: encompassing trampling and vegetation wear, soil compaction and erosion;
- Contamination: including nutrient enrichment (e.g. dog fouling), litter, invasive species;
- Fire: increased incidence and risk of fire; and
- Other: all other impacts, including harvesting and activities associated with site management.

In light of the new evidence relating to the recreation impact zone of influence, planning

authorities must apply the requirements of Regulation 61 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, to housing development within 12.6km of the SAC boundary. The authority must decide whether a particular proposal, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, would be likely to have a significant effect on the SAC.

Natural England are working alongside all the involved parties in order to achieve a Strategic Solution that brings benefits to both the SAC and the local area to deliver high quality mitigation. Once the strategy has been formalised all net new dwellings within the 500m - 12.6km zone of influence will be expected to contribute towards the formal strategy. In the Interim we are looking for bespoke mitigation to avoid adverse impacts upon the SAC from recreational disturbance.

Consequently, it is Natural England's view that the planning authority will not be able to ascertain that this proposed development as it is currently submitted would not adversely affect the integrity of the SAC. In combination with other plans and projects, the development would be likely to contribute to a deterioration of the quality of the habitat by reason of increased access to the site including access for general recreation and dog-walking. There being alternative solutions to the proposal and there being no imperative reasons of overriding public interest to allow the proposal, despite a negative assessment, the proposal will not pass the tests of Regulation 62.

Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

The proposed development is adjacent to a nationally designated landscape namely Chilterns AONB. Natural England advises that the planning authority uses national and local policies, together with local landscape expertise and information to determine the proposal. The policy and statutory framework to guide your decision and the role of local advice are explained below.

Your decision should be guided by paragraphs 176 and 177 of the National Planning Policy Framework which gives the highest status of protection for the 'landscape and scenic beauty' of AONBs and National Parks. For major development proposals paragraph 177 sets out criteria to determine whether the development should exceptionally be permitted within the designated landscape.

Alongside national policy you should also apply landscape policies set out in your development plan, or appropriate saved policies.

We also advise that you consult the Chilterns Conservation Board. Their knowledge of the site and its wider landscape setting, together with the aims and objectives of the AONB's statutory management plan, will be a valuable contribution to the planning decision. Where available, a local Landscape Character Assessment can also be a helpful guide to the landscape's sensitivity to this type of development and its capacity to accommodate the proposed development.

The statutory purpose of the AONB is to conserve and enhance the area's natural beauty.

You should assess the application carefully as to whether the proposed development would have a significant impact on or harm that statutory purpose. Relevant to this is the duty on public bodies to 'have regard' for that statutory purpose in carrying out their functions (S85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000). The Planning Practice Guidance confirms that this duty also applies to proposals outside the designated area but impacting on its natural beauty.

Priority Habitats and Species

The site coincides with deciduous woodland priority habitat. Priority habitats and Species are of particular importance for nature conservation and included in the England Biodiversity List published under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. Most priority habitats will be mapped either as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, on the MAGIC website or as Local Wildlife Sites. List of priority habitats and species can be found here². Natural England does not routinely hold species data, such data should be collected when impacts on priority habitats or species are considered likely. Consideration should also be given to the potential environmental value of brownfield sites, often found in urban areas and former industrial land, further information including links to the open mosaic habitats inventory can be found here.

Ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees

The site coincides with two stands of ancient woodland. You should consider any impacts on ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees in line with paragraph 180 of the NPPF. Natural England maintains the Ancient Woodland Inventory which can help identify ancient woodland. Natural England and the Forestry Commission have produced standing advice for planning authorities in relation to ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees. It should be taken into account by planning authorities when determining relevant planning applications. Natural England will only provide bespoke advice on ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees where they form part of a Site of Special Scientific Interest or in exceptional circumstances.

Further general advice on the consideration of protected species and other natural environment issues is provided at Annex A.

01/03/22 Natural England has previously commented on this proposal and made comments to the authority in our letter dated 6 January 2022. The advice provided in our previous response applies equally to this amendment, although we made no objection to the original proposal. The proposed amendments to the original application are unlikely to have significantly different impacts on the natural environment than the original proposal. Should the proposal be amended in a way which significantly affects its impact on the natural environment then, in accordance with Section 4 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, Natural England should be consulted again. Before sending us the amended consultation, please assess whether the changes proposed will materially affect any of the advice we have previously offered. If they are unlikely to do so, please do not re-consult us.

06/01/22 NO OBJECTION Based on the plans submitted, Natural England considers that the proposed development will not have significant adverse impacts on statutory designated sites has no objection. Natural England's further advice on landscapes and advice on other natural environment issues is set out below.

Protected Landscapes – Chiltern Hills AONB

The proposed development is for a site within or close to a nationally designated landscape namely Chiltern Hills AONB. Natural England advises that the planning authority uses national and local policies, together with local landscape expertise and information to determine the proposal. The policy and statutory framework to guide your decision and the role of local advice are explained below.

Your decision should be guided by paragraphs 176 and 177 of the National Planning Policy Framework which gives the highest status of protection for the 'landscape and scenic beauty' of AONBs and National Parks. For major development proposals paragraph 177 sets out criteria to determine whether the development should exceptionally be permitted within the designated landscape.

Alongside national policy you should also apply landscape policies set out in your development plan, or appropriate saved policies.

We also advise that you consult the relevant AONB Partnership or Conservation Board. Their knowledge of the site and its wider landscape setting, together with the aims and objectives of the AONB's statutory management plan, will be a valuable contribution to the planning decision. Where available, a local Landscape Character Assessment can also be a helpful guide to the landscape's sensitivity to this type of development and its capacity to accommodate the proposed development.

The statutory purpose of the AONB is to conserve and enhance the area's natural beauty. You should assess the application carefully as to whether the proposed development would have a significant impact on or harm that statutory purpose. Relevant to this is the duty on public bodies to 'have regard' for that statutory purpose in carrying out their functions (S85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000). The Planning Practice Guidance confirms that this duty also applies to proposals outside the designated area but impacting on its natural beauty.

Local sites and priority habitats and species

You should consider the impacts of the proposed development on any local wildlife or geodiversity sites, in line with paragraphs 175 and 179 of the NPPF and any relevant development plan policy. There may also be opportunities to enhance local sites and improve their connectivity. Natural England does not hold locally specific information on local sites and recommends further information is obtained from appropriate bodies such as the local records centre, wildlife trust, geo-conservation groups or recording societies. Priority habitats and Species are of particular importance for nature conservation and included in the England Biodiversity List published under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. Most priority habitats will be mapped either

as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, on the Magic website or as Local Wildlife Sites. List of priority habitats and species can be found here¹. Natural England does not routinely hold species data, such data should be collected when impacts on priority habitats or species are considered likely. Consideration should also be given to the potential environmental value of brownfield sites, often found in urban areas and former industrial land, further information including links to the open mosaic habitats inventory can be found here.

Ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees

You should consider any impacts on ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees in line with paragraph 180 of the NPPF. Natural England maintains the Ancient Woodland Inventory which can help identify ancient woodland. Natural England and the Forestry Commission have produced standing advice for planning authorities in relation to ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees. It should be taken into account by planning authorities when determining relevant planning applications. Natural England will only provide bespoke advice on ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees where they form part of a Site of Special Scientific Interest or in exceptional circumstances.

Further general advice on the consideration of protected species and other natural environment issues is provided at Annex A.

Campaign to Protect Rural England 11/01/22

We are writing to object to the above referenced Outline Application for the demolition of all existing buildings and the erection of residential dwellings including affordable housing, custom build (Use Class C3), retirement homes and care home (Use Class C2), plus all associated infrastructure. The location is land between Lodge Lane and Burtons Lane in Little Chalfont, Buckinghamshire

The Buckinghamshire branch of CPRE - The Countryside Charity is a long standing charity and has a role to protect the countryside from developments that do not meet acceptable planning guidelines. We have over 40,000 members and supporters nationally and well over 400 members in Buckinghamshire alone. We would like to register CPRE Bucks' strong opposition to the above planning application for the reasons below.

The site is within the London Metropolitan Green Belt

The relevant adopted Green Belt policy is Policy GB2. The applicant notes that this is in broad conformity with the current NPPF, though this policy has been found, when used on its own, to be out of date at previous appeals. As such, the NPPF carries strong weight in the decision making process, and, to this end, the applicant acknowledges that the proposal constitutes inappropriate development.

Paragraph 147 of the NPPF states that "Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances". This is further expanded on in Paragraph 148, and Case Law, quoted by applicant, emphasises the "seriousness of harm to the Green Belt" arising from inappropriate development.

In this case, it is important to appreciate the fundamental aims and purposes of the Green Belt. As you are aware, the NPPF makes clear (in Section 13), that “the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence”.

It continues by setting out the five purposes:

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

This application is open land and would fail to maintain the openness and permanence of this part of the Green Belt. The applicant acknowledges under Section 7.38 of the Planning Statement that the proposal would result in “a permanent physical change in the character of the Green Belt in this location”. This immediately highlights the failure to keep land permanently open as its essential characteristics, namely openness and permanence, would be lost.

Further, the proposal clearly breaches purposes a) and c) because it is extending the built-up area of Little Chalfont into the countryside, thereby failing to safeguard the importance of this land. The applicant acknowledges this additional harm in Section 7.38 stating that “in a spatial sense there will be physical development on areas of the site which currently have an absence of built form”, and also that there is visual harm, though the applicant considers this to be limited.

The proposal also works against prioritising derelict and urban land (purpose e). This is relevant because this site is not derelict or urban land – and there are many areas of brownfield that should be used first. This approach is supported by the new Buckinghamshire Council with its policy pledge “Brown before Green”. This pledge commits the Council to a very different approach to plan making than was in place when the Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan failed to be adopted because of initial concerns raised by the appointed Inspector.

As such, the harm to the Green Belt arises not just from definitional harm, but also because of spatial and visual aspects that result in the proposal failing to maintain the objectives of the Green Belt and at least two of the Green Belt purposes.

Very Exceptional Circumstances do not exist

In such cases, the applicant has to show that very special circumstances exist that clearly outweigh harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal. Case Law confirms that very special circumstances are a planning judgement for the decision maker. The applicant has set out a package of

circumstances focused on housing supply/needs. This does not provide the very special circumstances required to clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt, and this has been supported at appeal and in Case Law. Short term economic gains are flagged up along with community benefits regarding open space and access to the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Beauty. Again, these do not amount to a convincing set of circumstances.

Housing is being directed by the Council to Previously Developed Land (PDL) within Buckinghamshire, and this is a policy pledge by the Council. Building on PDL will provide the similar type of economic boosts highlighted by the applicant. Community facilities and open space can also be improved/provided with such development through the Community Infrastructure Levy. Finally, although the proposal lies outside the Chilterns AONB, it does border a small section of it. However, the proposed development in this location will not increase access to the AONB, and no land within the AONB is shown to be improved or even altered for the benefit of residents as part of this application.

Overall, the case of very special circumstances put forward by the applicant is very weak, and does not come close to the harm being “clearly outweighed by other considerations”.

Use of Evidence from the failed Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan

The applicant makes a great play about the evidence used by the Council to justify this land being identified in the failed emerging local plan for release from the Green Belt. The Planning Statement provides examples that the Council has used such evidence in the past to justify decisions. However, the evidence used by the applicant was to remove the land from the Green Belt. Not, as is the case here, to allow a large swath of housing within the Green Belt. These types of decisions are strategic ones, and the process is clearly detailed in the NPPF. Releasing Green Belt land does not involve the use of a planning application, but the adoption of a local plan. No local plan is emerging or has been adopted that shows the Council is considering this land for release from the Green Belt. Indeed, the opposite is likely, with the Council’s policy pledge for “Brown before Green”. Even though there is no emerging local plan, the proposals appears to be very much like a premature form of development. It would adversely affect and undermine the strategic approach adopted by the Council to meet its housing requirements whilst failing to safeguard the countryside.

In short, the strategic work and evidence of a failed local plan does not represent very special circumstances. The evidence has not even been through an Examination in Public. The evidence referred to by the applicant, therefore, does not change the above conclusion that there are no very special circumstances.

To conclude, the Buckinghamshire branch of the CPRE strongly objects to the above development as it constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt, which is by definition harmful to the openness of the Green Belt. Further, it results in visual and spatial harm and result in urban sprawl and the encroachment of development into the countryside. No very special circumstances exist that outweigh this harm and the application should be refused planning permission.

Buckinghamshire Affordable Housing Officer 05/04/22

I have reviewed the details of the outline planning application and I can see that the applicant is proposing that 40% of the proposed development will be affordable housing with a split of 70% x rented accommodation and 30% x intermediate housing. Therefore, I would be satisfied that the scheme would be policy compliant with CS 8 (Affordable Housing Policy) and CS 10 (Affordable Housing Types) in the Core Strategy for Chiltern District.

The application provides a breakdown of the property sizes for the affordable housing as follows:

3 x 1 b/r
31 x 2 b/r flat
51 x 2 b/r house
44 x 3 b/r
23 x 4 b/r

However, the application does not break this down further to show how these property sizes will be split between the rented and intermediate housing. Therefore, I cannot comment specifically on this aspect of the application. As a general comment:

- I would wish to see a good mix and even spread of properties within both tenures and I would not want to see a situation where there was a disproportionately higher number of larger family homes (3b/r and 4b/r) in the intermediate housing units compared to the rented units
- The number of 1 bedroom properties being proposed is low and comprises only around 2% of the total number of affordable units. I would prefer to see a higher proportion of 1 bedroom affordable properties in the development which would better reflect the demands on the Council's Housing Register.

Buckinghamshire Highways DM Officer 01/03/2022

The development proposals are identified as being an outline application for up to 380 residential units, 100 bed Retirement living, up to 60 bed care home, land safeguarded for a 1FE primary school and up to 1000 sqm community hub. This represents significant development being brought forward in Little Chalfont between Burtons Lane and Lodge Lane.

It is noted that the site was formerly a promoted site within the now withdrawn Chiltern and South Buckinghamshire Local plan, and as part of that there had been pre application engagement, at which the Highway Authority was an invitee to a small number of workshops. There was also pre application advice provided by the Highway Authority to the applicants a number of years ago, regarding the acceptability of the principal of accesses, however with respect to this application, despite numerous assertions within the Transport Assessment that items have been agreed the nature of pre application advice leaves the burden of evidencing and demonstrating proposals on the applicant.

Should applicants seek pre-application advice this is normally confidential between the parties. It should also be noted that pre application advice is always provided without prejudice to any assessment of a future application.

With respect to the policy review, the parking standards have been identified and will be required to be adhered to should the application be granted permission. However, at this stage this is not a consideration that shall be assessed.

The site sits to the south of the A404 Amersham Road, linking Amersham and Little Chalfont to the M25 and Chorleywood. The A404 is reached from the site by Burtons Lane to the West and Lodge Lane to the east. These roads are of the nature of semi rural/rural residential roads and provide links through the rural road network to the A413 in Chalfont St Peter and on to the M40. Within the centre of little Chalfont there is the confluence of Burtons Lane, the A404 and the B4443, Cokes Lane. This confluence takes the form of two junctions in very close proximity, a mini roundabout and a priority junction. There are a number of constraints and limitations around this junction that shall be elaborated on further later in this response.

Lodge Lane joins the A404 through a staggered crossroad junction on the eastern boundary of Little Chalfont.

It should be noted that Lodge Lane passes under a railway bridge to the north of the site access location, and this forms a constraint on Lodge Lane that shall be assessed later within this response.

I also take the opportunity to draw to your attention that assessment is being made against Manual for Streets and Manual for streets 2 rather than Design Manual for Roads and Bridges. The site resides within a network that is of a local nature and has speeds appropriate to Manual for Streets guidance.

Access by non-car modes

The applicants have sought to set out the sustainable transport situation of the site and to that matter have set out the distances to walking, cycling and public transport opportunities. The assessment however references distances and standards set out by Transport for London rather than Buckinghamshire Councils standards and guidance. It is therefore not a comprehensive assessment, and rather relies on the NPPF statement that in rural areas different policies and measures will be required.

Additionally, the applicants have not set out any form of adjustment that they have made with respect to the topography of the site and the surrounding areas when considering the current sustainable transport options.

Therefore, it is the Highway Authorities position that walking and cycling provision requires further assessment and review to demonstrate acceptability in the instance of this application with respect to both distance and the level and appropriateness of the provision.

It is true to say that Little Chalfont Station is located close to the site, and the services provided do provide a high-quality service schedule to London and from there on to the rest of the country. However, no information has been provided regarding the available capacity on these services and therefore it is not possible to conclude if this would constitute an

attractive sustainable option for any future residents. If this is not the case, then it must be concluded that this would result in additional vehicles using the highway network.

In contrast to the rail services available the analysis of the bus provision shows that in this area the level of provision is limited and cannot be considered to be of a high quality within this assessment.

I also note that the Parish Councils objections take the opportunity to highlight discrepancies within the stated frequency of services for rail and bus provision. Whilst I do not consider this to be of great significance, (i.e. it doesn't change the rail provision from a high quality service) it is an error that should be corrected

The applicant's assessment of the road safety record in the area suggests that there are no safety issues caused by defects within the highway or highway design in the area. It is my finding that by extending the area, which has been maintained to the perimeter of the site, by a small amount that within the past 5 years there have been 3 serious accidents at the Cokes Lane/Nightingale Lane junction and 2 serious accidents at the Cokes Lane/Amersham Road junction. These need further investigation and the road safety review area should be extended over that presented within the Transport Assessment prior to conclusions being drawn.

Access

The proposed access arrangements to the site comprise of two priority junctions, one on Burtons Lane and one on Lodge Lane. Both of these junctions sit at the bottom of dips, however they are able to achieve the visibility requirements (120m on Lodge Lane and 90m on Burtons Lane). Concern has been raised regarding the location on the access points in adverse weather, however I do not find that the gradients are extreme. It is not possible to substantiate the position on these accesses, or give it further consideration at this stage. I do however find that in order to demonstrate robust assessment of the access arrangements details of the gradients and forward visibility is required. The submission of Stage 1 Safety Audits of the access points can also identify issues and these are recommended in this instance.

Review of the swept path analysis demonstrates that a refuse vehicle is able to negotiate the access junctions, however there is no such analysis for a bus of any type. If buses are to serve the site (and it is expected as there are proposals for a bus only section within the site) these should also be assessed. From the drawings provided it is my view that the road widths shown for the site access junctions are less than the 6m identified within the text. The swept path on the lodge lane access requires a large vehicle to use the full width of the road to turn, further assessment of this access is therefore required to demonstrate that this can be achieved safely.

In order to facilitate two way movement between the site and the A404 on Lodge Lane it is proposed that the road be widened to 5.5m along its length with the exception of the section that passes under the railway line. The embankments would then be secured with retaining structures. I can confirm that a width of 5.5m is sufficient for two vehicles to and that the span of the bridge would not prevent the passing of vehicles, as a minimum of 4.8m is required to pass two cars. Should there be a requirement for a larger vehicle to pass, give and take would be required. This can be achieved through the bridge given that lodge lane

is straight, however a forward visibility drawing should be provided to identify the point at which drivers would become aware of the need to accommodate opposing traffic, to ensure that safety is maintained.

An additional access point for pedestrians and cyclists has been identified by the creation of a new footbridge over the rail line and providing connection to Oakington Avenue and onward to the A404. This has been shown to be possible and proposes the realignment of the Oakington Avenue junction with the A404. The proposals as presented are found to be acceptable in principle subject to detailed design being carried out. In order to assess the acceptability of this pedestrian provision details of pedestrian trips through this access should be provided and agreed.

It is presented within the Transport Assessment that there would be no through movements for vehicles within the site with the exception of public transport vehicles. This would ensure that the numbers of movements taking place at each access junction are regulated. It has not been presented how traffic would be prevented from passing through the middle of the site whilst allowing a bus to pass through. No outline of public transport provision within the site has been given and therefore full assessment cannot be made. It is noted that within the Parish Councils representation, it states that this would not be practically possible. There are a number of options that can be explored, however there are difficulties with the ongoing maintenance and security of such systems that would have to be addressed.

Highway Network Impact Assessment

Considering the highway assessment of the site, the application has not carried out strategic modelling of the site and the surrounding areas. Instead, the Transport Assessment uses one day of data from 2017 and assesses the network only using local junction models, this modelling scope has not been agreed and is insufficient. The network in this area is constrained and we are not confident the assignment set out is accurate. Our position is that given the scale and location of the development it should be subject to strategic modelling in order to assess the changes that would be anticipated as a result of re-routing and different choices that would be made by new and existing users of the network. This is particularly true given the presence of the care home, school and local centre. It is not a robust position to suggest that these uses will be internal trips only. Additionally, the applicant has not taken into consideration any committed or potential significant developments in the area. These should have been considered within the assessment.

Trip generation has been carried out using TRICS®, which follows the standard practice, however, the selection of surveys used places significant emphasis on sites in more urban settings than the application site, and internalisation of trips has reduced the number of trips with respect to the school, no evidence has been presented for the basis of an internalisation of 50%. This combined with the statement that 82% of people travel to work through non car modes causes me to have concerns regarding the data presentation of the trip rates and distributions. All detailed data sets would need to be provided and a detailed explanation as to how this conclusion has been reached. It is possible that the vehicular trip numbers have been unduly suppressed which would underestimate the developments impact.

As mentioned above the baseline models for the development are based on a single day survey in 2017 conditions, this data is now 5 years old and is considered to be older than should be used for Transport Assessments according to current guidance. Whilst a degree of allowance has been made by the Highway Authority regarding the ability to obtain reliable survey data through the Pandemic years (2020 – 2022) it would be expected that applicants undertake work to bring older survey data up to date through growth factors or other means to confirm that the data remains reliable and robust.

Local Junction modelling

The local junction models presented have been reviewed, and the following comments are made regarding the models themselves.

All the junction models have used Passenger Car Units (PCU's) within the traffic flow diagrams, but these do not appear to have been converted to PCU's from the vehicle counts. This is an error that needs to be corrected for all the models.

Within the junction geometry for Cokes Lane/A404 Amersham Road, the gradients have not been entered, this is a geometric feature that can have a significant impact on the output of the model. This is an item that requires correction.

It is also found that U turning movements are not included and that incorrect data has been used within the 2017 AM and PM periods. This is an error that requires correction.

The model for the A404 Amersham Road/Oakington Avenue junction does not include the closely associated Zebra crossing and so it is not possible to account for the impacts of pedestrian flow on the junction. This then prevents accurate assessment of the changes that would be expected from the development proposals. There is also a lack of data present for Right Turning movements from Oakington Avenue and the survey data is limited to a single day. These are errors that require correction.

The model for the junction of the A404 Amersham Road/Church Grove/Stoney Lane is found to contain only survey data for a single day, and so may not be considered to be a representative reflection of the conditions there, it is also apparent that the model is under representing the queues forming on Stoney Lane against the observed queues. This is a calibration error that requires correction.

The site access junction with Burtons Lane, is found to have overestimated the available visibility and the way in which the junction geometry has been presented is questionable, and in the Highway Authorities view over estimates the capacity of the junction. This model requires review.

As previously stated the junctions of Cokes Lane/A404 and Burtons Lane /A404 are in extremely close proximity and so it is considered that these should be assessed as a linked junction system in order to understand the interactions between the two junctions in more detail.

Representations by consultants on behalf of the Parish Council highlight congestion issues caused by right turning traffic at the junction of Cokes Lane, the A404 and the adjacent school access point. I share this concern, and question if the exit blocking impact of the school access has been considered within the assessment.

Mindful of the review of the models that have been used to provide the assessment of the junctions, it is not wise to draw definitive conclusions from the outputs until these matters have been resolved. It is possible to identify the locations that are under the greatest pressure. The junction that experiences the greatest pressures currently is demonstrated to be the A404 Amersham Road / Cokes Lane. No further comment can be made until the modelling has been resolved.

The results of the future 2026 assessments have not been reviewed in this response in detail due to the previously mentioned issues around the construction of the models. Once the models are amended and any information from strategic modelling has been applied it would be possible to review these results. It is questionable if this 2026 year is appropriate as it does not appear to have any relationship with the build out profile or a future 10 year from application. The Transport Assessment states that this was a year agreed with the Highway Authority, however, I again consider the age of this advice to view this statement as outdated.

Mitigation

A mitigation package has been proposed by the applicant, however given the deficiencies within the assessment set out above it is not considered that the mitigation package can at this time be determined to be either comprehensive or indeed appropriate.

With this in mind, the mitigations proposed do represent improvements to the transport network, and could form the basis of a mitigation package once the outstanding assessment items have been completed. Therefore, comment shall be provided on the proposals as they currently stand.

The widening of Lodge Lane would ensure that two way traffic can be achieved, there are civil engineering considerations that may require extensive detailed design to ensure that retaining structures are able to be acceptable to the Highway Authority, however these would be managed through the detailed design process. The proposals for Lodge Lane do not at present identify any need to regrade the surface at the location of the rail bridge. The Highway Authority requires comfort that the gradient does not provide a barrier to larger or long vehicles being able to pass under the bridge without danger of striking the structure. At present it is established that there would be approximately 200mm clearance for a HGV passing under the structure, however this is on the assumption of a level carriageway.

The proposals for mitigation of widening at the junction with the A404 on Burtons Lane are not presented in a way in which there can be any confidence that this would be successful or achieve the required effects on the highway as the foundational modelling underpinning this mitigation is not considered to adequately represent the network. The applicant presents this as initial indications. Further work and a robust case for this mitigation is

required before the Highway Authority is able to determine if this is acceptable as a form of mitigation.

The mitigation proposals for the A404 Amersham Road/Cokes Lane mini roundabout widening are not accepted by the Highway Authority as the foundational modelling underpinning this mitigation is not considered to adequately represent the network. Proper assessment cannot be made of this junction without linkage to the Burtons Lane junction to ensure that issues of blocking between the junctions are properly considered and assessed.

The mitigation proposals only consider motorised highway traffic, full consideration should have been given to requirements for mitigation and improvement to support the applicant's assertions regarding walking and cycling. It has been highlighted within the parish council's objection that there are deficiencies within the footway network on Burtons Lane in both width and lighting and the Highway Authority is in agreement. These should form part of a comprehensive mitigation package.

Refinement of the mitigation at Oakington Avenue is required with respect to the proposed additional bus stops. There are safety concerns at this location with traffic stopping and this is evidenced by the planning history regarding development at the property 1 Oakington Avenue. Further engagement with Road safety and Public Transport is required in order to confirm the suitability of locations for these stops however the Highway Authority does not object to the principle of additional bus stops being provided.

The Highway Authority is supportive of the proposals to upgrade the Zebra crossing on the A404 to a toucan. Advice has also been sought from Thames Valley Police on this matter and there is no objection in principle.

Internal Layout

Turning to matters of internal layout, I have concerns regarding the number of no-through routes proposed, that would require refuse and delivery vehicles to have to turn and reverse within the site. With an increase in home delivery, these features are increasingly causing the need for larger vehicles with poor visibility having to reverse within residential areas.

I also draw attention to the need for applicants to give consideration to the impacts of LTN 1/20 on development designs and proposals. Whilst Healthy Streets principles have been identified, this new guidance will have further consequences on design and layout.

With respect to connectivity with the Public Rights of Way network, connectivity to routes at Lodge Lane should be given greater consideration with collaboration with colleagues in the Council's Rights of Way department in order to provide safe access to the rights of way network from the site. There is no proposed pedestrian provision on Lodge Lane.

Travel Plan

Turning attention to the draft Travel Plan, it is noted that the plan identifies the need for separate plans for the school and nursery at later stages, it does not identify the community use element. This should be either included within the site wide plan or as a separate travel plan.

The hard measures identified within the plan do not represent any level of substantive ambition or provision other than the basic infrastructure that would be expected within a

development. It is therefore not considered that these would promote sustainable travel over and above the natural background take up of walking and cycling. For instance, there is no indication of wayfinding or route times being displayed either through the development or any destination improvements on the public highway.

I also note that there is no mention of how the developer proposes to ensure that barriers to cycling are not imposed by the layout or design of plots.

Again, the travel plan identifies walking distances recommended by TfL, and not Buckinghamshire Councils requirements. Current Buckinghamshire Council guidance is that bus stops should not be more than 250m from residential properties.

The travel plan identifies that Amersham is within a distance that is suitable for cycling to reach shops and facilities, this can be reached via the shared footway cycleway that runs along the north side of the road. It is accepted that Amersham new town with its facilities are on an approximate level to Little Chalfont, however the old town is at the bottom of a significant hill which would reduce the attractiveness of access by sustainable means.

Given the multiple uses proposed on this site it should be expected that with respect to Travel Planning there be a suite of Travel Plans that reside within an overarching Travel Plan to ensure that they are complimentary and mutually supportive. At present this is not the case, and therefore it is not clear how this would take place. The Framework Travel plan should set out how this can be achieved and what measures each detailed travel plan is able to expand and bring forward in a complimentary manner to each other.

It is noted that the Framework Travel Plan places benefit on the provision of high speed internet connection to reduce the need to travel by allowing the option for working from home and online shopping. This may serve to reduce the number of vehicle trips that may take place, however it is only deliverable if there are meaningful design features within the dwellings to support this. It should also be noted that travel and movement form part of healthy living physically and socially. Others will no doubt be in a position to comment on the impacts of these, however the Highway Authority seeks to ensure that highway provision remains to ensure that access to movement remains available for all in society without hinderance or reduction in ability to access.

The targets outlined within the Framework Travel Plan give no indication to the Highway Authority as to what the applicants believe that they are setting out to achieve, rather the applicants seek to set targets based on experiences through the life of the travel plan. This approach does not provide a rigorous means of defining success and so clear targets should be set out at the outset in order to judge if the plan is being successful.

Mindful of the above, the Highway Authority recommends refusal of this application for the following reasons;

- Reason 1 The Transport Assessment is insufficient, by nature of missing, and inadequate information to enable the highways, traffic and transportation implications of the proposed development to be fully assessed.

The site has not been fully demonstrated to have safe and suitable access, an impact that is less than severe, and appropriate sustainable travel provision can be achieved. The development therefore is contrary to or does not meet the criteria set out within the NPPF and NPPG, Highways Development Management Guidance (adopted 2018).

To enable highways matters to be considered further the applicant would be required to address the points raised in the comments above, including:

- Agreement of trip rates and the scope of the modelling with the Highway Authority.
- Addressing the issues relating to the proposed access points.
- Further consideration of the footway/cycleway access.
- Consideration of measures to encourage the use of sustainable forms of transport.

Buckinghamshire Council Archaeological Service

01/03/22 Thank you for re-consulting the Buckinghamshire Council Archaeology Service on the above application. We note the submission of the Historic Environment Desk-based Assessment addendum, and having reviewed this document conclude that our advice as dated 10th January 2022 remains appropriate.

10/01/22 Thank you for consulting the Buckinghamshire Council Archaeological Service on the above application. We maintain the local Historic Environment Record and provide expert advice on archaeology and related matters. As you will be aware, Paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that information held in the relevant historic environment record should be consulted and expert advice obtained where necessary. The NPPF recognises that the effect of an application on the significance of a heritage asset (including its setting) is a material planning consideration.

Historic Environment Record (HER) information

We have consulted the Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Record (HER) and note that the following records are relevant:

HER reference	Designation Status*	Description
0142506000	HER	Carpenters & Hillas Wood Mesolithic and Neolithic or Early Bronze Age flint artefacts found in Carpenters and Hillas Wood
0792100000	HER	Pollards Wood Linear earthwork identified on LiDAR suggested to be possible route of Roman road
0525000000	HER	'Triangle Field' Raans Farm

		Neolithic flint scatter found in fieldwalking survey east of Raans Farm
--	--	---

* COA = conservation area; LB = listed building; RPG = registered historic park; SAM = scheduled monument; PLN = planning notification area (undesigned area of archaeological interest); HER = historic environment record

Note: some records relate to extensive areas such as historic landscapes, historic towns and villages or areas of high archaeological potential. For full HER information and a licence for commercial use please contact the Bucks HER Officer.

Archaeological and related interests

We welcome the inclusion of a Heritage chapter within the EIA and the results of a geophysical survey submitted as part of the application.

The application area lies within a wider landscape with limited recorded archaeology, however, as the Heritage chapter submitted with the application rightly concludes, the absence of known archaeological sites within or close to the application site may be more to do with the lack of archaeological fieldwork undertaken within the area than a true absence of archaeological remains. Where works have been undertaken, such as at Raans Farm and Carpenters & Hillas Wood, artefact scatters of Mesolithic and Neolithic date have been identified. In addition, studies of newly acquired Lidar coverage of the area are revealing numerous new earthwork sites, such as the linear earthwork to the south of the application site which has been interpreted as a possible route of a Roman road.

The geophysical survey undertaken to inform the application (Wessex Archaeology 2021) did not identify any clear archaeological anomalies, but clearly states in the discussion that landscaping and land management have resulted in a high degree of magnetic disturbance, which may have masked any weaker archaeological anomalies. The lack of clear results in the geophysical survey cannot therefore be taken as evidence of a lack of archaeology within the site, and the results of this survey should be ground truthed through archaeological trial trenching.

It is clear that the site has been subject to disturbance through landscaping, quarrying, services and the installation of the golf course. It is therefore likely that if archaeological deposits are present within the site that they may have been truncated in places. However, the extent of previous truncation is unclear and the potential for in situ archaeological horizons remains.

The submitted outline development is likely to impact on any in situ archaeological horizons present, through the construction of housing, infrastructure and landscaping. With the uncertain potential for archaeological horizons to be present, it is recommended that further investigation in the form of archaeological trial trenching is carried out to identify the presence, scale, significance and state of preservation of any

archaeology within the site. The results of these works can inform the requirement for further mitigation.

Whilst we would recommend the applicant carry out archaeological trial trenching at the earliest opportunity so to inform the outline application, due to the likelihood of previous disturbance of any remains, and the inclusion of the geophysical survey with the application, these works could be undertaken as Conditions on any planning permission granted. However, we would recommend these works be undertaken in advance of any reserved matters applications so to inform the more detailed proposals.

If planning permission is granted for this development then it is likely to harm a heritage asset's significance so a condition should be applied to require the developer to secure appropriate investigation, recording, publication and archiving of the results in conformity with NPPF paragraph 205. With reference to the NPPF we therefore recommend that any consent granted for this development should be subject to the following conditions:

- **No reserved matters will be submitted, until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, have undertaken archaeological evaluation in form of trial trenching in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the planning authority. Where significant archaeological remains are confirmed these will be preserved in situ.**
- **Where significant archaeological remains are confirmed, no reserved matters application will be submitted until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, have provided an appropriate methodology for their preservation in situ which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the planning authority.**
- **Where archaeological remains are recorded by evaluation and are not of sufficient significance to warrant preservation in situ but are worthy of recording no reserved matters will be submitted until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, have secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the planning authority.**

The archaeological investigation(s) should be undertaken by professionally qualified archaeologists working to the agreed written scheme(s) of investigation which should be based on our on-line template briefs.

Buckinghamshire Heritage Officer 18/02/22

Summary

There is no harm to the identified designated heritage assets and therefore the proposal is acceptable.

The buildings at Homestead have been assessed under the commonly applied selection criteria for assessing the suitability of assets as non-designated heritage assets (NDHA). Due to limited age and historic interest, along with being significantly extended and altered it has been decided these do not meet the tests to be considered as such.

Heritage Assets

Listed Buildings (LB), which are designated heritage assets; due to the number of these being considered they will be discussed in the following report

Registered Park and Garden (RPG), which is a designated heritage asset; north of the application site is the GII Listed Latimer Park

Conservation Area (CA), which is a designated heritage asset; north of the application site is the Chenies and Latimer CA

Non-designated Heritage Asset (NDHA), buildings at Homestead have discussed below.

Discussion

There are no designated heritage assets within the application site and therefore the heritage assessment is the impact on the setting of the registered park and garden and conservation area as identified above. Along with the setting of a number of listed buildings to be discussed in the report.

The submitted heritage assessment concludes there is one non-designated heritage asset within the site, a 19th century surface quarry pit. Which will be discussed by the Archaeology consultation response.

However, the proposal includes the demolition of 'Homestead', which are a collection of early 20th century buildings in the Arts and Crafts style. And therefore an initial assessment of these is discussed below.

Proposal

As set out in the description, the current application seeks outline permission to develop an area of land to the south east of Little Chalfont. The site would contain 380 residential homes via a combination of apartments and 2-5 bedroom houses. Along with a retirement village, care home and an area safeguarded for education and community use.

Significance and Impact on the Identified Heritage Assets

The application site is that of the former Little Chalfont golf club and thereby provides a verdant character to this part of the village. Located within the Green Belt and adjacent to the Chilterns AONB the site also benefits from a number of woodland areas.

The wider setting of the application site is that of modern residential development to the north, south and west. Whereas residential development has not been extended to this part

of Lodge Lane to the east, there is an industrial yard area. It is the wider residential area surrounding the site which contains the closest listed buildings to the site.

- Listed Buildings (LB) of Little Chalfont

The nearest listed buildings to the application site are Loudhams, a former farmhouse and its former barn (converted to a dwelling) to the west, these are both GII listed. There are a number of other GII listed farmhouse, cottages and milepost within the village. However, along with Loudhams these are all separated from the application site by the existing landscape of residential dwellings, treelines and general modern development of the village. Due to the scale and significance of these listed buildings, their settings are likely to be limited to their closer surroundings and therefore not impacted by the current proposal.

- Listed Buildings (LB) of Chenies and Latimer

Due to their distance from the site the LBs in these surrounding villages have been excluded from the 1km study area of the submitted Heritage Assessment. However, as shown in the submitted DAS Little Chalfont, along with the neighbouring Chenies and Latimer are located on undulating topography along the River Chess. And whilst for similar reasons for the LBs in Little Chalfont itself the majority of LBs in these villages should not be considered, the larger scale and more significant LB, even beyond the 1km boundary should be assessed. Latimer House (GII) is located on an elevated position on the southern edge of Latimer village within its GII listed RPG. However, a site visit has ascertained that mutual visibility is not possible and therefore the setting of Latimer House would not be impacted by the current proposal.

- Registered Park and Garden, Latimer Park (GII) Latimer Park is to the north of the application site, within the Chiltern Hills and of the north side of the River Chess valley. An 18th century park, which is thought to have been advised by Lancelot Brown, forms the setting around Latimer House which itself is located on an elevation position. Overall the area of the park covers c213ha and is bound largely by agricultural land and woodland.

There is a terrace to the south of the house which overlooks the park to the south and towards the application site, with far reaching views due to the steeply falling ground levels in this direction. However, the park along the most southerly boundary is created by West Wood. Even with the lower ground level, the extensive and tall coverage of this wooded area impedes any direct views between the application site and the open character of the park and garden.

Due to the existing modern development to the north of the application site, the proposal would not have an impact on the setting of the wooded area on the southern boundary of the RPG.

- Conservation Area (CA), Chenies and Latimer The conservation area follows a similar boundary area as the RPG but excludes West Wood. However, the same principle applies that although West Wood contributes to the setting of the CA, it also screens the application site from the CA. And therefore the proposal would not impact the setting of the CA.

- Non Designated Heritage Assets (NDHA), Homestead The proposed scheme includes the demolition of three areas of development, including two modern houses on Oakingham Avenue to provide a cycle and pedestrian access to/from the site to the north. The modern golf club house along Lodge Lane toward the NW of the site. These buildings are not of any architectural interest and therefore their removal of no heritage concern.

However, the proposal includes the demolition of the buildings which form 'Homestead' towards the west of the application site, on a private access which leads from Burtons Lane. These are a collection of early twentieth century buildings, in the Arts and Crafts architectural style, along with modern agricultural buildings. The older structures include a large detached house, two outbuildings to the east and a stable block (with a later addition).

The heritage assessment only references the demolition of a small group of structures at Homestead Farm but offers no assessment of these buildings. And as a desk based heritage study the author has not visited the site.

According to the historical mapping, the first building on the site appears on the 1925 OS Map. This appears to match the plan form and position of the outbuilding immediately to the east of the house. This is a single storey rendered structure with timber detailing and tiled roof. Interestingly this small structure has a clock tower. Beyond this is a second later outbuilding with a first floor within the roof space. This building has brick external walls but again with timber detailing, although appears to have been significantly extended in more recent times.

To the north of these is a long narrow structure of two halves. One half a rendered stable block and the other a brick building with larger openings. The stable building appearing to relate in style and form to the other older outbuildings.

Beyond these outbuildings are two large modern agricultural barns, which other than contributing to the farm complex setting offer nothing in regards to architectural or historic interest of the site.

The house is a large detached property which is positioned at an oblique angle to the lane, allowing the rear of the building to benefit of the longer views over the application site. Predominantly two storeys in height, albeit with a third floor within the roof space of the main section of the building. The house is attractive and well-proportioned in the Arts and Crafts style but is largely unremarkable. It has been extended and more recently heavily renovated.

Whilst formerly a parish to nearby Amersham, Little Chalfont expanded significantly in the 1920s with the arrival of the Metropolitan Railway and when land was released to become part of Sir John Betjeman's 'Metroland'. The complex of buildings at Homestead are more removed from the typical suburban development of semi-detached rows of development synonymous with 'Metroland'. In that's its scale and isolated location is more affluent, however the style shares the over scaled gables, steep roof slopes and timber detailing that was common at this time.

There is a commonly applied selection criteria for assessing the suitability of assets as non-designated heritage assets (NDHA), including the asset type, age, architectural and historic interest, along group value. Regrettably the submitted information has not assessed this group of buildings.

Therefore, a site visit was carried out on the 1st February and a desk based study where it was found extensions and alterations have significantly undermined the original architectural integrity and setting of the buildings, in particular those to the SW of the main house and to the outbuildings. There appears to be no indication of an important architect, nor does it appear to have been built for any notable owner. As a collection of buildings built around the time of major development to the village the site offers some historic interest. Therefore, it is requested that the buildings are recorded prior to demolition and details submitted to the council's Historic Environment Record due to their contribution to the development of the village.

However, the limited age of the buildings along with a common style of house for the area and lack of any additional historical interest the buildings at Homestead are not considered to be non-designated heritage assets.

Heritage Policy Assessment

The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The proposals would preserve the architectural and historic interest of the listed building and therefore complies with sections 66 of the Act.

The proposals would preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area and therefore complies with section 72 of the Act.

NPPF

The proposal would cause no harm to the significance of the identified heritage assets.

Conclusion

For the reasons given above it is felt that in heritage terms:

The application would not raise any heritage objection subject to the following conditions:

- Recording of the buildings at Homestead prior to demolition to Level 2 (as per Historic England's A Guide to Good Recording Practice) and the record submitted to the council's Historic Environment Record (HER)

Buckinghamshire Ecology Officer

30/03/22 Thank you for consulting the Buckinghamshire Council Ecology Advice Service on the above proposal. I have reviewed the above application regarding its ecological implications and we would recommend refusal owing to the biodiversity loss resulting from this development and the impacts of the development on County value habitats (ancient woodland and 'Important' hedgerow), County value species (barbastelle) and on other protected species.

Summary Objection

From the information provided it is recommended that the application is refused or deferred at this stage due to the impacts on biodiversity, being contrary to NPPF and ODPM Circular 06/2005.30

Following the ES Addendum and further clarifications from the applicant our comments dated 25th January 2022 remain overall the same.

Biodiversity Net Gain Metric

Clarification is still required for the revised biodiversity net gain metric that was submitted. We still do not have the necessary information to make an assessment should this development result in a biodiversity net gain or not.

According to all information available to us the development will result in a biodiversity loss which is contrary to NPPF.

Full species lists and species abundances per existing habitat compartment assist us in reviewing the condition of each habitat within the site so the metric can be as much accurate as possible. Similarly the proposed habitat plan must be as detailed as possible and future management/land use should be considered prior to determination of the application so correct habitat entries and conditions are included in the metric.

We are not in agreement that habitat details can be decided at the reserved matters stage as then it will be too late to assess if the development will result in a biodiversity gain or not. If the public open space is the same area that is allocated for habitat creation (priority habitat lowland meadow) then this should be confirmed prior to determination and not at reserved matters stage.

We still require detailed existing and proposed habitat plans and explanations to each habitat entry in the metric so we can review the metric and assess the impact of this development on biodiversity. We can provide the reviewed version of the metric but first we require to receive updated detailed existing and proposed plans and clarifications to the queries below:

- The information sheet at the start of the metric has not been filled in in order to know who completed the metric and when.
- There are no specific comments in the metric to be able to check each habitat entry. In line with the Natural England Biodiversity Metric 3.0 User Guide a unique identifier should be assigned to each habitat entry and illustrated in the existing and proposed maps so we are able to cross-reference the habitat entries.

The guidance states " For both baseline and post-intervention data, ensure each habitat parcel, hedgerow or watercourse has been assigned a unique ID (this can be the row number in the metric calculation tool). Any maps generated to support the calculation should clearly display the unique ID of each parcel."

-If a habitat entry is the total area of different parcels within the site of the same habitat and of same condition then all the codes that this habitat represents in the maps should be entered in the comments (of this habitat row).

-If the same habitat type exists throughout the site but of different condition per

parcel/area (in this case 'modified grassland') then separate habitat entries of the same habitat but with different condition should be entered in the metric.

-Explanation should be provided in the comments of each habitat to be created/enhanced regarding how the stated condition will be achieved. -The detailed existing and proposed habitat plans and comments in each of the rows will also help to understand the new figures/entries in the revised metric of:

Baseline habitats

-The baseline 'developed land; sealed surface' increased from 1.57 he to 1.61 he.
-The baseline 'lowland beech and yew woodland' decreased from 4.41 he to 3.92 he.
-There is a new row in baseline habitats of 'lowland mixed deciduous woodland' of 0.14 he. It is not clear if this is the additional woodland habitat at Lodge Lane.

Habitats to be created

-There is now a new entry of habitat to be created of 'other woodland; broadleaved' of 0.13 he (it is not clear where this will be created-the proposed habitats map should illustrate this habitat parcel).
-'Other neutral grassland' increased from 6.17 he to 6.23 but it seems it is the same parcel. - It is unclear if the access road/widening of road by Lodge Lane is 0.24 he.

It should be again emphasised that in line with the Biodiversity Metric 3.0 User Guide - Natural England:

“The metric does not override or undermine any existing planning policy or legislation, including the mitigation hierarchy which should always be considered as the metric is applied.”

“Biodiversity metric calculations can inform decision-making where application of the mitigation hierarchy and good practice principles conclude that compensation for habitat losses is justified.”

Following applying the mitigation hierarchy any predicted biodiversity loss could be compensated for onsite subject to appropriate habitat creation and management proposals (allowing larger areas to habitat creation around the ancient woodland and better habitat connectivity) and any residual loss should be offset. Assurances need to be made that onsite compensation or offsetting would be deliverable prior to determination of the application.

Woodland Management Strategy

According to the proposed layout the ancient woodland 'Stoneydean Wood' will become isolated as an 'Important' hedgerow that connects this woodland to the south Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland will be removed and housing is proposed almost all around the periphery of the woodland.

Given the proposed layout a woodland management strategy was requested prior to determination of the application. It is stated in the Statement of Clarification-Ecology and Climate Change clarifications that “As all ancient woodland areas are to be retained, the Development as assessed in the ES would not result in significant adverse effects (further impacting the functional integrity of ancient woodland), and the recommended mitigation, such as buffer zones implemented, CEMP, LHMP and Woodland Management Strategy

(subject to a planning condition and addressed at RMA) would contribute to the preservation of the ancient woodland. Therefore, it is considered that at this stage, sufficient information has been provided in the ES to demonstrate how the Development would avoid deterioration of the ancient woodlands within the Site.” It is however questionable if sufficient information was provided to demonstrate how the development would avoid deterioration of ‘Stoneydean Wood’ when housing is proposed almost all around the woodland and the key connective corridor (‘Important’ hedgerow) to this woodland is to be removed.

We still recommend that given the proposed layout a woodland management strategy is submitted prior to determination of the application so the impacts of this development on the woodland can be fully assessed.

In our previous response we listed all direct and indirect impacts and our queries regarding the buffer zone are still not fully clarified. The habitats of the buffer area should be confirmed in principle prior to determination and not at reserved matters stage.

We have also requested a plan showing all buffer zones in metres around all woodland parcels within the site and it does not appear that this plan was submitted.

It should be again emphasised that Standing Advice states that development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists.

No such compensation strategy has been provided in this instance.

Protected Species

Protected species are a material consideration of the planning process and it is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted (ODPM, 2005/06).

Bats

Bat activity survey work of buildings 13 and 15 Oakington Avenue is required prior to determination of the application regardless if this application is outline. Before granting planning permission, the local planning authority should satisfy itself that the impacts of the proposed development on European Protected Species have been addressed and that if a protected species derogation licence is required, the licensing tests can be met and a licence is likely to be granted by Natural England. Bat roosts were confirmed in the buildings therefore full activity surveys must be carried out within the optimal survey season prior to determination of the application.

Regarding the trees at Lodge Lane it is still unclear how many will be exactly removed and how the road will be widened. We considered the results of the activity surveys carried out so far and it appears that there has been large concentration of bat passes immediately to the south of the railway bridge by Lodge Lane thus we would recommend that the whole section of Lodge Lane within the application site is also covered by sufficient activity survey work (transect/static detector surveys).

It should be noted that Lodge Lane is not lit and with Stony Lane, this lane connects two

parcels of ancient woodland 'Netherground Spring' in the south and 'Walk Wood' to the north. Given also the recorded presence of barbastelle at the site we consider that these surveys should be carried out so we can fully assess if the development will impact on a key bat commuting corridor. We would recommend that these surveys are carried out prior to determination of the application.

In the January 2022 ES Addendum no survey date is stated or the name of the surveyor who carried out the preliminary ground level roost assessment of the trees at Lodge Lane. Many trees have dense ivy therefore it is not entirely clear how negligible potential for roosting bats was concluded.

Great crested newt

Please note that the following comments are stated following discussion with the Newt Officer, Charley Scales (copied in this response):

Only one pond out of the five identified within 500m of the site was surveyed for its likely presence/absence of GCN via eDNA in July 2021 which is outside of the acceptable eDNA survey season. This survey result is invalid and cannot be considered to determine the likely absence of GCN from this waterbody.

Great crested newts are a protected species and as such are a material consideration for planning applications. Local Councils have statutory duty under the Habitats Regulations (2017 as amended) to ensure that when they are determining planning applications that they consider the impact to protected species prior to determination. This is also supported through the National Planning Policy Framework guidance and the OPDM Circular (2005/06).

Great crested newts have been identified as a potential constraint to development at the outline stage of this project. Therefore, they need to be dealt with at outline and cannot be left until reserved matters. The current level of information provided by the applicant is not sufficient to determine the likely absence of GCN from this site and therefore further information is required as stated within the Newt Officer's comments (16th March 2022).

Great crested newts may rest under refuges such as logs, bark, rocks, and debris (discarded furniture, etc). Placing further refuges such as carpet tiles and plywood boards on a site for the purpose of survey may be advised to increase the chances of newts finding a refuge. However, lifting and searching underneath such refuges appears to be a very inefficient method, and is best used as an additional technique. It should certainly not be relied upon as the sole survey method (English Nature, 2001).

It is difficult to predict impacts accurately when no or few data are available. Local Planning Authorities may refuse or defer planning permission in such cases. Where attempts have been made to predict impacts based on poor data, mitigation plans will be assessed in the light of the information contained in this section and the previous section on surveys; should the impact assessment not adequately address these points it is unlikely that the proposals will be viewed favourably. A recommendation for further survey is likely in such circumstances (English Nature, 2001).

Reptiles

Although it is stated in the Statement of Clarification-Ecology and Climate Change clarifications that a reptile receptor site plan is provided in Appendix B there is no plan of receptor site apart from the plan of refugia. The reptile receptor site plan and future management should be provided prior to determination of the application. Lighting Owing to the proposed development layout and the likely impacts on the ancient and priority woodlands and the presence of bats including County important barbastelle we requested a lighting strategy prior to determination of the application. It does not appear that this was submitted. Although the final lighting details can be submitted at reserved matters we require to see likely lux levels across the site so we can assess the impacts of this development on the woodlands and bats and other nocturnal wildlife. As previously stated, layout adjustments should be considered so the ancient and semi-natural woodland 'Stoneydean Wood', 'Important' hedgerow and barbastelle bats using the site are not adversely affected by the proposed development. We recommend that the development layout is revised to allow larger buffer areas around 'Stoneydean Wood' and Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland areas and to maintain existing habitat connectivity thus retain and protect the 'Important' hedgerow. A revised biodiversity net gain metric should be submitted prior to determination of the application following changes of the proposed layout. This should be accompanied by a detailed existing habitat plan (with full species list/abundance per habitat entry so we can check each habitat condition) and a detailed proposed habitat plan so there is no doubt of the metric result. Given all available information to us we would recommend that the application is refused or deferred at this stage owing to impacts on biodiversity, being contrary to NPPF and ODPM Circular 06/2005.

Legislation, Policy and Guidance

Reasonable Likelihood of Protected Species

Permission can be refused if adequate information on protected species is not provided by an applicant, as it will be unable to assess the impacts on the species and thus meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (2018), ODPM Circular 06/2005 or the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. The Council has the power to request information under Article 4 of the Town and Country (Planning Applications) Regulations 1988 (SI1988.1812) (S3) which covers general information for full applications. CLG 2007 'The validation of planning applications' states that applications should not be registered if there is a requirement for an assessment of the impacts of a development on biodiversity interests.

Section 99 of ODPM Circular 06/2005 states:

"It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision. The need to ensure ecological surveys are carried out should therefore only be left to coverage under planning conditions in exceptional circumstances, with the result that the surveys are carried out after planning permission has been granted. However, bearing in mind the delay and cost that may be involved,

developers should not be required to undertake surveys for protected species unless there is a reasonable likelihood of the species being present and affected by development. Where this is the case, the survey should be completed and any necessary measures to protect the species should be in place, through conditions and / or planning obligations, before permission is granted.”

European Protected Species Licensing (applies to bats, dormice and great crested newts)
Before granting planning permission, the local planning authority should satisfy itself that the impacts of the proposed development on European Protected Species (EPS) have been addressed and that if a protected species derogation licence is required, the licensing tests can be met and a licence is likely to be granted by Natural England.

As a EPS licence is required the applicant will need to provide the answers to all three licensing tests, alongside a mitigation strategy. The three tests are that:

1. the activity to be licensed must be for imperative reasons of overriding public interest or for public health and safety;
2. there must be no satisfactory alternative; and
3. favourable conservation status of the species must be maintained.

Together with the ecologist’s report, which answers test 3, the applicant should provide written evidence for tests 1 and 2. This can be contained within the ecological report or as separate document.

If the competent authority is satisfied that the three tests can be met, it should impose a planning condition preventing the development from proceeding without first receiving a copy of the EPS licence or correspondence stating that such a licence is not necessary. This approach ensures compliance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and enables a local planning authority to discharge its obligations under the Crime and Disorder Act and its wider duties under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 in relation to protected species.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Paragraph 118a of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states: “Planning policies and decisions should: a) encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains – such as developments that would enable new habitat creation or improve public access to the countryside”.

Paragraph 170d of the NPPF requires that: “Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by ... minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressure”.

Paragraph 175d of the NPPF states that: “When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles...development whose primary

objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.”

Ancient Woodland

The Natural England and Forestry Commission Standing Advice

(Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)) for ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees is a material planning consideration for local planning authorities (LPAs). Decisions have to be made in line with paragraph 180 (c) of the NPPF.

Paragraph 180c of the NPPF states that: “Development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons⁶³ and a suitable compensation strategy exists”.

(63) For example, infrastructure projects (including nationally significant infrastructure projects, orders under the Transport and Works Act and hybrid bills), where the public benefit would clearly outweigh the loss or deterioration of habitat.

Chiltern District Local Plan, Adopted September 1997 (CDLP) and Chiltern Core Strategy, Adopted 2011 (CCS)

Buckinghamshire Council resolved to withdraw the Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan 2036 on 21st October 2020. The Core Strategy for Chiltern District (adopted November 2011) Policy ‘CS24: Biodiversity’ states that: “The Council will aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity within the District. In particular:

- the Council will work with its partners to protect and enhance legally protected species and all sites and networks of habitats of international, national, regional or local importance for wildlife or geology
- development proposals should protect biodiversity and provide for the long-term management, enhancement, restoration and, if possible, expansion of biodiversity, by aiming to restore or create suitable semi-natural habitats and ecological networks to sustain wildlife. This will be in accordance with the Buckinghamshire Biodiversity Action Plan as well as the aims of the Biodiversity Opportunity Areas and the Chiltern AONB Management Plan.
- where development proposals are permitted, provision will be made to safeguard and where possible enhance any ecological interest.
- where, in exceptional circumstances, development outweighs any adverse effect upon the biodiversity of the site and there are no reasonable alternative sites available, replacement habitat of higher quality will be provided through mitigation and/or compensation to achieve a net gain in biodiversity.

The Delivery DPD will indicate on maps the location of the various sites mentioned above as required by PPS9.”

25/01/22



Directorate for Planning, Growth & Sustainability

Buckinghamshire Council
The Gateway
Gatehouse Road
Aylesbury
HP19 8FF

ecology.csb@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Ecology

Planning Application Response – CONFIDENTIAL

F.A.O. Laura Peplow

Date: 25 January 2022

From: Agni-Louiza Arampoglou, Ecology Officer

Application reference:	PL/21/4632/OA
Site:	Land Between Lodge Lane and Burtons Lane, Little Chalfont, Buckinghamshire
Proposal:	Outline application for the demolition of all existing buildings and the erection of residential dwellings including affordable housing, custom build (Use Class C3), retirement homes and care home (Use Class C2), new vehicular access point off Burtons Lane, improvements to existing Lodge Lane access including works to Lodge Lane and Church Grove, new pedestrian and cycle access at Oakington Avenue including construction of new pedestrian and cycle bridge and associated highway works, a local centre including a community building (Use Classes E(a)(b)(e), F2(b)), land safeguarded for educational use (Use Classes E(f) and F1(a)), public open space and associated infrastructure (matters to be considered at this stage: Burtons Lane and Lodge Lane access).

Dear Laura,

Thank you for consulting the Buckinghamshire Council Ecology Advice Service on the above proposal. I have reviewed the above application regarding its ecological implications and we would recommend refusal owing to the biodiversity loss resulting from this development and the impacts of the development on County value habitats (ancient woodland and 'Important' hedgerow), County value species (barbastelle) and on other protected species.

Summary
Objection
From the information provided it is recommended that the application is refused or deferred at this stage due to the impacts on biodiversity, being contrary to NPPF and ODPM Circular 06/2005.

Under the provisions of the **NPPF** and **ODPM Circular 2005/06** local authorities have a wider remit in the requirement to maintain, enhance and restore biodiversity. In addition to the **NPPF**, the **LPA** also has a biodiversity duty under section 40 of the **NERC Act** in exercising its functions to 'have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity'.

Further consideration must be given to the layout of this development so the ancient and semi-natural woodland 'Stoneydean Wood' and barbastle bats using the site are not adversely affected by the proposed development. We recommend that the development layout is revised to allow larger buffer areas around ancient woodland and **Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland** areas and to maintain existing habitat connectivity. A revised biodiversity net gain metric (**BNG**) should be submitted prior to determination of the application following changes of the proposed layout.

Clarification is required for a number of queries regarding the survey work undertaken to date and the biodiversity net gain metric which if revised indicates a loss of **-26.76% habitat units**. This biodiversity loss is likely to be larger following further revisions of the habitat/habitat condition entries.

Assurances must be made prior to determination of the application that the development will result in a biodiversity gain in line with **NPPF**.

In addition to our recommendation for a revised layout and revised biodiversity net gain metric the following information is required prior to determination of the application:

- **Woodland Management Strategy**
- Clarification of all buffer areas of woodland parcels - plan illustrating buffer zones in metres
- Clarification on the omission of 'Important' hedgerows in the **ES**
- Clarification on the omission of the importance of **Priority Habitats** in the **ES**
- Full botanical species list and abundance per habitat/habitat compartment in line with the **BNG** metric
- Clarification for a number of discrepancies in the **BNG** metric
- Clarification if part of woodland **W2** will be removed for play area
- **Bat** activity survey work of buildings 13 and 15 **Oakington Avenue**
- **Bat** survey dates for each building surveyed
- Preliminary ground level roost assessment and climbing inspection (as deemed necessary) of trees along **Lodge Lane** along with a plan showing which trees were so far fully surveyed
- Plan showing the location of surveyors covering the buildings during the 2019 and 2021 **ASW Ecology** activity surveys and start and finish times of surveys
- Clarification regarding the assessment that the onsite woodland is of low significance for barbastelle
- Great crested newt assessment (or evidence that the development is supported by **District Licensing**)
- Winter and autumn bird surveys
- Plan illustrating artificial reptile refugia locations / areas surveyed for reptiles and timings of reptile visits
- Reptile receptor site (site plan and further site management)
- **Further badger bait marking survey (CONFIDENTIAL)**
- **Lighting Strategy**

Should the revised layout, biodiversity gain and queries above be addressed prior to determination of the application and an approval be subsequently granted conditions relating to NE European Protected Species licence(s), a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) and to a lighting scheme will be recommended.

Discussion

The application is supported by an Environmental Statement (ES) (Waterman Infrastructure & Environment Limited, November 2021) that includes Chapter 12 – Ecology, and an Arboricultural Impact Assessment (Waterman, November 2021). A biodiversity net gain metric has been included as part of Chapter 12 and also provided to us in excel format.

Along with the main text relating to ecology in the ES the following documents were reviewed:

- Appendix 12.1: Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Waterman, 2019)
- Appendix 12.2: Update Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Waterman, 2021)
- Appendix 12.3: Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) (Waterman, 2021)
- Appendix 12.4: National Vegetation Classification (NVC) Survey Report (Griffin Ecology Ltd, 2019)
- Appendix 12.5: National Vegetation Classification (NVC) Survey Report (Griffin Ecology Ltd 2021)
- Appendix 12.6: Hedgerow Assessment Report (Ecology and Land Management, 2019)
- Appendix 12.7: Hedgerow Assessment Report (Ecology and Land Management, 2021)
- Appendix 12.8: Bat Surveys – Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PRA) Report – Buildings – ASW/BBL/001/23/2019 (ASW Ecology Ltd, 2019)
- Appendix 12.9: Bat Surveys – Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PRA) Report – Buildings – ASW/BBL/062/25/2021 (ASW Ecology Ltd, 2021)
- Appendix 12.10: Bat Surveys – Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PRA) Report – Trees (Sylvatica Ecology Ltd, 2019)
- Appendix 12.11: Bat Surveys – Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PRA) Report – Trees (Sylvatica Ecology Ltd, 2021)
- Appendix 12.12: Bat Surveys – Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PRA) Report – Railway Bridge – ASW/BBL/026/23/2019 (ASW Ecology Ltd, 2019)
- Appendix 12.13: Bat Surveys – Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PRA) Report – Railway Bridge – ASW/BBL/014/25/2021 (ASW Ecology Ltd, 2021)
- Appendix 12.14: Bat Surveys – Emergence Surveys on Buildings – ASW/SHP/037/23/2019 (ASW Ecology Ltd, 2019)
- Appendix 12.15: Bat Surveys – Emergence Surveys on Buildings – ASW/BDBL/065/25/2021 (ASW Ecology Ltd, 2021)
- Appendix 12.16: Bat Surveys – Transect surveys, static surveys, emergence/re-entry surveys and trapping surveys (Ridgeway Ecology Ltd, 2019)
- Appendix 12.17: Bat Surveys – Activity and Static Detector Surveys (Ridgeway Ecology Ltd, 2021)
- Appendix 12.18: Bat Surveys – Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PRA) Report – 13 and 15 Oakington Avenue & Trees Along Lodge Lane (Ridgeway Ecology Ltd, 2021)
- Appendix 12.19: Breeding Bird Survey Report – ASW/BBL/039/23/2019 (ASW Ecology Ltd, 2019)
- Appendix 12.20: Breeding Bird Survey Report – ASW/BBL/088/25/2021 (ASW Ecology Ltd, 2021)

- Appendix 12.21: Dormouse Survey Report (Don MacPherson, 2019)
- Appendix 12.22: Dormouse Survey Report (Don MacPherson, 2021)
- Appendix 12.23: Badger Survey Report – ASW/BBL/025/23/2019 (ASW Ecology Ltd, 2019) (CONFIDENTIAL)
- Appendix 12.24: Little Chalfont Technical Note – Badger Survey - WIE15569-101-TN-5-1-4-BS (Waterman, 2020) (CONFIDENTIAL)
- Appendix 12.25: Badger Survey Report (ASW Ecology Ltd, 2021) (CONFIDENTIAL)
- Appendix 12.26: Reptile and Terrestrial Amphibian Report - ASW/BBL/034/23/2019 (ASW Ecology Ltd, 2019)
- Appendix 12.27: Reptile and Terrestrial Amphibian Report - ASW/BBL/036/25/2021 (ASW Ecology Ltd, 2021)
- Appendix 12.28: Great Crested Newt eDNA Report (ADAS, 2021)
- Appendix 12.29: Little Chalfont: A Preliminary Invertebrate Assessment (Richard A. Jones, 2019)
- Appendix 12.30: Little Chalfont: A Follow-up Invertebrate Assessment (Richard A. Jones, 2021)

The site is approximately 29.74 hectares and comprises the disused Little Chalfont Golf Club, the former clubhouse and other 15 buildings, two areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland, and Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland areas, grassland fields and hedgerows, with Homestead farm and associated buildings located within the west of the site. The site is bordered to the north by a railway line.

The proposal involves the construction of up to 380 homes, 100 unit retirement village, 60 bed care home, safeguarded land for a primary school, a community centre and new public parkland. The development would comprise a phased development.

Mitigation for the impacts of this development on the ancient woodland is not considered in the current proposed layout. According to the current layout the woodland will be surrounded by an access road, will become isolated and its connective linear corridor to the south Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland will be removed. This connective corridor is an intact hedgerow which is deemed 'Important' according to the Hedgerow Regulations criteria. There will be high pressure on the woodland almost all around its boundaries. The area to the south that is proposed for habitat enhancement (enhancement to Priority Habitat Lowland Meadow), claimed to provide 'good' connectivity to the ancient woodland will be a public open space (also likely a dog walking area).

It should be noted that it is stated in the introduction of Chapter 12 that *"After the assessments detailed in this Environmental Statement (ES) were carried out, the red line boundary for the purposes of the planning application was extended slightly to include a series of highways improvements works along Lodge Lane and Church Grove, as well as improvements to the junction between Oakington Avenue and Amersham Way/Road."*

The ES therefore presents the assessments that were carried out on the basis of the previous red line boundary which was slightly smaller. Further information prior to determination of the application should be provided for the impacts of the development on dense linear woodland (from aerial

photography) and hedgerows and protected species within the areas that were not previously surveyed.

In the 'Landscape Capacity Assessment for Green Belt Development Options in the emerging Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan November 2017' (<https://www.chiltern.gov.uk/article/8603/Landscape-Capacity-Study-for-Green-Belt-Development-options>) a different boundary for this site was featured.

Although a larger area was planned to be affected, the development layout was much more appropriate as good connectivity of the ancient woodland 'Stoneydean Wood' to nearby habitats (and the key hedgerow connecting this woodland to Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland to the south) was then considered. It should be noted that according to this layout, development was planned immediately adjacent to the south-east ancient woodland 'Netherground Spring' and we would have requested a better design to be considered regarding this part of the site but overall the mitigation hierarchy appears to have been better implemented in this 2017 plan and the protection of the ancient woodland in the middle of the site and the habitat connectivity that was planned would have contributed to the nature recovery in England of 'more, bigger and joined up' areas of biodiversity (The Lawton Review, 2010 that contributed to the 25 Environment Plan, 2018).

'Stoneydean Wood' provides habitat to both barbastelle bats and to breeding red kite.

Barbastelle is one of UK's rarest mammals, an Annex II and IV of the European Habitats Directive listed species, a UK Priority Species (BAP Species) and red kite is listed under Schedule 1 of The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (*as amended*).

Owing to the increased number of barbastelle records within the site between the 2019 and 2021 surveys the site was considered to becoming increasingly more important for this species in this area. It was assessed in the ES that the site is of County value for foraging and commuting barbastelle bats however it is understood in the static/activity surveys report that the woodlands within the site were considered of low significance to this species and this needs to be clarified.

We would recommend that the development layout is revised so good connectivity between the ancient woodland 'Stoneydean Wood' and nearby habitats is maintained (the 'Important' hedgerow referred as H2 is retained), along with allocating larger buffer areas around this ancient woodland. The 'Landscape Capacity Assessment for Green Belt Development Options in the emerging Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan November 2017' site plan can be used for reference to re-design the development layout.

According to Woodland Trust Practical Guidance 'Planning for Ancient Woodland – Planner's Manual for Ancient Woodland and Veteran Trees' *"As a precautionary principle, a minimum 50 metre buffer should be maintained between the development and the ancient woodland, including through the construction phase, unless the applicant can demonstrate very clearly how a smaller buffer would suffice. A larger buffer may be required for particularly significant engineering operations, or for after-uses that generate significant disturbance."*

It should be highlighted that at the stage of scoping opinion no masterplan was submitted so we were not able to provide comments regarding the layout of the development at an earlier stage.

Important Ecological Features

The ES assessed the following Important Ecological Features (IEFs) such as the ancient woodlands on site, roosting bats and barbastelle and breeding red kite to be of County value, foraging and commuting bats of Local value and amphibians, reptiles, dormouse, badger, invertebrates, and hedgehog to be of less than Local value. The same less of local value was assigned to other onsite habitats (apart from the ancient woodland) and to designated sites owing to no significant effects anticipated from the proposed development.

It has to be highlighted that as four ponds were not surveyed and only one was surveyed for great crested newts (via eDNA survey which is considered insufficient as it was carried out outside the suitable survey season for eDNA surveys) the assessment for amphibians, in particular for great crested newts is inconclusive. **It is entirely unknown if significant great crested newt populations are present in the ponds within 500m of the site. The application should not be determined without further information provided regarding the impact of this development on great crested newts, a European Protected Species.**

It also appears that Priority Habitats/Habitats of Principal Importance were not appropriately assessed in the ES.

It was concluded that there will be no adverse effects to both the ancient woodland and to barbastelle if appropriate mitigation is applied. The ES states *"All woodland is to be retained as part of the development and a 20m buffer zone around all woodland habitat and a CEMP is to be implemented to prevent impacts from damage to root systems, pollution and over shading. Hedgerows and screening vegetation would be planted in close proximity to the woodlands to prevent intrusion into the woodland areas from local residents. A Landscape Habitat Management Plan (LHMP) would be produced to assist with the management of the woodland to retain its longevity and value within the site.*

With the mitigation stated above in place it is considered that the likely residual effect will be not significant".

However the proposed layout clearly shows residential development almost all around the ancient woodland (a road that appears to be next to the 20m buffer – clarification about buffer zones and a map illustrating buffer zones should be provided) and the 'Important' hedgerow (H2) that provides good connectivity to the nearby Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland to be removed. The proposed layout will lead to fragmentation of habitats and isolation of the ancient woodland which is in the middle of the site. Therefore we are not in agreement with this assessment.

As we previously stated in our scoping opinion response Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 Section 41 Priority Habitats (hedgerows and broad-leaved/deciduous woodland) should be retained and protected within the layout and design of the scheme. Habitat connectivity must also be maintained and enhanced within the development. The development design should strengthen green infrastructure links both on and off-site and ensure their long-term protection and management for biodiversity in line with Core Strategy policy CS9.

There is inconsistency between the statements about the buffer around woodland. A 20m buffer is stated in the ES and then in the 'Land Use and Green Infrastructure Parameter Plan' a minimum 30m buffer for ancient woodland is stated, along with minimum 15-20m for other existing woodland (i.e. Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland) and 5m for existing tree lines (which some lie within Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland). This plan does not illustrate the distances in metres so we can view clearly these buffer areas next to all important habitats. The illustration plans and contradictory statements about buffer zones do not allow us to make a thorough assessment. All this should be clarified prior to determination of the application. Distances between any development and all ancient woodland and Priority Habitat areas should not be left vague.

Designations

Two areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland, 'Stoneydean Wood' referred in the ES and Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) as 'W5' and 'Netherground Spring' referred in the ES and PEA as 'W1' exist within the site boundary. Another seven areas of ancient woodland are located within 1km of the site.

Most of the rest of the woodland areas located within the site boundary are designated NERC Act Section 41 Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland, including the hawthorn scrub area to the north-west of the site.

Within the Zone of Influence (10km of the site) ten Local Nature Reserves are located, twelve Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and one SSSI that is also a designated National Nature Reserve (NNR) 'Ruislip Wood'.

Three Local Wildlife Sites are also present within 3km of the site: 'Lane Wood, Ladies' Arbour', 'West Wood LWS, Place house Copse' and 'Meadow adjacent to Lower Water, Latimer'.

The ES concluded that there will be no impact on designated sites outside the application boundary due to the nature of the development and the distance from these sites.

According to the spatial dataset by Natural England 'Habitat Networks' the site lies within 'Network Enhancement Zone 2'. Within 'Network Enhancement Zone 2' lie land areas that are immediately adjoining existing habitat patches that are small or have excessive edge to area ratio where habitat creation is likely to help reduce the effects of habitat fragmentation.

The site also lies within the Natural England 'National Character Area 110 Chilterns'.

Existing Habitats

The initial extended Phase 1 survey of the site was carried out on 13th and 14th February 2019 by Waterman and an extended UKHab1 (UK Habitat Classification) survey of the site was undertaken on 13th May 2021 by Waterman.

A National Vegetation Classification (NVC) survey was carried out on 1st May 2019 and 16th July 2019. This survey covered six areas of woodland within the site boundary and was updated on 29th June 2021. The same level of botanical survey work has not been carried out for the remaining habitats on site, for the grassland fields that most will be developed and a species list with abundance per species

has not been provided. This species list (with abundance per species per habitat) is required prior to determination of the application so we can fully review the BNG metric.

It should be also noted that it appears that additional species were identified during the hedgerow surveys that were not included in the 2021 UKHab1 survey (e.g. field scabious).

The ES main text included the species composition from the UKHab survey however as an NVC survey was carried out in the woodlands this latter information should have been included as there were additional species recorded that were missed during the UKHab survey.

Habitats recorded on site (in line with UK Habitat Classification) include:

- Modified grassland with scattered scrub and scattered trees
- Bramble scrub
- Hawthorn scrub
- Buildings
- Built linear features and other developed land
- Lowland beech and yew woodland
- Lowland mixed deciduous woodland
- Other broadleaved woodland
- Native hedgerow
- Non-native hedgerow
- Lines of trees

The findings of main habitats are the following:

Modified grassland with scattered scrub and scattered trees

Modified grassland includes two areas within the site, the former golf course to the north with scrub and scattered trees (classified as amenity grassland, dense and scattered scrub and trees during the Phase 1 survey) and agricultural fields to the south and west (classified as semi-improved grassland and small part as amenity grassland during the Phase 1 survey).

According to the 2021 UKHab1 survey grasses make up over 75% of the cover in the former golf course grassland with dominant species being perennial rye grass, red fescue and Yorkshire fog and species found frequently to rarely to include cock's-foot, meadow foxtail, false brome, sweet vernal grass and false oat grass.

Herbs include creeping buttercup, spear thistle, germander speedwell with rarely recorded species including common vetch, cuckoo flower, bulbous buttercup, ribwort plantain, yarrow, wild strawberry, common sorrel and bird's foot trefoil. I agree with the ES assessment that the rarely recorded species indicate a neutral grassland and it appears that this grassland is slowly recovering from the previous intense management as a golf course (regular cutting). By comparing the Phase 1 and UKHab1 survey results this grassland was found to be species-richer in the 2021 survey.

It should be noted that wild strawberry is a Near Threatened species in England (according to the 2014 'A Vascular Plant Red List for England', BSBI).

It is stated in the ES that the herb species are not recorded in high enough frequencies for the habitat to qualify as 'other neutral grassland' however a species table and DAFOR abundance per species has not been provided. As stated above we expect to receive the full plant species list and abundances per species per habitat prior to determination.

Scattered trees and scrub within this grassland include bramble, field maple, pedunculate oak, apple species, horse chestnut, rowan, Leyland cypress, sycamore, ash, hornbeam, goat willow, western red

cedar, Scot's pine and copper beech. The majority of scattered trees on the site were found to be semi-mature to mature with fewer young trees/shrubs being present.

To the south and west of the site the grassland was found to be similar but much less rich in herb species and with no scattered trees or scrub. Grasses were found to be over 90% of the sward with dominant to abundant species being perennial rye grass, Yorkshire fog, red fescue and meadow foxtail and occasional species including cock's-foot, bent species and sweet vernal grass. Herbs that were recorded occasionally to rarely include common field speedwell, germander speedwell, creeping buttercup, common ragwort and bulbous buttercup.

Lowland beech and yew woodland

'Netherground Spring' referred as 'W1' in the UKHab survey report is ancient and semi-natural woodland and comprises lowland beech and yew woodland. The canopy is dominated by mature and semi-mature beech, pedunculate oak, hornbeam and ash with a shrub layer of frequent to occasional holly, elder, hawthorn and hornbeam.

According to the NVC survey the field layer includes frequent dog's mercury, ivy, bramble, bluebell and lesser celandine with occasional wood dock, wood avens, lords and ladies, enchanters nightshade and rarely occurring daffodil species (a cultivated species), three nerved sandwort, common figwort, common nettle, wood speedwell, garlic mustard, ivy-leaved speedwell, raspberry, cleavers, common ragwort, willowherb species, crocus species and snowdrop. Hybrid bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* x *hispanica* = *H. x massartiana* was also noted.

The composition of the woodland changes to the west where it is not designated an ancient and semi-natural woodland but is still designated as Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland. It appears that repeatedly throughout the reports Priority Habitats have not been fully considered.

This part of the woodland comprises young secondary woodland dominated by hazel coppice with a carpet of dog's mercury. W1 was assessed to be of County value, high distinctiveness habitat and in good condition.

Another lowland beech and yew woodland (referred in the ES as W2) is located to the south of the site. A small disused excavation pit is present within the boundary of the woodland which is dominated by abundant dog's mercury. The canopy includes beech with frequent to rare sycamore, pedunculate oak, ash, hornbeam, field maple, elder, holly, wild cherry and common whitebeam. Deadwood was present in the woodland. W2 was assessed to be of less than Local value, of high distinctiveness and in moderate condition. Clarification should be provided if part of this woodland will be removed. According to the Illustrative Landscape Plan (Post-Intervention Habitats) an area of this woodland is to be removed to accommodate a play area.

Other two lowland beech and yew woodland areas (referred in the ES as W3 and W4) are located to the west of the site. The canopies are dominated by beech with pedunculate oak, hornbeam, elder, sweet chestnut hazel and ash found to be present frequently to rarely. The native bluebell and invasive Spanish bluebell dominate the understorey. It is stated in the ES that access to all of W3 was not possible at the time of survey due to the presence of boundary fencing on to private land. Deadwood was present in both woodlands. W3 and W4 were assessed to be of high distinctiveness and in moderate condition.

'Stoneydean Wood' (referred as W5 in UKHab survey) is a designated ancient and semi-natural woodland and located centrally within the site. Adjacent to the designated ancient woodland area there is a thin linear woodland which is Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland (west side of the ancient woodland). According to the NVC survey 'Stoneydean Wood' consists of occasional beech and

hornbeam with rarely occurring pedunculate oak, holly, common hawthorn, elder and wild cherry. The field layer consists of frequent dog's mercury, bluebell, Enchanters nightshade with abundant common nettle, occasional cleavers and bramble and rarely occurring wood sedge, violet species, ground ivy, garlic mustard, herb Robert, gooseberry and wood millet.

This woodland was assessed to be of County value and of high distinctiveness and in good condition.

Lowland mixed deciduous woodland

Another designated Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland (referred in the ES as W6) is located to the north of the site and its canopy is dominated by ash with a dense shrub layer of hawthorn, holly and elder. Species in the understorey include bluebell, lords and ladies, cow parsley, common nettle and cleavers. W6 was considered to be of less than Local value and of high distinctiveness and in moderate condition. It should be noted that according to the plans and BNG metric an area of this Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland is to be removed to accommodate a play area.

Other broadleaved woodland

Broadleaved woodland (referred as W7 in the ES) is located to the north-east of the site and comprises two small blocks either side of an access gate. This is the only woodland parcel within the site that is not either ancient woodland or Priority Habitat. This woodland is young and is possibly planted with some seed regeneration. Species present include hazel, ash, Norway maple and elder. W7 was assessed to be of less than Local value and of medium distinctiveness and in moderate condition.

Hawthorn scrub

It should be noted that part of this dense hawthorn scrub (illustrated as purple in the Figure 1: Habitat Features Plan of the 2021 UKHab1 survey report) lies within Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland (that connects to Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland W6).

Hedgerows

According to the Waterman UKHab survey a number of hedges and lines of trees are present within the site. These comprise of intact hedgerows, intact hedgerows with trees and defunct hedgerows with trees. In summary:

- A line of trees (referred as H1 in the ES) runs along the northern boundary of the site consisting of semi-mature and mature Norway Maple, pedunculate oak, Leylandii, elder, ash and sycamore. The distinctiveness of this habitat was assessed of low and in poor condition.
- An intact native and species-rich hedgerow with trees (referred as H2 in the ES) runs in the centre of the site connecting the ancient woodland 'Stoneydean Wood' (W5) to Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland (W1) to the south of the site. This hedgerow is 3 to 4m wide and consists of hawthorn, beech, ash, elder and cherry. This hedgerow was assessed to be of high distinctiveness and in good condition. From the updated hedgerow survey this hedgerow was deemed 'Important' according to the Hedgerow Regulations criteria.
- A species-rich native hedge (referred as H3 in the ES) is located on the southern boundary of the site. The hedgerow is 5m wide and 3m tall. This hedge is dominated by blackthorn with occasionally recorded bramble, rose species, ash, hawthorn, sycamore and holly. This was assessed to be of medium distinctiveness and in good condition.

- Another species-rich native hedge with trees (referred in as H4 in the ES) runs along the western boundary of the site. This hedgerow is 2m wide and consists of ash, beech, yew, hazel, sycamore, hybrid black-poplar and hawthorn. This was assessed to be of high distinctiveness and in good condition.
- Species-poor non-native hedgerows (referred as H5 and H6 in the ES) form garden boundaries to the west of the site. These were assessed to be of very low distinctiveness and we agree that they do not require a condition assessment.
- A line of trees (referred as H7 in the ES) runs along the north-western boundary of the site to the west of the ancient woodland W5, consisting of semi-mature and mature hornbeam, holly, sycamore and ash. This line of trees was assessed to be of low distinctiveness and in moderate condition.

All these hedgerows were considered to be of less than Local value which is questionable (*see below*).

Biodiversity Net Gain

According to the Biodiversity Net Gain metric dated 13th September 2021 (and included in Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment report, Waterman, November 2021) the proposed development will result in a biodiversity net gain of 25.21% habitat units and 20.41% of hedgerow units.

I revised the habitats and some of the conditions in the entries in the metric and **the proposed development is likely to result in a biodiversity loss of -26.76% habitat units which is contrary to NPPF**. This biodiversity loss figure is considered to be higher given a revision in the habitat parcels and conditions.

It does not appear that the current criteria in the DEFRA metric (Biodiversity Metric 3.0 technical supplement, July 2021) were applied. In addition, according to the species composition the grassland fields (former golfcourse grassland and pasture fields) were different thus it is not understood why they were entered in one habitat entry with 'Poor' condition. A full species list with species abundances is required so we can make a full assessment regarding this. Similarly, it is not understood why all the woodland areas were entered with the same condition as apparently were assigned a different condition. Condition assessment in line with the 3.0 technical supplement should be carried out for all habitats present and separate entries should be made in the metric per condition.

It is stated in the assessment report "that small areas within the site that were not surveyed have been assigned the habitat category 'Urban-developed land; sealed surface'. Following a field survey of these areas and the true categorisation of habitats within these areas, the calculator need to be updated." According to aerial photography there is dense tree cover at Lodge Lane and the habitat map in the report indicates this area was not surveyed. It should not be entered in 'Urban-developed land; sealed surface'. Thus, the 'Urban-developed land; sealed surface' is 0.94 hectares in the metric instead of 1.57 hectares that was entered. Both the unsurveyed areas that are to be affected for new access appear to be broad-leaved woodland (from aerial photography) thus the areas were added in the metric in the category 'Other broad-leaved woodland'. Certainly this has to be revised when we receive the survey results for these areas.

Clarification should be also provided for the discrepancy between the total woodland area in the baseline habitats in the metric 4.48 hectares and the total woodland area stated in the NVC survey

report of 6.99 hectares. The Griffin Ecology 2021 report states "A total of six areas of broadleaved woodland are located within the bounds of the site covering a total area of approximately 6.99ha."

Areas that are proposed to be amenity space are also the main areas for habitat creation (grassland seeded with a wildflower mix) and have been classified as 'other neutral grassland'. However, as there will be human pressure on these areas and will be used as amenity space this entry should be 'Modified grassland' unless further information is provided about the long-term management of this habitat.

There is uncertainty about the habitats to be created within the buffer zones of the woodlands. This information is required prior to determination of the application. For the purposes of the BNG metric that was entered as 'other neutral grassland'.

An area of Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland (W6) will be removed for a play area but also according to the Figure 2: Illustrative Landscape Plan (Post-Intervention Habitats) in the BNG report an area of W2 woodland will be removed for another play area. Clarification is required regarding this habitat.

An area of 2.7 hectares of existing 'Modified grassland' is to be enhanced to Priority Habitat Lowland Meadow (at the south of the site). However, it appears from the plans that this area will be public open space. Further information is required prior to determination of the application how this habitat enhancement will be carried out given the ongoing human pressure. The target condition of Good means that it will need to pass all 5 criteria in the condition assessment. Further details should be provided about the long-term management plan showing how this is to be achieved.

The play areas that are scattered throughout the site should be entered in the 'Developed land; sealed surface' and not in 'Modified grassland' or other habitat category. According to the Illustrative Masterplan there will be likely on hardstanding.

The proposed allotments were entered with a condition of 'Moderate'. Further information is required regarding this entry as the condition of allotments relies solely on the residents' long-term use of the plots.

Clarification should be provided if the attenuation basin that is entered as SUDS in the metric will be constructed to hold permanent water over the year and act as a wildlife pond. Most attenuation basins are usually only wet for short periods of time following intense rainfall events and dry for most of the year. The Figure 2: Illustrative Landscape Plan (Post-Intervention Habitats) indicates a large area of attenuation basins and a smaller of pond. It is not clear if the entry of 'Sustainable urban drainage feature' of 0.03 hectares applies to the larger attenuation basin featured in the plan or just the pond.

It is not understood why the hedgerow H4 was entered as of 'Medium' distinctiveness. This should be entered as 'High' in line with the hedgerow survey.

Half a kilometre of native species-rich hedgerow will be removed along with 0.11km line of trees, including an 'Important' hedgerow that connects 'Stoneydean Wood' to the south Priority Habitat

Deciduous Woodland (annotated as H2 in the BNG report). According to the metric 1.21km of hedgerow will be planted, including a hedgerow surrounding 'Stoneydean Wood'. Although it is understood that this hedgerow will be within the buffer area of the woodland and may act as a barrier it will not connect to another hedgerow thus it will not function as a connective linear habitat.

Similarly, the proposed hedgerow H9 that is 0.15km does not appear that it will function as a connective linear habitat. It is not clear in the plan if it is proposed in this location to connect the two woodland parcels. Therefore I do not consider that the hedgerow creation that is shown in the metric is realistically a 'like for like' hedgerow replacement.

The predicted biodiversity loss could be compensated for onsite subject to appropriate habitat creation and management proposals (allowing larger areas to habitat creation around the ancient woodland and better habitat connectivity). Any residual loss should be offset. Assurances need to be made that onsite compensation (aiming to at least 10% biodiversity net gain in line with the emerging Environment Act) or offsetting would be deliverable prior to determination of the application to ensure that this development will result in a biodiversity gain in line with NPPF.

It should be emphasised that in line with the Biodiversity Metric 3.0 User Guide - Natural England:

"The metric does not override or undermine any existing planning policy or legislation, including the mitigation hierarchy which should always be considered as the metric is applied."

"Biodiversity metric calculations can inform decision-making where application of the mitigation hierarchy and good practice principles conclude that compensation for habitat losses is justified."

Landscape and Ecological Management

Should you be minded to grant permission to this application I would recommend that a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan is submitted to reduce the impacts of the development by incorporating opportunities for wildlife in and around the development once works are complete. Such an approach is in accordance with the NPPF.

The LEMP should include the following details in line with the British Standard on Biodiversity BS 42020:2013:

- a) Description and evaluation of features to be managed.
- b) Ecological trends and constraints on site that might influence management.
- c) Aims and objectives of management.
- d) Appropriate management options for achieving aims and objectives.
- e) Prescriptions for management actions.
- f) Preparation of a work schedule (including an annual work plan capable of being rolled forward over a five-year period).
- g) Details of the body or organisation responsible for implantation of the plan.
- h) Ongoing monitoring and remedial measures.

The LEMP shall also include details of the legal and funding mechanism(s) by which long-term implementation of the plan will be secured by the developer with the management bodies responsible for its delivery.

The plan shall also set out (where results from monitoring show that conservation aims and objectives of the LEMP are not being met – i.e. monitoring woodlands, monitoring species such as barbastelle and red kite) how contingencies and/or remedial action will be identified, agreed and implemented so that the development still delivers the fully functioning biodiversity objectives of the originally approved scheme. The approved plan will be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

The management plan should detail enhancements of the site for biodiversity, creation of habitat for Protected / notable species and future long-term management of the site.

Owing to ancient woodland within the site species used for planting should be native and ideally of local provenance (minimising risks of changing the genetic stock of the woodland and also introducing non-native species).

In order to ensure that all such measures are carried out effectively and managed into perpetuity, I recommend that a detailed landscape and ecological management plan for the site is submitted and approved prior to works commencing. This could be secured via a condition attached to any approval subsequently granted to the application.

It should be noted that a Woodland Management Strategy is required **prior to determination** of the application to ensure the protection of the ancient woodland and Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland.

Ancient Woodland

The ES states in section 12.151 that *“all woodland is to be retained and protected as part of the development. Without a buffer around the ancient woodland to protect the root system and the seed bed, impacts to root systems during the construction phase would result in a permanent, adverse effect significant at the County level.”* It is also stated in section 12.152 *“Although woodlands are to be retained indirect effects such as changes in air quality, increase in dust, potential for contaminated run-off (fuel, oil etc) and spills would result in a permanent, adverse effect significant at the County level.”*

To mitigate for these impacts it is stated *“all woodland is to be retained as part of the Development and a 20m buffer zone around all woodland habitat and a CEMP is to be implemented to prevent impacts from damage to root systems, pollution and over shading. Hedgerows and screening vegetation would be planted in close proximity to the woodlands to prevent intrusion into the woodland areas from local residents. A Landscape Habitat Management Plan (LHMP) would be produced to assist with the management of the woodland to retain its longevity and value within the site.”*

“With the mitigation stated above in place it is considered that the likely residual effect will be not significant.”

As mentioned above, the Land Use and Green Infrastructure Parameter Plan specifies a minimum 30m buffer for ancient woodland, along with a minimum 15-20m for other existing woodland (i.e. Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland) and 5m for existing tree lines (which some are Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland).

Clarification must be provided prior to determination of the application regarding the exact buffer zones surrounding ancient woodland and priority habitats. A plan should be provided prior to determination illustrating the buffer zones in metres. It is understood that this is an outline application and plan amendments can happen in the Reserved Matters stage of each phase therefore it should be ensured at this stage that ancient woodlands and priority habitats will be protected within the development by larger buffer areas/additional habitat creation and good connective habitats.

We strongly disagree with the current proposed layout.

In line with Natural England and Forestry Commission Standing Advice ([Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)) some of the following direct effects of this development to 'Stoneydean Wood' and 'Netherground Spring' ancient woodlands include (further explanation added in *Italics* where required):

- damaging functional habitat connections, such as open habitats between the trees in wood pasture and parkland – *most of the open grassland surrounding 'Stoneydean Wood' will be developed to residential area and other connective habitat, an 'important' hedgerow, is to be removed*
- increasing levels of air and light pollution, noise and vibration - *by an increase of nitrogen levels due to cars/access roads, gas emissions from residential properties, increased level of lighting from residential properties, street lighting, car headlights, machinery works/SUDS works next to woodland*
- changing the water table or drainage - *an access road surrounding 'Stoneydean Wood' and residential buildings, surface run off owing to site topography*
- changing the woodland ecosystem by removing the woodland edge or thinning trees - causing greater wind damage and soil loss – *possible issue in the future when allocating residential properties near to ancient woodlands and trees have to be felled down due to health and safety.*

Indirect effects of the proposed development that can also cause the loss or deterioration of the ancient woodland within the site include:

- breaking up or destroying working connections between woodlands, or ancient trees or veteran trees - *an 'important' hedgerow is to be removed, along with grassland habitat*
- reducing the amount of semi-natural habitats next to ancient woodland that provide important dispersal and feeding habitat for woodland species – *almost all areas surrounding 'Stoneydean Wood' are to be built up and an 'important' hedgerow to be removed, both areas affected causing isolation of this woodland*
- reducing the resilience of the woodland or trees and making them more vulnerable to change - *by increased access of residents, their pets, pollution*
- increasing the amount of dust, light, water, air and soil pollution - *reasons as stated above*
- increasing disturbance to wildlife, such as noise from additional people and traffic

- increasing damage to habitat, for example trampling of plants and erosion of soil by people accessing the woodland or tree root protection areas
- increasing damaging activities like fly-tipping and the impact of domestic pets
- increasing the risk of damage to people and property by falling branches or trees requiring tree management that could cause habitat deterioration
- risk of garden encroachment, including potential invasive species
- changing the landscape character of the area

No adequate information was included in the ES on how there will be no unavoidable deterioration of the ancient woodlands within the site, in particular of 'Stoneydean Wood' which appears to be much more impacted by habitat fragmentation compared to 'Netherground Spring' woodland.

Standing Advice states that if granting permission that results in unavoidable loss or deterioration of ancient woodland **where wholly exceptional reasons are demonstrated**, planning conditions should be attached to the approval to make sure the developer:

- avoids damage
- mitigates against damage
- compensates for loss or damage (which is to use as a last resort)

This mitigation hierarchy should be applied in line with NPPF paragraph 180a to avoid significant harm to biodiversity.

Paragraph 180 (c) of the NPPF states:

(c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons ⁶³ and a suitable compensation strategy exists

(63) For example, infrastructure projects (including nationally significant infrastructure projects, orders under the Transport and Works Act and hybrid bills), where the public benefit would clearly outweigh the loss or deterioration of habitat.

There is no sufficient evidence that the mitigation hierarchy has been applied when considering the layout of this development. We strongly advise that the application is refused or deferred at this stage until a revised layout is submitted that incorporates larger buffer areas around the ancient woodlands, contributes to green infrastructure by new green corridors and maintains the existing significant corridors (ie. 'Important' hedgerow linking the ancient woodland to Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland).

A buffer zone should consist of semi-natural habitats such as woodland, a mix of scrub, grassland, heathland and wetland and contribute to wider ecological networks and be part of the green infrastructure of the area. It does not appear how the proposed grass buffer area around 'Stoneydean Wood' next to an access road implements the above.

In line with Standing Advice planning permission should be refused if the proposed development will result in the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees unless both of the following applies:

- there are wholly exceptional reasons
- there's a suitable compensation strategy in place (this must not be a part of considerations of wholly exceptional reasons) - paragraphs 33 and 34 of the planning practice guidance (Natural environment - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)) on compensation guidance

Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees are irreplaceable. Therefore, proposed compensation measures should not be considered as part of the assessment of the merits of the development proposal.

Hedgerows

The Ecological Walkover Survey (Waterman, 8th June 2021) and the ES Chapter 12 fail to account for any hedgerows that are deemed as 'Important' by the Hedgerow Regulations 1997 criteria and therefore must be protected.

There is overall an inconsistency in the number of hedgerows by comparing the 2021 Waterman UKHab survey and the Hedgerow Assessment Report (Ecology and Land Management, 2021).

According to the Hedgerow Assessment Report (Ecology and Land Management, 2021) **there are four species-rich and 'Important' hedgerows in accordance with the Hedgerow Regulations criteria** (7 woody species or more), and six hedgerows in favourable condition.

In the Hedgerow Assessment Report (Ecology and Land Management, 2021) the hedgerow H2 (as referred in the main text of the ES Chapter 12) that connects the ancient woodland 'Stoneydean Wood' (W5) and Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland (W1) is deemed 'Important' according to the Hedgerow Regulations.

Another hedgerow is deemed as 'Important' that is located between the dense hawthorn scrub and dwellings and was not considered in the Waterman 2021 survey.

The hedgerows referred as H3 and H4 in the ES and 2021 Waterman survey are also deemed 'Important'.

From these four 'Important' hedgerows one will be removed (H2) and the connectivity between the ancient woodland 'Stoneydean Wood' and Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland will be permanently lost. We strongly disagree with the removal of this hedgerow. This 'Important' hedgerow must be retained and protected.

It should be highlighted that hedgerows are also Priority Habitat - Habitats of Principle Importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

In the PEA report (Waterman, 2019) hedgerows are stated to be of National Level of Importance (Habitats and Species of Principal Importance for the conservation of biodiversity as listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act, 2006, including ecologically important hedgerows under the Hedgerows Regulations, 1997) and it is also stated *"A Hedgerow Regulations assessment is recommended to ascertain whether any of the hedgerows present on Site are classified as 'important' and therefore protected under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. The results of this survey would inform the emerging scheme design with regards to the retention of any hedgerows which are classified as important, inform mitigation as a result of hedgerow loss, and highlight opportunities for the enhancement of other hedgerows on Site, specifically those which are recorded as defunct or species poor, enhancing the network of green infrastructure within the Site in accordance with planning policies CS4, CS24 and CS32."*

Therefore, it is enigmatic why following a Hedgerow Regulations assessment being carried out and hedgerows were found within the site to be 'Important' these hedgerows were not even mentioned in the ES and on the contrary all hedgerows within the site were considered to be less of Local value. Justification for omitting the importance of hedgerows within the ES and stating that are less of Local value should be provided prior to determination of the application.

As stated Priority Habitats were not fully considered in the ES. The line of trees H7 lies within Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland, H2 connects ancient woodland (W5) to Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland (W1), and H3 connects two areas of Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland (there is actually a line of trees bordering the site to the east connected to this hedgerow that is not described in the survey). H4 also connects to Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland (W4).

Species

Protected and notable species which have been identified as potential Important Ecological Features anticipated to be affected by the development include bats, badger, reptiles, great crested newt and other amphibians, nesting birds, dormouse and invertebrates.

Should you be minded to grant approval to this application I would recommend that a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) is produced and secured via a condition to the application to take into account all the following species that are likely to be impacted on by the proposed development.

The CEMP should be completed in accordance with the British Standard on Biodiversity BS 42020:2013 with the details below:

Proposed Ecological Impacts

- Details of what biodiversity features could be impacted (in that phase) and what development activities could be potentially damaging.

Timetables

- A rolling timetable of when and where specific measures to avoid / reduce impacts are to be carried out including any seasonal or legal implications (e.g. the bird nesting season) and who is responsible.
- The nature of the pre-commencement ecological checks / surveys required and details of the results of these surveys once they have been undertaken (for our approval).

Avoidance and Mitigation Measures

- Details of method statements for specific biodiversity issues (e.g. for specific destructive activities such as: vegetation clearance, hedgerow removal, tree felling, soil stripping and building demolition).
- Identify all practical measures (e.g. fencing, protective barriers and warning signs) and sensitive working practices to avoid impacts. We expect to see details of type, location and means of installation and maintenance FOR EACH PHASE.
- Specifically state the agreed buffer zones relevant to each phase. For example a minimum buffer of 5m around all on-site hedgerows and ditches has been agreed, but this will need to be increased in some phases to protect other biodiversity features (e.g. where badger setts and mature trees are present).
- Details of inspections to ensure wildlife (e.g. badgers and brown hares) do not become trapped in excavations or machinery.

On-site Personnel & Training

- The role and responsibility of the on-site Ecological Clerk of Works (ECOW) in each phase should be clearly stated including which works require supervision by the ECOW in relation to the current timetable for that phase.
- Evidence that an ECOW has been appointed for each phase and has an appropriate level of experience.
- Details of other responsible person and lines of communication on-site in relation to the implementation of the CEMP.
- Details of any awareness training of on-site non-ecological personnel such as tool box talks provided by the ECOW.
- Who will be responsible for erection and maintenance of on-site fencing, protective barriers and warning signs.
- Who is responsible for compliance with regulations, legal consents, planning conditions, environmental procedures and contractual agreements and the issuing of periodic reports on success and compliance.

These periodic reports should feedback into the CEMP for the subsequent phase and ensure the results of this regular review are effectively communicated to on-site staff.

Monitoring, Compliance, Contingency and Emergency Measures

- Details of contingency measures in the event of an accident or other potentially damaging incident (e.g. pollution incidents; how to deal with previously unrecorded protected species found during construction and restoration; unexpected bad weather; repair of damaged features etc.).
- Details of procedures to avoid pollution incidents (e.g. from fuel spills and site run-off based on an understanding of the wildlife interest at risk).

- Regular review of the implementation of CEMP throughout the construction / restoration phase to monitor effectiveness of mitigation measures and compliance with legal, planning and/or contractual requirements.
- Details of biosecurity protocols / method statements to prevent spread of non-native species between sites.
- Temporary management of existing wildlife features during construction / implementation.
- Ensure copies of all ecological reports relevant to sites works, relevant planning conditions and any protected species licences are kept in the site office and are available to refer to at any time.

Bats

According to the ES there is a total of 16 buildings (buildings B1- B16) present within the site and it is understood that all will be demolished.

Preliminary roost assessment surveys were undertaken on 20th September 2019 and updated on the 24th – 26th May 2021 (trees), 11th April 2019 and updated on the 23rd April 2021, 26th April 2021, 8th July 2021 and 17th August 2021 (buildings) and 27th June 2019 and updated on the 9th April 2021 (structures). On 9th July 2019 a single trapping survey was undertaken in the ancient woodland 'Stoneydean Wood'.

It is unclear which buildings surveyed on which dates as this information was not included. The survey dates per building surveyed should be provided.

Initial bat emergence surveys were undertaken during July to September 2019 and then updated during May to August 2021, a total of three bat emergence surveys were undertaken each year at the buildings at Homestead Farm and a further two emergence surveys at the Clubhouse/Stores buildings. It is not understood why a dawn re-entry survey was not carried out as part of the survey work by ASW Ecology in line with Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (Collins 2016). The start and end times of the activity surveys were not included in the AWS reports. These need to be provided.

The buildings surveyed were those that had been previously identified as moderate to high bat roost potential.

Initial static and activity surveys were carried out in 2019 where a single survey per month between April to September was carried out for activity surveys and static detectors used. The surveys were then updated using the same survey effort in 2021. As per our scoping opinion response we expected two surveys per month. Clarification should be provided prior to determination of the application regarding the reasons for reducing the number of surveys per month contrary to best practice.

A number of limitations are listed regarding the bat surveys undertaken such as:

- No access to the railway bridge (thus potential of bat roosts remains unknown)
- 2019 survey – an unknown exact survey date
- No aerial inspection possible on seven trees near the active red kite nest

- For one tree that was identified as having high potential in the plans no further information is provided and assumptions are made
- One tree assessed as having low potential to support roosting bats it is also stated in the trees to be surveyed further and its potential stated as moderate
- Inconsistencies between the classification of same trees surveyed by Ridgeway Ecology Ltd and ASW Ecology Ltd
- No bat swarming or hibernation surveys have been carried out (unknown whether there are any structures that support these roosts)

It is also stated in the ES that only half of the survey effort was carried out for advanced survey techniques in 2019 and due to the findings from that single night's survey, it was considered by the surveyor that no update surveys using these techniques would be carried out in 2021. Justification should be provided regarding this.

A summary of the buildings surveyed is outlined below.

Buildings/structures

- **Former Clubhouse** (referred as B1 in the ES)
Assessed as having moderate potential to support roosting bats in the PEA by Waterman in 2019 and then updated to low by ASW Ecology in the 2019 bat survey report. According to the photographs in the report and the description indicating numerous gaps and the location of this building located next to optimal habitats for foraging bats, it is not understood how its potential for roosting bats can be revised to being low. Clarification should be provided for the change in the assessment.
- **Storage Building** (referred as B2 in the ES)
Assessed as moderate potential by Waterman in 2019 and again updated to low by ASW Ecology Ltd in 2021. It is not understood why the potential of this structure to support roosting bats was also downgraded. Clarification should be provided for the change in the assessment.
- **Single storey water station** (referred as B3 in the ES) and **two flat roofed substation/water buildings** (referred as B4 and B5 in the ES)
All these three structures were found to have a negligible potential to support roosting bats.
- **Homestead Farm main farmhouse** (referred as B6 in the ES)
Assessed to have a high potential to support roosting bats as multiple potential roosting features were noted included gaps below roof and ridge tiles, missing tiles, gaps below hanging tiles and under lead flashing. It was confirmed from the activity surveys that this building supports a day roost of common pipistrelle with a small number of bats roosting underneath two locations under ridge tiles and under hanging tiles. This building is likely to be subject to further survey to inform a Natural England European Protected Species Licence that will be required to proceed with the demolition works. According to the 2019 survey *"There was no access permission into the remaining roof voids at the main house but many of the lofts have been already converted it was noted."* Thus the following statement is inconclusive *"There was no bat evidence found anywhere at the stated site, either on external surfaces or within the interiors of the buildings searched."* There may have been evidence in the roof voids that were not inspected. Access permission should be sought to complete the survey of this building. It does not appear that roof voids were not inspected owing to health and safety reasons. Three dusk emergence surveys were carried out whereas one should have been a dawn re-entry survey. The location of the surveyors covering the building is not included. This should be

submitted (for all activity surveys covering the different buildings) prior to determination of the application.

- **Single-storey brick structure** (referred as B7 in the ES)
Assessed to have a moderate potential owing to gaps present below corner tiles with further tiles also missing.
- **Derelict single-storey brick structure** (referred as B8).
Assessed to have a moderate potential featuring gaps below roof and ridge tiles.
- **Single-storey structure** (referred as B9 in the ES), **single-storey structure** (referred as B10 in the ES), **open-sided plastic polytunnel** (referred as B11 in the ES), **single storey shed** (referred as B12 in the ES), **single-storey storage structure** (referred as B13 in the ES)
All these structures were assessed to have a negligible potential to support roosting bats.
- **Single-storey structure used as a stables and garage** (referred as B14 in the ES)
Assessed to have a low potential to support roosting bats owing to a few gaps below tiles and a small gap next to the apex on the west elevation.
- **13 Oakington Avenue bungalow** (referred as B15 in the ES) and **15 Oakington Avenue bungalow** (referred as B16)
Buildings were found to support a bat roost, presumably a maternity roost of pipistrelle species. The roof voids were already converted and potential access points for bats existed under hanging tiles of dormer windows. Numerous droppings were found under at least one hanging tile. It is understood that these buildings will be demolished to accommodate a new access road. Further activity survey work is required prior to determination of the application in line with BCT Good Practice Guidelines. A Natural England European Protected Species Licence will be required to proceed with demolition works to these buildings.

The railway bridge was assessed to have a low potential to support roosting bats but it has not been fully accessed thus clarification should be provided regarding this assessment.

Trees

Eight trees were assessed as having high potential to support roosting bats, thirteen trees to have moderate potential and thirteen trees to have low potential. It was confirmed that a common beech (annotated as T037) supports a bat roost but species still remains unknown as no DNA analysis of droppings or further survey was undertaken. The droppings were thought to be of pipistrelle species.

All remaining trees were found to have negligible potential and were not further mentioned in the ES.

It is not clear which trees within the site were subject to a preliminary ground level roost assessment and were found to have negligible potential. In line with BCT Good Practice Guidelines the following information should have been included in the preliminary ground level roost assessment of trees:

- descriptions of trees surveyed (including reference number, species, diameter at breast height);
- descriptions of potential and actual roost features (including height above ground level and aspect);
- description of evidence of bats found;

- trees not surveyed and reasons why;
- all of the above marked onto a plan of the site;
- a set of cross-referenced photographs.

It is stated in the preliminary ground level roost assessment report *"Trees of negligible potential have not been included in this report."* Also no photographs were included, not even for the tree that supports a bat roost.

Along Lodge Lane most trees that were surveyed were found to have a negligible potential to support roosting bats apart from nine that were found to have low potential and one tree that was found to have moderate potential. I was not able to cross-reference if these trees were subject to a climbing survey.

Overall, it is very difficult to understand from the information provided if all the trees to be removed within the site have been subject to a preliminary ground level roost assessment and climbing survey. Ideally a tree removal plan that illustrates also the trees that were surveyed for bats can be submitted to provide clarification. Otherwise a plan illustrating all trees that were surveyed (including the ones that were found to have negligible potential) should be provided.

It is stated in the ES that *"all trees within the woodland areas with bat potential are to be retained as part of the development and only one tree along Lodge Lane requires further survey effort."*

I would recommend that further activity survey work of the tree that has moderate potential and is to be removed is carried out prior to determination of the application.

I agree with the recommendation stated in the ES that *"it should be noted that bat survey data that are older than 18 months in age and the works on said features have not commenced, the need for an update survey should be agreed by the Applicant with the local planning authority to ensure legal compliance"*.

Static and activity surveys

A total of eleven bat species were recorded within the site during the static and activity surveys.

Common pipistrelle was found to be the most frequently encountered species along transect routes with the majority of detections being located along the southern and western boundaries of the site and near the site entrance. Soprano pipistrelle was recorded less frequently and detections were located along the boundaries in the southern and western parts of the site and to the east.

Larger bats such as serotine, noctule and Leisler's bat were occasionally encountered along the woodland edge and Natterer's bats were recorded twice, once in June and once in July along the woodland edge. The 2021 results are largely consistent with those obtained during the 2019 surveys although numbers of common pipistrelles compared to soprano pipistrelles were higher during that year.

Daubenton's bats and whiskered bat / Brandt's bats were recorded on one or two occasions in areas of woodland. Brown long-eared bats were recorded rarely in the areas of woodland and along the woodland edge. This species was probably under-recorded as their most commonly produced echolocation calls are very quiet. A single Nathusius' pipistrelle was recorded in late April at the eastern corner of the site within an area of woodland.

It is stated in the Ridgeway Ecology survey *"Therefore, the overall site is considered to be of low-moderate bat roosting potential with the woodland and woodland areas being much more likely to be used than the grassland areas"* however it does not appear that the woodland areas were well covered during the survey work. In addition it does not appear that the 'Important' hedgerow that was identified as a commuting route in the 2019 surveys was well covered.

Harp Traps

Four soprano pipistrelles, a single common pipistrelle and noctule were captured during this single survey in 2019.

Barbastelle

Compared to two recordings in 2019, there were 107 recordings of barbastelle in 2021. The majority of these were recorded in one of the central woodlands (W2) in July and 15 were recorded at the eastern end of the site in August.

It is stated in the ES *"The majority of the encounters occurred quite late after sunset (5-6 hours), which is around 2 hours before sunrise in July, indicating that bats are not roosting within the site but are passing through and/or using the site for foraging and commuting."*

Further explanation should be provided for the conclusion that no barbastelle roosts are present within the site.

Further clarification should be provided regarding the statement in the Ridgeway Ecology report *"Barbastelles were encountered in the woodland at the eastern end of the site in April, in the woodland in the centre of the site in May and along the woodland edge in the western part of the site in August. It is likely that the site's woodland is of low significance for this species."*

Even by assuming that barbastelle is not roosting within the site but using the site for foraging and commuting, that latter alone is important consideration to take in designing the proposed development layout.

It appears from a heatmap in 2021 Ridgeway Ecology report that the highest density of barbastelle occurrences was in the Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland to the south-west of the site with some also present on the hedgerow to be removed that connects Stoneydean to the south-east Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland.

According to the ES From the roosts present within the site, the two presumably pipistrelle maternity bat roosts (in bungalows B15 and B16) and the small pipistrelle day roost (in building B6) and presumably a pipistrelle day roost in tree T037 roosting bats were assessed to be of County value.

The site was also assessed to be of local value for the assemblage of foraging and commuting bat species. Further clarification is required for the basis of this assessment.

According to the ES owing to the increased number of barbastelle records within the site between the 2019 and 2021 surveys the site was considered to becoming increasingly more important for this species in this area. Therefore it was considered that the site is of County value for foraging and commuting barbastelle bats.

In the Ridgeway Ecology bat survey report (2019) it is stated:

“The introduction of housing will primarily impact upon the grassland areas which are not frequently used by bats as well as impact upon the woodland areas due to an increase in human presence within these areas. Loss of woodland connectivity is likely to have an impact upon the use of the important woodland foraging and potential roosting areas. Potential loss of grassland immediately adjacent to the woodland and treelines is likely to result in a loss of insect prey. An increase in lighting levels is likely to deter many species from foraging and commuting within the site boundary.”

Bat mitigation in relation to the roosts being permanently lost and as additional biodiversity enhancement was proposed including bat access to at least six cavities between the tiles, lining and battens on the west, east or southfacing roof pitches of at least three of the houses near the northern site boundary and woodland areas, six Schwegler 1W bat boxes to be incorporated into the top of the east, south or west-facing walls of the houses near the north site boundary and a total of ten Schwegler 2F bat boxes to be erected within woodland habitat along the south of the site. A plan should have been submitted indicating these locations.

For a housing development of just two dwellings (where bats were not found to be present on the site) the installation of two bat boxes as a biodiversity enhancement is usually secured via a condition as a biodiversity enhancement of that small development. I therefore do not agree with the proposed number of bat features within a development of approximately 380 houses and at a site where eleven species of bats were found to be present, including barbastelle. The proposed features are quite inadequate if we consider the overall impact of this development on bats in Little Chalfont, especially given the poor layout of the development where most bat foraging habitat and commuting routes will be permanently destroyed.

Should you be minded to approve this application, then given the size of this development and the detrimental impact on bat species we would recommend that more consideration is given in terms of bat roosting features within the site. It is not over mitigation given the scale of this development to consider a separate built bat structure, along with a revised layout. We welcome discussions with the consultant ecologists in relation to this.

Birds

A total of five morning-based visits were undertaken within the site with a single survey undertaken once per month between April and August 2019 and 2021.

The initial bird survey visits were undertaken on: 19/04/2019, 15/05/2019, 27/06/2019, 16/07/2019 and 19/08/2019. The updated bird survey visits were undertaken on: 16/04/2021, 24/05/2021, 14/06/2021, 15/07/2021 and 18/08/2021.

A total of 37 bird species were recorded within the site during the survey period in 2021.

It should be noted that the assessment regarding Red Listed and Amber Listed species is out of date owing to a December 2021 Birds of Conservation Concern review and therefore amendments in both Red/Amber lists. I would recommend that the 2021 report is revised to include an up to date assessment of Red and Amber Listed species present on site.

According to the updated Birds of Conservation Concern review swift that was recorded on site is now a Red Listed species.

Nine species were confirmed breeding on site including red kite (a Schedule 1 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 *(as amended)* species that was found breeding within the site in 'Stoneydean Wood'), woodpigeon, green woodpecker, blackbird, blue tit, carrion crow, jackdaw, magpie and the non-native ring-necked parakeet.

The site was assessed of less than Local value for birds owing to the bird species assemblage (apart from red kite).

Red kite bred successfully in both 2019 and in 2021 survey seasons and three fledged young recorded in 2021. The nest was found to be located within the northeast of 'Stoneydean Wood'. Red kite is the most notable bird species within the site and it is assessed to be of County value.

As stated in the ES *"Schedule 1 birds are susceptible to disturbance and so indirect effects during construction such as increased human presence, noise and pollution in conjunction with the loss of foraging habitat such as the vast amount of grassland on Site is likely to have a permanent, adverse effect significant at County level."*

It is also stated that *"The development therefore would implement a 50m buffer zone around the nest and no works would be carried out during the nesting season within this buffer zone."* It is understood that following development a 50m buffer zone will not be possible as different documents of the application state either a 20m buffer or 30m buffer of this woodland. As this species has been recorded breeding at the same location (north-east of 'Stoneydean Wood') in two consecutive years further consideration should be given for the layout of the development to allow larger buffer area / habitat creation surrounding this woodland.

We welcome the proposals of native plant species, including fruit / berry and seed producing species, and plant species beneficial to invertebrates to provide foraging habitat for birds. We would recommend that these plant species are native.

It is also proposed that a total of ten Schwegler 1B Nest Boxes will be installed within the site. Similarly with the number of bat boxes ten bird boxes (and of the same box type) does not appear to be adequate nesting habitat enhancement given the scale of this development. As the Red Listed species swift was recorded we expect a good number of integrated swift boxes in new dwellings along with integrated house sparrow terrace boxes.

It should be noted that no winter and autumn bird surveys were undertaken since the first bird survey in 2019. It is stated in the report *"The main constraint to the bird survey is that this investigation could not be undertaken during the Winter or the Autumn period, due to the commissioning of this new study."* However, as the first survey was in 2019 winter and autumn surveys could have been completed by the submission of this application. All surveys should be completed prior to determination of the application.

Great Crested Newt and Other Amphibians

Great crested newt

The proposals involve development within 250m of ponds where great crested newts may be present. There is inconsistent information regarding the number of ponds within 500m site radius of the site. Once it is stated that the PEA highlighted four ponds within 500m and then in the ES it is stated that there are five ponds.

The 2019 PEA states that pond (referred as P1) is located 100m north-west of the site, pond (referred as P2) is located c.90m east of the site, pond (referred as P3) is located 235m south of the site and pond (referred as P4) is located 380m north of the site. All four of these ponds could not be surveyed due to access restrictions in 2019 and 2021.

A pond (referred as P5) located at the school approximately 150m north of the site was the only pond that was subject to an eDNA survey in July 2021 but at the wrong time of year (outside of the optimal survey season for eDNA great crested newt surveys). This survey revealed a negative result but as it was carried out the wrong time of year great crested newts may have been missed.

The rest of the ponds were not surveyed for great crested newts therefore the assessment in the ES that amphibians are less of Local value is inconclusive. It is unknown if any of these ponds or all support great crested newts.

The proposed development site is classified as an 'Amber' impact risk area for great crested newts. This indicates that there is moderate habitat suitability for newts on site and/or in the surrounding landscape.

Natural England Interim Guidance on District Level Licensing (January, 2020) stipulates that **development projects that are located within 'Red' or 'Amber' impact risk zones must demonstrate proposals do not pose a risk to great crested newts, or, provide detail on the methods that will be used to safeguard against such risks, which may include licensing.**

The presence or likely absence of great crested newts needs to be established by way of a survey in accordance with the Great Crested Newt Conservation Handbook (Froglife, 2001) – comprising a Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment of nearby ponds, eDNA survey and/or great crested newt pond surveys to determine presence/likely absence and population size, where necessary.

If there are up-to date records confirming that great crested newts are present a licence will be required to enable the proposed works to proceed in a lawful manner via obtaining a European Protected Species (EPS) site-based mitigation licence from Natural England. Where on-site mitigation is required the LPA must have confidence that appropriate levels of mitigation will be delivered within the scheme.

Alternatively, the District Licencing scheme (operated by the Nature Space Partnership) can be applied in the absence of the further information or in place of the current site-based mitigation licensing required above. Under Buckinghamshire Council's District Licence, development works that may cause impacts upon great crested newts can be authorised as part of the planning process.

For great crested newt matters and concerns refer to the Newt Officer's comments.

Other amphibians

The development should demonstrate how it will not also impact on other amphibians such as common toad, a NERC Act Schedule 41 Priority Species.

Low number of common toad were found within the site during the reptile surveys, within the woodland edge habitat. Wildlife kerbs should be considered in any roads close to suitable amphibian habitat.

Reptiles

Survey visits were carried out in April, May, June and September 2019 by ASW Ecology and then updated in April, May and June 2021. Ideally survey visits should have been also carried out in September 2021 (as optimal months for reptile surveys are April, May and September).

A plan illustrating the location of the artificial refugia has not been included in the reports. It is stated in the 2021 report *"The entire site was surveyed using refugia e.g. fields, hedgerows and woodlands, were investigated for reptile and amphibian species presence. There was an additional emphasis on boundary habitats such as scrub boundaries and tall grassland edges where reptiles would expect to be present in higher densities."*

The plan indicating the location of refugia should be provided or at least a plan indicating the areas that were surveyed by the use of refugia. In addition, the timings of the survey visits was not included in both 2019 and 2021 reports. This information should be provided.

In September 2019 a single slow-worm was found under a roofing felt at the western corner of the ancient woodland 'Stonydean Wood' where tall grass meets bramble scrub.

A total of three slow-worms were found during any single survey visit close to the railway line and near adjacent rear gardens in 2021. This included maximums of two sub-adults and one adult male. One juvenile grass snake was found near to the adjacent rear gardens and was considered to be the same individual on a number of visits. A total of two common toads were also recorded. This consisted of one male and one female near to ancient woodland 'Netherground Spring'.

In the 2021 report it is stated that a low population of both grass snake and slow-worm is present on site however it should be noted that in line with 'Froglife Advice Sheet 10 - Reptile Survey' regarding determining the relative population size of reptiles at least 20 visits per season are recommended.

Reptiles were assessed to be of less than Local value according to the ES.

According to the 2021 reptile survey report *"it is essential that a reptile translocation programme, in conjunction with habitat manipulation, is undertaken within the application site before any habitat clearance works can commence."* *"A new receptor site will need to be found for the reptiles at the application site, before any land clearance can begin."* There is no further information about the receptor site in the report. I would recommend that a site plan detailing the location of the receptor site (and details of any further management) is submitted prior to determination of the application.

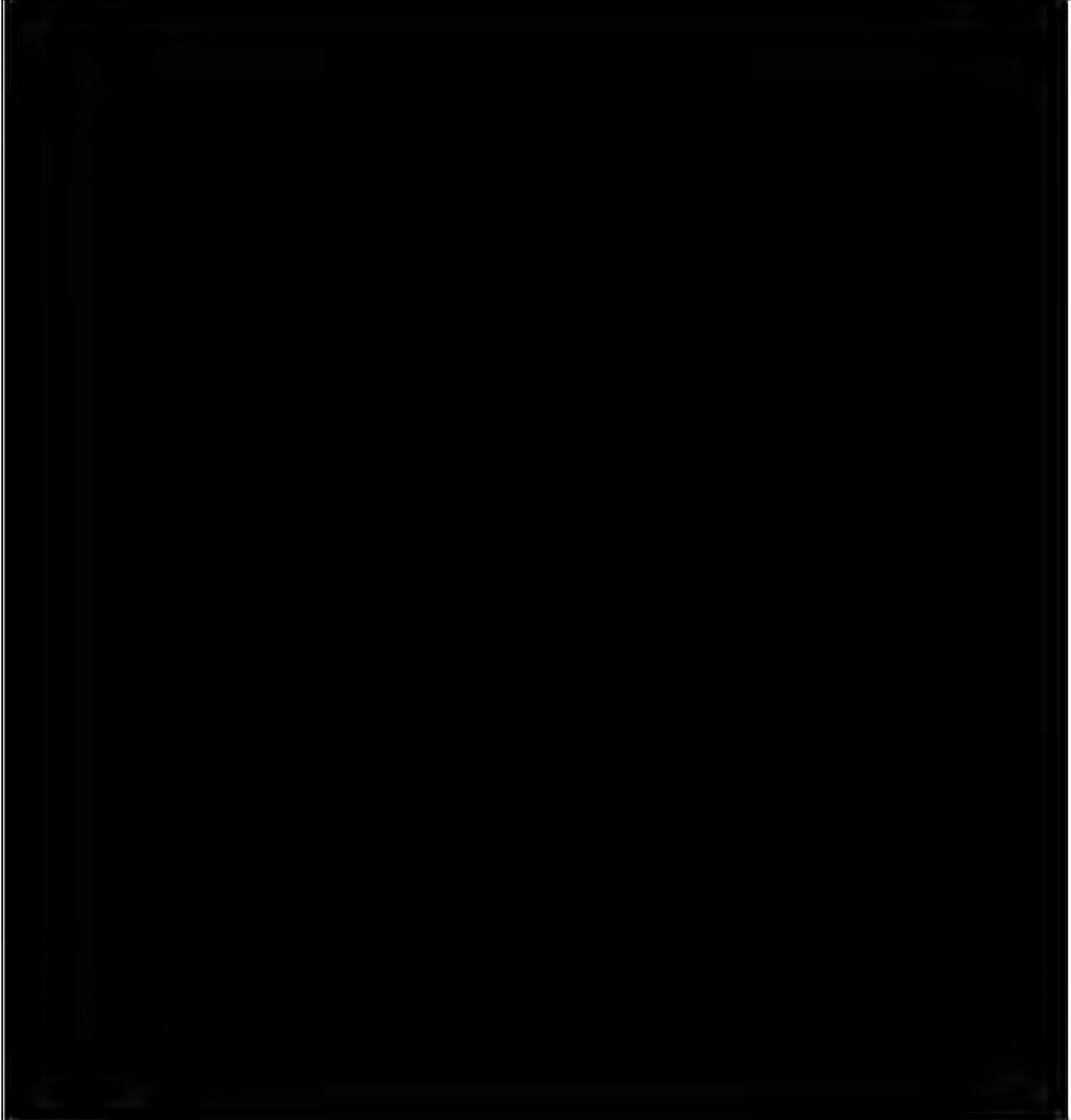
Hazel Dormouse

Dormouse surveys were carried in 2019 and 2021 by Don MacPherson.

According to the reports nest tubes were installed into all habitats that could possibly supply feeding, nesting or habitat corridors for hazel dormice at a maximum of 20m intervals. The site was surveyed from April 2019 to November 2019 and from April 2021 to September 2021.

No signs of dormouse activity were found anywhere on the site. Only remains of rose hips where mice had used the nest tubes as feeding stations were found and limited number of hazel nuts to have been opened by squirrels, mice or voles.

As the closest dormouse record exists within 3 miles of the site I would recommend that a precautionary approach is taken and any subsequent Construction and Environmental Management Plan fully addresses protection measures for this species.



Invertebrates
<p>The application site is within a 'B-Line' area; a Buglife scheme to map networks which are important to pollinating invertebrates.</p>
<p>Invertebrate surveys were carried out on four occasions in May, June, August and September 2019 and on three occasions in 2021, in May, June and August.</p>
<p>In 2019 areas of actively horse-grazed paddock in the south of the site produced several interesting and scarce species, but these were explicitly excluded from the 2021 survey due to these areas being retained as part of the development.</p>
<p>A total of 321 species have been recorded within the site from all surveys in 2019 and 2021.</p>

In 2019 one nationally rare, Red Data Book species *Heriades truncorum* was recorded (a solitary bee found mainly in south-east England) and six nationally scarce (notable) species including *Anthocomus fasciatus* (a small 'false' soldier beetle of rough grassy places), *Dorytamus ictor* (a small weevil associated with large poplar trees), *Lasius brunneus* (a small ant associated with broadleaved woodlands in central England), *Microplontus campestris* (a small weevil that feeds on ox-eye daisy), *Psylliodes luteola* (a small flea beetle with uncertain habitat requirements) and *Rhinocyllus conicus* (a scarce weevil that feeds on thistles). Eighteen very local species were also recorded (very local status is a much more subjective, but nevertheless useful, measure of scarcity and is based on personal experience, published and unpublished records. It is applied to species that are very limited in distribution or confined to very limited specialist habitats.).

The 2021 surveys revealed that the most important parts of the site for invertebrates seems to be the areas of old woodland. The areas of woodland produced numerous scarce insects usually associated with dead and decaying fungoid timber. These include the beetles *Endomychus coccineus*, *Lithostygnus serripennis*, *Mycetophagus piceus*, *Platyrhinus resinosus*, *Pyrochroa coccinea*, *Triplax aenea*, *Uleiota planata*, and the two ants *Temnothorax nylanderi* and *Lasius brunneus*. Perhaps the most interesting species to be recorded was the crampball weevil, *Platyrhinus resinosus*.

Due to the woodlands on site being retained as part of the development, invertebrates were assessed to be of less than Local value.

It does not appear that a Pantheon analysis was carried out in line with Government Guidance Invertebrates: advice for making planning decisions. Pantheon is a database tool developed by Natural England and the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology to analyse invertebrate sample data, by recognising assemblage types and scoring each type according to its conservation value. This information can be used to determine site quality by revealing whether the species list is indicative of good quality habitat, inform on species ecology and assist in management decisions by revealing the key ecological resources ([Pantheon \(brc.ac.uk\)](http://Pantheon.brc.ac.uk)).

The development proposals including proposed planting scheme and other biodiversity enhancements (e.g. decayed deadwood piles) should be informed by the results of the invertebrate survey work to ensure that habitat for pollinating insects are retained and enhanced, to contribute to the wider aims of the B-Lines network.

Hedgehog

The site has potential to support hedgehog given also suitable habitat in the nearby gardens. Should the application be granted approval the CEMP produced must address the protection of hedgehogs during the construction phases of the development but also post development by installing hedgehog domes, log piles but also by allowing dispersal of the species throughout the gardens, by installing hedgehog pathways/gaps in garden fences.

Invasive Non-Native Species

A large stand of Japanese knotweed, a non-native and invasive species listed in Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (*as amended*) was recorded within the grazing paddocks towards the south of the site during the surveys in 2019 and 2021.

I agree with the recommendations in the ES that an eradication programme is implemented. Japanese knotweed is classified as controlled waste and as such, the plant and any soil containing rhizome material has to be disposed of in accordance with the Environmental Protection Act (Duty of Care Regulations) 1991.

Another species listed in Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (*as amended*) the Spanish bluebell (and hybrid bluebell) are present within the site. We expect to see details of the management of this plant in the Woodland Management Strategy.

Sustainable Drainage

Sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) need to be designed using best practice for wildlife in line with 'Sustainable Drainage Systems: Maximising the potential for people and wildlife - A guide for local authorities and developers' document by the RSPB and Wildfowl and Wetland Trust.

It is not clear how the ancient woodland will be protected from surface water run off resulting from this development. Owing to the topography of the site surface water can flow through both areas of the ancient woodland. In addition, it is understood that some of the proposed drainage works are located next to the woodland.

Artificial Lighting

A lighting design strategy is required to ensure that the proposed development will not impact on existing valuable habitats (woodlands, hedgerows, grasslands) that are used by nocturnal species such as bats and badger.

Impacts through external lighting (including street lighting, security lighting, school sports pitch lighting, car headlights) can have significant impacts on bat behaviour and foraging/commuting corridors. It is therefore considered that an appropriate level of assessment will be required to determine the importance of the site to bats, and for the development to be designed to avoid/mitigate impacts as appropriate.

Should this application be granted approval the lighting scheme can be secured via a condition as the location and light fittings can be confirmed at the Reserved Matters stage for each phase of development. However, owing to the sensitivity of this site, consisting of important habitats such as the ancient woodland and light-sensitive species such as bats, including barbastelle, a lighting design strategy that will outline likely lux levels throughout the site and dark zones is required prior to determination of the application so we can fully assess the impact of this development on habitats and bats in particular. We would recommend that this is submitted following revision of the proposed layout.

An illuminance plan/contour plots should be provided which show the extent of light spill and its intensity (minimum and maximum lux values). Models should include light from all luminaires and each should be set to the maximum output anticipated to be used in normal operation on site.

Artificial lighting design needs to be designed in accordance with the 'Guidance Note 08/18: Bats and artificial lighting in the UK' (Institute of Lighting Professionals, 2018).

Legislation, Policy and Guidance

Reasonable Likelihood of Protected Species

Permission can be refused if adequate information on protected species is not provided by an applicant, as it will be unable to assess the impacts on the species and thus meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (2018), ODPM Circular 06/2005 or the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. The Council has the power to request information under Article 4 of the Town and Country (Planning Applications) Regulations 1988 (SI1988.1812) (S3) which covers general information for full applications. CLG 2007 'The validation of planning applications' states that applications should not be registered if there is a requirement for an assessment of the impacts of a development on biodiversity interests.

Section 99 of ODPM Circular 06/2005 states:

"It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision. The need to ensure ecological surveys are carried out should therefore only be left to coverage under planning conditions in exceptional circumstances, with the result that the surveys are carried out after planning permission has been granted. However, bearing in mind the delay and cost that may be involved, developers should not be required to undertake surveys for protected species unless there is a reasonable likelihood of the species being present and affected by development. Where this is the case, the survey should be completed and any necessary measures to protect the species should be in place, through conditions and / or planning obligations, before permission is granted."

European Protected Species Licensing (applies to bats, dormice and great crested newts)

Before granting planning permission, the local planning authority should satisfy itself that the impacts of the proposed development on European Protected Species (EPS) have been addressed and that if a protected species derogation licence is required, the licensing tests can be met and a licence is likely to be granted by Natural England.

As a EPS licence is required the applicant will need to provide the answers to all three licensing tests, alongside a mitigation strategy. The three tests are that:

1. the activity to be licensed must be for imperative reasons of overriding public interest or for public health and safety;
2. there must be no satisfactory alternative; and
3. favourable conservation status of the species must be maintained.

Together with the ecologist's report, which answers test 3, the applicant should provide written evidence for tests 1 and 2. This can be contained within the ecological report or as separate document.

If the competent authority is satisfied that the three tests can be met, it should impose a planning condition preventing the development from proceeding without first receiving a copy of the EPS licence or correspondence stating that such a licence is not necessary. This approach ensures compliance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and enables a local planning authority to discharge its obligations under the Crime and Disorder Act and its wider duties under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 in relation to protected species.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Paragraph 118a of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states: “*Planning policies and decisions should: a) encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains – such as developments that would enable new habitat creation or improve public access to the countryside”*

Paragraph 170d of the NPPF requires that: “*Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by ... minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressure”.*

Paragraph 175d of the NPPF states that: “*When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles...development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.”*

Chiltern District Local Plan, Adopted September 1997 (CDLP) and Chiltern Core Strategy, Adopted 2011 (CCS)

Buckinghamshire Council resolved to withdraw the Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan 2036 on 21st October 2020. The Core Strategy for Chiltern District (adopted November 2011) Policy ‘CS24: Biodiversity’ states that: “*The Council will aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity within the District. In particular:*

- *the Council will work with its partners to protect and enhance legally protected species and all sites and networks of habitats of international, national, regional or local importance for wildlife or geology*
- *development proposals should protect biodiversity and provide for the long-term management, enhancement, restoration and, if possible, expansion of biodiversity, by aiming to restore or create suitable semi-natural habitats and ecological networks to sustain wildlife. This will be in accordance with the Buckinghamshire Biodiversity Action Plan as well as the aims of the Biodiversity Opportunity Areas and the Chiltern AONB Management Plan.*
- *where development proposals are permitted, provision will be made to safeguard and where possible enhance any ecological interest.*
- *where, in exceptional circumstances, development outweighs any adverse effect upon the biodiversity of the site and there are no reasonable alternative sites available, replacement habitat of higher quality will be provided through mitigation and/or compensation to achieve a net gain in biodiversity.*

The Delivery DPD will indicate on maps the location of the various sites mentioned above as required by PPS9.”

If you have any queries regarding this advice, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Agni-Louiza Arampoglou

Ecology Officer

ecology.csb@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Buckinghamshire Ecology, Newt Officer

16/03/22 Holding Objection; Insufficient GCN Information Provided. Further Information Required:

- Proof of entry into Buckinghamshire Council's District Licence Scheme – via provision of a NatureSpace Report or Certificate; or
- Provide the necessary GCN survey information. For all other matters relating to Ecology please refer to the Ecology Officer's Comments.

Discussion

Please see my comments from 25th January 2022 regarding the previous reports submitted for this application.

These comments will review the updated ecological information submitted.

The development falls within the amber impact risk zone for great crested newts. Impact risk zones have been derived through advanced modelling to create a species distribution map which predicts likely presence. In the amber impact zone, there is suitable habitat and a high likelihood of great crested newt presence.

- There are 4 known ponds within 500m of the development proposal. The closest pond is located 30m to the north-west of the site. There is 1 pond located 100m to the north-east. Another pond is 130m to the south-east. The last pond is located 320m to the south of the site. A fifth pond has been identified that is not on the pond layer.
- There is connectivity between the development and surrounding features in the landscape via grassland, hedgerows, and woodland.

An Environmental Statement Addendum by Waterman (February 2022) of the site at Land Between Lodge Lane and Burtons Lane, Little Chalfont, Buckinghamshire has been carried out and concluded that:

- 'An updated search of aerial photography for ponds within 500m of the new Highways Improvements Works RLB has been undertaken and found five ponds within the 500m buffer, one additional pond was identified as compared to the November 2021 ES. Pond 1 (P1) is located approximately 55m west of the Site within an area of woodland of Amersham Road. Pond 2 (P2) is located approximately 155m to the southeast of the Site within the middle of a grassland field located to the east of Lodge Lane. Pond 3 (P3) is located approximately 300m to the south of the Site within a private residential property. Pond 4 (P4) is located approximately 70m north of the Site within a patch of scrub and trees on the corner of Amersham Road and Church Grove. The final pond, Pond 5 (P5) is located approximately 140m north of the Site within the grounds of the Little Chalfont Primary School. This pond was subject to eDNA sampling in 2021 as part of the November 2021 ES and found GCN to be absent.'
- 'No previous surveys or Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessments have been carried out

on the ponds (apart from eDNA on P5) due to access restrictions (see limitations).’

- ‘The location of the ponds in relation to the Site can be seen in Figure 3 of Appendix 12.2A (WIE15569- 101-GR-PEAA-3A).’
- ‘No records of great crested newt (GCN) *Triturus cristatus* were returned from the data search in 2021. The habitats being lost as part of the Highways Improvements Works are considered suboptimal for this species, with the proposed works affecting highly managed modified grassland and hardstanding only. Therefore, GCN is assessed to be not Significant.’

A Review of Submitted Addendum Ecological Information by Bioscan (March 2022) of the site at Land Between Lodge Lane and Burtons Lane, Little Chalfont, Buckinghamshire has been carried out and concluded that:

- ‘Section 12.3- Great Crested Newt. This section states: “[...] Pond 5 (P5) is located approximately 140m north of the Site within the grounds of the Little Chalfont Primary School. This pond was subject to eDNA sampling in 2021 as part of the November 2021 ES and found GCN to be absent.” However, the Applicant has failed to acknowledge the limitations to the reliability of this survey data, arising from having undertaken the sampling outside of the eDNA seasonal survey window (which falls between mid-April and June)⁷, and therefore this result cannot and should not be relied upon. This section goes onto state: “No previous surveys or Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessments have been carried out on the ponds (apart from eDNA on P5) due to access restrictions”’
- ‘However, two of the ponds are located immediately adjacent to public highways and would allow for the Applicant to undertake HSI assessments. Entering the various parameters to the HSI ‘calculator’, and taking a conservative approach to scoring the various indices, the resulting score for P1 was calculated to be 0.55, with P4 returning a result of 0.58. These scores place these two waterbodies within the ‘Below average’ category for great crested newt suitability. However, as previously stated, the scores are based on conservative parameters being entered, and without the assessor viewing the ponds on the ground, and consequently the score may be higher. Furthermore, it is unclear why the Applicant did not undertake a HSI assessment of the pond that was accessed for the eDNA sampling (P5), especially given the limitations imposed by having undertaken that sampling outside of the optimal season.’

I am still not satisfied that the applicant has adequately demonstrated that there will no impact to great crested newts and/or their habitat as a result of the development being approved.

Only one pond out of the five identified within 500m of the site was surveyed for its likely presence/absence of GCN via eDNA in July 2021 which is outside of the acceptable eDNA survey season. This survey result is invalid and cannot be considered to determine the likely absence of GCN from this waterbody.

The rest of the ponds have not been surveyed for great crested newts therefore the conclusions in the ES Addendum that amphibians are ‘not Significant’ is inconclusive. It is unknown if any of these ponds or all support great crested newts. Should GCN be present in these nearby ponds they may well use the site during their terrestrial dispersal phase.

A lack of records does not mean an absence of GCN, it can simply mean that an area is

under recorded. Environmental records can provide an indication of the likely presence of a species on, or within proximity, to the site. The absence of records for protected species and sites does not necessarily indicate absence. The use of historical environmental records is not a substitute for appropriate surveys at the correct time of year when informing land use change and development proposals.

Lastly, it is understood that proposals will only affect modified grassland and hardstanding, however whilst short grassland and amenity grassland is often less appealing to newts and would provide limited routes for dispersal should GCN be present, it is important to note that “sheep, horse and cattle grazed pasture are all used by great crested newts. Very short pasture is easily traversed by newts, and provides night-time foraging, but little in the way of shelter” (Froglife, 2001).

Therefore, the likely absence of GCN from this site cannot be determined with the current level of information presented.

In line with the guidance from Natural England (Great crested newts: District Level Licensing for development projects, Natural England, March 2021), further information is required to either rule out impacts to great crested newts (i.e. to show that the rest of the ponds within 500m are not suitable for great crested newts, or carry out a survey to determine presence/likely absence and then present appropriate mitigation and compensatory measures to satisfy the licensing tests) or demonstrate how GCN will be dealt with. The applicant needs to either:

- Submit a NatureSpace Report or Certificate to demonstrate that any potential impacts of the proposed development can be addressed through Buckinghamshire Council’s District Licence. GCN survey information is not required for this option; or
- Provide further information to describe the status of the ponds within 500m and the suitability of habitat on and adjacent to site, in line with Natural England’s Standing Advice, to rule out impacts to great crested newts, or demonstrate how any impacts can be addressed through appropriate mitigation/compensation proposals*

*Please be aware that as part of this potential population assessments may need to be undertaken by a suitable qualified ecologist in accordance with the Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines (English Nature, 2001). If GCN are identified, then an EPS site-based mitigation licence may be required. Some of the surveys are seasonally constrained.

For all other matters relating to Ecology please refer to the Ecology Officer’s comments.

25/01/22 Holding Objection, Further GCN Information Required:

- Provision of a NatureSpace Report or Certificate; or
- Provide the necessary GCN Survey information.

For all other matters relating to Ecology please refer to the Ecology Officer’s comments

Discussion

The development falls within the amber impact risk zone for great crested newts. Impact risk zones have been derived through advanced modelling to create a species distribution

map which predicts likely presence. In the amber impact zone, there is suitable habitat and a high likelihood of great crested newt presence.

- There are 4 known ponds within 500m of the development proposal. The closest pond is located 30m to the north-west of the site. There is 1 pond located 100m to the north-east. Another pond is 130m to the south-east. The last pond is located 320m to the south of the site.

- There is connectivity between the development and surrounding features in the landscape via grassland, hedgerows, and woodland.

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) by Waterman (March 2019) of the site at Land Between Lodge Lane and Burtons Lane, Little Chalfont, Buckinghamshire has been carried out and concluded that:

- 'Based on the findings of the PEA and update PEA a range of additional surveys for flora and fauna have been undertaken to determine the ecological value of the Site, including; ...
• eDNA Survey of accessible pond at Little Chalfont Primary School;'

- 'No records of great crested newt (GCN) *Triturus cristatus* were returned from the data search. Furthermore, no waterbodies are present on Site. However, OS mapping suggest four ponds are located within 500m of the Site; pond P1 located 100m north-west of the site, pond P2 located c.90m east of the site, pond P3 located 235m south of Site and pond P4 located 380m north of the site.'

- 'Suitable terrestrial habitat (including hibernation opportunities) is present on Site for amphibian species, with suitable terrestrial connectivity existing between these ponds and the Site. Whilst a railway line and/or road(s) are present separating the Site from P2 and P4, these are no considered to act as a complete barrier to potential dispersal of GCN from these ponds and onto the Site.'

- 'An eDNA survey should be undertaken to provide confidence of the presence/likely absence of GCN within the four off-Site ponds and inform consultation with the determining authority regarding the requirement for further survey work for this species.' - 'Should eDNA surveys confirm the presence of GCN within off-Site ponds, further population class assessments may be required to determine the population sizes within each pond and likelihood of impacts as a result of the Development.'

An Ecological Walkover Survey by Waterman (June 2021) of the site at Land Between Lodge Lane and Burtons Lane, Little Chalfont, Buckinghamshire has been carried out and concluded that:

- 'No additional waterbodies that are already stated in the 2019 PEA were recorded on or within 500m of the Site'

- 'There has been no significant change to the operation or management of the Site and results of the assessment of the 2019 PEA remain valid.'

An Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report (ES) by Waterman (July 2021) of the site at Land Between Lodge Lane and Burtons Lane, Little Chalfont, Buckinghamshire has been carried out and concluded that:

- 'No records of great crested newt (GCN) *Triturus cristatus* were returned from the data search. Furthermore, no waterbodies are present on Site. However, five ponds are located within 500m of the Site.'
- 'Ponds P1, P2, P3 and P4 (see Figure 12.1, Appendix 12.2) could not be surveyed (see limitations section) but pond P5 located at the school approximately 150m north of the Site was surveyed by ADAS as part of this assessment. Although no Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) surveys were undertaken at the ponds (again see limitation sections), an eDNA assessment of pond P5 was carried out in July 2021 with a negative result.'
- 'With low numbers of common toad found on Site within the woodland edge habitat that is to be retained as part of the Development, Amphibians are assessed to be of less than Local value.'

I am not satisfied that the applicant has adequately demonstrated that there will be no impact to great crested newts and/or their habitat as a result of the development being approved. There are inconsistencies regarding the number of ponds within 500m of the site. With the PEA discussing four ponds within 500m and the ES stating there are five ponds. There is also reference to a figure (Figure 12.1, Appendix 12.2) depicting the pond locations, but this could not be located to help understand the exact location of each pond numbered and discussed.

Only one pond out of the five identified within 500m of the site was surveyed for its likely presence/absence of GCN via eDNA in July 2021 which is outside of the acceptable eDNA survey season. This survey result is invalid and cannot be considered to determine the likely absence of GCN from this waterbody.

The rest of the ponds were not surveyed for great crested newts therefore the assessment in the ES that amphibians are to be of 'less than Local value' is inconclusive. It is unknown if any of these ponds or all support great crested newts. Therefore, the likely absence of GCN from this site cannot be determined with the current level of information presented.

In line with the guidance from Natural England (Great crested newts: District Level Licensing for development projects, Natural England, March 2021), further information is required to either rule out impacts to great crested newts (i.e. to show that the rest of the ponds within 500m are not suitable for great crested newts, or carry out a survey to determine presence/likely absence and then present appropriate mitigation and compensatory measures to satisfy the licensing tests) or demonstrate how GCN will be dealt with. The applicant needs to either:

- Submit a NatureSpace Report or Certificate to demonstrate that any potential impacts of the proposed development can be addressed through Buckinghamshire Council's District Licence. GCN survey information is not required for this option; or
- Provide further information to describe the status of the ponds within 500m and the suitability of habitat on and adjacent to site, in line with Natural England's Standing Advice, to rule out impacts to great crested newts, or demonstrate how any impacts can be addressed through appropriate mitigation/compensation proposals*

*Please be aware that as part of this potential population assessments may need to be

undertaken by a suitable qualified ecologist in accordance with the Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines (English Nature, 2001). If GCN are identified, then an EPS site-based mitigation licence may be required. Some of the surveys are seasonally constrained.

For all other matters relating to Ecology please refer to the Ecology Officer's comments.

More details on the district licensing scheme can be found at www.naturespaceuk.com

Buckinghamshire Environmental Services (Noise and Air Quality) 19/01/22

With reference to the Air Quality section of the Environmental Statement submitted as part of the planning application outlined above, I have the following comments to make

1. According to the Air Quality Assessment the Development would not provide a centralised combustion plant (as set out in the Energy and Sustainability Statement). The Strategic Environment would discourage the provision of a centralised combustion plant. However, should one be provided details of the plant used and its impact on local air quality will need to be assessed.
2. As recommended in the Air Quality Assessment a condition requiring a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to be produced and implemented. The CEMP to be approved by the Local Authority.
3. Traffic flow data comprising Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) flows, traffic composition (% Heavy-Duty Vehicles (HDVs)) used in the model were provided by Motion. Any significant amendments made in the traffic data will have to be reflected in the Air Quality Modelling.

Please see below comments from Andrew Godman on Environmental Noise

1. Outline application - I do not wish to make an objection to the generality of this planning application on environmental noise and vibration grounds as I believe that the main thrust of the proposed development (i.e. dwellings, school, community building, etc.) in the location cited is acceptable.

However, the impacts of both noise and vibration are situational in nature and therefore I recommend to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) that these issues are dealt with as Reserved Matters in any subsequent full application concerning the precise location and design of the dwellings et al.

Notwithstanding the above, the impact of constructional activity associated with the above on the existing and prospective communities will warrant specific control during that phase of development. I would recommend that this is done by means of a specific condition of the kind set out below.

2. Control of environmental impacts arising from construction activity

Given that the development will be associated with a prolonged construction phase I suggest that a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) is required – this has

been accepted by the applicant (see para 9.57, et al, of the Planning Statement dated November 2021 submitted in support of the application).

I suggest the following condition but it may be that the LPA wishes to expand the matters subject to control via the CEMP to include those raised by other consultees such as the Highway Authority:

No part of the development hereby approved shall commence until a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The CEMP shall set out, as a minimum, site specific measures to control and monitor impacts arising in relation to noise and vibration (with particular regard to piling and power floating activities as appropriate), dust, and fumes. It shall also set out arrangements by which the developer shall maintain communication with local stakeholders in the vicinity of the site, and by which the developer shall monitor and document compliance with the measures set out in the CEMP. The development shall be carried out in full accordance with the approved CEMP at all times.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of nearby residential and commercial premises and the area generally.

Buckinghamshire Environmental Services (Contamination) Officer

04/03/22 I have reviewed the changes to the Preliminary Risk Assessment prepared by Waterman Infrastructure & Environment Ltd (Report ref. WIE15569-110-1-3-1-PRA). I have no additional comments to make with regards to land contamination. Please refer to my previous comments dated 24th January 2022 (Our ref. 21/02815/SECONT).

24/01/22 I have reviewed the Preliminary Risk Assessment prepared by Waterman Infrastructure & Environment Ltd (Report ref. WIE15569-110-1-2-2-PRA).

The PRA has identified a number of plausible contaminant linkages that require further investigation. The Environmental Consultant has recommended that an intrusive investigation be carried out.

Based on this, the following contaminated land condition is recommended on this and any subsequent applications for the site.

The application requires the following condition(s):

1. Prior to the commencement of development 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

TFL Safeguarding

08/03/22 We have no additional comments to make on this planning application except

that our attached comments to the original application are still valid and should be taken into consideration.

18/01/22 I can confirm that the planning applicant is in communication with London Underground engineers with regard to the bridge structure part of this development but not the wider development. Therefore we have no objection in principle to this planning application subject to the applicant fulfilling their obligations to London Underground and Transport for London under the legal requirements between ourselves and the promoter of the development .

However, to ensure safety of our operational railway, we request that the grant of planning permission be subject to conditions to secure the following:

The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until detailed design and method statements (in consultation with London Underground) for each stage of the development have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority which:

- provide demolition and construction details on all structures including all of the foundations, basement and ground floor structures, or for any other structures below ground level, including piling (temporary and permanent),
- provide details on the use of tall plant/scaffolding · accommodate the location of the existing London Underground structures
- there should be no opening windows or balconies/terraces facing the LU railway elevation
- demonstrate access to elevations of the building adjacent to the 46 property boundary with London Underground can be undertaken without recourse to entering our land
- demonstrate that there will at no time be any potential security risk to our railway, property or structures
- accommodate ground movement arising from the construction thereof
- mitigate the effects of noise and vibration arising from the adjoining operations within the structures

The development shall thereafter be carried out in all respects in accordance with the approved design and method statements, and all structures and works comprised within the development hereby permitted which are required by the approved design statements in order to procure the matters mentioned in paragraphs of this condition shall be completed, in their entirety, before any part of the building hereby permitted is occupied.

Reason: To ensure that the development does not impact on existing London Underground transport infrastructure, in accordance with London Plan 2021, draft London Plan policy T3 and 'Land for Industry and Transport' Supplementary Planning Guidance 2012.

We also ask that the following informative is added:

The applicant is advised to contact London Underground Infrastructure Protection in advance of preparation of final design and associated method statements, in particular with regard to: demolition; drainage; excavation; construction methods; tall plant: scaffolding: security; boundary treatment; safety barriers; landscaping and lighting

This response is made as Railway Infrastructure Manager under the "Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2015". It therefore relates only to railway engineering and safety matters. Other parts of TfL may have other comments in line with their own statutory responsibilities.

TFL (Planning)

25/02/22 Thank you for consulting Transport for London (TfL). I can confirm that we have no additional comments to make on the amended documentation. For information I attach again our previous response sent on 12th January which sets out TfL's observations on the planning application.

12/01/22 Thank you for consulting Transport for London (TfL). The site is adjacent to tracks used by London Underground's Metropolitan line services and is close to Chalfont and Latimer station. We have reviewed the accompanying transport assessment and have the following officer level comments to make on the proposed development.

1 - Table 3.1 which sets out services from Chalfont and Latimer station contains a number of errors and should read as follows:

Destination	peak frequency	Provider
London Marylebone (*)	30 minutes	Chiltern Railways
Aylesbury and/or Aylesbury Vale P	30 minutes	Chiltern Railways
Aldgate and/or Baker Street (*)	10 minutes	Transport for London
Chesham	30 minutes	Transport for London
Amersham	15 minutes	Transport for London

There are no direct services to Watford and services to Harrow on the Hill all continue to central London destinations.

2 - Para 3.19 states

Table 3.1 demonstrates that the site is located in close proximity to approximately 10 rail services an hour in each direction.

This should in fact say 8 **peak** trains per hour (also repeated in para 8.3) - 6 Metropolitan line and 2 Chiltern Railway services. Off-peak frequencies to/from Amersham are 2 tph, and sometimes Aylesbury / London Marylebone are less than 2 tph so off peak services are much less frequent.

3 - Para 3.20

Although TfL is not responsible for bus services we note the limited operating hours although this is only obvious from appendix C.

For route 71/73, there are only five buses per day to/from Little Chalfont at 0820, 1030, 1230, 1430,1547.

For route 103, operating hours are limited to the following times:

0628 - 1823	M-F eastbound
0800 - 1751	Sat eastbound
0737 - 1938	M-F westbound
0906 - 1901	Sat westbound

4 - Para 4.5

The proposed widening of Lodge Lane will affect the rail (London Underground) over road bridge on Lodge Lane although the impacts are unclear. Colleagues in London Underground Infrastructure Protection (LUIP) will comment on this in more detail in their separate response

Para 4.8

We note that the route through the site will be designed as a bus and sustainable transport link, with no access provided to through traffic. However, it is not clear how this would be enforced

Para 4.11

Colleagues in LUIP and TfL Commercial Development will provide advice to the applicants regarding the proposed pedestrian/cycle bridge including the need for enclosure as well as legal agreements to cover ownership, construction and future maintenance

Para 8.3

We would have expected to see more analysis of the impacts on rail services and stations, for example looking at the peak hour (rather than the whole of the peak), some assessment of current/future train loading and a basic analysis of station gateline capacity usage pre/post implementation. Given the development's size and location, it is not anticipated that there would be any major capacity issues which require mitigation but we would expect to see some analysis to confirm this.

Although it is stated that '*....the increase of 88 departures equating to an average of 9 persons per train in the morning peak*', the average is misleading as the departures are concentrated on the six fast(er) services, not the all stations services. Chiltern Railway services generally have a short formation, 3 or 4-car which led to high peak services being full and standing pre-pandemic.

Para 8.4

It is claimed that '*while there is a regular hourly bus service along the A404 Amersham Road, linking High Wycombe and Watford, the demand for such a service is low given the excellent rail and tube provision.*'

There is in fact no direct rail service between Little Chalfont and either Watford or High Wycombe.

Bus usage is more likely to be low because of the limited hours of operation and the long journey times which are affected by severe traffic congestion.

I hope that these comments are helpful and that feedback can be provided to the applicants so that they can respond to the issues raised

Thames Valley Police

9/03/22 I have no additional comments to add to our submission dated the 20th January 2022.

20/01/22 Whilst I do not wish to object to this outline proposal in terms of access, consultation with BTP should be sought in relation to the proposed pedestrian route over the railway line at the north of the development. I will forward the consultation to them.

I provide the following comments to aid the applicant moving forward to subsequent submissions and to prevent any future objections from Thames Valley Police. The comments are provided with the aim that the resultant development should meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, address section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and not negatively impact our police resources. This is in no way an exhaustive list and

I would urge the applicant to seek further consultation with us as the design and applications evolve.

Footpaths and Cycle Paths

Footpaths and cycle routes should be as open as possible providing clear sightline to enable the user to assess the route ahead and sufficiently wide enough to allow people to pass comfortably. They should also have a sufficient level of surveillance along the route to help safeguard it from being used by those intent on crime and anti-social behaviour. They should be positioned to the front of dwellings where surveillance is present.

‘Public footpaths should not run to the rear of, and provide access to gardens, rear yards or dwellings as these have been proven to generate crime’ Ref. Secured By Design, Homes 2019, Footpath Design

Where possible /cycle paths should run alongside the road way, albeit with sufficient space or demarcation for safety reasons, to maximise this surveillance from passing activity. Safer places quote and SBD. The position of other footpath and cycle routes across the development should be considered carefully and whilst connectivity is sought, excessive permeability should be avoided as this will benefit offenders. Footpaths and cycle routes should reflect where people will want to go in doing so removing the risk of future desire lines and unauthorised routes developing in inappropriate locations. Providing an excessive number of possibilities in terms of routes will dilute the level of legitimate usage which can deter those intent on crime and anti-social behaviour. The positioning of the buildings must provide a high level of surveillance to the roadways, footpath and cycle paths as they enter and leave the development.

Grid layout

It is good to see that the illustrative layout shows the presence of back to back gardens in a grid layout. The point of entry for the majority of burglaries are the vulnerable side and rear elevations which this grid layout seeks to protect. Where side and rear elevations abut the public realm suitable defensive space should be present to deter those intent on unauthorised access.

‘Crime and anti-social behaviour are more likely to occur if buildings and private and communal spaces have a large number of sides exposed to the public realm’. Ref. Safer Places – Structure

School and Care Facility

Neighbourhood issues can arise if suitable parking is not provided for guardians at school drop off and pick up times. Consideration should be given to and illustrated in later plans how parking vehicle traffic and parking associated with the school will not impact the surrounding dwellings and its occupants.

From the illustrative plans, the care home facilities are located in close proximity to the school and its grounds. Defensive space must be present and could be provided in future landscape plans to prevent the activity and noise associated with the school adversely

affecting the residents and their privacy.

Play Parks

Ensure that all play parks have a suitable level of surveillance from the surrounding properties to help safeguard them, the tenancy of these properties should benefit from the facilities ensuring they will be willing and capable guardians for them.

Should the current plans be submitted, I would have significant concerns over the safety of the play park located to the north of the site next to the proposed railway overbridge. This lacks surveillance and will attract crime and antisocial behaviour allowing an offender to enter and leave without the risk of being observed.

‘Crime and anti-social behaviour are more likely to occur if criminals can operate, including travelling to and from the location without the fear of being seen’. Ref Safer Places – Surveillance

Landscaping

Landscaping should deliver strong visual cues relating to changes from public to private realm providing defensive space for privacy and ‘stand-off’. This should include private boundaries and parking areas. The landscaping plans should not restrict sightlines across the development. The positioning and variety of trees and shrubs should take into the consideration the positioning of surveillance from neighbouring plots and also passing activity. Eg from the Illustrative plans trees are located close to the skate park area where their canopies could obscure sightlines from the houses opposite.

Lighting

Lighting should be present and where possible provided from column lighting, with suitable diffusers fitted to push the light to the ground preventing light spill/pollution. Lighting from the ground up causes shadowing, which from the purpose of crime prevention obscures facial recognition. Furthermore low level, bollard lighting or similar, is more likely to be damaged. Lighting should be appropriate to the level of activity associated with the location. Eg. Play areas, it may be appropriate to not light a younger child’s play area and provide a curfew on the skate park and BMX track to prevent it attracting usage after certain hours. Un-adopted areas of the development should not be provided with a poor quality lighting scheme and no individual should be able to affect the light provided. This is often the case where communal un-adopted areas are powered by feeds from neighbouring plots. Ref Lighting against Crime – Secured By Design

Rear Garden Access Routes

Rear garden access routes can provide a secluded route devoid of surveillance in which offenders can operate. They also provide access to the vulnerable side and rear elevations of a dwelling, the point of entry for the majority of burglary offences. These routes should not run parallel or concurrently to each other where over time as boundaries deteriorate

they can provided an unauthorised route through the development. Gates should be present, securing these areas at the front fascia of the building eliminating any recess. Gates should be a minimum of 1.8m in height, robust construction and fitted with self-closing hinges and key operable from either side. They should serve a maximum of 4 dwellings.

Active Surveillance

Active surveillance should be present across the development and especially from private dwellings out to the public realm. Active surveillance is that available from active rooms in the dwelling, those most likely to be occupied and able to deter or observe an offender, these including kitchens and lounge areas. Further crime prevention advice and best practice guidance can be found at the website Secured By Design. I would urge the applicant to review the design guides to incorporate the general principles of CPTED (crime prevention through environmental design) in their subsequent applications, as well as demonstrating the presence of suitable physical security.

Lead Local Flood Authority

29/03/22 The applicant has provided additional information, Buckinghamshire Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) has reviewed the additional information provided in the following documents:

- Maximum Surface Water Flood Depths – 1 in 100yr Event (HYD-XX-XX-DR-FR-0004 Revision P04, 08/03/2022, Hydrock)
- Maximum Surface Water Flood Depths – 1 in 100yr + 40% Event (HYD-XX-XX-DR-FR-0005 Revision P04, 08/03/2022, Hydrock)
- Maximum Surface Water Flood Depths – 1 in 1000yr Event (HYD-XX-XX-DR-FR-0006 Revision P04, 08/03/2022, Hydrock)
- Post Development Maximum Surface Water Flood Depths – 1 in 100yr + 40% CC Event (08877-HYD-XX-XX-DR-FR-0007 Revision P04, 08/03/2022, Hydrock)
- Post Development Overland Flow Depth Comparison (08877-HYD-XX-XX-DR-FR-5000 Revision P01, 21/03/2022, Hydrock)
- Technical Design Note – Flood Risk & Drainage Response to LLFA Response (08877-HYD-XXXX-RP-D-5002 Revision P01, 18th March 2022, Hydrock)
- Infiltration Assessment (08877-HYD-XX-XX-RP-GE-0001, 5 th December 2019, Hydrock)
- MicroDrainage Calculations: o West SW Model o Southern Infiltration Basin o Central Infiltration Basin
- Drainage Strategy for Illustrative Masterplan – Overview Plan (LCF-HYD-XX-XX-DR-D-2200 Revision P07, 18/03/2022, Hydrock)
 - o Drainage Strategy for Illustrative Masterplan – Sheet 1 of 5 (LCF-HYD-XX-XX-DR-C-2201 Revision P07, 18/03/2022, Hydrock)
 - o Drainage Strategy for Illustrative Masterplan – Sheet 2 of 5 (LCF-HYD-XX-XX-DR-C-2202 Revision P07, 18/03/2022, Hydrock)
 - o Drainage Strategy for Illustrative Masterplan – Sheet 3 of 5 (LCF-HYD-XX-XX-DR-C-2203 Revision P07, 18/03/2022, Hydrock)
 - o Drainage Strategy for Illustrative Masterplan – Sheet 4 of 5 (LCF-HYD-XX-XX-DR-C-2204 Revision P07, 18/03/2022, Hydrock)

o Drainage Strategy for Illustrative Masterplan – Sheet 5 of 5 (LCF-HYD-XX-XX-DR-C-2205 Revision P07, 18/03/2022, Hydrock)

- Technical Design Note – SuDS Management Strategy (08877-HYD-XX-XX-RP-D-5003 Revision P01, 18th March 2022, Hydrock)

The LLFA has also reviewed the following documents, as discussed in our consultee response dated 20th January 2022:

- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy (LCF-HYD-XX-XX-RP-D-5001 Issue P05, 26th November 2021, Hydrock)
- Hydraulic Modelling Report (08877-HYD-XX-XX-RP-FR-0001 Issue P03, 26th November 2021, Hydrock)
- Exceedance Flow Routes (LCF-HYD-XX-XX-DR-D-2400 Revision P02, 26.10.2021, Hydrock)
- Illustrative Masterplan (00973E_MP01 Revision P1, 24.11.2021, JTP Studios)

The LLFA maintain our objection to the proposed development due to insufficient evidence that infiltration is a viable method of surface water disposal.

Flood Risk

Surface Water Hydraulic Modelling

As requested, additional details regarding the hydraulic modelling have been provided, this information included a breakdown of the flood depth categories and a flood depth difference map comparing the baseline and post development scenario. The depth difference map (08877-HYD-XXXX-DR-FR-5000 Revision P01, 21/03/2022, Hydrock) only shows the flood depth differences within the red-line boundary of the site. The LLFA require the depth difference map to be extended outside of the site to demonstrate that the proposed development is compliant with paragraph 167 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021) by not increasing flood risk off site.

Taking a Sequential Approach

The hydraulic modelling has been updated which shows that all proposed buildings have been removed from areas at risk of surface water flood risk.

Surface Water Drainage

Infiltration Rate Testing

As discussed in the LLFAs previous consultee response (dated 20th January 2022) the proposed surface water drainage scheme will rely on infiltration, runoff will be attenuated within basins before being discharged to soakaways beneath the basins. Infiltration rate testing has been provided to support the proposal, however the LLFA have concerns with the testing completed.

Eight locations across the application site were tested for infiltration potential, however, only one trial pit (SA04) achieved sufficient drop in water to derive an infiltration rate. Within the Infiltration Assessment (08877-HYD-XX-XX-RP-GE-0001, 5th December 2019, Hydrock) it is stated that the site is underlain by chalk geology, with areas either side of the dry valley being overlain by superficial deposits. The superficial deposits will naturally have a lower infiltration potential than the chalk.

As stated above the only trial pit to achieve infiltration was SA04, and this appears to be because this trial pit intercepted the chalk. The LLFA query why several trial pits were not dug deeper until the chalk was encountered. At present it has only been demonstrated that Infiltration Basin 1 will be located in the chalk and therefore will allow for infiltration as proposed. As the depth of the chalk across the site is unknown, it currently cannot be shown that all of the proposed soakaways will be located within the chalk. It has therefore not been demonstrated that the proposed surface water drainage scheme will function as intended.

In order to demonstrate that all of the proposed soakaways will be located within the chalk the LLFA require additional trial pits to be constructed, ideally in the locations of the proposed basins and soakaways or as close as reasonably practical. These trial pits must be dug deep enough to intercept the chalk.

It must also be noted that at detailed design, additional infiltration rate testing will be required in the locations of all of the proposed basins/soakaways to the effective depth of the soakaways to ensure that they are sized sufficiently.

Location of Basins

Previously, concerns were raised about the locations of the basins in relation to the surface water flooding, the Technical Note explains that the hydraulic modelling has been updated which shows that the basins have now been removed out of areas of flood risk. However, the LLFA do not agree with this assessment, when the Drainage Strategy (LCF-HYD-XX-XX-DR-D-2200 Revision P07, 18/03/2022, Hydrock) is overlain onto the Post Development Surface Water Flood Depths (08877- HYD-XX-XX-DR-FR-0007 Revision P04, 08/03/2022, Hydrock) Basins 3 and 4 appear to still be at risk of surface water flooding. The information presented has not addressed the original concern and therefore the applicant must either provide sufficient evidence that the basins are not in locations at risk of flooding, in the form of a layout map showing the proposed drainage system with the outputs of the hydraulic modelling overlain, or by relocating the basins.

Layout

As requested the proposed locations of the tree pits and bio-retention areas have been added to the indicative Drainage Layout drawings.

The invert levels of the basins and the proposed soakaways have been noted on the Drainage Strategy drawings, however, there appears to be an error for 'Infiltration 02 – Basin'.

The invert level of the proposed soakaways has been stated as 107.40m AOD, however the invert level of the basin has been noted as 106.40m AOD meaning that the base of the basin would be below the base of the soakaways. It has been assumed that this is an error and the LLFA require these values to be corrected.

Calculations

Three sets of calculations have been submitted and have been titled as follows; West SW Model, Southern Infiltration Basin and Central Infiltration Basin. It is difficult to match up these titles to the infiltration basins on the plans as they have been labelled as basins 1, 2, 3

and 4, therefore the LLFA require clarification of which set of calculations are for each basin. It also appears that calculations for one of the basins has not been submitted as there are only three sets of calculations but four proposed basins.

Soakaway Base

Within the MicroDrainage calculations for the soakaways the 'Infiltration Coefficient Base' has been assigned a value. It should be noted that this value should be set as 0.00 m/hr to account for the silting up of the infiltration device over time (section 25.4 CIRIA SuDS Manual, 2015).

Half Drain Time

In line with section 25.7 of the CIRIA SuDS Manual (2015), calculations must show that the system has a half drain time within 24 hours for the 1 in 30 year rainfall event.

Maintenance

As requested a SuDS Management Strategy (08877-HYD-XX-XX-RP-D-5003 Revision P01, 18th March 2022, Hydrock) has been provided which sets out the management and maintenance of all of the proposed SuDS components.

Information Required

In order for the LLFA to undertake a full review of the proposed surface water drainage strategy the following information is required:

Flood Risk

- Submission of depth difference map between the baseline and post-development scenario extending outside of the redline boundary of the site

Surface Water Drainage

- Additional trial pit constructed in the locations of the basins, dug until the chalk is intercepted
- Either, evidence that basins 3 and 4 are not at flood risk, in the form of a layout map showing the proposed drainage system with the outputs of the hydraulic modelling overlain or relocation of the basins out of surface water flood risk areas
- Update to the drainage layout to address error to invert level for basin 2
- Clarification on which calculations relate to each basin/soakaways
- Calculations provided for all proposed basins/soakaways
- Calculations updated with 'Infiltration Coefficient Base' set as 0.00m/hr
- Calculations updated with half drain times

We look forward to receiving the additional information requested above.

It is requested that the Local Planning Authority consults the LLFA when they are in receipt of this information so that we can review our position in relation to the above proposals.

Advice to LPA

If you are minded to approve the application contrary to this advice, we request that you contact us to allow further discussion and/or representations from us.

01/03/22 The LLFA has no further comments to make on the proposed development based on the updated information. The LLFAs full comments and requirements can be found within their consultee response (dated 20th January 2022).

20/01/22 Buckinghamshire Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) has reviewed the information provided in the following documents:

- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy (LCF-HYD-XX-XX-RP-D-5001 Issue P05, 26th November 2021, Hydrock)
- Hydraulic Modelling Report (08877-HYD-XX-XX-RP-FR-0001 Issue P03, 26th November 2021, Hydrock)
- Drainage Strategy for Illustrative Masterplan – Overview Plan (LCF-HYD-XX-XX-DR-C-2200 Revision P06, 26.11.2021, Hydrock)
- Drainage Strategy for Illustrative Masterplan – Sheet 1 of 5 (LCF-HYD-XX-XX-DR-C-2201 Revision P06, 26.11.2021, Hydrock)
- Drainage Strategy for Illustrative Masterplan – Sheet 2 of 5 (LCF-HYD-XX-XX-DR-C-2202 Revision P06, 26.11.2021, Hydrock)
- Drainage Strategy for Illustrative Masterplan – Sheet 3 of 5 (LCF-HYD-XX-XX-DR-C-2203 Revision P06, 26.11.2021, Hydrock)
- Drainage Strategy for Illustrative Masterplan – Sheet 4 of 5 (LCF-HYD-XX-XX-DR-C-2204 Revision P06, 26.11.2021, Hydrock)
- Drainage Strategy for Illustrative Masterplan – Sheet 5 of 5 (LCF-HYD-XX-XX-DR-C-2205 Revision P06, 26.11.2021, Hydrock)
- Exceedance Flow Routes (LCF-HYD-XX-XX-DR-D-2400 Revision P02, 26.10.2021, Hydrock)
- Illustrative Masterplan (00973E_MP01 Revision P1, 24.11.2021, JTP Studios)

The LLFA objects to the proposed development due to insufficient evidence that infiltration is a viable method of surface water disposal.

Flood Risk

Surface Water Flood Risk

The Flood Map for Surface Water (FMfSW) provided by the Environment Agency shows that the majority of the site lies in an area of very low risk of surface water flooding (meaning there is less than 0.1% likelihood of flooding occurring in a given year). An online version of this mapping data is available to view through the Environment Agency's Long term flood risk information mapping.

However, due to the natural topography two flow routes divide the site, a high risk flow route (meaning there is a greater than 3.3% likelihood of flooding occurring in a given year) flows west to east, with ponding occurring along the eastern boundary of the site with Lodge Lane. It should be noted that for the medium risk flood event (meaning there is between 3.3% and 1% likelihood of flooding occurring in a given year) that the depth of the ponding within the eastern section of the site is anticipated to be greater than 1.2m. The second flow route flows north to south and is at low risk of flooding (meaning there is between 0.1% and 1% likelihood of flooding occurring in a given year) and converges with the first flow route in the centre of the site.

Surface Water Hydraulic Modelling

Due to the EA mapping showing surface water flow routes through the site a surface water flooding hydraulic modelling exercise has been undertaken (Hydraulic Modelling Report, 08877-HYD-XX-XXRP-FR-0001 Issue P03, 26th November 2021, Hydrock). The model was run at different return periods and showed the flow routes as seen in the EA flood mapping. The baseline model outputs show that the flow route which flows west to east is very similar to the EA mapping, however the flow route which flows north to south starts to appear during higher return periods. The ponding to the east of the site is shown to have depths of over 900mm, as this area on the EA mapping is shown to have a flood depth of over 1.2m the LLFA request that the categories are broken down further to have a greater understanding of the flood depths, especially for the higher return periods (1 in 100, 1 in 100 plus climate change and 1 in 1000).

A post-development scenario has also been presented within the modelling report for the 1 in 100 year event plus 40% climate change, the output mapping appears to show areas of increased flood risk onsite. Comparing the baseline and post-development outputs it does not appear that there is an increase to flood risk offsite, however as a depth difference map has not been provided this cannot be said with certainty. The LLFA therefore request that a depth difference map is provided to ensure that there is no increase in surface water flood risk off site.

A culvert has been proposed under one of the main roads to ensure that the flow route can continue to be conveyed, at present the culvert has been proposed as a 1500x650mm box culvert. The LLFA would encourage the applicant to discuss the culvert with Transport for Buckinghamshire (TfB) as it is assumed that this road would be offered for adoption and therefore the maintenance of the culvert would transfer to TfB, who may have specific requirements for culvert structures.

Taking a sequential approach

The Planning Policy Guidance (paragraph 001, 2014) sets out that a sequential approach must be taken when locating development within site, whereby development must be located in the area of lowest flood risk. As explained above the post-development modelling appears to show areas of increased flooding on site, having geo-referenced the post-development model output (08877-HYDXX-XX-DR-FR-0007 Revision P03, 26/11/2021, Hydrock) and the Illustrative Masterplan (00973E_MP01 Revision P1, 24.11.2021, JTP Studios) it appears that the dwellings have been proposed in the areas now at risk of surface water flooding, this is not acceptable. The applicant must ensure that all proposed buildings are located out of areas at risk of surface water flooding.

Ground Water Flood Risk

The Groundwater Flood Map (Jeremy Benn Associates, 2016) shows the groundwater level in the area of the proposed development to be at within 5m of the ground surface for a 1 in 100 year return period. This means that flooding from groundwater is not likely.

Surface Water Drainage

It has been proposed to manage surface water generated by the development via infiltration. It appears that the site has been divided into three catchments, for ease these

will be referred to as the 'western catchment', 'northern catchment' and 'eastern catchment'. A basin with soakaways underneath and tanked permeable paving have proposed in each of the catchments, the eastern catchment has two basins proposed.

Infiltration Rate Testing

In order to support an infiltration based scheme infiltration rate testing must be completed, in section 5.2 of the Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy (LCF-HYD-XX-XX-RP-D-5001 Issue P05, 26th November 2021, Hydrock) it is stated that site investigations have been completed which indicate that infiltration is viable, however no evidence of the infiltration rate testing has been provided. Therefore, the applicant has not demonstrated that the proposed development can manage surface water runoff. The LLFA request that the ground investigation report showing the completed infiltration rate testing is submitted.

It should be noted that site specific infiltration rate testing must be completed in accordance with BRE365. Tests must be completed in the location (or as close as practically possible) and to the effective depth of the proposed infiltration component. Tests must be completed a minimum of three times and water should drain until nearly empty. The time taken for the trial pit to drain from 75% full to 25% full is then used to calculate the infiltration rate. The worst calculated rate from the three tests is then used to inform the storage calculations.

In line with Chapter 25 of the CIRIA SuDS Manual, full infiltration based schemes which are reliant on a rate of less than 1×10^{-6} m/s are not permissible. For slower rates the LLFA may accept a partial infiltration (Type B) drainage schemes. In line with Chapter 25 of the CIRIA SuDS Manual, infiltration rates which have been extrapolated are not permissible.

SuDS Components

As mentioned above surface water runoff will be attenuated and managed via tanked permeable paving and basins with soakaways underneath across all three catchments. Within section 5.3 of the Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy it has also been stated that rain gardens and tree pits will also be incorporated into the surface water drainage scheme, the locations of these components have not been shown on the drainage layouts.

Having geo-referenced the Drainage Strategy for Illustrative Masterplan – Overview Plan (LCF-HYDXX-XX-DR-C-2200 Revision P06, 26.11.2021, Hydrock) and overlaying the post-development model output it can be seen that both of the basins proposed in the eastern catchment have been located within areas at risk of flooding. During times of flooding these components will be inundated with flood water and will not be able to manage surface water runoff generated by the site, this will increase flood risk to the proposed site. Therefore, the proposed basins and underlying soakaways must be relocated outside of any areas at risk of surface water flooding.

The LLFA strongly encourages surface water reuse and encourages the applicant to investigate active rainwater harvesting. An active system enables water to be reused within the dwelling for nonpotable uses such as toilet flushing and can therefore decrease the total volume of surface water which requires disposal at the site. Active rainwater harvesting

would be an ideal solution within the proposed care home, local centre and school. This development provides a fantastic opportunity to incorporate a range of small scale and large scale SuDS component which provide water quality, amenity and biodiversity benefits to the site.

Calculations

Calculations for the proposed surface water drainage scheme have not been provided within the surface water drainage strategy. Calculations to demonstrate that the proposed drainage system can contain up to the 1 in 30 storm event without flooding are required. Any onsite flooding between the 1 in 30 and the 1 in 100 plus 40% climate change storm event should be safely contained on site. These calculations must include details of critical storm durations and demonstrate how the proposed system as a whole will function during different storm events. If any flooding occurs for the 1 in 100 year plus 40% climate change event, then we require details of where this flooding will occur and the volume of the flooding.

Climate Change Allowances

The Environment Agency updated the climate change allowances for peak rainfall intensity in 2016. When designing a surface water drainage system, the LLFA encourage that 40% climate change allowance is used. A climate change allowance of 20% will be accepted if the system has been sensitivity checked for the 1 in 100 plus 40% climate change allowance event.

Urban creep

An urban creep value of 10% should be applied to surface water drainage schemes to take account of any future increases in impermeable areas within the site. For example, this includes patios, conservatories and small extensions (Section 24.7.2, CIRIA SuDS Manual, 2015).

Maintenance

A maintenance plan for the surface water drainage system needs to be provided. It should include the maintenance tasks which are required, the persons responsible for undertaking maintenance and frequency by which these will be undertaken.

Information Required

In order for the LLFA to undertake a full review of the proposed surface water drainage strategy the following information is required:

Flood Risk

- Submission of depth difference map between the baseline and post-development scenario
- Depth categories on output maps broken down
- Demonstration that a sequential approach has been taken and locating dwellings out of areas at risk of surface water flooding

Surface Water Drainage

- Ground investigation report demonstrating that infiltration rate testing has been completed in accordance with BRE365

- Relocation of proposed basins outside of any areas at risk of surface water flooding
- Indicative locations of proposed tree pits and rain gardens shown on drainage strategy
- Calculations
- Maintenance plan

We look forward to receiving the additional information requested above. It is requested that the Local Planning Authority consults the LLFA when they are in receipt of this information so that we can review our position in relation to the above proposals. Advice to LPA If you are minded to approve the application contrary to this advice, we request that you contact us to allow further discussion and/or representations from us.

Buckinghamshire Strategic Access Officer

11/02/22 I have no comments on the additional information from rights of way perspective.

24/01/22 Further to my letter dated 18th January 2022, in which I requested a new roadside footway connection along Lodge Lane to Footpath LCF/11/1, I would like to update my comments based on information which I didn't identify in the Design & Access Statement.

The Parameter Plan 'Access and Movement' [p. 80] proposes a linking pedestrian route from the site's internal network of footpaths directly to the vehicular highway along Lodge Lane, at a point situated opposite Footpath LCF/11/1 [yellow highlight in Extract 1].



Extract 1

The red edge is continuous with the vehicular highway demonstrating this is deliverable and

negates the need for the roadside footway my previous response requested. Moreover, being segregated from traffic, this alternative likely to be more attractive.

The agent has agreed a 2m wide bitumen surface specification. A dropped kerb and tactile paving would provide disabled access and any works within the highway verge can be secured within the wider s278 agreement.

With this in mind, I would request my recommended condition from 18th January 2022 is replaced with the following:

Condition Prior to 75th occupation, a 2m-wide, on-site footway, between the main access off Lodge Lane and Footpath LCI/11/1 [as shown in principle on the 'Access & Movement' Parameters Plan], shall be laid out and constructed in accordance with details to be first approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority. Reason In order to minimise danger, obstruction and inconvenience to users of the highway and of the development; and to meet increased demand created by the development that facilitates wider recreational connections east for existing and new residents.

18/01/21 There are no public rights of way within or close to the proposed site that would contribute to walking and cycling options for new residents connecting, for example, to local shops, bus stops, schools and train station. Therefore, there are no improvements sought to provide better links to local facilities on this network. However, Footpath LCI/11/1 commences near the proposed new vehicular access along Lodge Lane, which I highlight blue on Plan 1. A connecting bridleway (yellow) provides a recreational link to Chenies village, Chenies Manor and the wider Chess Valley, so a demand appears to be created in this direction.

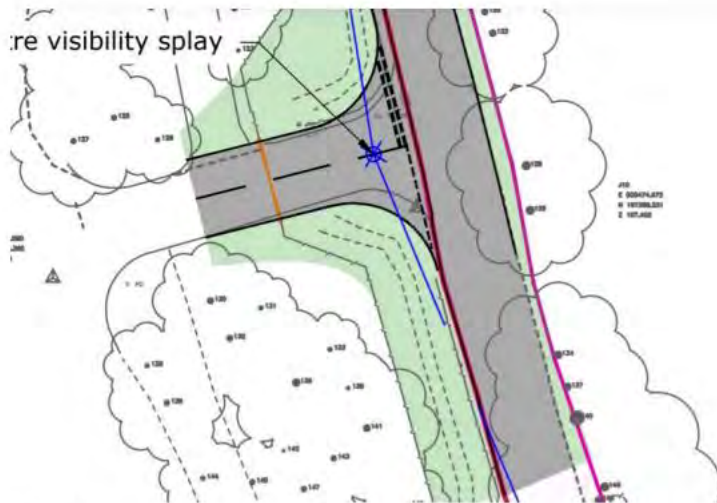


Plan 1

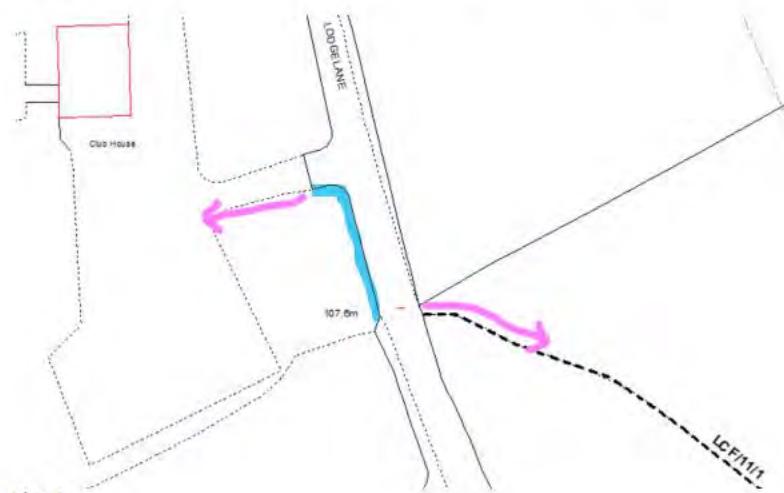
The provision of the additional new footways and cycleways for walkers and cyclists in a northerly and north-westerly direction across the railway line to Oakington Avenue and Burton's Lane, could facilitate easier, off-road connections for new residents to the wider rights of way network, mainly situated north of the A404, with links into the Chess Valley and wider Chilterns AONB.

In addition, the new pedestrian footways and public open space through the site from Oakington Avenue [west end] and Burtons Lane could benefit new and some existing residents accessing Footpath LCI/11/1 along Lodge Lane and the wider rights of way network towards Chenies – see Plan 1 above. However, that would need balancing against likely increased vehicular use of Lodge Lane which would detract from any existing pedestrian use from Oakington Avenue [east end] where, with narrow and steep verges, walkers seem likely to use the road. Currently there are no recorded public rights along Long Walk to the south, between Burtons Lane and Lodge Lane, but a public footpath [LCF/9/1] branches off it, which is unusual.

The Transport Assessment [TA] confirms Lodge Lane is widened from around 4.8m to 5.5m. Appendix I [Drawing 140207-40] of the TA details the new T-junction into the site and widened road width (Extract 1), with no footways. However, with the development creating an increased pedestrian demand in this easterly direction, walkers will use the carriageway itself, creating a hazard, especially in poor light. They could also interfere with right visibility of drivers on exit at the T-junction. With this in mind, I would recommend a new, 24m long, 2m wide footway connection along Lodge Lane from the improved T-junction to Footpath LCI/11/1, as indicated blue in Plan 2, with onward connections highlighted pink.



Extract 1



Plan 2

The new, adopted pedestrian footway could be part of wider off-site highway works secured under a section 278 Highways Act 1980 agreement. However, provision of this footway would need to be combined with a walking connection from the Lodge Lane T-junction to the proposed pedestrian network within the residential development. Presumably, this can follow at detailed design.

Overall, the suggested improvement will enable the development to comply with Policy CS20 aiming to achieve developments well-connected to walking facilities, with good access to community recreational space that is easily accessible for all.

The following is recommended.

Condition

Prior to 75th occupation, a 2m-wide footway along Lodge Lane, between the improved site access T-junction and Footpath LCI/11/1 shall be laid out and constructed in accordance with details to be first approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority.

Reason In order to minimise danger, obstruction and inconvenience to users of the highway and of the development; and to meet increased demand created by the development that facilitates wider recreational connections for existing and new residents.

Informative: The applicant is advised that the off-site works will need to be constructed under a Section 278 Highways Act 1980 legal agreement. This 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: Development Management 6th Floor, County Hall Walton Street Offices AYLESBURY HP20 1UY Email: dm@buckscc.gov.uk

Buckinghamshire Education Officer 21/01/22

I have considered the details of the above application for 380 homes (including land safeguarded for educational use) and can confirm that we would require a financial contribution to expand primary and secondary school provision to accommodate the above development.

Primary schools in the area are currently close to capacity and the scheme proposes *an area of 1.4 hectares to be safeguarded for a new 1FE Primary School or primary school expansion with nursery, to be delivered on site should the Council determine if there is a requirement. In the alternative, an expansion of Little Chalfont School may be considered as the most appropriate option to increase capacity. Under this alternative scenario the education land that is safeguarded on the site could then be used for enhanced sports and playing provision associated with the school.*

While a scheme of this size would generate a little over 0.5 forms of entry - the minimum size of school that could be approved by the DfE is 1 form entry The Council would therefore expect the applicants to meet the full cost of building a new 1FE primary school (including 26 place nursery) which based on the DfE cost multiplier (as at 1Q 2022) is £5,713,947.

Secondary schools are currently at capacity and the Council is currently making provision to expand existing secondary provision to accommodate projected increased demand in the area. I have included the education infrastructure costs per dwelling type to allow an assessment to be made of the scale of contributions required on the scheme in accordance with Council adopted S106 guidance (as at 1Q 2022):

Provision Type	Flats		Houses		
	1 Bed	2 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4+ Bed
Secondary	£281	£1,488	£2,386	£7,438	£12,154

Buckinghamshire Tree Officer 03/03/22

Tree Preservation Order No 5 of 1984 protects Netherground Spring on the south-eastern edge of the site adjacent to Honours Yard in Lodge Lane. This is also classified as an area of ancient semi-natural woodland.

Tree Preservation Order No 10 of 1986 protects Loudhams Wood at Pucks Paigles in Burtons Lane, just outside the southern boundary of the site.

Stoneydean Wood in the centre of the site is classified as another area of ancient semi-natural woodland.

The original application included an Arboricultural Impact Assessment by Waterman Infrastructure & Environmental Limited dated November 2021. This included a Baseline Tree Survey consisting of a survey by Sylva Consultancy dated August 2016 for the original golf course site, that has been supplemented by further survey work by Waterman in July 2019 covering the areas outside the Sylva survey area. A revised Arboricultural Impact Assessment by Waterman Infrastructure & Environmental Limited dated January 2022 has now been submitted which includes "A further survey of the trees adjacent to the junction of Oakington Avenue and the A404 [which] was undertaken in January 2022". However, there are other changes in the documents and it is now proposed to remove 73 "arboricultural features" rather than 69 "arboricultural features". The four additions are four small trees at the junction of Oakington Avenue with the A404 Amersham Road. They are not important trees and would be a consequence of the proposal to move the entrance of Oakington Avenue about five metres to the east. Nonetheless an "arboricultural feature" could be an individual tree, a group of trees or a woodland.

I note that the Application Form is for "all matters reserved" but the applicant's description is for "matters to be considered at this stage: Burtons Lane and Lodge Lane Access".

The proposed access in Burtons Lane would be through an old hedgerow. This appears to have been a mixed field hedge that has been later reinforced with beech planting and was once regularly cut at a height of about 1.5m. It has now been neglected for many years and has grown up to a height of about 8m. It appears that some hazel, elder and beech would be lost for the access but no large trees.

The proposed access at Lodge Lane uses the old golf course entrance but is likely to require the loss of a line of poor tall young ash trees beside the road G15, which are classified as Category U in the tree survey, for the visibility splay. Appendix I in the Transport Statement shows proposals for some widening of Lodge Lane on either side of the railway bridge by widening the cutting on the western side with the construction of a small retaining wall. The drawing shows one maturing ash tree close to the road in W13 on the western side to be removed where the proposed retaining wall would be constructed but some shrubs and small trees would also be lost.

The revised Arboricultural Impact Assessment by Waterman Infrastructure & Environmental Limited dated January 2022 includes a list of the 73 "arboricultural features" to be removed

and this includes W13 on the list of “Trees which could be retained”. However, the report also includes a series of three Tree Protection and Removal Plans. These show “trees, groups or hedges to be removed” in red but in addition “individual trees within groups to be removed for highways works” are annotated “To be removed”. Revision P02 dated 30.11.21 is described as “Site Boundary updated. W13 trees retained” and revision P03 dated 31.01.21 {22!} is described as “Additional trees to be removed added”. Revision P02 shows three trees to be removed for highways works but revision P03 shows nineteen trees to be removed for highways works including most of the woodland W13 even though this is listed to be retained. The report describes woodland W13 as being in good physiological and structural condition and lists it in the highest Category of A2. The removal of most of the trees in this woodland would have a dramatic adverse effect on the appearance and rural character of the sunken section of Lodge Lane just to the north of the railway bridge.

The indicative plans for the proposed development show the existing woodland on the site to be retained and the Land Use and Green Infrastructure Parameter Plan shows Woodland and Ecological Buffers around these areas. These are described as min. 30m buffer for Ancient Woodland, min. 15-20m for other Existing Woodland and min. 5m for Existing Tree Lines, which should help to minimise damage. It also shows an Ecological Re-wilding area with limited pedestrian access and some public open space.

However, all the trees outside the woodland areas appear to be shown to be removed on the indicative plans with no attempt to retain the better specimens or the hedgerow linking the central Stoneydean Wood to other woodland on the southern edge. Normally an application should seek to retain Category A and B trees by adapting the scheme to allow their retention rather than removing them. I would hope that in any more detailed submission, that more of these trees would be shown to be retained. Nonetheless, it is possible that a significant level of tree removal may be acceptable if there is a correspondingly higher level of suitable replacement planting.

In conclusion, it appears that the proposed accesses themselves would not require significant tree loss but I am concerned about the extent of woodland loss suggested as being necessary for the widening of Lodge Lane to the north of the railway bridge.

Furthermore, I am disappointed that the indicative proposals appear to involve the loss of all the trees within the more open parts of the site rather than adapting any proposals to retain the better trees. However, such loss may be acceptable if there is a high level of appropriate replacement tree planting.

Nonetheless, the indicative proposals for the main development suggest that the applicants intend to comply with the Natural England/Forestry Commission Ancient Woodland, Ancient and Veteran Trees Standing Advice, which would be essential.

Generally, I am concerned about the extent of the proposed tree loss associated with the application and in particular, I would like to see far greater retention of the trees in the woodland W13 beside Lodge Lane as was proposed in the previous version of the Tree Protection and Removal Plans Revision P02 dated 30.11.21.

Possible condition if approved: No development shall take place until a full Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, which shall detail all work within the root protection areas of the retained trees within and around the site. This statement shall include details of protection measures for the trees during the development, and information about any excavation work, any changes in existing ground levels and any changes in surface treatments within the root protection areas of the trees, including plans and cross-sections where necessary. In particular, it shall show details of proposals to avoid damage to the nearby trees during the widening of Lodge Lane. The work shall then be carried out in accordance with this method statement and tree protection plan. Reason: To ensure that the existing established trees within and around the site that are proposed to be retained are safeguarded during construction 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.

Buckinghamshire Landscape Officer 15/02/22

DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 2021 (LVIA)
Design and Access Statement Parts 1 & 2 JTP November 2021 (DAS)
Hedgerow Survey report Ecology and Land Management August 2021 (HS2021)
Arboricultural Impact Assessment Waterman Environment Ltd November 2021 (AIA)
Environmental Assessment Vol.2 Figures Waterman Environment Ltd November 2021
Transport Assessment Biddulph Ltd November 2021

Environmental Statement Addendum Waterman Environment Ltd January 2022 Landscape and Visual Impacts Addendum January 2022 (LVIA2)
Arboricultural Impact Assessment Addendum Waterman Environment Ltd January 2022 (AIA2)

1. SUMMARY

1.1. The proposal represents an over development of this sensitive site. Proposed housing densities and spread of development across this sensitive site goes significantly beyond that outlined in the 2017 Landscape Capacity Study, produced by Terra Firma as evidence for the withdrawn local plan 2036.

1.2. The effects of the proposal on the landscape character of the site have been wholly underestimated. For instance, the LVIA underestimates the landscape Value by not appropriately considering important natural, cultural and functional features of the site, as required by recent new guidance published by the Landscape Institute in Technical Guidance Note TGN 02-21. Its assessment of landscape Sensitivity is unsound as it mixes up Low and Medium values in the assessment. It also fails to recognise the Landscape Guidelines for Development, set out in the Council's Landscape Character Assessment (Landscape Character Area 18.3 Little Chalfont Rolling Farmland), which aim to protect sensitive features of the landscape. Proposed mitigation has been inaccurately described in the Year 1 and Year 15 assessment of effects on the Landscape Character of the site (Table 7) and suggests the development would, for instance, 'conserve the network of hedgerows and hedgerow trees' and 'take account of the Root Protection Areas for existing trees',

which is not true. The proposal would cause Significant Moderate/Major harm to the landscape character of the site.

1.3. The proposed development encroaches over the northern side of the dry valley, to below the 110m contour AOD. The legibility of the dry valley would be lost, causing Significant Moderate/Major harm to this key characteristic.

1.4. Given the limited information provided about mitigation, the effects on both ancient woodland, trees and general woodland would be Neutral, in landscape terms. The implied benefits of new planting and management are not detailed or controllable enough to be considered a reliable balance to weigh against the identified harms.

1.5. The removal of 70% of the Grade A2 woodland (W13) from along Lodge Lane, and replacement with an engineered retaining structure, would cause Significant Major harm to both the rural character of the lane, and the woodland itself. The ES confirms this harm cannot be mitigated.

1.6. The effects of introducing lighting across two thirds of this dark, unlit site has not been considered in any of the assessments of landscape or visual impact. This is a critical omission as the lighting (which would include flood lighting for the sports pitches and lighting for commercial premises, as well as street lighting and domestic lighting) would cause Significant Moderate/Major harm to the character of the site, as well as Significant Moderate/Major harm to a number of views from outside the site.

1.7. The proposed 45-55 dph would not allow for the level of green space, planting and size of trees required to provide an appropriate landscape design response to the adjacent Burtons Lane to Doggetts Wood Lane Area of Special Character and would cause Significant Moderate harm to it and its setting.

1.8. None of the Visual Effects assessments (detailed in Table 8, appendix 13.8, LVIA) have included a consideration of lighting across the site (which includes potential flood lighting for sports pitches) and are therefore inaccurate and unreliable. Other impacts have also been underestimated. The proposal would cause Significant Moderate/Major harm to a number of views from outside the site.

1.9. Insufficient detail of proposed mitigation has been provided. It is not considered appropriate that unquantified secondary mitigation and enhancement proposals be relied on so heavily in the assessment of landscape and visual effects of the development. It is also considered inappropriate that the future management of these important and irreplaceable landscape features (which is relied upon to provide benefits) be consigned to being dealt with by condition.

1.10. Any future proposals for development on this site must accurately identify the landscape sensitivities of this valued site and its surroundings and seek to protect and enhance them as required by the NPPF. The spread and density of development should be greatly reduced to more closely reflect Terra Firma's Landscape and Capacity Assessment 2017 but also be informed by an LVIA. It should identify and retain the characteristic dry

valley topography.

1.11. Housing densities should be kept lower to reflect the sensitivities of the site and local landscape and to allow for greater retention of important trees and hedgerows. There should be greater opportunities for sizable tree planting throughout the development on streets and incidental open space to provide a high quality landscape for future residents. Lighting should be considered as part of the design stage to ensure development that requires heavy lighting is not located adjacent to sensitive landscape features. All lighting should be designed to the Institute of Lighting Professional's requirements for Environmental Zones E1.

2. DETAILED COMMENTS

2.1. Existing Assessments, Guidance and Policy This site is within an area of land previously identified in the now withdrawn Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan 2036 as a potential development site (known as Site 6).

Supporting Evidence for that proposed allocation included a Landscape Capacity Assessment (LCA 2017) for Green Belt Development Options, carried out in November 2017 by Terra Firma. That strategic level assessment concluded the site had a Landscape Capacity of MEDIUM and included a plan (Fig.6) showing where development might be considered, subject to further detailed assessments being carried out such as Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

2.2. It is important to note that LCA 2017 was based on development across the site having a density range of 30-35 dwellings per hectare with heights between 2-3 storeys. In contrast to the current application, which proposes a significantly higher density range of 35-65 dph (density parameter plan 00973E-S02 Rev.P1) along with building heights between 2-3.5 storeys (building heights parameter plan 00973E-PP02 Rev. P1). Furthermore, it did not identify or consider the Burtons Lane to Doggetts Wood Lane Established Residential Area of Special Character adjacent to the west of the site (Policy H4, Established Residential Area of Special Character, Chiltern District Local Plan, consolidated 2011)

2.3. Since that capacity assessment was carried out, two relevant reports have been published: - Landscape Institute's Technical Advice Note published February 2021 (TGN 02-21) Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations Providing updated guidance on how to assess landscape value, prompted by a need to interpret the NPPF 2019 term 'valued landscape' (for which the NPPF or planning guidance provides no definition). It takes into account expert witness evidence at inquiry, Inspectors/Secretary of State decisions and high court judgements. This updates guidance given in Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Ed (GLVIA3), which the applicant relies upon as a basis for their LVIA methodology. - Chiltern and South Bucks Townscape Character Study Part 3 (TCS3), Chris Blandford Associates, January 2017 Updating previous townscape character studies (for Chiltern and South Bucks former districts) to ensure a consistent townscape character assessment process and policy evidence base for the now withdrawn Chiltern and South Bucks local plan 2036. Neither this assessment, or the local plan policy H4 which underpins it, is referred to in the applicant's LVIA.

2.4. NB// The Environmental Statement confirms in Vol.1, para.13.54 that landscape and visual effects of MODERATE or MAJOR are deemed 'SIGNIFICANT'.

2.5. Landscape Character of Site Landscape Value: The LVIA underestimates the landscape value of the site by failing to include in its assessment methodology, consideration of Natural Heritage or Cultural Heritage (formerly known as Conservation Interests in GLVIA3); or Function (a new factor since GLVIA3), as advocated in the recent TGN 02-21.

2.6. Natural Heritage features on, or immediately adjacent to, the site include Priority Habitats (including woodlands, grassland fields and hedgerows); Ancient Woodlands (Stoneydean Wood, Netherground Spring Wood, New Hanging Wood); 'Favourable' and 'Important' Hedgerows (HAR2021); a large number mature and specimen trees; and a distinctive dry valley topography.

2.7. Cultural Heritage features on, or immediately adjacent to, the site include Burtons Lane to Doggetts Lane Area of Special Character (TCS3), covered by Policy H4 Established Residential Area of Special Character in the Chiltern District Local Plan.

2.8. Functional attributes include the site providing a setting for both the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty adjacent to the east (with which it shares a number of landscape characteristics) and the Burtons Lane to Doggetts Lane Area of Special Character to the west and south-west.

2.9. This site is considered to be a 'valued' landscape in terms of para. 174(a) of the NPPF. As such, it must be protected and enhanced. The LVIA's underestimation of the site's landscape Value also leads to an overall underestimation of the level and significance of effect the development would have on the site.

2.10. Landscape Sensitivity: The LVIA is inconsistent in its assessment of the site's Sensitivity to the development proposal. In Appendix 13.7 Table of Landscape Effects (under Character of the Site) it refers to the sensitivity being Medium. But in the actual assessment (see Commentary on Development sections under 'Construction Phase', Year 1 and Year 15) it continually refers to the site's sensitivity as Low. The LVIA's underestimation of Sensitivity leads to an underestimation of the overall level and significance of effect the development would have on the site.

2.11. Both the site and the adjacent AONB sit within the same Landscape Character Area (LCA 18.3 Little Chalfont Rolling Farmland). The site shares landscape characteristics of the AONB eg. ancient hedgerows; ancient woodlands; and dry valleys. Sensitive landscape and visual receptors identified in the LCA that are exhibited on the site include: - Open farmland and woodland cover (large area of ancient woodland) which provides enclosure, a backdrop to views and biodiversity valley - The rural farmland and wooded character of the landscape occurring between the settlement of Little Chalfont and Chorley Wood/Rickmansworth - Lanes/roads through open farmland or enclosed by woodland which retain a rural character.

2.12. The proposal would harm these sensitive receptors and fail to achieve the Landscape Guidelines for development in LCA 18.3 which include: - Conserve and manage the mosaic

of woodland and farmland which is key to retaining a rural character between settlement -
Conserve the character of rural roads - Seek to avoid further expansion of settlement which leads to suburbanisation along roads

2.13. The above inaccuracies in the assessment of landscape value and sensitivity, and lack of recognition of key sensitive key characteristics of the site, result in an underestimation of the overall effect of the proposal on the landscape character of the site. The site is considered to have a Value of High (rather than Medium); a Sensitivity of Medium/High (rather than Medium or Low); the Magnitude of Change would be Large (agreed).

2.14. This would result in a permanent, significant MODERATE/MAJOR ADVERSE EFFECT on the overall landscape character of the site (rather than Moderate Beneficial effect).

2.15. Landform The dry valley landform is a key landscape characteristic of the site. It features the western extension of a dry valley, which starts in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in the west and crosses the AONB boundary into the site. Dry valleys are a characteristic of the AONB. The DAS (2.3) establishes the dry valley is between 105 and 120m AOD. Having identified this distinctive landscape feature it is unclear why development should then be proposed from the 120m contour down to below the 110m contour AOD, almost entirely developing the northern side of the valley. The legibility of the rural dry valley would be lost from locations outside the site such as Lodge Lane and Burtons Lane, and also to new residents within the site. In its assessment of Landscape Effects (Appendix 13.7: Table of Landscape Affects) under Landform, the LVIA states the 'dry chalk valley is to be retained'. This is clearly not the case and, as the proposal would cause harm to a characteristic feature of the AONB, there is no plausible explanation for how the assessment could find the development to have a 'minor beneficial' impact on landform.

2.16. The landform is considered to have a Sensitivity of High (agreed); the Magnitude of Change would be Large (rather than Small).

2.17. This would result in a permanent, significant MODERATE/MAJOR ADVERSE EFFECT on landform (rather than Minor Beneficial effect).

2.18. Ancient Woodland (hedgerow refs. from HS2021) The AIA2 (Tree Retention and Protection dwgs. 005 P03, 006 P 02 and 007 P02) shows that an 'Important' hedgerow (H8, Fig.2. HS2021), which provides an important habitat connection between Stoneydean Wood (Ancient Woodland) and Netherground Spring Wood (Priority Habitat and partly Ancient Woodland), would be removed. This is to accommodate a substantial new road and shared cycleway east/west through the site. In its assessment of Landscape Effects (Appendix 13.7: Table of Landscape Affects) under Ancient Woodland, the LVIA makes no reference to this critical loss of connectivity and permanent severance, which would have an adverse impact on Stoneydean Wood's biodiversity. This adverse impact has not been taken into account in the assessment of landscape effects.

2.19. The Ancient Woodlands are considered to have a Sensitivity of High (agreed); the Magnitude of Change would be Medium (but would include adverse effects as well as

beneficial ones). Whilst there are opportunities within the wider site to include additional woodland planting, no details have been provided at this outline application stage, so it is not possible to assess the level of benefits it might bring.

2.20. An ecology specialist is better placed to weigh the ecological benefits provided by the proposed woodland buffer planting and the future (undetailed) woodland management plan against the harm caused to Stoneydean Wood by the loss of ecological connectivity and permanent severance by a major road. Nevertheless, this permanent harm has not been identified or considered in the LVIA at all, whereas the unquantified benefits of the woodland planting and management have.

2.21. With the adverse effects being measurable and the benefits being unquantifiable, the best assessment possible at this stage is that the proposal would potentially result in a NEUTRAL EFFECT on the character of the Ancient Woodland, in landscape terms (rather than Moderate Beneficial) but this would wholly reliant on the quality of the mitigation secured at condition stage.

2.22. Hedgerows (hedgerow refs. from HS2021) The AIA2 (Tree Retention and Protection dwgs. 005 P03, 006 P02 and 007 P02) shows six hedgerows will be removed from within and on the site boundary as a result of this development, including one 'Important' hedgerow (H8, Fig.2. HS2021), one 'Favourable' hedgerow (H3, Fig.2. HS2021) and two containing potentially veteran trees (H1 and 4, Fig.2. HS2021). This represents approximately 50% of all hedgerows identified in the HS2021 being removed, despite the applicant's own Hedgerow Assessment recommending 'the long term protection and enhancement of hedgerows throughout the site' (para.5.3). In its assessment of Landscape Effects at Year 15 (Appendix 13.7: Table of Landscape Affects) under Hedgerows, the LVIA refers to H8 but generalises about the other hedgerows and makes no clear reference to any hedgerow loss.

2.23. Hedgerows of this ecological value cannot be replaced instantly and would take decades to begin showing the level of ecological and landscape value that these have been found to have. There is no plausible explanation why the assessment could find that their removal and replacement with new planting in other locations with potentially less landscape character relevance and/or less ecological value, could have a 'minor beneficial' effect on the hedgerow resource on site in as little as 15 years.

2.24. The hedgerows are considered to have a Sensitivity of Medium (agreed); the Magnitude of Change would be Medium (rather than Small). Whilst there are opportunities within the wider site to include hedgerow planting, no details of quality or locations have been provided at this outline application stage, so it is impossible to assess the level of benefits it might bring.

2.25. Again, an ecology specialist is better placed to weigh the ecological benefits provided by the proposed hedgerow planting and the future (undetailed) ecological management plan against the harm caused to Stoneydean Wood by the loss of ecological connectivity and permanent severance by a major road. Nevertheless, this permanent harm has not been identified or considered in the LVIA at all, whereas the unquantified benefits of the hedgerow planting and management have.

2.26. With the adverse effects being measurable and the benefits being unquantifiable, the best assessment possible at this stage is that the proposal would potentially result in a NEUTRAL EFFECT on Hedgerows, in landscape terms (rather than Minor Beneficial effect) but this would wholly reliant on the quality of the mitigation secured at condition stage.

2.27. Trees and woodland (general) The AIA2 (Tree Retention and Protection dwgs. 005 P03, 006 P02 and 007 P02) indicates that 59 individual trees, sixteen tree groups and six hedgerows would be removed (totalling 73 arboricultural features), with only the woodland blocks and some of the boundary vegetation being retained.

2.28. With almost 50% of the woodland and tree stock on site being categorised A (high) or B (moderate) value (AIA2, Table 1), it is queried why the LVIA should assess the overall sensitivity of the tree and woodlands as only Medium.

2.29. It is considered the sensitivity is at least Medium/High (rather than Medium); the Magnitude of Change would be Medium (rather than Small). Whilst there are opportunities within the wider site to provide new tree and woodland planting, no details of quality, size or location have been provided at this outline application stage, so it is not possible to accurately assess the level of benefits it might bring.

2.30. With the adverse effects being measurable and the benefits being unquantifiable, the best assessment possible at this stage is that the proposal would potentially result in a NEUTRAL EFFECT on Trees and Woodland overall, in landscape terms (rather than Minor Beneficial effect), but this would wholly reliant on the quality of the mitigation secured at condition stage.

2.31. Trees (Lodge Lane) Of particular concern is woodland group W13. The Waterman tree survey schedule (Appendix C, AIA2, addendum January 2020) identifies these trees (W13) as Category A2 (High value) which means – ‘Trees of high quality with a life expectancy of at least 40 years, having particular visual importance as arboricultural and/or landscape features’. It confirms they are in good structural and physical condition. The group is spread along the western bank of Lodge Lane and would suffer significant harm from the development. The group consists of 20 category A (High value) trees, 14 (70%) of which are shown as removed as a consequence of the road widening scheme (AIA2, Dwg. 005 P03).

2.32. These trees, along with their understorey (which would also be removed) currently make a significant contribution to the rural character of this section of Lodge Lane. Following the road widening scheme there would be no opportunity to mitigate their loss. The wooded bank would be much reduced in size with the remaining bank being replaced with an engineered ‘green retaining structure’. Examples of this structure are shown in the DAS (Section 6.5) and demonstrate how the character would change from an informal rural, wooded bank to a formal engineered, grassed structure. The Environmental Statement Addendum January 2022, Chapter 13, para 13.5 Mitigation and Enhancement Measures confirms the adverse landscape effects of the highway works ‘cannot be mitigated’.

2.33. As the W13 woodland group has been categorised as A (high value) in the AIA2, it is questionable why the Table of Landscape Effects (appendix 13.7A ES addendum Jan 2022) assesses them as having only Medium sensitivity. They are considered to have High sensitivity (rather than Medium); as 70% of them would be removed the Magnitude of Change would be Large (rather than Medium).

2.34. This would result in a permanent, significant MAJOR ADVERSE EFFECT on Lodge Lane tree group W13 (rather than Moderate Adverse effect)

2.35. Lodge Lane character The lane has a rural character along most of its length and is typical of the rural lanes found in the AONB. This rural character becomes particularly strong near the adjacent site, where the road dips down into the dry valley and the trees of New Hanging and Netherground Wood overhang either side forming a green tunnel. Historic maps indicate that Lodge Lane was remodelled between 1882 and 1886, when the Metropolitan railway was built and railway bridge installed over Lodge Lane. This is likely to be when the lane levels were dropped and the lane side banks created to accommodate the railway bridge. Accordingly, the special character of this lane has been developing for approximately 136 years.

2.36. Lodge Lane forms the boundary between the site to the west and the AONB to the east but in reality, the rural characteristics of valley, woodland and fields are continued from the AONB into the site. An exception to this is the Honours Yard business estate to the south of the site, although this is enclosed by landform and woodland which significantly reduces its effect on the rural character of the lane. In contrast, the roadside woodland thins in the vicinity of the site and the valley landscape can be readily perceived, especially in winter. The removal of 70% of the trees along with their understorey, remodelling of the banks and introduction of engineered retaining features would have a harmful, urbanising effect on this rural lane.

2.37. No assessment of Lodge Lane character is provided in the LVIA. It is considered to have a Sensitivity of High; the Magnitude of Change would be Medium (as the proposal would affect 130m of a longer lane).

2.38. This would result in a localised but permanent, significant MAJOR ADVERSE EFFECT on the character of this section of Lodge Lane.

2.39. Lighting

The site is currently unlit and reflects the dark landscape of the adjacent AONB. Introducing lighting across two thirds of the site, including high level lighting associated with proposed sports pitches in the north and other commercial development, will undoubtedly have a significant effect on the landscape and visual character of the site, as well as effects on biodiversity.

2.40. Despite both Buckinghamshire Council Strategic Environment Protection Team (BCSEPT) and Chilterns Conservation Board (CCB) highlighting, at ES Scoping stage, the need for a detailed lighting assessment, the LVIA provides no assessment of the landscape and

visual effects lighting would have on the site or immediate landscape. The submitted lighting assessment is restricted to an assessment of only the visual effects of the proposal on just four, clustered viewpoints (N20, N21, N22 and N23) to the north-east of the site in the AONB (LVIA para. 13.68).

2.41. All roads surrounding the site are unlit, except for Oakington Avenue to the north (which is very minimally lit). Although the dwellings themselves would emanate some light, the majority of residential roads (including Honours Yard business estate and the railway line) are separated from the site by substantial tree belts (which include conifers) and/or woodlands, so light spill would be very minimal, even in winter. Most of the adjacent developments are private, so light from road traffic would be very minimum indeed. Lodge Lane is not heavily trafficked so light from this direction would also be minimal.

2.42. It is considered that the Baseline Condition of the majority of the site falls within the Institute of Lighting Professional's Environmental Zone E1: Natural; Dark - AONB's etc (rather than E2: Rural; Low District Brightness – Sparsely inhabited rural area, village or relatively dark outer suburban locations). The site is essentially a dark landscape, associated much more with the adjacent AONB landscape to the east than the Little Chalfont settlement to the west and north.

2.43. The site is considered to have a Sensitivity of Medium/High (rather than Low); The Magnitude of Change would be Medium/Large (not assessed in LVIA).

2.44. This would result in a permanent, significant MODERATE/MAJOR ADVERSE EFFECT on the site.

2.45. Area of Special Character (ASC) Burtons Lane to Doggetts Wood Lane ASC lies adjacent to the west of the site. The special character of the 'Woodland Roads' and 'Green Suburban Roads' which typify the ASC are described in the Chiltern and South Bucks Townscape Character Study (Chapter 4, Sections 4.4 and 4.5).

2.46. The DAS includes a Local (built) Character Assessment (Chapter 3) making reference to the low density housing (with leafy character) in the adjacent ASC. It claims to reflect this character in the 45-55dph medium density development proposed in the 'Streets and Lanes' character areas east of Burtons Lane. However, the proposed layout is considered unsympathetic, as the proposed 45-55 dph would not allow for the level of green space, planting and size of trees required to provide an appropriate landscape response to the adjacent ASC.

2.47. Lower density housing enables the retention of more existing important or mature landscape features (trees, woodlands and hedgerows), which help provide a more mature landscape in which to set the new development. It also allows space for the provision of new tree and hedgerow planting to help soften the effects of the new development and provide an enhanced landscape for the future.

2.48. Tree Retention and Protection dwgs. 005 P03, 006 P02 and 007 P02 in the AIA2 indicate that 59 individual trees, sixteen tree groups and six hedgerows would be removed

(totalling 73 arboricultural features), with only the woodland blocks and some of the boundary vegetation being retained. This is a direct result of the spread and density of the proposed development.

2.49. In its assessment of Landscape Effects (Appendix 13.7: Table of Landscape Affects) under Character of Site, the LVIA claims 'the development would represent an extension of Little Chalfont that would offer a large range of landscape improvements that create a transition between the existing built form and the wider undeveloped landscape to the east' (AONB). This is contested, as the existing ASC already provides a 'transition zone' on the edge of Little Chalfont, which is identified and protected through policy (H4). Far from 'creating a transition', this development undermines the existing transition zone and introduces higher density housing beyond it to the east.

2.50. The LVIA provides no assessment of the effect of the proposal on the ASC.

2.51. It is considered the ASC has a Sensitivity of High; The Magnitude of Change would be Medium. This would result in a permanent, significant MODERATE ADVERSE EFFECT to the ASC and its setting.

2.52. Visual Effects

Table 8 'Table of Visual Effects' (appendix 13.8, LVIA) summarises the LVIA assessments and findings of the visual effects of the proposed development on a range of visual receptors at year 15. None of the assessments have included a consideration of lighting across the site (including potential flood lighting for sports pitches) and are therefore inaccurate and unreliable. Other impacts have also been underestimated. The adverse effects of the proposed development would be much greater than concluded in Table 8. Examples of viewpoints from which visual effects have been particularly underestimated are: -

Vp.18 PRoW LCF/11/1 (in New Hanging Wood in AONB to east), walkers: Sensitivity High (agreed); Magnitude of Change Small/medium (rather than Small). This would result in a permanent, significant MODERATE ADVERSE EFFECT on footpath users (rather than Minor Adverse)

Vps. 1, 2, 3 and 4 Lodge Lane, road users: Urbanisation. Loss of wooded bank on northern stretch, engineered banked features. Clear views into site on passing including development and lighting. Sensitivity Medium (agreed); Magnitude of Change Medium/Large (rather than Very Small). This would result in a permanent, significant MODERATE/MAJOR ADVERSE EFFECT on road users (rather than Negligible Adverse)

Vp.11 Loudhams Wood Lane looking east, road users

Adjacent 55-65 dph, high density housing, 2.5-3 storey high, on rising ground. Limited opportunity for large scale tree planting. New lighting, including potential flood lighting of sports pitches on higher ground to north-east.

Sensitivity Medium (agreed); Magnitude of Change Medium (rather than Very Small-none).

This would result in a permanent, MINOR/MODERATE ADVERSE EFFECT on road users

(rather than Negligible Adverse to neutral) Vps.12/13 Burton Lane looking east, road users

Loss of views through trees over dry valley. New 45-55 dph, medium density housing, 2.5-3 storey height.

Sensitivity Medium (agreed); Magnitude of Change Small/Medium (rather than Very small). This would result in a permanent, MINOR/MODERATE ADVERSE EFFECT on road users (rather than Negligible Adverse)

Vps. 9 and 10 Village Way looking east, road users. Glimpsed views through houses/trees of 55-65 dph high density development, 2.5-3 storey high, on rising ground, lighting including sports pitches. Limited opportunity for large scale tree planting. Sensitivity Medium (agreed); Magnitude of Change Small/Medium (rather than Very small). This would result in a permanent, MINOR/MODERATE ADVERSE EFFECT on road users (rather than Negligible Adverse to Neutral)

2.53. Mitigation and Enhancement

Paras 13.24 – 13.26 (Design and Mitigation) confirm that ‘Primary’ mitigation measures are those shown on the Land Use and Green Infrastructure Parameter Plan 00973E_PP01 Rev.P1 and would therefore be secured by any permission at this outline stage. Details of ‘Secondary’ mitigation measures would be provided later at condition stage.

2.54. Secondary mitigation measures are described in para. 13.189 of the LVIA and include general and unquantifiable descriptions such as:

- New tree and hedge planting in open space and streets; orchards, nature reserve, allotments, meadows, formal parks; recreation areas and SuDS features
- Provision of a Landscape Habitat Management Plan to include an Ecological and Woodland Management Strategy (this would presumably include management proposals for the existing ancient woodlands and proposed nature reserve)

2.55. Although no details are provided at this outline stage of either the primary or secondary mitigation, and none would be provided until condition stage, the Year 15 assessment of landscape and visual effects relies heavily on both (confirmed in LVIA Chapter 13, para 13.25 – 13.26).

2.56. It is not considered appropriate that secondary mitigation and enhancement details, for which there are no details or security of provision, be relied on so heavily in the assessment of landscape and visual effects of the development. It is also considered inappropriate that the future management of these important and irreplaceable landscape features (which is relied upon to provide benefits) be consigned to being dealt with by condition.

2.57. It is concerning that statements in the Year 1 and Year 15 assessments of effect on the Landscape Character of the site (Table 7) are misleading and/or false and overstate the mitigation and enhancements provided within the development. For instance, it is not correct that the development would ‘conserve the network of hedgerows and hedgerow trees’ or ‘take account of the Root Protection Areas for existing trees’. The applicants own assessment in AIA2 confirms that 59 individual trees, 16 tree groups and six hedgerows (approx. 50% of all hedgerows identified in the HS2021) within the site would be removed. It should be noted that the applicants own Hedgerow Assessment (HAR2021) recommends ‘the long term protection and enhancement of hedgerows throughout the site’ (para.5.3).

3. CONCLUSION

3.1. This proposal conflicts with NPPF, para.174 (a) by failing to protect and enhance a 'valued' landscape.

3.2. It fails to achieve the Landscape Guidelines for development in LCA 18.3; requiring the removal of important and valued trees, hedgerows and farmland; harming the rural character of Lodge Lane and proposing development which requires the suburbanisation of adjacent roads.

3.3. It conflicts with Core Strategy policies: CS21 by harming the setting of Burtons Lane to Doggetts Wood Lane Area of Special Character CS22 by failing to protect the setting of the Chilterns AONB or safeguarding views into and out of the area CS32 by failing to protect strategic green infrastructure assets (hedgerow connections)

3.4. It conflicts with Local Plan policies: GC4 by failing to retain important established trees and hedgerows GB30 by not being well integrated into its rural setting or conserving the scenic beauty and amenity of the landscape H4 by harming the special character of the Burtons to Doggetts Wood Lane Area of Special Character LSQ1 by harming the setting of the AONB TW6 through the loss of good quality woodland which has landscape significance and amenity value (W13).

Buckinghamshire Urban Designer 21/03/22 (see next page)



Directorate for Planning Growth & Sustainability
Buckinghamshire Council,
Walton Street Offices,
Walton Street,
Aylesbury
HP20 1UA

stefan.kruckowski@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Laura Peplow
Development Management
(Chiltern Area)
Planning, Growth & Sustainability
Buckinghamshire Council

21 March 2022

Dear Laura

Application: Little Chalfont

Thank you for consulting me on this application.

Summary:

OBJECTION

The submitted proposals seek to set a series of design principles, for instance in the form of parameter plans. These are unsatisfactory as they do not provide a robust basis for any future Reserved Matters applications in that they permit a disconnected street network, poor resolution of the interface with existing homes and allow development to come forward wholly or largely at two stories or less. Clarity is required about the link street (proposed as a bus/emergency route). If a bus service is not viable, the risk is that this link would not be delivered in any form. It would be prudent at this stage for the council to require an adopted street to be provided to ensure that if approved, any developer buying the site would factor the capital costs of this link into their viability appraisal.

There are a number of other urban design weaknesses: assessment of off-site walking and cycling infrastructure, internal layout with particular concerns about building orientation and street network. There is insufficient information relating to surface water management. There is a lack of appreciation of local character and a failure to utilise the Council's Townscape Character Study that must inform development proposals. The National Design Guide emphasises the important of context, as such the failure to respond to the Townscape Character Study is a critical oversight.

Appreciating the outline nature of the application, the Design and Access Statement, in particular the parameters plans would be a base on which a Reserved Matters application is pursued. I am of the view that the proposals as submitted would frustrate the council's ability to secure a well-designed scheme. To resolve these concerns, the proposals require fundamental changes to be made. A single Framework Plan is required as opposed to a series of parameter plans. The Framework Plan must set out key design principles such as where buildings must be a certain height. This Framework Plan also needs to set out other non-negotiable design requirements that will need to be resolved at any future Reserved Matters stage, such as a school design that relates positively to the streets and public spaces around it.

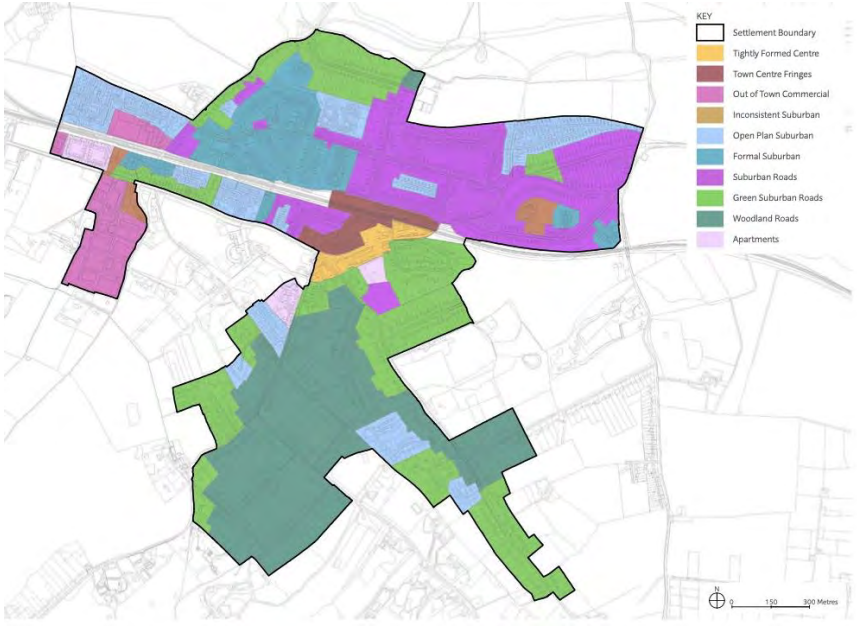
If the Council were seeking to approve this application, I would suggest a condition to the effect of: notwithstanding the submitted Design and Access Statement and Parameter Plans, prior to determination of any Reserved Matters application a 1) single framework plan; 2) Design Code shall be submitted and approved to the Planning Authority. A Note to Applicant would encourage the applicant to engage in pre-application discussions and set out the structure of the Design Code:

Heading		Rule
Streets and spaces	1	Follow the Framework Plan
	2	Connect up
	3	Street types
	4	Design of access points to Lodge Lane and Burtons Lane
	5	Civic and public spaces
	6	Surface water management
	7	Hammerheads
	8	Street furniture
Blocks and buildings	9	Standard perimeter blocks
	10	Special (narrow) perimeter blocks.
	11	Hot frontages
	12	Make the most of long and open views
	13	Face streets and public spaces
	14	Building lines
	15	Turn corners and street pivots well
	16	Joining buildings together
	17	Building heights
	18	Roofscape
	19	Gardens and amenity space
	20	Rear elevations
Homes	21	Every home to offer some green to the street
	22	Cycle parking
	23	Car parking: on plot
	24	Car parking: off plot
	25	Flat over garage homes
Details	26	Building appearance, style and detailing
	27	Local
	28	Hedgehog highways, nesting and feeding habitats
	29	Kerb appeal
	30	Level changes and retaining structures
	31	Parcel joins

The proposals were subject to pre-applications discussions with which I was involved. Since the last pre-application meeting various major changes have been made to the development proposals which have diluted some positive design elements. In addition, a number of structural design elements remain unresolved which I consider should be resolved an outline stage as they are structural (macro) rather than detailed (micro) design considerations.

Observations on the Design and Access Statement (November 2021)

2.2 Access and Connections, p.28	A key finding of the National Travel Survey is that whilst the vast majority of journeys are less than a mile they are largely undertaken by a private car (outside of London). This is a fundamental challenge for any development in this location. How will modal shift be achieved and what interventions are required both on and off site to achieve modal shift and 'buck the trend'?
2.2 Access and Connections And 2.7 Local Facilities	Distance between the site and local facilities cannot be the sole determinant of access; the quality of pedestrian and cycle between the site and facilities requires analysis taking into account LTN 1/20, Gear Change or the NHS Long Term Plan.
2.2 Access and Connections And 2.7 Local Facilities	Where are the barriers to pedestrians and cyclists beyond the site and what should be the role of any development in helping to fix all or some of these?
Access and Connections, p.30	I question how likely it will be that bus services will ever penetrate the development if the bridge is not built to accommodate them. Creating a new or extension to the existing bus route would be inefficient, requiring a bus to drive down Burtons Lane, complete a loop around the development before going back onto Burtons Lane. Has a service such as on demand buses been explored, such as Arriva Click?
p.44-45	As earlier comments it is not sufficient just to identify local facilities but the quality of connections between places, focusing on pedestrians and cyclists. For instance, Image 6 – with many parents working at home all or some of the week, there is a major opportunity to encourage parents that do not need to drive their children to school as part of their commute to walk or cycle them. It is well known (see National Travel Survey) that concerns about safety are part of the reason why parents will drive their children to school. So what are the barriers and issues between the site and Little Chalfont Primary School?
2.8 Constraints and opportunities p.47	A major opportunity exists on the Burton Lane frontage responding to the distinctive plot and building character along this street. The base plan offers strong cues as to how the frontage needs to be integrated into the place.
3.1 Local Character Assessment, p.50	No reference to Townscape Character Study. The analysis of these settlements already exists; and in a more comprehensive manner within this Study.
p.51	Why start with Amersham on the Hill? Why is this relevant? Key features are not correct. Continuous building frontage is only a characteristic in certain locations. Old Town, On the Hill (core) and On the Hill (residential streets) are all very different to each other. From a residential perspective, plot sizes/shapes and landscape structure are the basis of character. This observation is reinforced by the Townscape Study that identifies multiple character areas in this settlement.
p.54, p.55	Plot and street character are key features.
p.59	Paragraph titled 'Buildings' states properties are set back a short distance from the road. This is incorrect as buildings have deep set backs – as illustrated on the photo marked 5.

	No mention of Metroland and the character of this form of development.
p.60	<p>Summary paragraph. I do not understand what this is trying to say. Cues from the place need to influence the character of the development. Whilst modern development cannot build homes at the density characteristic of the local area, specific elements can be drawn out and replicated, particularly in the integration of structural landscaping within the street and on individual plots. During pre-applications discussions the applicant was encouraged to consider what 21st Metroland might be. This has still not been explored. The Townscape Character Study identifies a number of character areas within this settlement. How might any development respond to this, for example if the development were approved, how would an updated version of this map be coloured?</p> 
p.65	The design principles discussed and agreed at pre-application discussions in November 2019 need to be included within the Design and Access Statement.
p.67	Table, top line right hand column. Why are there three character areas? How do these (as earlier observations) relate to the Townscape Study?
p.68	How many people commented? What quantitative data was drawn from the responses received?
p.69	Table, second line right hand column. What quality are these cycle connections taking LTN1/20 into account?
p.71	The proposals 'leap' to the layout plan shown in axonometric.
p.76	A single framework plan is needed.
p.77	<p>As per pre-application discussions, back gardens need to back onto existing back gardens. Exposing rear gardens breaks perimeter block structure and creates Secure by Design issues. Narrow spaces such as this become problematic spaces and expose existing properties adjacent to the site.</p> <p>Why is a strip of public open space proposed along the Burtons Lane frontage? Referring back to earlier observations, the most responsive approach here would be three large plots facing the Lane and accessed from it with on plot vehicle turning.</p>

	<p>Indicative SUDS ponds. What are the options for surface water management? What options are there taking into account the soil characteristics? Can we avoid or limit the extent of attenuation basins? What assumptions have been made about the basins and what sort of basins would be created in side profile. How appropriate is the proposed water management response to landscape character?</p> <p>Is Section BB on p. 107 representative of all the proposed basins?</p>
p.78	<p>Building heights. Parameters need to set out where certain building heights are required. Up to heights are ineffective. All coloured zones (p.79) could be built as entirely one or two storey.</p>
p.80	<p>What is the proposed street network?</p> <p>The central link section is proposed as restricted access for buses and emergency vehicles. However if this is not open to delivery vehicles, it is likely that a delivery driver will need to drive through the middle of the village to reach different parts of the development.</p> <p>It is not appropriate to propose a shared footway/cycleway (see LTN1/20).</p> <p>Access design – how will access be designed taking into account Manual for Streets, National Design Guide, Townscape Study, LTN 1/20 etc?</p>
p.85	<p>September 2021 – change also included a different interface with Loudhams Wood Lane. This change of interface is not supported and is inconsistent with good urban design practice.</p>
p.85	<p>Will development never take place on the southern portion? Would it not be prudent to future proof access if there is a possibility that development in this location might be required in the future whether this were 10 or 100 years from now?</p>
p.85	<p>Peer review. Any design review must be independent and comply with the CABE principles for design review https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/resources/guide/design-review-principles-and-practice</p>
p.90	<p>Layout observation: why back homes onto Stonydean Wood; not consistent with good urban design practice unless controls are in place to avoid 1.8m close boarded fenced rear gardens.</p> <p>Many trees are within 6m of foundations. If enhanced foundations are not proposed, all trees need to be removed within 6m of foundations to offer a more accurate illustration of what tree planting is actually deliverable.</p>
p.92	<p>Noting earlier comments, the illustration on this page would look very different if a developer were to use up to parameters and build one and two storey buildings (as permitted on p.79).</p>
p.93	<p>The community hub/space would look very different if a developer used the parameter building heights to build a single storey structure.</p>
p.96/97/100	<p>The NPPF requires tree lined streets. It is not clear whether assumptions made about streets widths/block depths allow for street trees in some locations. The space for street trees along a number of streets seems limited/non-existent. Whilst this is an outline application, providing sufficient space for trees can have a significant impact on development coverage (housing numbers) and should be considered more at this stage.</p>

p.106	Section AA - where is the road? Is access into the woodland proposed to be permitted? The hedgerow is proposed as a barrier, so I presume access is not permitted?
p.110	<p>Key missing number 14. What happens to the cycle land when it meets the square?</p> <p>It is important for the square to include key design requirements such as the front door of the school to the square and active ground floor frontages.</p> <p>It is unclear how the school will integrate into streets and public spaces taking into account current poor practice trends for surrounding schools with fencing, detaching them from the public realm and designing them with large car drop offs. It would be more useful if images showed best practice examples of school design. For instance, what is “a pleasant school drop-off environment”? Are these children being walked into school having walked, cycled or driven there?</p>
p.117	Lighting. Commendable objectives but has this been discussed with Highways? If not, how is this deliverable?
p.119/120	Access Design – is this consistent with best practice? Corner radii appear over sized? Refuse vehicles can cross the centre line to reduce corner radii.
p.121	No reference to LTN1/20.
p.122	Disconnected street network heavily reliant on hammerheads which frustrates movement and requires refuse vehicles to perform reverse movements which is not supported. The Movement Strategy must show a network of connected and adopted streets. This is a further benefit of backing homes onto existing homes as it makes a connected street network more viable.
p.125	Car use. Local standards will apply. There is an important distinction between car use and car ownership. Reducing car parking provision in new developments outside of London and other major cities simply results in displaced parking.
p.126	<p>How will unauthorised parking be prevented through design? (Bottom right photo).</p> <p>Cycle and car parking standards. Tandem parking needs to be limited. As per pre-application discussions, why can this development not be more creative in the way it approaches car storage drawing ideas from places like Clay Farm, Cambridge.</p>
p.127	I do not understand what we are being told here. How will the development avoid common inclusive design pitfalls? What does the applicant understand these pitfalls to be? For example, driveway cross overs that require the pavement to drop create difficulties particularly for those who are blind or visually impaired. Lighting columns in the 2m pavement corridor, service strips and shared surfaces are also examples of exclusive rather than inclusive design.
p.138	Image (material) pixelated. How do the materials relate to the Townscape Study?
p.139	As per previous observations, Burtons Lane frontage needs to be a distinct and standalone design response and does not fit with the Loudham Mews idea.

p.139	Stoneydean Place would seem to be appropriate to cover the square; which surely would be different in character to residential streets?
p.142	Text refers to side of plot parking behind the building line then refers to integral garages. As such, what is the regulatory control as anything is permitted?
p.152	Weatherboarding “can be used”. Unless weatherboarding “must be used”, the images are not representative of what will be delivered.
p.160	As per previous observations and pre-application discussions, I am concerned that the Design and Access Statement does not provide clarity that a school detached from the public realm and set behind high fencing will not be acceptable.
p.160	The scheme needs to complete a perimeter block by backing homes onto the gardens of existing homes adjacent to the site. Design principles need to require a line of back gardens along this edge, with building heights and typologies reflecting the adjacent homes.
p.170/171	Not required in a Design and Access Statement.

I trust these comments are of assistance. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further assistance or advice.

Kind regards

Stefan

Dr. Stefan Kruczkowski
Urban Designer
Specialists Team

Buckinghamshire Climate Response Officer 25/02/22

Preamble

The Environmental Statement (hereafter “ES”) is divided into three parts; Volume 1 comprising the main text, Volume 2 comprising the Figures and Volume 3 comprising the Appendices. The following topics, chapters and appendices have been deemed within the scope of the Climate Response consultation comments and reviewed as part of this consultation response. This is based upon the descriptions provided in Table 1.1 “Specified Information” within the ES2 :

- Energy demand and use; “Energy and Sustainability Statement” – separate standalone document in Appendix
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Climate Change Impact; Chapters 3, 4 and 7 through 14 of the Environmental Statement Volume 1 and Cumulative Impact; Chapter 15
- The “Utilities Statement” has also been reviewed with respect to the provision of energy supply (electricity, gas where applicable) to the proposed development

I. Energy Demand & Use – Energy & Sustainability Statement

These comments concern the Energy & Sustainability Statement (Hereafter “ESS”), Issue 04, submitted November 2021.

Chapter 1 identifies the site, project team and report purpose. Chapter 2 outlines the national and local policy background. It is worth noting that the “Future Homes Standard” consultation response has since been published in December 2021 – this was in line the report’s expectations for publication in late 2021. Policy CS5 requiring an “Energy Statement” is addressed within the ESS, Chapter 3.

Chapter 3 sets out the policy summary and requirements. The report seeks to demonstrate how they have been met through the application of the Energy Hierarchy. The Energy Strategy sets out broadly reasonable principles, however due to the outline nature of the application is not yet sufficient detailed and will be developed as the master planning progresses.

I recommend imposing a condition upon the application, that a suitable Energy Statement be submitted which satisfies policies CS4, CS5 and GC2. The Energy Statement must be deemed acceptable by the Council for the condition to be discharged.

I further strongly recommend imposing a second condition, requiring the developer to provide suitable evidence following construction of the dwellings that they have been built and perform as set out in the Energy Statement. This is necessary to address the well documented “Performance Gap” between the design performance and as built performance³ which presents a serious challenge to the credibility of the UK construction industry’s sustainable ambition.

Chapters 4 and 5 deal with embodied carbon and sustainable water use, in the context of

policy CS4. I recommend imposing conditions requiring the developer to evidence the application of the principles outlined in Chapter 4 during construction.

I further recommend imposing a condition to require the developer to evidence that the proposed water usage levels outlined in Table 5.1 have been achieved in the as-built dwellings.

Chapter 6 deals with climate resilience. I recommend imposing a condition, to be discharged during the master planning stage, requiring the developer to evidence the implementation of the outlined passive design principles within the development. The current statements are high level and objective setting in their nature and insufficient at this stage. Further detail of the recommended conditions is given in IV.

II. Environmental Statement – Main Text

In Chapter 5, paragraphs 5.36 to 5.39, reference is made to the Energy & Sustainability Strategy. Please see my comments above. Further, paragraph 5.38 states that the 31% reduction over Part L regulations exceeds the 10% CS5 policy requirement. This is not accurate – policy CS5 requires that “at least 10% of ... energy requirements are from decentralised and renewable or low-carbon sources”; this is not the same as carbon reduction against Part L baselines. The comparison made in paragraph 5.38 should be removed or corrected. This is an error in the ES.

Paragraph 6.8 outlines the planned site phasing, lasting from 2022 to 2026. It is worth noting that the Ministry Housing, Communities & Local Government have published planned changes to the Part L regulations coming into effect during 2023, with further changes planned for 2025. These will materially affect the requirements on carbon savings for homes built out during different phases of the development⁴. The Applicant must account for how they will approach the dynamic nature of the regulatory regime given the schedule for the development build out.

Within Table 1.1 and point 5 (f), it is stated that Chapters 5 and 9 cover climate impact including “for example the nature and magnitude of greenhouse gas emissions”. However, in neither chapter can I find an attempt to quantify and contextualise the total emissions from the project, nor can I find an attempt to assess their magnitude. I would expect that the cumulative emissions from the whole life of the project should be presented including both construction and the entire operational life of the development. This should be set into the context of the local and national emissions including a comparison to the counterfactual baseline case where development does not take place. This is a serious omission from the application.

Based upon the errors and omissions identified within the Environmental Statement, I will be recommending that the application be refused as the ES fails to adequately assess the climate change impact of the proposed development.

III. Utilities Statement

The Utilities Statement deals with the relevant infrastructure required for the development.

Chapter 4.1.3 indicates that the applicant has a “budget” estimate with the DNO SSEN. The lack of an accepted, secured connection offer could be an impediment to the development. It is recommended to impose a condition upon the application to secure an adequately sized grid connection for the development. The accepted connection offer and a report demonstrating the adequate sizing of the connection should be required for condition discharge. Given the increasing move to electrify new build housing for both transport and heating, securing the necessary capacity cannot be taken for granted and a condition is justified.

IV. Recommended Conditions

Should the Council be minded to grant outline permission I recommend that the following conditions be imposed:

Condition 1

No dwelling shall be occupied until an Energy Statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. The statement shall include and assess the feasibility of measures to utilise decentralised, renewable or low-carbon sources of energy including:

- b. Air or Ground Source Heat Pumps
- c. Solar PV
- d. Solar Thermal

Reason: To ensure the development is sustainable and to comply with the requirements of CS5 (Encouraging Renewable Energy Schemes) of Core Strategy for Chiltern District. Which states: ‘In developments of more than 10 dwellings or 1,000 square metres of non-residential floorspace, the Council will require that at least 10% of their energy requirements are from decentralised and renewable or low-carbon sources. Where developers cannot meet this requirement, the Council will require robust professional evidence to demonstrate why this is not feasible or viable.’

Condition 2

No dwelling shall be occupied until suitable evidence has been submitted to the LPA and approved in writing that the dwelling has been constructed and performs in line with the Energy Statement approved through Condition 1.

Reason: There is a well-documented “performance gap” in the new build housing market in England whereby housing consistently underperforms against design. This must be addressed through rigorous monitoring, in line with the monitoring requirements set out in CS5 (Encouraging Renewable Energy Schemes) of Core Strategy for Chiltern District. Which states: We will measure success by monitoring that: All residential schemes of more than ten dwellings and commercial developments with floorspace greater than 1,000 square metres should incorporate and implement the above renewable energy requirements.

Condition 3

No construction shall be undertaken until suitable evidence has been submitted to the LPA and approved in writing outlining how the sustainable construction principles outlined in Chapter 4 of the ES shall be implemented during construction.

Reason: To encourage sustainable construction, in light of climate change, as outlined in chapter 8.4 of Core Strategy for Chiltern District. Which states: The Council is committed to

encouraging development which is sustainable, in terms of location, construction and design which will help to address the underlying causes of climate change and its impacts at both a local and national level. We will therefore seek to ensure that the negative environmental and climatic effects of new developments are minimised by encouraging sustainable methods of construction

Condition 4

No dwelling shall be occupied until a report providing evidence that the water usage levels outlined in Table 5.1 of the ES have been achieved in the as-built dwellings has been submitted to and approved by the LPA in writing.

Reason: To encourage sustainable development, and to comply with policy CS4 of Core Strategy for Chiltern District. Which states: Use of water efficiency measures during construction projects and as part of new development to reduce consumption and ensure no detrimental impact on water quality;

Condition 5

A condition, to be discharged during the master planning stage, requiring the developer to evidence the implementation of passive design and passive cooling principles within the development.

Reason: To encourage sustainable construction, in light of climate change, as outlined in chapter 8.4 of Core Strategy for Chiltern District. Which states: The Council is committed to encouraging development which is sustainable, in terms of location, construction and design which will help to address the underlying causes of climate change and its impacts at both a local and national level.

Condition 6

No dwelling shall be occupied until a report demonstrating that an adequately sized grid application has been accepted by the DNO has been submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. This must outline the anticipated demand for the development.

Reason: To comply with policy CS26 of Core Strategy for Chiltern District. Which states: Ensure that developments will be served by adequate infrastructure capacity in terms of water supply, foul drainage, waste water and sewage treatment, high speed broadband access and other utilities, without leading to problems for existing users.

Condition 7

No dwelling shall be occupied until a report demonstrating suitable provision of EV charging points across the new development has been submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. Reason: To comply with policy chapter 8.10 of Core Strategy for Chiltern District. Which states: The Council will also encourage the provision of sustainable fuel infrastructure such as electric charging points at appropriate locations.

V. Conclusion

In responding to the application I have assessed the Energy & Sustainability Statement, the Environmental Statement and the Utilities Statement. Should the Council be minded to grant outline permission, I have identified 7 conditions to be imposed. However, in my assessment, based upon the flaws and omissions identified in the Environmental Statement I recommend that the application be refused.

Waste

24/02/22

I have consulted with our contract manager on this large outline proposal. From a Waste perspective, we will certainly service domestic residential dwellings. We can include provision of other elements, which could be trade or sit under the definition of Schedule 2 (commercial classification). Both of which would be subject to charges the council apply for the provision of waste collection.

Before we commit on the trade side of things, we would like to know more around the operating of the care home. Is this a private operation and the type of waste arising (would there be clinical waste for instance in large quantity). Similarly to have a better understanding of the community centre and how this is operated.

We could agree to consult on waste management solutions for the site as a whole, with the condition that we would only provide a service to domestic properties i.e. those paying CT. Trade premises would need to find their own service provider, however, we could make recommendations for those sites, for the purposes of the planning consent.

26/01/22

Apologies for the delay. Having looked at all the current plans, we will need more detailed information and plans. We need to know how many properties are residential and plan locations for bin stores, collection points and vehicle tracking. What type of properties, are there apartments. Any bin stores need to have sufficient space to accommodate a defined number of bins per property

Sport England 17/01/22

Thank you for consulting Sport England on the above outline application for the demolition of all existing buildings and the erection of residential dwellings including affordable housing, custom build (Use Class C3), retirement homes and care home (Use Class C2), new vehicular access point off Burtons Lane, improvements to existing Lodge Lane access including works to Lodge Lane and Church Grove, new pedestrian and cycle access at Oakington Avenue including construction of new pedestrian and cycle bridge and associated highway works, a local centre including a community building (Use Classes E(a)(b)(e), F2(b)), land safeguarded for educational use (Use Classes E(f) and F1(a)), public open space and associated infrastructure (matters to be considered at this stage: Burtons Lane and Lodge Lane access).

Sport England provides the following comments for your consideration.

The site is not considered to form part of, or constitute a playing field as defined The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (Statutory Instrument 2015 No. 595), therefore Sport England has considered this a non-statutory consultation.

Sport England notes that the proposal will result in the loss of the golf course which has been closed and out of use since 2010.

The planning statement considers that the matter of the loss of the golf course has been dealt with on a previous appeal, and consequently the issue of the loss of the sports facilities has been dealt with. Sport England cannot find details of the appeal and would wish to reassure itself that this matter has been dealt with and accepted. Can further information be provided?

In general terms, Sport England would expect that notwithstanding its disused status, and in accordance with para 99(a) of the NPPF, the application is supported by a robust needs assessment which demonstrates that the golf course and associated facilities are no longer needed and are surplus to requirements.

Para 99 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 has clearly shown 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.

New sports provision/facilities to serve the community It is understood that is a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging authority and as such, the proposed development is required to provide CIL contribution in accordance with the Councils adopted CIL Charging Schedule.

It is acknowledged that there is no requirement to identify where those CIL monies will be directed as part of the determination of any application. That said, Sport England would encourage the Council to consider the sporting needs arising from the development as well as the needs identified in its Infrastructure Delivery Plan (or similar) and direct those monies to deliver new and improved facilities for sport.

Sport England notes that the proposal includes provision for a new primary school with associated playing field and sports facilities. Sport England strongly encourages opening up school sports facilities to the community. We would encourage the school to enter into a community use agreement to secure access to these facilities by local community groups and clubs. Further information can be found here on Sport England's website:

<https://www.sportengland.org/campaigns-and-our-work/use-our-school>.

We would expect that for the new playing field, a proper and robust assessment of ground conditions is carried out by a specialist sports turf contractor/agronomist to identify any constraints on the land which may affect its suitability for sport. The design and construction of the new playing field should be carried out in accordance with our Natural Turf for Sport guidance <https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fspublic/natural-turf-for-sport.pdf> . Similarly, any new sports facilities should be designed and built in accordance with Sport England design guidance: <https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/designand-cost-guidance>.

We would encourage consideration of how the community hub/building can also help meet the development population's needs for movement; sport and physical activity. Again, please refer to Sport England's guidance on facility design, as above.

Active Design

Sport England, in conjunction with Public Health England, has produced 'Active Design' (October 2015), a guide to planning new developments that create the right environment to help people get more active, more often in the interests of health and wellbeing. The guidance sets out ten key principles for ensuring new developments incorporate opportunities for people to take part in sport and physical activity. The Active Design principles are aimed at contributing towards the Government's desire for the planning system to promote healthy communities through good urban design. Sport England would commend the use of the guidance in the master planning process for new residential developments. The document can be downloaded via the following link: <https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/designand-cost-guidance/active-design>.

Conclusion

Subject to satisfactorily clarifying with Sport England the details relating to the appeal on the land which deals with the issue of the loss of golf provision, Sport England does not wish to raise an objection to the proposal in principle under our planning objective 3: Provide - To provide new opportunities to meet the needs of current and future generations. However, this is subject to imposing the following conditions on any permission:

1 (a) No development shall commence [or other specified time period] until the following documents have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority after consultation with Sport England: (i) A detailed assessment of ground conditions (including drainage and topography) of the land proposed for the playing field which identifies constraints which could adversely affect playing field quality; and (ii) Where the results of the assessment to be carried out pursuant to (i) above identify constraints which could adversely affect playing field quality, a detailed scheme to address any such constraints. The scheme shall include a written specification of the proposed soils structure, proposed drainage, cultivation and other operations associated with grass and sports turf establishment and a programme of implementation. (b) The approved scheme shall be carried out in full and in accordance with the approved programme of implementation [or other specified time frame – e.g. before first occupation of the educational establishment].

The land shall thereafter be maintained in accordance with the scheme and made available for playing field use in accordance with the scheme. Reason: To ensure that the playing field is prepared to an adequate standard and is fit for purpose and to accord with Development Plan Policy **. Informative: The applicant is advised that the scheme should comply with the relevant industry Technical Guidance, including guidance published by Sport England, National Governing Bodies for Sport. Particular attention is drawn to 'Natural Turf for Sport', (Sport England, 2011).

2. The playing field/s and pitch/es shall be constructed and laid out in accordance with the standards and methodologies set out in the guidance note "Natural Turf for Sport" (Sport England, 2011), and shall be made available for use before occupation [or other specified timeframe] of the development [or specified part of the development] hereby permitted. Reason: To ensure the quality of pitches is satisfactory and they are available for use before development (or agreed timescale) and to accord with Development Plan Policy **.

The absence of an objection to this application, in the context of the Town and Country Planning Act, cannot be taken as formal support or consent from Sport England or any National Governing Body of Sport to any related funding application, or as may be required by virtue of any pre-existing funding agreement. Thank you once again for consulting Sport England. We would be grateful if you would advise us of the outcome of the application by forwarding a copy of the decision notice.

Cadent 07/01/22 & 15/02/22 (comments repeated)

Your planning application – No objection, informative note required

We have received a notification from the LinesearchbeforeUdig (LSBUD) platform regarding a planning application that has been submitted which is in close proximity to our medium and low pressure assets. We have no objection to this proposal from a planning perspective, however we need you to take the following action.

What you need to do

To prevent damage to our assets or interference with our rights, please add the following Informative Note into the Decision Notice:

Cadent Gas Ltd own and operate the gas infrastructure within the area of your development. There may be a legal interest (easements and other rights) in the land that restrict activity in proximity to Cadent assets in private land. The applicant must ensure that the proposed works do not infringe on legal rights of access and or restrictive covenants that exist.

If buildings or structures are proposed directly above the apparatus the development may only take place following diversion of the apparatus. The applicant should apply online to have apparatus diverted in advance of any works, by visiting cadentgas.com/diversions

Prior to carrying out works, including the construction of access points, please register on

www.lineearchbeforeudig.co.uk to submit details of the planned works for review, ensuring requirements are adhered to.

Download attachments from the following link (Please note this link is valid for 72 hours, so please download and save maps)

https://plans.safedigs.co.uk/TFLAb3oVBuz1RT0/CadentGas_Plant_Enquiry_24326501.zip

Your responsibilities and obligations

Cadent may have a Deed of Easement on the pipeline, which provides us with a right of access for a number of functions and prevents change to existing ground levels, storage of materials. It also prevents the erection of permanent/temporary buildings, or structures. If necessary Cadent will take action to legally enforce the terms of the easement.

This letter does not constitute any formal agreement or consent for any proposed development work either generally or related to Cadent's easements or other rights, or any planning or building regulations applications.

Cadent Gas Ltd or their agents, servants or contractors do not accept any liability for any losses arising under or in connection with this information. This limit on liability applies to all and any claims in contract, tort (including negligence), misrepresentation (excluding fraudulent misrepresentation), breach of statutory duty or otherwise. This limit on liability does not exclude or restrict liability where prohibited by the law nor does it supersede the express terms of any related agreements.

If you need any further information or have any questions about the outcome, please contact us at plantprotection@cadentgas.com or on 0800 688 588 quoting your reference at the top of this letter.

BPA (21/12/21 & 24/02/22)

Planning Application PL/21/4632/OA - Not Affected

Thank you for your correspondence regarding the above noted planning application. Having reviewed the information provided, the BPA pipeline(s) is not affected by these proposals, and therefore BPA does not wish to make any comments on this application. However, if any details of the works or location should change, please advise us of the amendments and we will again review this application.

NATS Safeguarding (22/12/21 & 11/02/22)

The proposed development has been examined from a technical safeguarding aspect and does not conflict with our safeguarding criteria. Accordingly, NATS (En Route) Public Limited Company ("NERL") has no safeguarding objection to the proposal.

However, please be aware that this response applies specifically to the above consultation and only reflects the position of NATS (that is responsible for the management of en route

air traffic) based on the information supplied at the time of this application. This letter does not provide any indication of the position of any other party, whether they be an airport, airspace user or otherwise. It remains your responsibility to ensure that all the appropriate consultees are properly consulted.

If any changes are proposed to the information supplied to NATS in regard to this application which become the basis of a revised, amended or further application for approval, then as a statutory consultee NERL requires that it be further consulted on any such changes prior to any planning permission or any consent being granted.

Thames Water

11/02/22

Waste Comments

Thames Water would advise that with regard to FOUL WATER sewerage network infrastructure capacity, we would not have any objection to the above planning application, based on the information provided.

The application indicates that SURFACE WATER will NOT be discharged to the public network and as such Thames Water has no objection, however approval should be sought from the Lead Local Flood Authority. Should the applicant subsequently seek a connection to discharge surface water into the public network in the future then we would consider this to be a material change to the proposal, which would require an amendment to the application at which point we would need to review our position.

There are public sewers crossing or close to your development. If you're planning significant work near our sewers, it's important that you minimize the risk of damage. We'll need to check that your development doesn't limit repair or maintenance activities, or inhibit the services we provide in any other way. The applicant is advised to read our guide working near or diverting our pipes.

<https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fdevelopers.thameswater.co.uk%2FDeveloping-a-large-site%2FPlanning-your-development%2FWorking-near-or-diverting-our-pipes&data=04%7C01%7Cplanning.comments.csb%40buckinghamshire.gov.uk%7C4fc694ab74734ce4470e08d9ed714507%7C7fb976b99e2848e180861ddabecf82a0%7C0%7C0%7C637801893026080581%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV872luMzliLCJBTiI6Iik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=xSJ4vZCkPoc1YMMa6oS00o%2F2RGSDCyvYTodZMP13OwA%3D&reserved=0.>

Thames Water recognises this catchment is subject to high infiltration flows during certain groundwater conditions. The scale of the proposed development doesn't materially affect the sewer network and as such we have no objection, however care needs to be taken when designing new networks to ensure they don't surcharge and cause flooding. In the longer term Thames Water, along with other partners, are working on a strategy to reduce

groundwater entering the sewer networks. Thames Water recognises this catchment is subject to high infiltration flows during certain groundwater conditions. The developer should liaise with the LLFA to agree an appropriate sustainable surface water strategy following the sequential approach before considering connection to the public sewer network. The scale of the proposed development doesn't materially affect the sewer network and as such we have no objection, however care needs to be taken when designing new networks to ensure they don't surcharge and cause flooding. In the longer term Thames Water, along with other partners, are working on a strategy to reduce groundwater entering the sewer network.

Water Comments

With regard to water supply, this comes within the area covered by the Affinity Water Company. For your information the address to write to is - Affinity Water Company The Hub, Tamblin Way, Hatfield, Herts, AL10 9EZ - Tel - 0845 782 3333.

Supplementary Comments

Waste. Regarding the FOUL WATER discharge in the Flood Risk Assessment document it is mentioned that "The proposal is for circa. 380 residential units, a care home, circa. 100 retirement units, a primary school & nursery along with associated infrastructure, highways parking and up to 100 0m2 of community space". At page 13 it is mentioned that the catchment will be separated into four sub-catchments and it is given the number of dwellings and commercial area that will be discharged at each sub-catchment. However, it is not mentioned where the care house, school & nursery will be. Therefore the comments for the FOUL NETWORK are ONLY FOR the number of dwellings and the sqm of commercial areas that are mentioned at the Outline Application -FRA Document.

23/12/21

Waste Comments

The application indicates that SURFACE WATER will NOT be discharged to the public network and as such Thames Water has no objection, however approval should be sought from the Lead Local Flood Authority. Should the applicant subsequently seek a connection to discharge surface water into the public network in the future then we would consider this to be a material change to the proposal, which would require an amendment to the application at which point we would need to review our position. Thames Water recognises this catchment is subject to high infiltration flows during certain groundwater conditions. There are public sewers crossing or close to your development. If you're planning significant work near our sewers, it's important that you minimize the risk of damage. We'll need to check that your development doesn't limit repair or maintenance activities, or inhibit the services we provide in any other way. The applicant is advised to read our guide working near or diverting our pipes.

<https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fdevelopers.thameswater.co.uk%2FDeveloping-a-large-site%2FPlanning-your-development%2FWorking-near-or-diverting-our-pipes&data=04%7C01%7Cplanning.comments.csb%40buckinghamshire.gov.uk%7Cfd1>

49dc48b454f12401908d9c5ef1ce7%7C7fb976b99e2848e180861ddabecf82a0%7C0%7C0%7C637758453044323664%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6Ij1haWwiLCJXVC16Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=PPqNYNdh2SVGqIWCLHAu3Qgt4KKXcBCarhq5qHNKIoE%3D&reserved=0.

Thames Water recognises this catchment is subject to high infiltration flows during certain groundwater conditions. The developer should liaise with the LLFA to agree an appropriate sustainable surface water strategy following the sequential approach before considering connection to the public sewer network. The scale of the proposed development doesn't materially affect the sewer network and as such we have no objection, however care needs to be taken when designing new networks to ensure they don't surcharge and cause flooding. In the longer term Thames Water, along with other partners, are working on a strategy to reduce groundwater entering the sewer network.

Thames Water would advise that with regard to FOUL WATER sewerage network infrastructure capacity, we would not have any objection to the above planning application, based on the information provided.

Forestry Commission 20/01/22

Thank you for seeking the Forestry Commission's advice about the impacts that this application may have on Ancient Woodland. As a non-statutory consultee, the Forestry Commission is pleased to provide you with the attached information that may be helpful when you consider the application:

- Details of Government Policy relating to ancient woodland
- Information on the importance and designation of ancient woodland

SUMMARY

We note that this development is located close to two blocks of ancient woodland, which may be affected by this development. Impacts may include, but not be limited to, compaction and/or erosion of soils and tree roots; damage via anti-social behaviour; damage and disturbance to flora and fauna from domestic pets; noise, air, light and dust pollution during and after construction.

We are encouraged to read in part 2 of the Design and Access Statement (DAS) that a 30 metre buffer to the ancient woodland will be provided, as well as a 15 to 20 metre buffer zone around other existing woodland. We're also pleased to see consideration to planting within the buffer zones to discourage access to the woodland. We would recommend a single point of controlled access be included to allow for management of the woodlands as and when required. Should this outline permission be granted, we would expect these commitments to be honoured within the subsequent full planning application.

The general topography suggests that surface water flow will run through both blocks of ancient woodland. Therefore, care must be taken when siting the proposed Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) so that these will not adversely affect the hydrology of the ancient woodland, or lead to pollution events. SuDS should not be built within the buffer zones, as

per our joint standing avoid with Natural England.

As standard, if this outline application is given permission, we would expect to see a commitment in future applications that there will be no development in the buffer zones, nor should gardens back onto the ancient woodland. There is a risk of 'garden creep' into woodlands and buffer zones, as well as unauthorized informal access, as well as the risk of fly-tipping of garden waste, which can detrimentally affect the nutrient status of the woodland soils.

We're pleased to see consideration has been given to use of timber within the construction of the buildings, including a number of façades. We would encourage a commitment to use of sustainably-sourced timber, such as that which has been FSC or PEFC certified. Further commitment could be demonstrated by use of timber which has also been certified by Grown In Britain, supporting the UK timber industry and sustainable woodland management, as well as reducing the carbon footprint of the timber by avoiding imported wood.

Finally, it appears from the plans that there is also a commitment for tree-lined streets. We encourage this for the multiple benefits street trees bring, such as urban heat cooling, slowing effects of rainfall during flash flood events, as well as providing habitat islands and corridors. We would expect in future full applications for the particular needs of street trees, such as avoidance of root compaction and vulnerability to drought, to be addressed in the design to ensure successful establishment and growth. END SUMMARY

Ancient woodlands are irreplaceable. They have great value because they have a long history of woodland cover.

It is Government policy to refuse development that will result in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats including ancient woodland, unless "there are wholly exceptional reasons¹ and a suitable compensation strategy exists" (National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 180).

We also particularly refer you to further technical information set out in Natural England and Forestry Commission's Standing Advice on Ancient Woodland – plus supporting Assessment Guide and Case Decisions.

As a non-ministerial Government Department, we provide no opinion supporting or objecting to an application. Rather we are including information on the potential impact that the proposed development would have on the ancient woodland.

One of the most important features of ancient woodlands is the quality and inherent biodiversity of the soil; they being relatively undisturbed physically or chemically. This applies both to Ancient Semi Natural Woodland (ASNW) and Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS). Direct impacts of development that could result in the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland or ancient and veteran trees include:

- damaging or destroying all or part of them (including their soils, ground flora or fungi)
- damaging roots and understory (all the vegetation under the taller trees)
- damaging or compacting soil around the tree roots

- polluting the ground around them
- changing the water table or drainage of woodland or individual trees
- damaging archaeological features or heritage assets

It is therefore essential that the ancient woodland identified is considered appropriately to avoid the above impacts.

Planning Practice Guidance emphasises: ‘Their existing condition is not something that ought to affect the local planning authority’s consideration of such proposals (and it should be borne in mind that woodland condition can usually be improved with good management)’.

If this application is on, adjacent to or impacting the Public Forest Estate (PFE):

– Please note that the application has been made in relation to land on the Public Forest Estate and Forestry England, who manage the PFE, is a party to the application. They therefore should also be consulted separately to the Forestry Commission.

If the planning authority takes the decision to approve this application, we may be able to give further support in developing appropriate conditions and legal agreements in relation to woodland management mitigation or compensation measures. Please note however that the Standing Advice states that “Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees are irreplaceable. Consequently you should not consider proposed compensation measures as part of your assessment of the merits of the development proposal”.

We suggest that you take regard of any points provided by Natural England about the biodiversity of the woodland.

This response assumes that as part of the planning process, the local authority has given due regard as to whether or not an Environmental Impact Assessment is needed under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 or the Environmental Impact Assessment (Forestry) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999, as amended. If there is any doubt regarding the need for an Environmental Impact assessment (Forestry), including for forest roads, please contact us.

We would also like to highlight the need to remind applicants that tree felling not determined by any planning permission may require a felling licence from the Forestry Commission.

Woodland Trust 20/01/22

As the UK's leading woodland conservation charity, the Woodland Trust aims to protect native woods, trees and their wildlife for the future. We own over 1,000 sites across the UK, covering over 30,000 hectares and we have over 500,000 members and supporters.

Impact to Ancient Woodland

The Trust holds concerns regarding planning application PL/21/4632/OA on the basis of potential disturbance and detrimental impact to Stoneydean Wood (grid reference:

SU9998997186) and Netherground Spring (grid reference: TQ0042197309), two areas of Ancient Semi Natural Woodland designated on Natural England's Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI).

Ancient Woodland

Natural England¹ and the Forestry Commission defines ancient woodland "as an irreplaceable habitat. It is a valuable natural asset important for: wildlife (which include rare and threatened species); soils; carbon capture and storage; contributing to the seed bank and genetic diversity; recreation, health and wellbeing; cultural, historical and landscape value [which] has been wooded continuously since at least 1600AD."

It includes: "Ancient semi-natural woodland [ASNW] mainly made up of trees and shrubs native to the site, usually arising from natural regeneration

Plantations on ancient woodland sites – [PAWS] replanted with conifer or broadleaved trees that retain ancient woodland features, such as undisturbed soil, ground flora and fungi"

Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 180 states: "When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons⁶³ and a suitable compensation strategy exists;" Footnote 63, defines exceptional reasons as follows: "For example, infrastructure projects (including nationally significant infrastructure projects, orders under the Transport and Works Act and hybrid bills), where the public benefit would clearly outweigh the loss or deterioration of habitat."

The Council should also have regard for Policy CS24 (Biodiversity) of the Core Strategy for Chiltern District (2011) with respect to the protection of the natural environment.

Impacts to Ancient Woodland

This application is for the re-development of an existing golf course to a mixed-use residential development within proximity to two areas of ancient woodland. Natural England has identified the impacts of development on ancient woodland within their standing advice. This guidance should be considered as Natural England's position with regards to development impacting ancient woodland:

"Indirect effects of development can also cause the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees by:

- breaking up or destroying working connections between woodlands, or ancient trees or veteran trees - affecting protected species, such as bats or wood-decay insects
- reducing the amount of semi-natural habitats next to ancient woodland that provide important dispersal and feeding habitat for woodland species
- reducing the resilience of the woodland or trees and making them more vulnerable to

change • increasing the amount of dust, light, water, air and soil pollution

- increasing disturbance to wildlife, such as noise from additional people and traffic
- increasing damage to habitat, for example trampling of plants and erosion of soil by people accessing the woodland or tree root protection areas
- increasing damaging activities like fly-tipping and the impact of domestic pets
- increasing the risk of damage to people and property by falling branches or trees requiring tree management that could cause habitat deterioration
- changing the landscape character of the area”

When land use is intensified such as in this situation, plant and animal populations are exposed to environmental impacts from the outside of a woodland. In particular, the habitats become more vulnerable to the outside influences, or edge effects, that result from the adjacent land’s change of use. These can impact cumulatively on ancient woodland - this is much more damaging than individual effects.

We are concerned about the following impacts to the ancient woodlands:

- Intensification of the recreational activity of humans and their pets can result in disturbance to breeding birds, vegetation damage, trampling, litter, and fire damage.
- Fragmentation as a result of the separation of adjacent semi-natural habitats, such as small wooded areas, hedgerows, individual trees and wetland habitats.
- Noise, light and dust pollution occurring from adjacent development, during both construction and operational phases.
- Where the wood edge overhangs public areas, trees can become safety issues and be indiscriminately lopped/felled, resulting in a reduction of the woodland canopy and threatening the long-term retention of such trees.
- Adverse hydrological impacts can occur where the introduction of hard-standing areas and water run-offs affect the quality and quantity of surface and ground water. This can result in the introduction of harmful pollutants/contaminants into the woodland.
- Development can provide a source of non-native and/or invasive plant species and aids their colonisation of the woodland.

Mitigation

Detrimental edge effects have been shown to penetrate woodland causing changes in ancient woodland characteristics that extend up to three times the canopy height in from the forest edges. As such, it is necessary for mitigation to be considered to alleviate such impacts. Natural England’s standing advice for ancient woodland, states: “Mitigation measures will depend on the type of development. They could include:

- putting up screening barriers to protect ancient woodland or ancient and veteran trees from dust and pollution
- measures to reduce noise or light
- designing open space to protect ancient or veteran trees
- rerouting footpaths and managing vegetation to deflect trampling pressure away from sensitive locations
- creating buffer zones”

Additional mitigation approaches are also outlined in our Planners’ Manual² ; these measures would help ensure that the development meets policy requirement and guidance and include:

- Retaining and enhancing natural habitats around ancient woodland to improve connectivity with the surrounding landscape.
- Measures to control noise, dust and other forms of water and airborne pollution.
- Sympathetic design and use of appropriate lighting to avoid light pollution.
- Producing and funding an access management plan for the woodland, and/or providing alternative natural greenspace to reduce additional visitor pressure.
- Implementation of an appropriate monitoring plan to ensure that proposed measures are effective over the long term and accompanied by contingencies should any conservation objectives not be met.

Buffering

The Trust acknowledges that the applicants have provided the ancient woodlands on site with a buffer zone of 30 metres. However, for large developments we advocate for a buffer zone of 50 metres as a precautionary principle, unless the developer can clearly demonstrate a smaller buffer will suffice. This will help to avoid root damage and allow for the effect of pollution from the development.

The buffer zone should be planted before construction commences on site. HERAS fencing fitted with acoustic and dust screening measures should also be put in place during construction to ensure that the buffer zone does not suffer from encroachment of construction vehicles/stockpiles, and to limit the effects of other indirect impacts.

This is backed up by Natural England's standing advice which states that "the proposal should have a buffer zone of at least 15 metres from the boundary of the woodland to avoid root damage (known as the root protection area). Where assessment shows other impacts are likely to extend beyond this distance, the proposal is likely to need a larger buffer zone. For example, the effect of air pollution from development that results in a significant increase in traffic."

Conclusion

The Trust holds concerns about this planning application on account of potential detrimental impact to the ancient woodlands on site due to their proximity to the proposed development.

Chilterns Conservation Board 08/02/22

CCB Comments / further details sought on to highway interventions to Lodge Lane and its landscape implications (matters of setting to the adjoining AONB boundary).

The Chilterns Conservation Board (CCB) has been consulted on this application. In August 2021 we commented on the scoping of the Environmental Statement. We raised the point, amongst others, that this application falls within the setting of the AONB at its eastern limb and when the application site is viewed from within the AONB, in public footpaths to the east and including the Chilterns Way. We also made points on the sensitivity of lighting upon the AONB and the importance of buffers to the Ancient Woodlands within the site, including appropriate management measures to prevent unnecessary pressures upon those sensitive habitats.

We have reviewed the papers and would like to comment. Our comments are shaped by our statutory purposes as defined in the CROW Act at section 87. Section 85 of that Act is also relevant because it applies the 'duty of regard' to planning applications within the AONB, as may affect its setting. We comment below and we specifically raise objection to the treatment of the access onto Lodge Lane, which is shown as 'indicative' on the submitted highway plans. This level of detail was not known at the ES scoping stage. To assist the LPA our main points are captured within each sub-heading.

CCB's Position on the draft (now withdrawn) Local Plan

The CCB supports a plan-led approach. The detailed planning statement at its 7.34 deals with the former draft Local Plan and accurately reports the CCB's previously submitted representations on this site (BP6) and our views on other promoted sites, notably BP4 (London Rd West) and BP5 (SE of Whielden Street).

The key issue will be the impact upon the setting of the AONB. This is a matter of elevated importance following its inclusion in the 2021 revisions to the NPPF. It is also mentioned in adopted Local Plan policy CS 22 and the CCB has produced a position paper on the setting of the AONB. In this case that setting is both visual but also the ecological connectivity between the AONB and the site as well as the implications for future recreational pressures. We note that a section 106 in its heads of terms will propose, potentially, waymarking and route promotions from within the site to the wider landscape.

The CCB's Position Statement on Development affecting the setting of the Chilterns AONB (2011) states that 14. 'The setting of the Chilterns AONB does not have a geographical border. The location, scale, materials or design of a proposed development or land management activity will determine whether it affects the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB. A very large development may have an impact even if some considerable distance from the AONB boundary. However, the distance away from the AONB will be a material factor in forming a decision on any proposals, in that the further away a development is from the AONB boundary the more the impact is likely to be reduced'. One very germane example, at paragraph 16 states that examples of adverse impacts include, 'Reduction in public access and detrimental impacts on the character and appearance of rural roads and lanes'.

We acknowledge that the retention of a dry valley running east-west through the site is a feature that is contiguous with the wider dip slope/plateau landscape character area that predominates in this part of the AONB. We place great weight on the landscape character assessment that applies here and comment below on the access arrangement considering the landscape character.

The submitted illustrative layout as reported at 7.42 of the supporting planning statement proposes no work to the eastern boundary of Lodge Lane. Works are proposed, however, to the access and Lodge Lane provides the principal access. The AONB boundary runs immediately to the west of Lodge Lane and the treatment of the eastern side of Lodge Lane falls squarely within the setting of the AONB. As you travel along Lodge Lane, one immediately appreciates its sylvan and verdant qualities, in a unified sense. You read the

landscape here as one unified whole. The LVIA element of the Environmental Statement chapter at section 13.7 denotes the importance of the verges along Lodge Lane and their screening capacity to the proposed development. The supporting planning statement deals with the retaining wall along Lodge Lane at its 7.42 and accepts that the proposed widening here manifests as resulting in some harm (paragraph 7.55). The planning statement comprehensively reports the AONB Management Plan at its 8.102.

We would specially draw attention to Management Plan policy DP4, 'In the setting of the AONB, take full account of whether proposals harm the AONB. For example, development of land visible in panoramic views from the Chilterns escarpment, or which generates traffic in or travelling across the AONB, or which increases water abstraction from the chalk aquifer, thereby reducing flow in chalk streams'. Supporting text also states, 'We consider that the setting of the Chilterns AONB is the area within which development and land management proposals (by virtue of their nature, size, scale, siting, materials or design) may have an impact, either positive or negative, on the natural beauty and special qualities of the area'.

Other CCB guidance includes or Environmental Guidelines for the Management of Highways in the Chilterns (2009). Paragraph 3 states that 'The special rural character of a section of road can often depend upon small features, and changes to these can greatly alter perceptions of the area. The cumulative effect of these small works should be recognised. This may require a longer-term view as each successive period of work may be several years apart. Examples include the installation of kerbs, the replacement of a hedge with wire fencing, the use of concrete rather than timber posts and the erection of streetlights'.

The applicant's Transport Assessment at its Appendix H deals with the proposed widening and the location of the retaining wall. This is described as 'indicative'. As submitted, it is harmful and avoidable. The LVIA content in chapter 13 of the ES details the impacts upon Lodge Lane and notes (file 13.7) that 'the sensitivity of the Chilterns AONB plateau- Dipslope is considered to be high' and reports on the impacts of what are deemed 'urbanising elements', such as the railway and the proximity of the nearby settlement. The CCB concludes that the current widening and retaining wall feature along Lodge Lane would create an urbanising features in its own right and would ask that this intervention is rethought and reconsidered. We assume from the Transport Assessment Appendix H that other options were considered. Following our own Environmental Guidelines for the Management of Highways in the Chilterns (2009) we would ask that the Highways Authority discuss with the LPA a much more appropriate form of road treatment with the deletion of such urbanising features. The proposed planned layout requires a landscape plan and treatment that is informed by the LVIA, itself consistent with the methodology that is set out in the GLVIA guidelines 3rd edition as published by the Landscape Institute and as also set out in the Environmental Statement at its section 13.4.

Ecology and Dark Skies Environment.

We know that the site supports a considerable level of bat foraging and potentially including barbastelle or bechstein's. This coincides with the need for a dark skies environment and one that links to the AONB and other contiguous wooded landscapes that envelope the site

and Chalfont more generally. This sensitivity also affects the treatment of the principal access and the route that it serves. The dark skies environment of the AONB, as recognised in the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance, must be given weight as a material consideration. The ecological considerations combined with the landscape and tranquillity requirements for conservation of a dark skies' environment must carry great weight as a material planning issue. This will require a detailed and indeed 'bespoke' approach. We could not find a lighting plan or statement and such matters need to be the subject of key principles, as agreed between all parties to the application.

PREVIOUS CCB COMMENTS on EIA SCOPING OPINION 31st August 2021

EIA scoping opinion in accordance with Regulation 15 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 for proposed development comprising demolition of existing buildings on site and construction of up to 380 homes (including 40% Affordable Units), 100 unit Retirement Village (Use Class C2/C3), 60 bed Care Home (Use Class C2), safeguarded land for a 1FE Primary School/ Primary School Expansion with nursery, Community Centre (possibly including retail use, flexible office space, satellite GP surgery) and new public parkland | Little Chalfont Golf Club Lodge Lane And Adjacent Land To The South Including Homestead Burtons Lane Little Chalfont Buckinghamshire HP8 4AJ

Buckinghamshire Chilterns Area Reference: PL/21/3073/EIASO

CCB Comments on an EIA Scoping Opinion.

Thank you for consulting the Chilterns Conservation Board (CCB) on the above scoping opinion.

We propose to submit our comments alongside the applicant's submitted report. The Chilterns AONB lies to the immediate east of the site and all parties to this (anticipated) application will want to agree that the impact upon the setting of the AONB is a matter of material importance and the subject of being 'sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas', as set out at 176 in the July 2021 updated version of the NPPF. We could not find any specific mention of a settings relationship in these papers, however, we comment below on the matters to be included. Request for a Scoping Opinion July 2021 Waterman Infrastructure & Environment Limited (original document March 2019). Chilterns Conservation Board (CCB) Comments on the scoping opinion.

CCB noted the date of the original work (March 2019). The ecological sections will require updating, especially, and the LPA will be aware of that. The Council's in-house ecologist has confirmed this point in her response.

Bio-diversity net gain

This will require the production of a bio- diversity impact plan, linked to the calculation of a 10% net gain in line with the DEFRA metric. As the 3.0 metric is now released (July 2021), all parties to the application will want to work towards and in compliance with that

methodology. The applicant will need to update their preliminary ecological assessment (March 2019) to align with these new requirements.

Ancient Woodland and Air Quality

The CCB is alert to the fact that the nearby Ancient Woodlands are within the AONB. This is, in part, a matter for a consideration of setting (see below) but is also highly relevant to habitat and green infrastructure connectivity.

CCB recommendation here - To consider the relationship here with the Buckinghamshire Green Infrastructure Plan and the habitat connectivity enhancements to and from this site, consistent with the Lawson Report (2010) principles of 'making space for nature'. The site sits alongside a strong and connected framework of mixed deciduous woodland, including Ancient Woodland.

Planning Policy Assessment

The scoping ES mentions the South Bucks Local Plan policy 9 on the Natural Environment.

To address the AONB, reference is also required to:

AONB Management Plan 2019-2024

Duties in the CROW Act 2000 and NERC Act 2006 Duties in the NPPF (now including setting) at 176.

CCB recommendation here - The consideration of setting requires a detailed assessment, in the form of an appropriate Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), dealing with conservation and enhancement (also see CROW section 85 which deals with impacts upon the AONB), maintaining and enhancing ecological corridors, conserving and enhancing landscapes and improving biodiversity and green infrastructure.

Paragraph 2.2.1.

This paragraph sets out an indicative 15 m buffer to any Ancient Woodland.

CCB recommendation - that any such standard is very much the minimum standard and discussion in the ES will have to consider a GI-led approach to engender woodland management. The strong linear connectivity between the woodland and grassland habitats that surround this site must be given detailed consideration in any ES.

Paragraph 4.7

CCB supports an air quality assessment, which needs to be linked with the detailed ecological assessment, once produced by the applicant's consultant.

Paragraph 4.10

The preliminary ecological assessment was March 2019 and will need to be updated.

Paragraph 4.11 to 4.11.3

The setting of the AONB.

Cumulative Impact Assessment

As is acknowledged the (statutory) boundary of the AONB lies to the immediate west of the application site. A comprehensive PROW network moves between the AONB's nationally protected landscape and Little Chalfont.

Paragraph 4.11.3 refers to the setting of the AONB.

CCB recommendation - The ES must deal with the settings relationship, with reference to CROW s 85, the NPPF, the AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 and CCB's own Position Statement on Setting (2011). We noted discussion of cumulative impacts, as required by the regulations. CCB recommendation - Any cumulative assessment must include an assessment germane to the impact upon the AONB's landscape character, consistent with our own Position Statement on the cumulative impact upon development within the AONB. Please refer to 'Cumulative Impacts of Development on the Chilterns AONB' (2017).

Paragraph 7.6 and 7.7.

Solar Glare Light Pollution.

The ES scoping report argues that solar glare and light pollution can be 'scoped out'. We disagree. The proximity to the AONB, a dark skies environment within the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) guidance, means that light spill or glare and light pollution generally, is a matter of great interest and relevance to an AONB assessment.

CCB recommendation- A detailed lighting impact assessment is required. A matter of particular interest being the impact upon the AONB by virtue of solar glare and light pollution. This would be an approach consistent with many other applications that sit adjacent or adjoining the AONB. Again, we also rely on the CROW Act section 85 which deals with 'so as to affect' the AONB, as opposed to an impact within the AONB.

The Board recommends that the decision-maker takes into account the following:

- The Chilterns AONB Management Plan

(<http://www.chilternsaonb.org/conservationboard/management-plan.html>), which deals with the special qualities of the Chilterns and the development chapter notes that 'the attractiveness of the Chilterns' landscape is due to its natural, built and cultural environment. It is not a wilderness but countryside adorned by villages, hamlets and scattered buildings'.

- The Board is a body that represents the interests of all those people that live in and enjoy the Chilterns AONB

The Chilterns AONB is nationally protected as one of the finest areas of countryside in the UK. Public bodies and statutory undertakers have a statutory duty of regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB (Section 85 of CroW Act).

Dacorum Borough Council 24/01/22

Thank you for your consultation received 22nd December 2021 notifying Dacorum Borough Council about the above. The Local Planning Authority Raises No Objection to the proposal. Further details on the Council's decision can be found overleaf.

Three Rivers District Council 24/01/22 and 07/03/22

This Council has considered the above application and raises NO COMMENT to the application subject to your authority ensuring that the proposal complies with all relevant policies contained in the adopted Development Plan and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Chiltern Society 13/01/22

The Chiltern Society strongly objects to this inappropriate planning application on Green Belt land. The Chiltern Society is well-established with circa 7000 members acting as a voice of all those championing the Chilterns and our countryside; campaigning to cut overbearing development, conserving the Chiltern landscape, and promoting the enjoyment and environmental understanding of the area.

General Comment

Whilst it is understood that an outline planning application will not have the detail of a full application, the Chiltern Society believe that there is insufficient firm definition of the key development parameters in this application. The application shows a distinct lack of commitment on behalf of the Developer with many aspects prefaced with the words “illustrative” and “indicative”, meaning that very little is properly defined (apart from the proposed access routes) and virtually anything can be changed at the final application stage. This can include the commitment to key parameters, e.g., the degree of affordable housing, and the scope of the Development itself. This approach by the Developer gives them a ‘foot in the door’ at minimal commitment. On these grounds alone the application should be rejected.

Green Belt

With the withdrawal of the Local Plan, the land remains Green Belt and under paras 140 and 141 of the NPPF can only be removed as part of a new Local Plan. That Plan is now a matter for the whole of Buckinghamshire, rather than just the predominantly Green Belt Chiltern and South Bucks areas. Buckinghamshire Council with its now enlarged geographical area, a good part of which is not Green Belt or AONB, are required to consider non-Green Belt alternatives. In addition, the housing need quoted by the developer is not currently applicable and therefore there is no argument for ‘very special circumstances’ under para 148.

Loss of Green Belt land will have a substantial adverse impact on the habitat and openness of the of the area, especially in this ‘dry valley’ which is a special feature of the Chilterns landscape requiring protection.

The ‘very special circumstances’ case put forward does not include sufficient assessment of the harm that would be caused by the Development. For example, there is no consideration in the assessment of the harm to biodiversity, the impact on the setting of the Chilterns AONB or the loss of open space that would arise from a development of this size.

Without a hard boundary, development of this land will threaten further encroachment to the South.

Infrastructure

Little Chalfont has seen many major housing developments in recent years without any significant improvement in the local infrastructure, e.g., roads, parking, schools, medical services, etc. This Development, increasing the population by ~15%, will stretch the already overloaded infrastructure to unacceptable levels.

The main route through Little Chalfont is the East to West A404 which is narrow and already congested at peak times. This congestion will worsen as future developments are proposed in nearby Chorleywood. Routes North and South are all very restricted and are mostly single-track country lanes frequently gridlocked with only ad-hoc passing places.

The Developer's claim that Little Chalfont is a sustainable location is misguided. In addition to the road congestion, parking in the village by the shops is usually impossible and the small car park is always close to capacity. Rail connections before Covid were saturated and will eventually return to these levels. Schools are oversubscribed, and the secondary schools are difficult to access by the congested A404. The cycle lane along part of the A404 towards Amersham is inadequate – narrow, dangerous with too many crossing roads and driveway entrances.

The proposed vehicle site access points in Burtons Lane and Lodge Lane are into narrow lanes. In the case of Lodge Lane, which is a boundary with the AONB, the proposed widening will significantly alter the character of the area. The proposed access from Lodge Lane is at the bottom of a steep valley (roads at 14% gradient) which poses a danger because of reduced braking distances especially in winter conditions. There are no footpaths/cycleways in Lodge Lane making walking and cycling dangerous.

The site access via Burtons Lane will add a further level of traffic to the village junction with the A404 and the nearby roundabout – already a congested area.

Hydrology and Water Management

There are serious questions to be answered regarding the hydrology and waste-water management of the area given the risk of local flooding and the 'dry valley' nature of the site. It is unclear what the impact of this large Development will be on local flooding and the risk of the sewerage system being overloaded in flood conditions. The simple statement that "no surface water will be discharged into the system" is too glib without a full risk assessment.

Ecology, Habitat and Biodiversity

Developing this land for housing will have a detrimental impact on the ecology, habitat, and biodiversity. A Chilterns 'dry valley' is a special feature that should be a protected environment. Though the Plan 'saves' an area of ancient woodland, it is isolated from

adjacent land and becomes an 'island in a suburban environment' destroying its natural state.

The application should include a full plan as to how the required net gain of at least 10% in biodiversity would be achieved. This should be a 10% gain that can be realised on completion of the development and not on habitat that would develop over several years.

Summary

The submitted Plan frequently uses the words "illustrative" and "indicative" when describing the proposed Development, meaning that very little (apart from access routes) is well defined. This demonstrates a total lack of commitment on behalf of the Developer who can make significant changes after the Outline Planning stage. This alone is cause for rejection.

The case to build on Green Belt land adjacent to an AONB is not presented and the harm to the environment and infrastructure is not referenced. The argument for 'very special circumstances' is not made.

The infrastructure of Little Chalfont is already saturated, and this Development will add unacceptable levels of congestion and stress to service provision.

There is insufficient consideration of flooding and wastewater management, given that the area is already suffering from regular discharges of sewerage into local rivers.

The dry valleys of the Chilterns are a special feature of the chalk landscape that should be high on the list of protected areas. This Development will destroy this feature and the important wildlife habitats contained within.

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS:

Representations include approximately 1100 objections and 110 letters in support. The vast majority of objections cited objection on Green Belt grounds amongst other concerns and the vast majority of supporting comments referenced housing and affordable housing provision and need.

The grounds of objection are summarised below:

Green Belt

Inappropriate development in the Green Belt, contrary to purposes and all loss of Green Belt land should be resisted

Very Special Circumstances not demonstrated.

Harm to GB as a result of other development including HS2

Brownfield land should be developed before greenfield

Coalescence with other settlements – Chorleywood, Chalfont St Giles etc.

Existing Metropolitan Line a clear defensible boundary.

Planning policy

Draft local plan withdrawn and carries no weight.

Green Belt boundaries in Chiltern district unchanged.

Local plan evidence base flawed and therefore so is the developers reliance on it

Development should be consistent with any future local plan

Acceptance of proposed development not consistent with GB policy – e.g for replacement community centre and householder extensions.

Development shouldn't be progressed while BC encouraging residents to contribute to Design Code

Speculative application fault of LPA for not adopting plan with appropriate sites

Holistic County-wide plan needed

Potential for a Chilterns National park, development should not be allowed at this time

Landscape

Harm to landscape of Little Chalfont

Harm to Chilterns AONB including tranquillity

Harm to AONB due to highway works and tree removal works

Proximity to AONB

Harm to topography of dry valley

Site visible in views from surrounding roads

Harm to character of surrounding roads

Environmental concerns

Air pollution

Harm to health

Noise

Quality of environment worsened

Harm to wildlife and biodiversity

Harm to woodland due to increased and inappropriate use

Biodiversity Net Gain assessment poor quality

Harm to ancient Woodland

Loss of Agricultural Land

Loss of hedgerow

Loss of trees and greenery

Geology unsuitable

Sub soil composition changed

Light pollution from development and associated additional vehicles and accesses

Flood risk and water table impact over time

EIA out of date and inadequate

Ecological survey data inadequate

EIA scoping requirements noted

Climate change concerns and considerations

Sewerage discharge increased into local rivers

Highways concerns

Extra traffic and congestion

Lack of/narrow pavements – risk to pedestrians

Congestion on surrounding lanes and risk to pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders

Routes used by commercial vehicles, delivery drivers and construction traffic associated with the development

Safety & accident concerns

Inclement weather increasing safety concerns

Speeding on existing roads

Concerns relating to low railway bridge

Single lane sections

Impact on wider road network, has Highways England been consulted.

Survey results invalid and Transport Assessment flawed, inaccurate and lacking in information

More intensive use of Long Walk as a short cut

Concerns junctions unable to sustain increased traffic

Rat running relating to through road proposed in centre of development

Area characterised by small rural roads with limited possibility for widening and unsuitable for more traffic

Access points from Burtons Lane and Lodge Lane not viable

Improvement works would not address road infrastructure issues

Substandard visibility splays limited by topography in some locations

Ring road should be built before any further development in LC

Pedestrian/cycle audit not undertaken

Other development schemes rejected due to unsuitability of Lanes

Insufficient information relating to location of vehicular accesses

Toucan crossing will increase crossing times

Proposals do not seek to promote or encourage sustainable modes of transport. The Travel Plan offers no mode share targets and is unambitious.

Concerns relating to sustainable transport including public transport and cycling take up

Insufficient on-site parking to serve development

CTMP lacking detail

Poor state of existing roads worsened

Concern relating to emergency vehicles and access

Impact of post covid-car reliance

Construction traffic and access issues

Amenity

Harm to amenity of local residents

Noise and disturbance increased within locality

Area a well-used green space

Community health and mental health harmed

Design

Too dense
Overdevelopment
Land uses in submission unclear
Poor design
'Village character' of Little Chalfont changed to town
Urbanisation of Little Chalfont
Change to character of surrounding roads.
Lack of car parking and charging facilities
Harm to Residential Area of Exceptional Character
Development isolated from existing community
Lack of gardens
Small properties with small gardens proposed, out of keeping with existing character
Site layout poor
Waste vehicle collection impractical
Outline nature of application means plans may not resemble this indicative proposal
Allotments too big

Footbridge

Change to character of Oakington Avenue
Unattractive and poor design
No evidence that accepted by rail operator
Loss of privacy to dwellings
Noise, disturbance and antisocial behaviour
Danger to school children

Historic Character

Object to demolition of Homestead Farm House as it is an important Arts and Crafts style historic building
Road upgrades would damage historic character
Disturbance of archaeological artefacts

Consultation

Application submission deliberately timed during the Christmas and New Year holiday to minimise the opportunity for residents to research and make comments
Insufficient consultation period for an application of such importance
Developer consultation and communications unclear and misleading
No mention of recent pre-app discussions
Newsletter from developer misleading
Consultation through local plan process will allow all parties to contribute to consideration of sites
Number of objections shows overwhelming strength of feeling against development
Concern relating to weight given to generic supportive consultation responses
Concern relating to submission of comments (some of which are anonymous and duplicate) after consultation deadline

Housing need and mix

Little Chalfont has accepted a disproportionate amount of new housing development, alternative locations should be considered
Development disproportionate to size of Little Chalfont
Sufficient retirement accommodation available in Little Chalfont
Query whether retirement accommodation should provide affordable housing
Insufficient affordable housing proposed
Comments relating to the validity of population numbers increasing and declining – need for housing
Question need for affordable housing
Question is affordable housing is genuinely affordable
Need to holistically consider need in Bucks
Buckinghamshire should not be developed further
Other more dense localities should be intensified further
Need for housing questioned in post covid world, not necessary to be near motorways and railway station
Flats for sale in Little Chalfont have not been purchased in 12 months
Would support a smaller scheme limited to golf course
Small contribution to housing demand
Short term solution to housing crisis

Mitigation

Mitigation measures vague and not secured
School place funding and land should be secured
Infrastructure should not be funded by tax payers
Additional cost for residents associations
No detail of responsibility for communal facilities
Has school and health funding been agreed with the Council and NHS
Mitigation secured e.g S106 usually insufficient
Potential that affordable homes won't be delivered
Interaction of development with existing infrastructure not mitigated

Socio-economics/Infrastructure/Facilities

Socio economic data and allowance for future monitoring should be provided
Local infrastructure failing
Impact on tube and station
No monitoring of socio-economic effects
No benefit to existing community
No jobs in Little Chalfont
Increased impact on health care – additional demand would not be met in Hertfordshire
Increased impact on dentists
Need to reinforce local utilities
Provision not made for local employment
Drop in surgery not feasible
BMX/Skatepark not required
Increased residents will result in disease and unhygienic conditions

Increased school demand at nursery, primary and secondary levels – potential displacement and need to travel
Standard of living worsened for existing residents
Parking issues in Little Chalfont centre and at station – shops will suffer if residents are unable to park
Pressure on existing disabled parking due to retirement village
Only one shop proposed to serve development
Character of Little Chalfont changed if new village hall on site rather than in existing location. Existing facilities should be improved instead
Community cohesion and social interaction diminished
New centre will compete with existing

Other

Properties remaining empty due to high insurance premiums
Property values reduced
Security and crime risks associated with development.
Proximity of development to primary school
No mention of additional policing
Developer greed – aggressive and speculative
Potential for additional development adjacent to Long Walk
Development will attract out of area buyers rather than locals
Loss of recreational opportunities
Land neglected
Loss of Golf Course
Previous applications on this site refused
Object to loss of bungalows on Oakington Avenue
Precedent
Restrictive covenant on land
Planners should also consider applications in progress out of borough
HS2 cumulative data not considered
Bin collection issues in area worsened
Water shortage in area
Land should be rewilded/planted with trees/used as public park.

Supportive comments can be summarised as follows:

Very special circumstances demonstrated
Site performs poorly in Green Belt Terms
Site supported for development in withdrawn local plan
Regeneration and enhancement of Little Chalfont
Creation of an sustainable new neighbourhood for Little Chalfont
Insufficient housing in Little Chalfont
Provision of new homes
Increased Housing supply
Additional housing reduces overcrowding
Modest scale of development proposed
Additional local housing reduces commuting and associated cost and pollution

Affordable housing provision

Young people unable to afford housing, affordable housing only way to stay in local area

No ability to 'export' housing needs elsewhere, need critical in entire area

Older living accommodation proposed

Greener houses with reduced resident energy bills, electric car charging etc

Variety of housing types proposed to suit different needs including smaller 'normal' homes rather than large houses

Logical location for additional housing within Little Chalfont – proximity to housing and commercial sites

Site largely out of view and proposal will not alter the existing character of Little Chalfont

Development site has clear boundary

Development required to meet government targets/vision

Convenient location

Proximity to public transport

Proximity to existing amenities

Proximity of dwellings to school

Provision of additional amenities including community uses and land for school

Appropriate infrastructure provision to support development and opportunity to improve existing infrastructure through investment

Additional revenue will help the council invest in further development and maintenance

Provision of sports facilities/stake/BMX park will benefit young people

Dense towns more environmentally friendly due to less journeys

Job creation in the short and long term

Contribution to local and national economy

Investment in area

Economic benefits to residents and companies

Businesses will benefit from more residents

Beneficial to community

Generation of sense of community

High-quality landscape setting

Sufficient green space around Little Chalfont

Increased access to woodland, green space, allotments and cycle paths of benefit to resident health

No impact on AONB

Focussed on sustainability

Environmentally friendly, would benefit wildlife

Site not available for public use

Site of poor quality, unutilised and not useful to local community

Site used for commercial purposes previously

Site available immediately

Similar proposals accepted elsewhere

Well thought out proposal

Community consultation reflected in proposal

Construction disruption temporary

Traffic congestion will not be an issue due to increased flexible working

This page is intentionally left blank

APPENDIX B: Site location plan

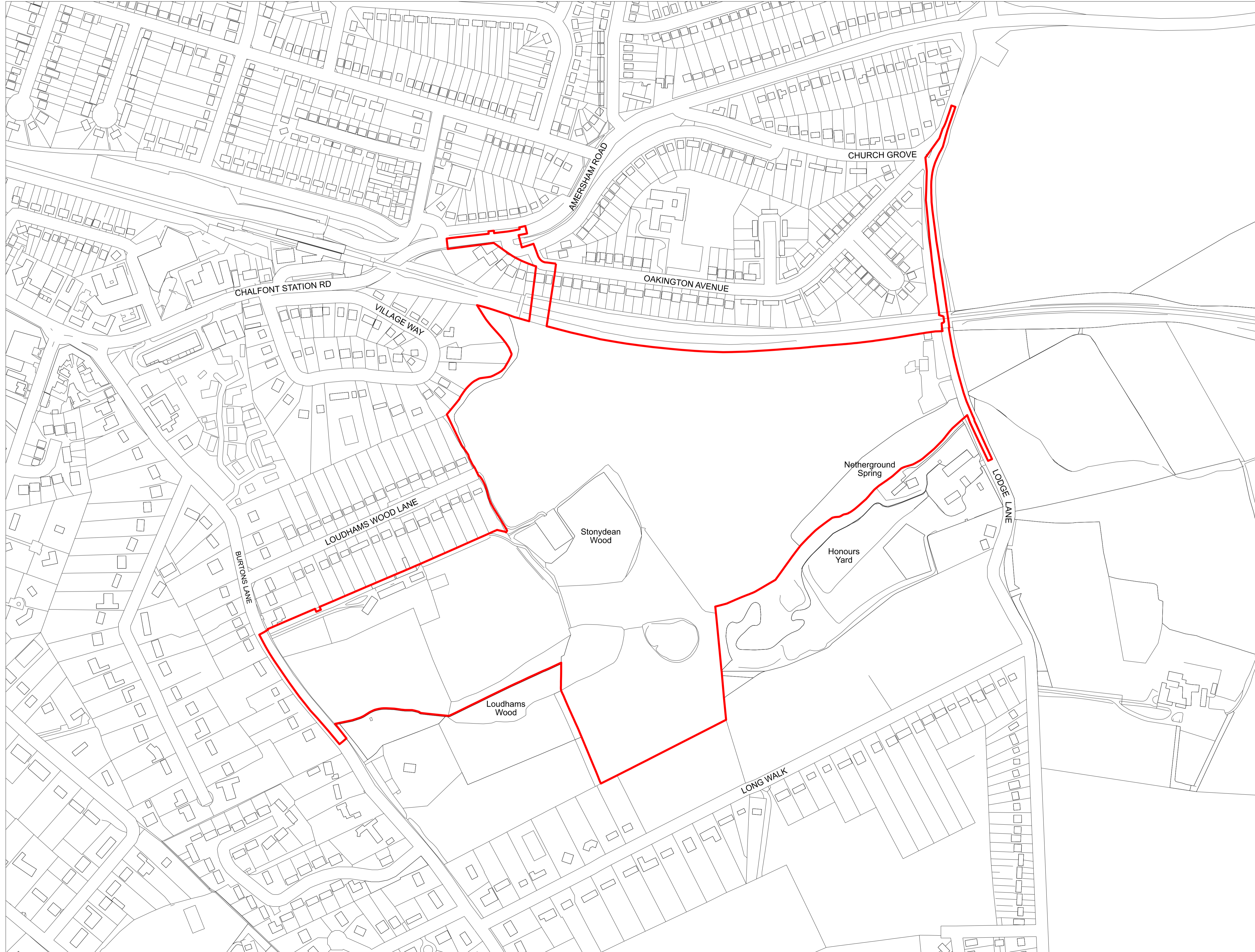
Notes:
 Do not scale from this drawing.
 All contractors must visit the site and be responsible for taking and checking Dimensions.
 All construction information should be taken from figured dimensions only.
 Any discrepancies between drawings, specifications and site conditions must be brought to the attention of the supervising officer.
 This drawing and the works depicted are the copyright of JTP.

This drawing is for planning purposes only. It is not intended to be used for construction purposes. Whilst all reasonable efforts are used to ensure drawings are accurate, JTP accept no responsibility or liability for any reliance placed on, or use made of, this plan by anyone for purposes other than those stated above.

Key

KEY

— Application Boundary - 29.7 Ha



P1 24.11.2021 For Planning CDS ECC

Rev	Date	Description	Drawn	Chkd

Drawing Status
FOR PLANNING

Client
BIDDULPH (BUCKINGHAMSHIRE) LTD

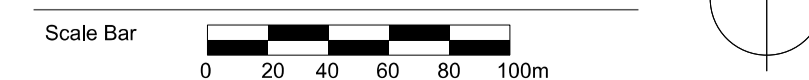
JTP Studios
 Unit 5, The Rum Warehouse
 Pennington Street
 London, E1W 2AP
 +44 (0)20 7017 1780
 www.jtp.co.uk

Project
**Little Chalfont Park:
 Land South East of Little Chalfont**

Drawing Title
Site Location Plan

Scale @ A1 1:2500 Job Ref. 00973E

Drawing No. 00973E_S01 Revision P1



APPENDIX C: APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

Application Ref. PL/21/4632/OA

Proposal: Outline application for the demolition of all existing buildings and the erection of residential dwellings including affordable housing, custom build (Use Class C3), retirement homes and care home (Use Class C2), new vehicular access point off Burtons Lane, improvements to existing Lodge Lane access including works to Lodge Lane and Church Grove, new pedestrian and cycle access at Oakington Avenue including construction of new pedestrian and cycle bridge and associated highway works, a local centre including a community building (Use Classes E(a)(b)(e), F2(b)), land safeguarded for educational use (Use Classes E(f) and F1(a)), public open space and associated infrastructure (matters to be considered at this stage: Burtons Lane and Lodge Lane access).

Summary

Buckinghamshire Council, as Local Planning Authority and Competent Authority, has carried out a Habitats Regulations Assessment as required by The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) ('the Habitat Regulations'), to assess whether there are likely significant effects on the Chiltern Beechwood Special Area of Conservation arising from this development, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

The applicant has not submitted any evidence as part of this application.

Having regard to the evidence published by Dacorum Borough Council from the consultants, Footprint Ecology, in March 2022, Buckinghamshire Council concludes that under the Habitat Regulations, recreational pressure is screened in and as such a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment has been carried out by Buckinghamshire Council as Competent Authority. This has concluded that the effect of any net new homes within 12.6 kilometres of the Ashridge Commons and Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest's boundary in the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation, beyond the 500 metres Avoidance Zone, need to be mitigated.

The application site lies within the 12.6 kilometres zone of influence outside the 500 metre Avoidance Zone.

Informing individual Appropriate Assessment of Planning Applications and Permitted Development

New evidence has been published by Dacorum Borough Council (March 2022) from the consultants Footprint Ecology on the impacts of recreational and urban growth on Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation. Natural England support the conclusions. The evidence has concluded that likely significant effects on the integrity of the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation from recreational disturbance would derive from a net increase in new homes within a linear distance of 12.6 kilometres from the boundary of the Ashridge Commons and Woods Site of Special

Scientific Interest of the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation, as defined in the 12.6km zone of influence. The disturbance is from additional human and dog presence.

Using this evidence, Buckinghamshire Council's Habitats Regulations Assessment determined that the likely significant effects within a 12.6km zone of influence and outside the 500 metre linear distance (Avoidance Zone) from the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation boundary were likely to harm the integrity of the conservation purposes of the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation and would need to be mitigated.

The Habitats Regulations Assessment concluded that Planning Applications and Permitted Development, which provide for a net increase in new homes outside the 500 metres Avoidance Zone and within the 12.6 kilometres zone of influence from the Ashridge Commons and Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest would have a significant likely effect on the conservation features of the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation and that such applications and permitted development can only be permitted if the applicant enters in to a legal agreement with Council, as Local Planning Authority, to pay towards Buckinghamshire Council's Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy.

Natural England, the Government's conservation advisor, support the findings in the Habitats Regulations Assessment.

Appropriate Assessment of Planning Application reference number PL/21/4632/OA

1. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017)

In accordance with Regulation 63 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations(2017) a competent authority (in this case Buckinghamshire Council), before deciding to undertake, or give any consent, permission or other authorisation for, a plan or project which—

- a. is likely to have a significant effect on a European site... (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and
- b. is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of that site

must make an appropriate assessment of the implications of the plan or project for that site in view of that site's conservation objectives.

A person applying for any such consent, permission or other authorisation must provide such information as Buckinghamshire Council may reasonably require for the purposes of the assessment or to enable it to determine whether an appropriate assessment is required.

Buckinghamshire Council must, for the purposes of the assessment, consult the Conservation Body, NE, and have regard to any representations made by that body. It

must also, if it considers it appropriate, take the opinion of the general public, and if it does so, it must take such steps for that purpose as it considers appropriate. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment, and subject to Regulation 64 (Considerations of overriding public interest), Buckinghamshire Council may agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the European site.

In considering whether a plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of the site, Buckinghamshire Council must have regard to the manner in which it is proposed to be carried out or to any conditions or restrictions subject to which it proposes that the consent, permission or other authorisation should be given.

2. Stages 1: Screening for Likely Significant Effects

Buckinghamshire Council accepts that this proposal is a 'plan or project' which is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation). The potential likely significant effects on the integrity of the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation is from recreational disturbance. A net increase in homes is likely to result in additional visits to the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation with consequential erosion and pollution within the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation.

At this stage Buckinghamshire Council cannot rule out the likely significance effects on the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (alone or in combination with other plans or projects) because the proposal could undermine the Conservation Objectives of the SAC. This is because the proposal lies outside the 500 metres Avoidance Zone and within 12.6 kilometres of the boundary of the Ashridge Commons and Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest in the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation and represents a net increase in homes within this zone which will lead to an increase in local population and a likely increase in recreational disturbance within the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation.

As the likely significance effect cannot be ruled out at this stage an Appropriate Assessment must be undertaken.

- 3. Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment:** more than 500 metres and within 12.6 kilometres. Based on the evidence published by Dacorum in relation to their local plan Buckinghamshire Council must decide whether or not an adverse effect on site integrity (alone or in combination with other plans or projects) can be ruled out. Mitigation may be able to be provided so that the proposal can reduce adverse effects.

The Council considers that the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS) would need to be agreed with Natural England to ensure a robust and capable mitigation of the likely significant effects of the proposal outside the 500 metres Avoidance Zone and within the 12.6 kilometres defined Zone of Influence from the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation boundary.

4. Conclusion

An Appropriate Assessment has been carried out for this development in accordance with the Habitats Regulations 2017. The applicant has not provided an appropriate mitigation strategy to prevent a likely significant effect upon the integrity of the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation.

Buckinghamshire Council considers, following consultation with Natural England, that without appropriate mitigation measures to prevent a likely significant effect upon the integrity of the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation, pursuant to Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) and Regulation 63(5) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017), planning permission should be refused.

The applicant has not provided an appropriate mitigation strategy agreeable to the Council and Natural England and the application should be refused for the following reason ∴

Reason for Refusal

The Council considers that the proposed development would by reason of its proximity lying within a 12.6k metre linear distance of the Ashridge Commons and Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest within the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation would add to the recreational disturbance in this area likely to harm the integrity of the conservation purposes of the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation. In the absence of a legal obligation to secure an appropriate mitigation strategy to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority, the proposal would be contrary to the Habitat Regulations and paragraphs 180 and 181 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy CS4 of the Core Strategy for Chiltern District (2011).

APPENDIX D

- **Access and movement parameter plan**
- **Building heights parameter plan**
- **Demolition parameter plan**
- **Land use and green infrastructure plan**
- **Illustrative masterplan**
- **Indicative density plan**
- **Indicative phasing plan**

Notes:
 Do not scale from this drawing.
 All contractors must visit the site and be responsible for taking and checking Dimensions.
 All construction information should be taken from figured dimensions only.
 Any discrepancies between drawings, specifications and site conditions must be brought to the attention of the supervising officer.
 This drawing and the works depicted are the copyright of JTP.

This drawing is for planning purposes only. It is not intended to be used for construction purposes. Whilst all reasonable efforts are used to ensure drawings are accurate, JTP accept no responsibility or liability for any reliance placed on, or use made of, this plan by anyone for purposes other than those stated above.

Key

- Application boundary
- Main access - all modes
- Secondary access - footway/cycleway only⁴
- Proposed vehicular route: Primary²
- Proposed vehicular route: Secondary²
- Proposed vehicular route: Bus / Emergency access only²
- 25m Corridor for Primary and Secondary route¹
- Strategic cycleway³
- Indicative shared footway/cycleway³
- Indicative footways³
- Public Square²
- Existing Access to Pumping station (Service Access only)

NOTES

1. The Alignment of the Primary and Secondary route may deviate within the limits of the 25m corridor, subject to highway detailed design and on-site constraints.
2. Proposed Primary and Secondary route includes carriageway, green verges, footways and cycleways. The road layout as shown on the Parameter Plans are indicative only and subject to detailed road design.
3. Alignment of footways/cycleways are subject to detailed design.
4. Alignment and design of bridge crossing over railway is subject to detailed design.

P1 24.11.2021 For Planning CDS ECC

Rev	Date	Description	Drawn	Chkd

FOR PLANNING

Client
BIDDULPH (BUCKINGHAMSHIRE) LTD

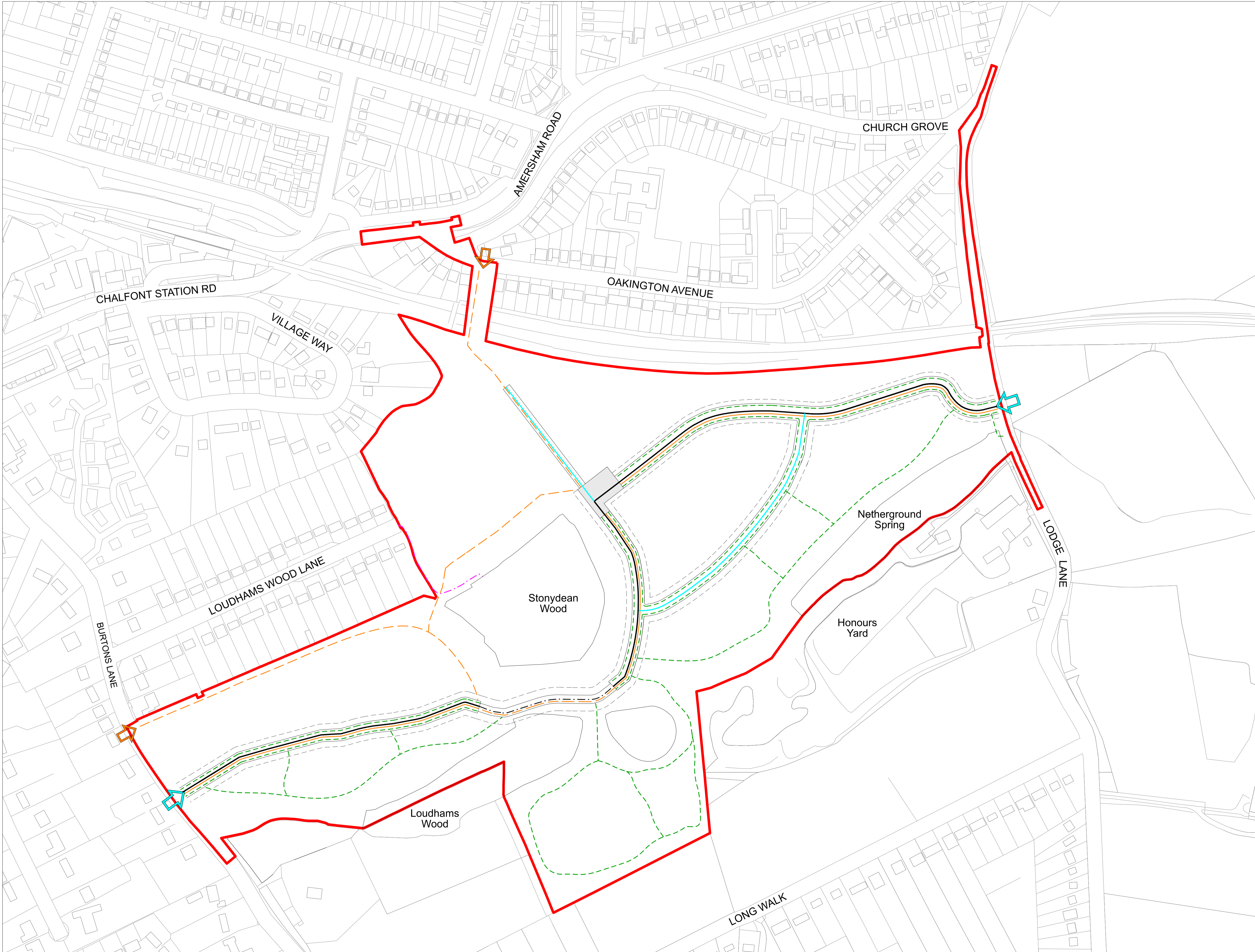
JTP Studios
 Unit 5, The Rum Warehouse
 Pennington Street
 London, E1W 2AP
 +44 (0)20 7017 1780
 www.jtp.co.uk

Project
**Little Chalfont Park:
 Land South East of Little Chalfont**

Drawing Title
**Access and Movement
 Parameter Plan**

Scale @ A1 1:2000 Job Ref. 00973E
 Drawing No. 00973E_PP03 Revision P1

Scale Bar



Notes:
 Do not scale from this drawing.
 All contractors must visit the site and be responsible for taking and checking Dimensions.
 All construction information should be taken from figured dimensions only.
 Any discrepancies between drawings, specifications and site conditions must be brought to the attention of the supervising officer.
 This drawing and the works depicted are the copyright of JTP.

This drawing is for planning purposes only. It is not intended to be used for construction purposes. Whilst all reasonable efforts are used to ensure drawings are accurate, JTP accept no responsibility or liability for any reliance placed on, or use made of, this plan by anyone for purposes other than those stated above.

Key

- Application boundary
- Proposed vehicular routes
- Proposed vehicular route (Bus & Emergency Vehicle only)
- Residential: Up to 2.5 storeys with occasional landmark buildings up to 3 storeys (Up to 13m to top of ridgeline for 2.5 storeys and up to 15m to top of ridgeline for 3 storeys)
- Residential: Up to 3 storeys (Up to 15m to top of ridgeline)
- Residential: Up to 3.5 storeys (Up to 16.5m to top of ridgeline)
- Mixed Use: Up to 3 storeys (Up to 16.5m to top of ridgeline)
- Land safeguarded for Educational Use: Up to 2 storeys (Up to 13m to top of ridgeline)

NOTES

The height parameters set out in the Building Heights Parameter Plan are to maximum ridge heights.

An additional 0.5m has been included within the maximum ridge heights to accommodate for both ground works and the minimum threshold from the 1 in 100-year plus climate change surface water flood level.

P1 24.11.2021 For Planning CDS ECC

Rev	Date	Description	Drawn	Chkd

Drawing Status

FOR PLANNING

Client

BIDDULPH (BUCKINGHAMSHIRE) LTD



JTP Studios
 Unit 5, The Rum Warehouse
 Pennington Street
 London, E1W 2AP
 +44 (0)20 7017 1780
 www.jtp.co.uk

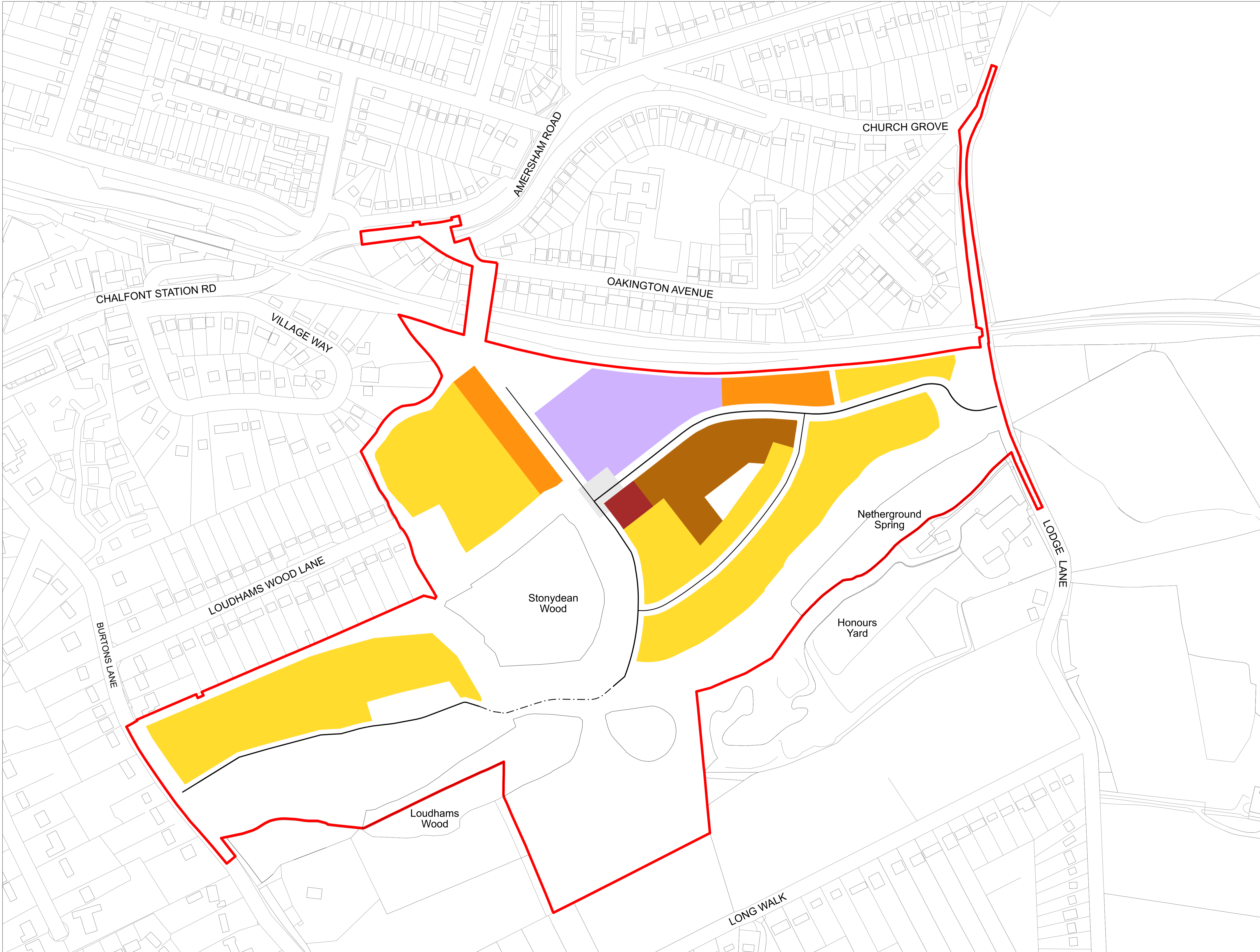
Project
**Little Chalfont Park:
 Land South East of Little Chalfont**

Drawing Title
**Building Heights
 Parameter Plan**

Scale @ A1 1:2000 Job Ref. 00973E

Drawing No. 00973E_PP02 Revision P1

Scale Bar  



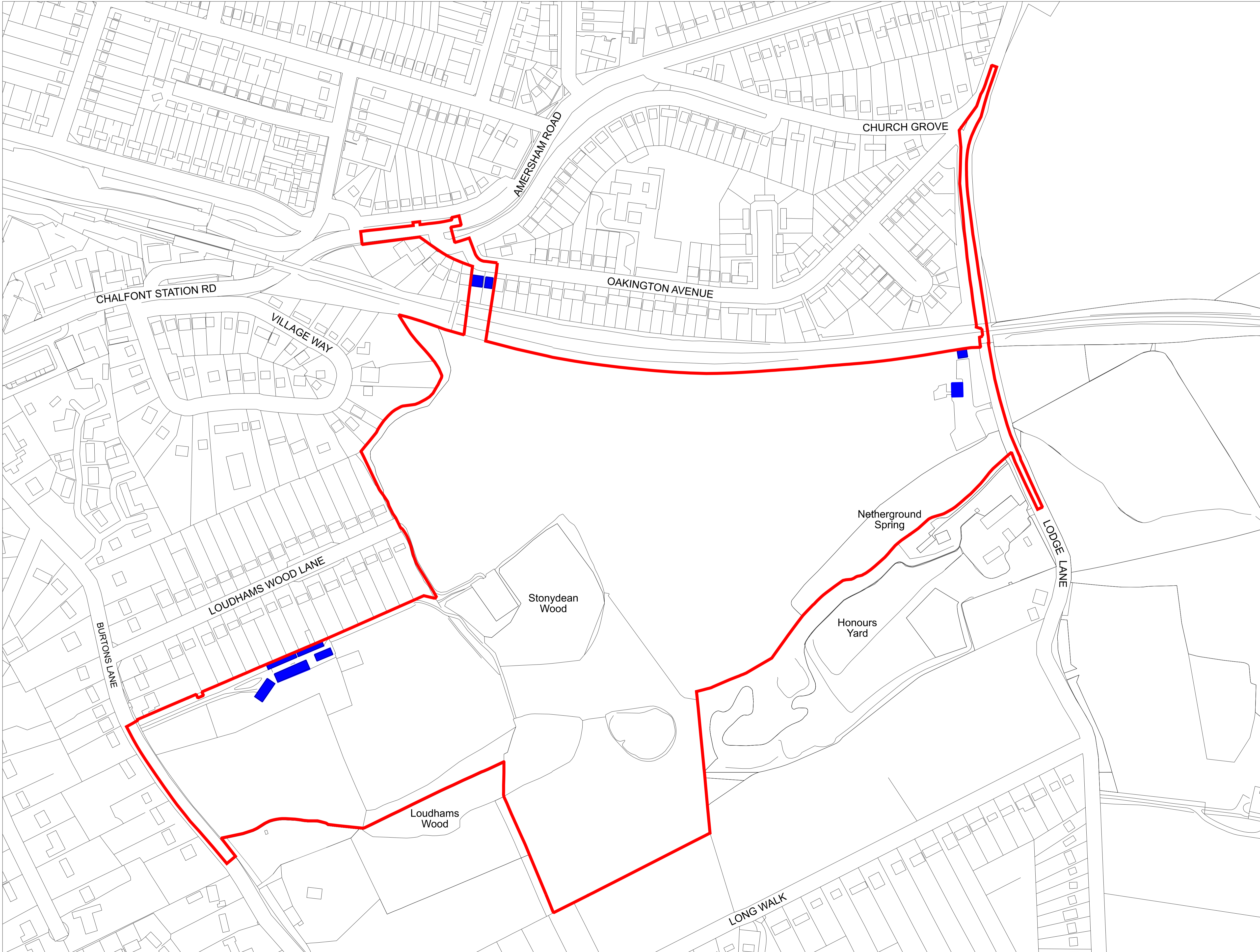
Notes:
 Do not scale from this drawing.
 All contractors must visit the site and be responsible for taking and checking Dimensions.
 All construction information should be taken from figured dimensions only.
 Any discrepancies between drawings, specifications and site conditions must be brought to the attention of the supervising officer.
 This drawing and the works depicted are the copyright of JTP.

This drawing is for planning purposes only. It is not intended to be used for construction purposes. Whilst all reasonable efforts are used to ensure drawings are accurate, JTP accept no responsibility or liability for any reliance placed on, or use made of, this plan by anyone for purposes other than those stated above.

Key

KEY

- Application boundary
- Existing buildings to be demolished



P1	24.11.2021	For planning	CDS	ECC
----	------------	--------------	-----	-----

Rev	Date	Description	Drawn	Chkd

Drawing Status
FOR PLANNING

Client
BIDDULPH (BUCKINGHAMSHIRE) LTD

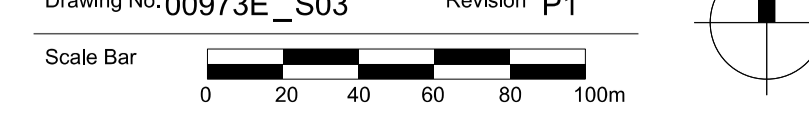


JTP Studios
 Unit 5, The Rum Warehouse
 Pennington Street
 London, E1W 2AP
 +44 (0)20 7017 1780
 www.jtp.co.uk

Project
**Little Chalfont Park:
 Land South East of Little Chalfont**

Drawing Title
**Demolition
 Parameter Plan**

Scale @ A1 1:2000 Job Ref. 00973E
 Drawing No. 00973E_S03 Revision P1



Notes:
 Do not scale from this drawing.
 All contractors must visit the site and be responsible for taking and checking Dimensions.
 All construction information should be taken from figured dimensions only.
 Any discrepancies between drawings, specifications and site conditions must be brought to the attention of the supervising officer.
 This drawing and the works depicted are the copyright of JTP.

This drawing is for planning purposes only. It is not intended to be used for construction purposes. Whilst all reasonable efforts are used to ensure drawings are accurate, JTP accept no responsibility or liability for any reliance placed on, or use made of, this plan by anyone for purposes other than those stated above.

- Notes:
1. All land uses can deviate +/-3m within the application boundary, subject to on-site constraints.
 2. Proposed bridge over the railway can deviate within the boundaries of No.13 and No.15 Oakington Ave.
 3. The shapes and sizes of the attenuation ponds/basins as shown on the plan are indicative only.
 4. The alignment of the Primary, Secondary, Bus & Emergency vehicular route may deviate within the limits of the 25m corridor, subject to highway detailed design and on-site constraints. The adjacent parcels will be adjusted accordingly.



Key

LAND USE

- Application boundary
- Existing Infrastructure
- Proposed vehicular routes (Primary, Secondary, Bus & Emergency Access)⁴
- Proposed Bridge over railway²
- 25m Road Corridor for Proposed vehicular routes (Primary, Secondary, Bus & Emergency)⁴
- Residential (Use Class C3)¹
- Residential Custom Build (Use Class C3)¹
- Retirement Living (Use Class C2)¹
- Care Home (Use Class C2)¹
- Mixed use (Use Classes E(a)(b) (e), F2(b))¹
- Land safeguarded for Educational Use (Use Classes E(f) and F1(a))¹

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

- Public Square
- Existing Woodland
- Existing Ancient Woodland
- Woodland and Ecological buffers (min. 30m buffer for Ancient Woodland, min. 15-20m for other Existing Woodland and min. 5m for Existing Tree Lines)
- Ecological Re-wilding (incl. limited pedestrian access)
- Public Open Space (incl. informal kickabout, allotments and community orchards)
- Indicative location for SuDs ponds³
- Indicative Play Areas (NEAP/LEAPs/LAPs)
- Indicative Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA)
- Indicative Area for new Pump Station

P1 24.11.2021 For Planning CDS ECC

Rev	Date	Description	Drawn	Chkd

Drawing Status
FOR PLANNING

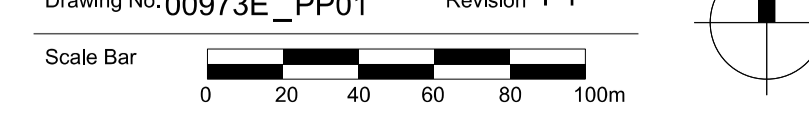
Client
BIDDULPH (BUCKINGHAMSHIRE) LTD

JTP Studios
 Unit 5, The Rum Warehouse
 Pennington Street
 London, E1W 2AP
 +44 (0)20 7017 1780
 www.jtp.co.uk

Project
**Little Chalfont Park:
 Land South East of Little Chalfont**

Drawing Title
**Land Use and Green
 Infrastructure Parameter Plan**

Scale @ A1 1:2000 Job Ref. 00973E
 Drawing No. 00973E_PP01 Revision P1



Notes:
 Do not scale from this drawing.
 All contractors must visit the site and be responsible for taking and checking Dimensions.
 All construction information should be taken from figured dimensions only.
 Any discrepancies between drawings, specifications and site conditions must be brought to the attention of the supervising officer.
 This drawing and the works depicted are the copyright of JTP.

This drawing is for planning purposes only. It is not intended to be used for construction purposes. Whilst all reasonable efforts are used to ensure drawings are accurate, JTP accept no responsibility or liability for any reliance placed on, or use made of, this plan by anyone for purposes other than those stated above.



Application Boundary - 29.7 Ha

Aerial photograph is not geo-referenced. Refer to Site Location Plan (Drawing 00973E_S01) for precise location of application boundary.

P1 24.11.2021 For Planning CDS ECC

Rev	Date	Description	Drawn	Chkd

Drawing Status
FOR PLANNING

Client
BIDDULPH (BUCKINGHAMSHIRE) LTD

jtp JTP Studios
 Unit 5, The Rum Warehouse
 Pennington Street
 London, E1W 2AP
 +44 (0)20 7017 1780
 www.jtp.co.uk

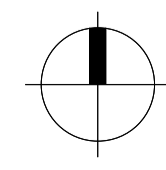
Project
**Little Chalfont Park:
 Land South East of Little Chalfont**

Drawing Title
Illustrative Masterplan

Scale @ A1 1:2000 Job Ref. 00973E

Drawing No. 00973E_MP01 Revision P1

Scale Bar
 0 20 40 60 80 100m

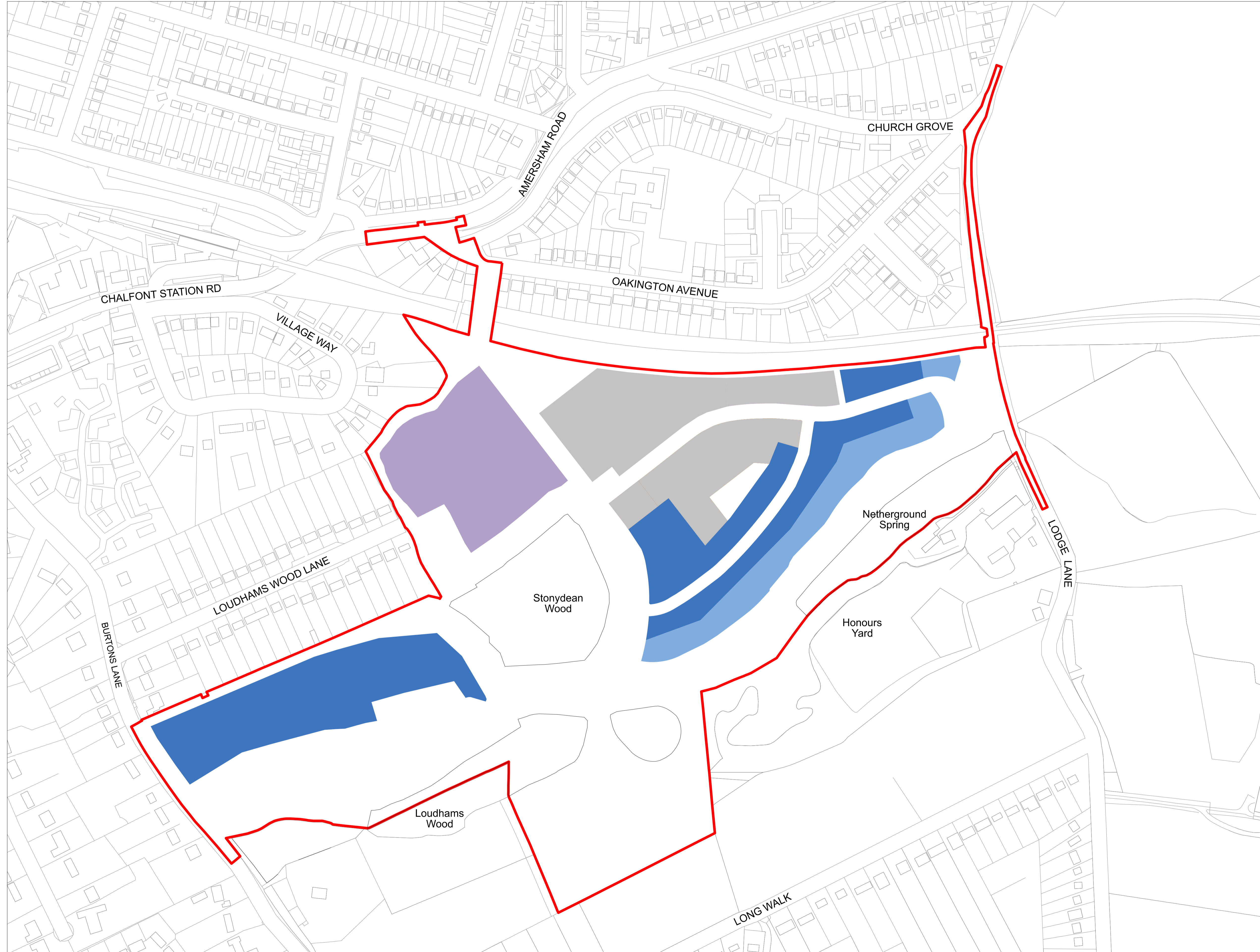


Notes:
 Do not scale from this drawing.
 All contractors must visit the site and be responsible for taking and checking Dimensions.
 All construction information should be taken from figured dimensions only.
 Any discrepancies between drawings, specifications and site conditions must be brought to the attention of the supervising officer.
 This drawing and the works depicted are the copyright of JTP.

This drawing is for planning purposes only. It is not intended to be used for construction purposes. Whilst all reasonable efforts are used to ensure drawings are accurate, JTP accept no responsibility or liability for any reliance placed on, or use made of, this plan by anyone for purposes other than those stated above.

Key

- Application boundary
- Residential 35-45 dph
- Residential 45-55 dph
- Residential 55-65 dph
- Retired Living / Care Home / Mixed Use / Land safeguarded for Educational Use



P1	24.11.2021	For Planning	CDS	ECC
----	------------	--------------	-----	-----

Rev	Date	Description	Drawn	Chkd
-----	------	-------------	-------	------

Drawing Status

FOR PLANNING

Client

BIDDULPH (BUCKINGHAMSHIRE) LTD

JTP Studios
 Unit 5, The Rum Warehouse
 Pennington Street
 London, E1W 2AP
 +44 (0)20 7017 1780
 www.jtp.co.uk

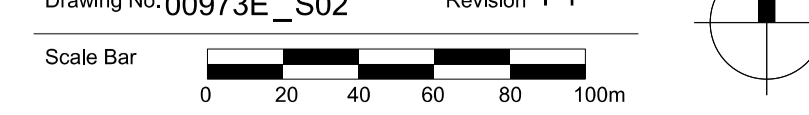
Project
**Little Chalfont Park:
 Land South East of Little Chalfont**

Drawing Title

Indicative Density Plan

Scale @ A1 1:2000 Job Ref. 00973E

Drawing No. 00973E_S02 Revision P1



Notes:
 Do not scale from this drawing.
 All contractors must visit the site and be responsible for taking and checking Dimensions.
 All construction information should be taken from figured dimensions only.
 Any discrepancies between drawings, specifications and site conditions must be brought to the attention of the supervising officer.
 This drawing and the works depicted are the copyright of JTP.

This drawing is for planning purposes only. It is not intended to be used for construction purposes. Whilst all reasonable efforts are used to ensure drawings are accurate, JTP accept no responsibility or liability for any reliance placed on, or use made of, this plan by anyone for purposes other than those stated above.

Key

- Application boundary
- - - Construction & Haul Road/ Final Primary Road
- Access Points for Construction
- Buildings to be demolished

Phase 0 (2022 - 2023)

- Phase 1 (2023 - 2024)
- Phase 2 (2024 - 2025)
- Phase 3 (2025 - 2026)

P1	24.11.2021	For Planning	CDS	ECC
Rev	Date	Description	Drawn	Chkd
Drawing Status				
FOR PLANNING				
Client				
BIDDULPH (BUCKINGHAMSHIRE) LTD				

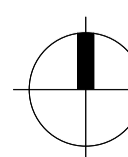


JTP Studios
 Unit 5, The Rum Warehouse
 Pennington Street
 London, E1W 2AP
 +44 (0)20 7017 1780
 www.jtp.co.uk

Project
**Little Chalfont Park:
 Land South East of Little Chalfont**

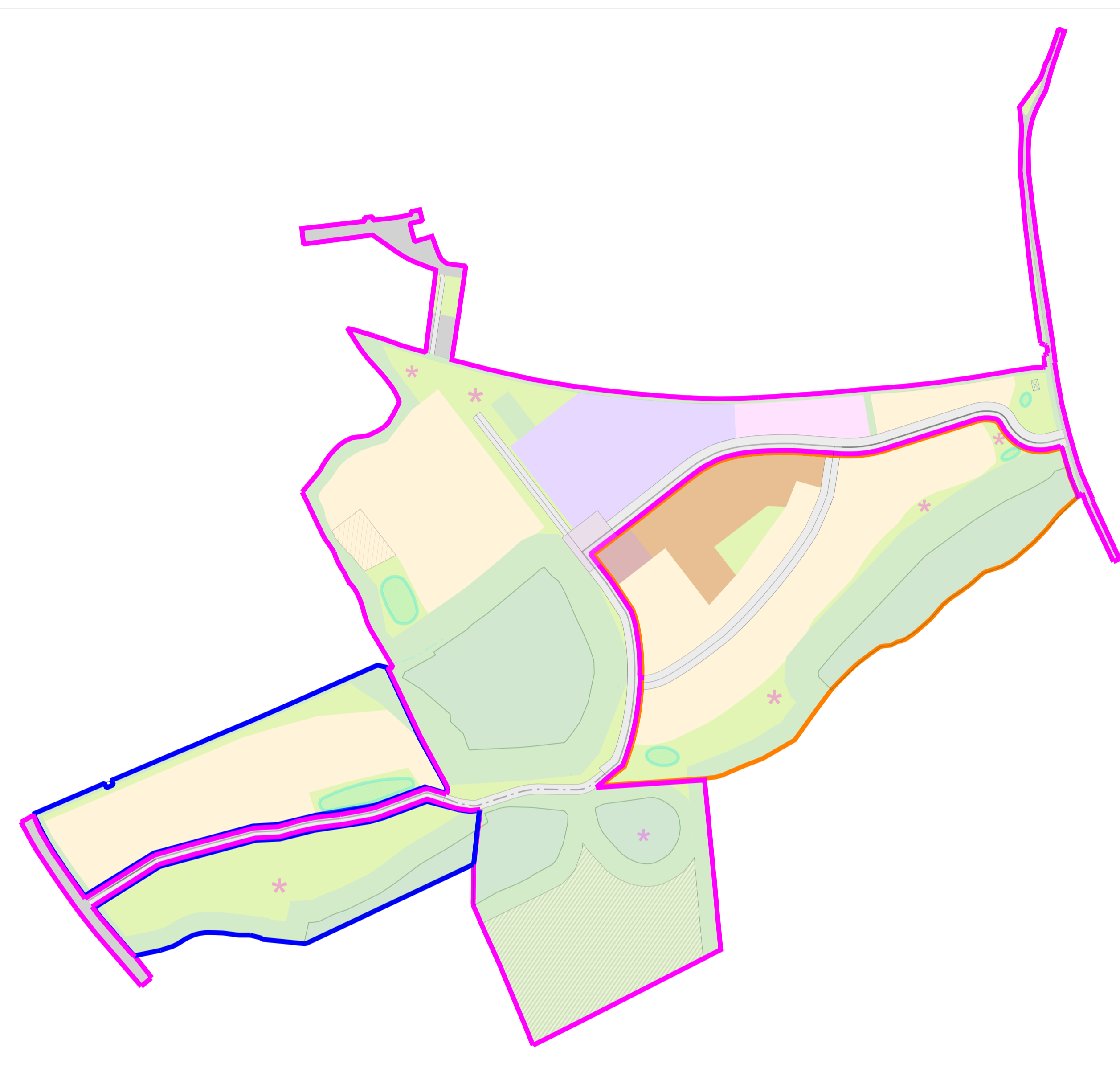
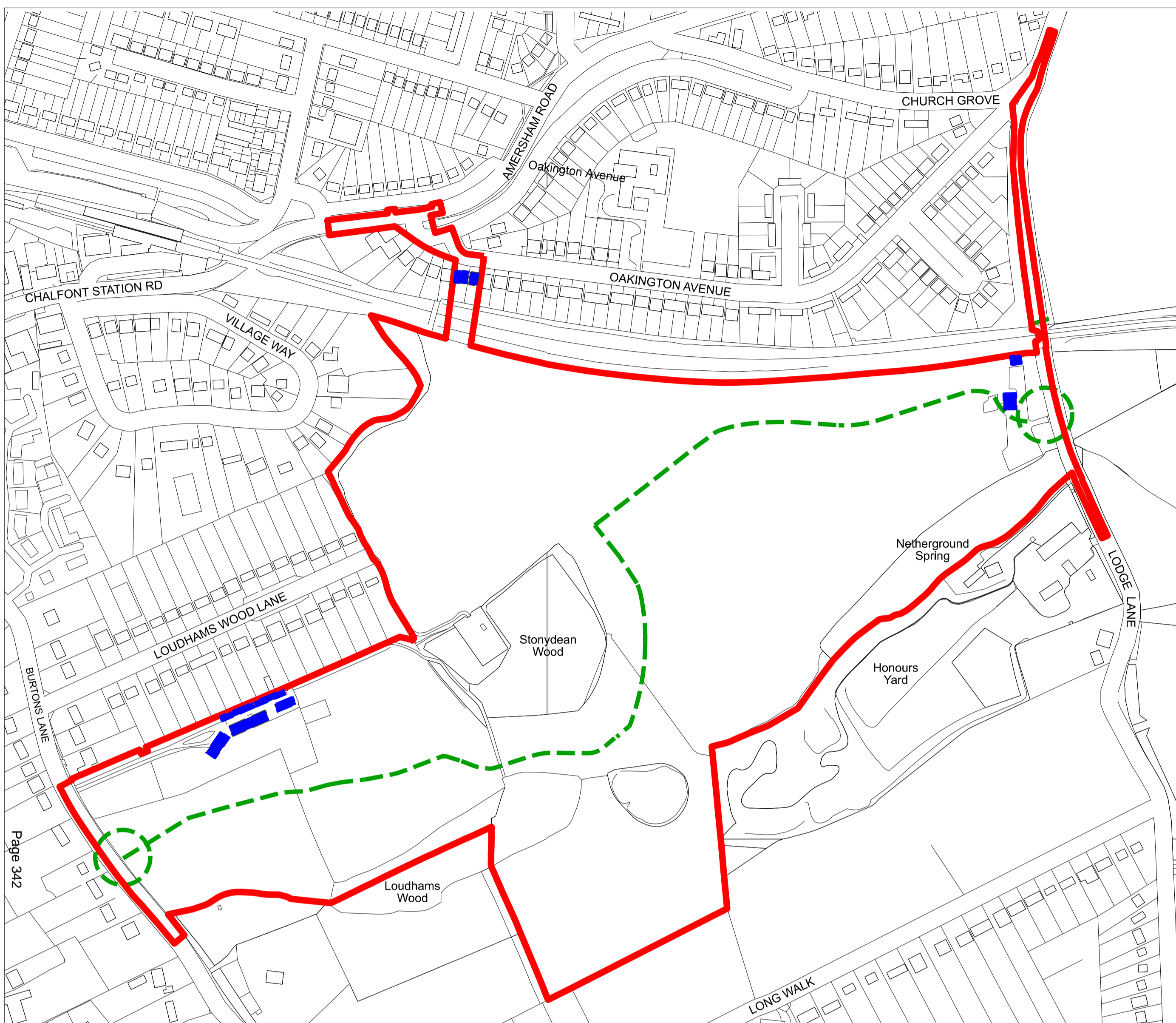
Drawing Title
**Indicative Phasing &
 Construction Plan**

Scale @ A1 1:2000 Job Ref. 00973E
 Drawing No. 00973E_S03 Revision P1
 Scale Bar 0 20 40 60 80 100m



Phase 0 (Enabling Works)

Phase 1-3



**Phase 0 (Enabling Works)
 2022-2023**
 Protecting trees/landscape to be retained
 Demolition of existing buildings
 Remediation, cut & fill
 Landscape management
 Construction of haul road
 Installation of services and access points

**Phase 1
 2023-2024**
 Installation of services, footpaths and access points including the Lodge Lane widening works.
 Final finishing and surfacing of roads
 Bridgeworks - Oakington Avenue
 Primary school and nursery incl. drop off
 Residential (Approximately 140 homes)
 Carehome
 Associated movement infrastructure & landscape strategy

**Phase 2
 2024-2025**
 Installation of services, footpaths and access points
 Final finishing and surfacing of roads
 Residential (Approximately 130 homes)
 Community Building
 Independent Living
 Associated movement infrastructure & landscape strategy

**Phase 3
 2025-2026**
 Installation of services, footpaths and access points
 Final finishing and surfacing of roads
 Residential (Approximately 110 homes)
 Associated movement infrastructure & landscape strategy