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'.

Furter consideration must be given to the layout of this development so the ancient and semi-natural woodland 'Stoneydean Wood' and barbastlle 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-S-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 it 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, cuckooflower, 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 it 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 habitrats.

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)) 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 B1in 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 wotk 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 Decidous 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 Decidous 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 pipistelle 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 1WI 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 fund 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

[redacted]

[redacted]

Invertebrates

The application site is within a 'B-Line' area; a Buglife scheme to map networks which are important to pollinating invertebrates.

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.

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.

A total of 321 species have been recorded within the site from all surveys in 2019 and 2021.

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), *Dorytomus ictor* (a small weevil associated with large poplar trees), *Lasius brunneus* (a small ant associated with broadleaved woodlands in central England), *Microplontus compestris* (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).

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 undertoke 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. Whilsts 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 pilling 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 the46 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 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 cycles 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 it 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 ques 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 x 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.

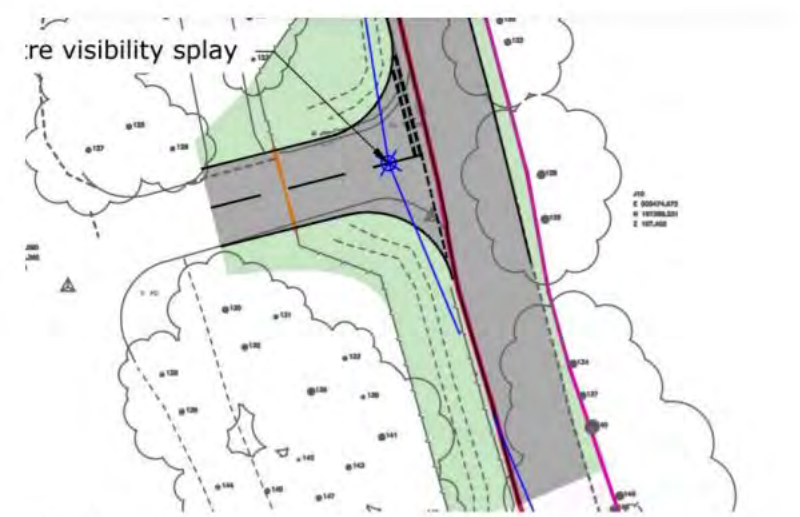
18/01/21 There are no public rights of way within or close to the proposed site that would contribute to walking and cycling options for new residents connecting, for example, to local shops, bus stops, schools and train station. Therefore, there are no improvements sought to provide better links to 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

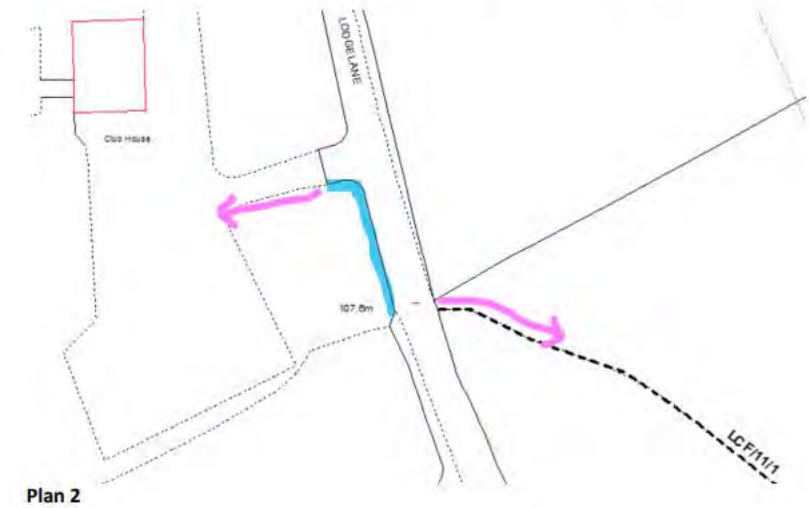
The provision of the additional new footways and cycleways for walkers and cyclists in a northerly and north-westerly direction across the railway line to Oakington Avenue and Burton's Lane, could facilitate easier, off-road connections for new residents to the wider rights of way network, mainly situated 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.kruczkowski@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.

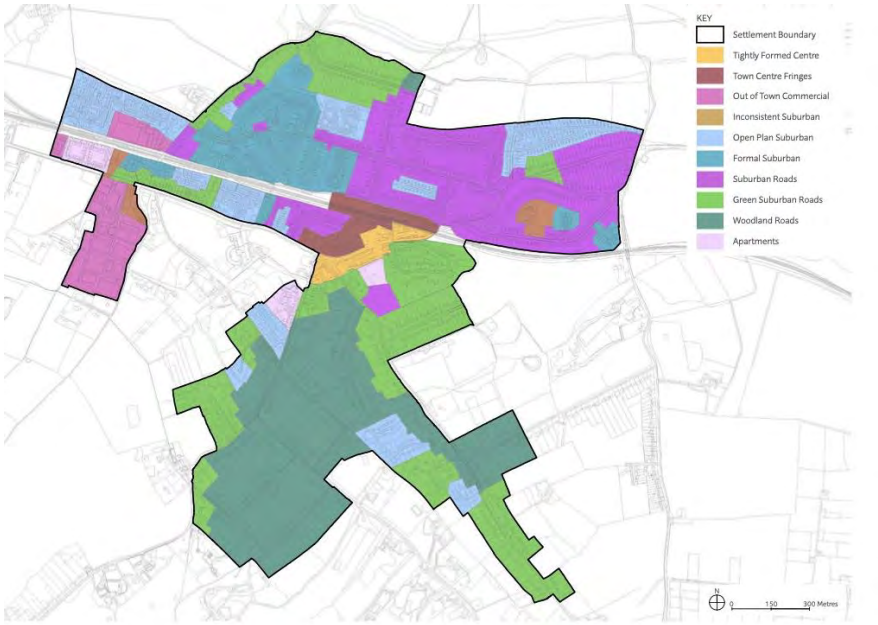
If the Council were seeking to approve this application, I would suggest a condition to the effect of: notwithstanding the submitted Design and Access Statement and Parameter Plans, prior to determination of any Reserved Matters application a 1) single framework plan; 2) Design Code shall be submitted 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	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.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	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. 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.

	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? Is Section BB on p. 107 representative of all the proposed basins?
p.78	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.80	What is the proposed street network? 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. It is not appropriate to propose a shared footway/cycleway (see LTN1/20). Access design – how will access be designed taking into account Manual for Streets, National Design Guide, Townscape Study, LTN 1/20 etc?
p.85	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.85	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.85	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.90	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. 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.92	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.93	The community hub/space would look very different if a developer used the parameter building heights to build a single storey structure.
p.96/97/100	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.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	Key missing number 14. What happens to the cycle land when it meets the square? 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. 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. T 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.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	How will unauthorised parking be prevented through design? (Bottom right photo). 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.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.linesearchbeforeudig.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-ordiverting-ourpipes&data=04%7C01%7Cplanning.comments.csb%40buckinghamshire.gov.uk%7C4fc694ab74734ce4470e08d9ed714507%7C7fb976b99e2848e180861ddabecf82a0%7C0%7C0%7C637801893026080581%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV87 2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%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 or 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-ordiverting-ourpipes&data=04%7C01%7Cplanning.comments.csb%40buckinghamshire.gov.uk%7Cfd1

49dc48b454f12401908d9c5ef1ce7%7C7fb976b99e2848e180861ddabecf82a0%7C0%7C0%7C637758453044323664%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=PPqNYNdh2SVGqlWCLHAu3Qgt4KKXcBCarhq5qHNKIoE%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 show 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 CCBs 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 dipslope/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 mimimise 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 ection 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 in 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