

<u>Location:</u>	Land To The East Of Talbot Way And Kristiansand Way And Flint Road Allotments Flint Road Letchworth Garden City Hertfordshire SG6 1TY
<u>Applicant:</u>	Barratt David Wilson Homes (North Thames)
<u>Proposal:</u>	Reserved matters application for approval of layout, scale and appearance of buildings and landscaping pursuant of outline permission 21/00504/OP granted 03.04.2025 for residential development comprising of up to 120 dwellings with vehicular access via Flint Road
<u>Ref. No:</u>	25/03084/RM
<u>Officer:</u>	Peter Bull

Date of expiry of statutory period: 19 March 2026

Extension of statutory period: 19 June 2026

Reason for Delay:

The initial officer report was delayed due to discussions and negotiations on various technical aspects, further information received and additional consultation exercises that was undertaken as a result.

Reason for referral to Committee

The site area for this application for development exceeds 1 ha and therefore under the Council's scheme of delegation, this application must be determined by the Council's Planning Control Committee.

1.0 Site History

- 1.1 21/00504/OP - Residential development comprising of up to 120 dwellings with vehicular access via Flint Road (all matters reserved except means of access) – approved subject to legal agreement
- 1.2 26/00605/DOC - Details reserved by Condition 7: (Foul drainage) of planning permission 21/00504/OP granted 03.04.2025
- 1.3 25/02959/DOC - Details reserved by condition 8 Part A (Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation) of outline application reference 21/00504/OP – part discharged
- 1.4 26/00604/DOC - Details reserved by Condition 6: (Drainage excavations) of planning permission 21/00504/OP – pending

- 1.5 26/00602/DOC - Details reserved by Condition 4: (Drainage Management and Maintenance) of planning permission 21/00504/OP – pending
- 1.6 26/00603/DOC - Details reserved by Condition 5: (Drainage during construction) of outline permission 21/00504/OP – pending
- 1.7 26/00515/DOC - Details reserved by Condition 16: (Design Code) of planning permission 21/00504/OP – pending
- 1.8 26/00514/DOC - Details reserved by Condition 3: (Drainage SWMDDS) of planning permission 21/00504/OP – pending
- 1.9 26/00607/DOC - Details reserved by Condition 21: (Fire Hydrants) of planning permission 21/00504/OP – pending
- 1.10 26/00282/DOC - Details reserved by Condition 14 (BNGMP) of outline planning permission reference 21/00504/OP – pending
- 1.11 26/00357/DOC - Details reserved by Condition 18 (Noise Assessment) of outline planning permission reference 21/00504/OP – pending
- 1.12 26/00366/DOC - Details reserved by Condition 10 (Highway Improvement Works) of outline planning permission reference 21/00504/OP – pending
- 1.13 26/00281/DOC - Details reserved by Condition 12 (Construction Traffic Management Plan) of outline planning permission reference 21/00504/OP – pending
- 1.14 26/00360/DOC - Details reserved by Condition 24 (Site Waste Management plan) of outline planning permission reference 21/00504/OP – pending
- 1.15 26/00357/DOC - Details reserved by Condition 18 (Noise Assessment) of outline planning permission reference 21/00504/OP – pending
- 1.16 26/00367/DOC - Details reserved by Condition 11 (Upgrading bus stops) of outline planning permission reference 21/00504/OP – pending
- 1.17 26/00368/DOC - Details reserved by Condition 22 (Refuse and recycling) of outline planning permission reference 21/00504/OP – pending
- 1.18 26/00362/DOC - Details reserved by Condition 15 (Swift and Bat Boxes) of outline planning permission reference 21/00504/OP – pending
- 1.19 26/00282/DOC - Details reserved by Condition 14 (BNGMP) of outline planning permission reference 21/00504/OP – pending
- 1.20 26/00283/DOC - Details reserved by Condition 9 (Vehicle Access) of outline planning permission reference 21/00504/OP – pending
- 1.21 26/00364/DOC - Details reserved by Condition 20 (EV charging point) of outline planning permission reference 21/00504/OP – pending

- 1.22 26/00013/S106A - Modification to S106 associated with 21/00504/OP to modify Paragraph 1.3 of Part 1 of Schedule 2 to change the mix of affordable housing units – pending
- 1.23 26/00363/DOC - Details reserved by Condition 19 (Energy and sustainability statement) of outline planning permission reference 21/00504/OP - pending

2.0 **Policies**

2.1 **North Hertfordshire District Local Plan 2011 -2031**

Policy SP1: Sustainable Development in North Hertfordshire
Policy SP2: Settlement Hierarchy
Policy SP6: Sustainable transport
Policy SP7: Infrastructure requirements and developer contributions
Policy SP8: Housing
Policy SP9: Design and sustainability
Policy SP10: Healthy communities
Policy SP11: Natural resources and sustainability
Policy SP12: Green infrastructure, biodiversity and landscape
Policy SP13: Historic Environment
Policy T1: Assessment of transport matters
Policy T2: Parking
Policy HS3: Housing Mix
Policy HS5: Accessible and adaptable housing
Policy D1: Sustainable design
Policy D3: Protecting living conditions
Policy D4: Air quality
Policy HC1: Community facilities
Policy NE1: Strategic green infrastructure
Policy NE2: Landscape
Policy NE4: Biodiversity and geological sites
Policy NE6: New and improved open space
Policy NE7: Reducing flood risk
Policy NE8: Sustainable drainage systems
Policy NE9: Water quality and environment
Policy NE10: Water conservation and wastewater infrastructure
Policy HE1: Designated heritage assets
Policy HE4: Archaeology

2.2 **Supplementary Planning Documents**

Design SPD (2015)
Vehicle Parking Provision at New Development SPD (2011)
Sustainability SPD (2024)
North Herts Design Code (Draft 2026)
East and North Herts Shared Waste Services Waste Storage and Collection
Guidance for Developers

2.3 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024)

Section 2: Achieving sustainable development

Section 5: Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

Section 6: Building a strong competitive economy

Section 8: Promoting healthy and safe communities

Section 9: Promoting sustainable transport

Section 11: Making effective use of land

Section 12: Achieving well-designed places

Section 13: Protecting Green Belt land

Section 14: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Section 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

2.4 National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Provides a range of guidance on planning matters including design, flood risk, biodiversity and planning obligations.

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 HCC Highways – no objections to original proposals. Updated consultation response on revised layout awaited and will be reported

3.2 Letchworth Heritage Foundation – supports the proposals

3.3 NHC Ecology – no objection

3.4 NHC Urban Design – no objection

3.5 NHC Senior Transport Officer – no objection

3.6 NHC Tree and Landscape Officer – no objection subject to conditions

3.7 Place Services (Landscaping) – comments provided identifying improvements

3.8 NHC Waste and Recycling – any comments on updated layout to be reported

3.9 Anglian Water – any comments to be reported

3.10 Neighbours – 3 letters received – issues raised are as follows -

- queries relating to allotment improvements
- provision of water point to water new landscaping
- adequate bin storage areas
- archaeological engagement
- absence of community building
- site not to be adopted by local authority
- inappropriate location for residential use alongside industrial operations (fuel depot) and the local recycling centre

- juxtaposition of residential use with industrial uses and associated noise, fumes and traffic adjacent causing hazards for residents especially school children
- additional traffic and transport
- absence of road improvement to mitigate these problems.
- priority should be to keep heavy industry separate from school children walking to school
- opportunities for installing solar panels should be expanded and layout should be redesigned to facilitate larger arrays to roofs.

4.0 Planning Considerations

4.1 Site and Surroundings

4.1.1 The application site is located to the north-east of Letchworth and to the south of Norton. It was removed from the Green Belt as part of the site allocation (LG3) in the North Herts Local Plan (NHLP). It now falls within the settlement boundary of Letchworth. The site covers an area of approximately 5.5 hectares. It is roughly rectangular in shape, tapering at its northern end. There are residential properties to the north and beyond allotment gardens to the west. There is an industrial estate to the south through which vehicular access to the site is proposed. There are open fields within the Green Belt to the east, where there is a hedge and ancient orchard.

4.1.2 There are no public footpaths crossing the site. However, there is a public footpath that runs beyond the northern boundary of the site (PRoW 026).

4.1.3 There is existing woodland plantation within the site towards the east and southern boundaries. The site rises from south at Flint Road to north adjacent to Norton. There is an existing vehicular access to the south which serves the existing allotment gardens.

4.2 The Proposal

4.2.1 The application seeks reserved matters approval of *layout, scale and appearance and landscaping* pursuant of outline permission 21/00504/OP granted in April 2025 for residential development comprising of up to 120 dwellings with vehicular access via Flint Road.

4.2.3 The proposed housing mix is set out in the table below -

Size	Market (60%)	Affordable (40%)	Total
1 bed apartment	5	12	17
2 bed apartment	4	8	12
2 bed house	0	9	9
3 bed house	38	15	53
4 bed house	20	4	24
5 bed house	5	0	5
	72	48	120

Table 1

4.2.4 Included in the housing delivery set out above will be 6 no. M(4)3 apartments (2 market and 4 affordable) and all 28 affordable houses and 63 private houses (91 in total) will be delivered as M(4)2.

4.2.5 The application proposals are set out in the following documents -

- Application Form
- Final Planning Statement
- Design and Access Statement - Part 1
- Design and Access Statement - Part 2
- Design and Access Statement - Part 3
- Design and Access Statement - Part 4
- Design and Access Statement - Part 5
- Design and Access Statement - Part 6
- Photo Book Part 1
- Photo Book Part 2
- HTA-A_DR_0102_B_Illustrative Masterplan
- HTA-A_DR_0103_A_Parameter Plan with Proposal
- HTA-A_DR_0100_D_Proposed Site Layout
- HTA-A_DR_0124_C_Boundary Materials
- HTA-A_DR_0120_C_Car and Cycle Parking Strategy
- HTA-A_DR_0165_Cycle Store Elevations Floor and Roof Plans
- HTA-A_DR_0161_Double Garage Elevations Floor and Roof Plans
- HTA-A_DR_0150_Enclosure Details
- HTA-A_DR_0010_Existing Site Plan
- HTA-A_DR_0166_Refuse Store Elevations Floor and Roof Plan
- HTA-A_DR_0121_C_Refuse Strategy
- HTA-A_DR_0122_D_Tenure Distribution
- HTA-A_DR_0124_D_Wall and Roof Materials
- HTA-A_DR_0167_A_Substation Elevations Floor and Roof Plans
- HTA-A_DR_0001_Site Location Plan
- HTA-A_DR_0104_A_Sales Arena
- BNG Validation check
- P25-0636_EN_0004_A_Detailed Hard Landscape Proposals
- P25-0636_EN_0002_S1_A_Detailed Public Open Space Landscape Proposals (Sheet 1 - 3)
- P25-0636_EN_0003_A_Detailed Soft On-Plot Landscape Proposals (Sheet 1 - 4)
- P25-0636_EN_0006_S1_A_Play Space And Green Street Details (Sheet 1 - 3)
- P25-0636_EN_0005_C_Landscape Masterplan
- CSA_7316_111_Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy
- 2502330-ACE-XX-00-DR-C-0007_B_Proposed Footway Improvements
- 2502330-ACE-XX-00-DR-C-0006_B_Proposed Site Access
- Transport Technical Note (1 - 3)
- 2502330-ACE-XX-XX-DR-C-0101-E_Levels Strategy
- HTA-A_DR_2081_B_Stanford Detached Floor and Roof Plans
- HTA-A_DR_2080_A_Stanford Floor and Roof Plans
- HTA-A_DR_2075_B_Watford Floor and Roof Plans
- HTA-A_DR_2010_B_Whitlingham Floor and Roof Plans
- HTA-A_DR_0162_Shared Garage Elevations Floor and Roof Plans
- HTA-A_DR_0160_A_Single Garage Elevations Floor and Roof Plans
- HTA-A_DR_0300_B_Street Elevations 1
- HTA-A_DR_0302_B_Street Elevations 3
- HTA-A_DR_2045_B_YH50 Floor Plans
- HTA-A_DR_2050_B_YH52 Floor and Roof Plans

- HTA-A_DR_2055_B_YH54 Floor and Roof Plans
- HTA-A_DR_2060_YH55 Floor and Roof Plans
- HTA-A_DR_2000_C_Rainham Floor and Roof Plans
- HTA-A_DR_2115_C_Blackwater Woodland Elevations
- HTA-A_DR_2125_C_Conwy Woodland Elevations
- HTA-A_DR_2165_B_Cottage Flats Elevations
- HTA-A_DR_2150_D_YH52 End Allotment Elevations
- HTA-A_DR_2146_D_YH50 End Allotment Var Elevations
- HTA-A_DR_2145_C_YH50 End and Mid Allotment Elevations
- HTA-A_DR_2151_C_YH52 End Avenue Elevations
- HTA-A_DR_2130_B_Fairburn Woodland Elevations
- HTA-A_DR_2140_C_Flatford Woodland Elevations
- HTA-A_DR_2135_C_Minsmere Woodland Elevations
- HTA-A_DR_2101_C_Rainham Avenue Elevations
- HTA-A_DR_2100_B_Rainham Gateway Elevations
- HTA-A_DR_2105_C_Skomer Gateway Elevations
- HTA-A_DR_2106_D_Skomer Gateway Var Elevations
- HTA-A_DR_2181_B_Stanford Detached Woodland Elevations
- HTA-A_DR_2180_B_Stanford Semi-Detached Elevations
- HTA-A_DR_2176_C_Watford End Allotment Elevations
- HTA-A_DR_2175_C_Watford End Avenue Elevations
- HTA-A_DR_2110_C_Whitlingham Gateway Elevations
- HTA-A_DR_2155_D_YH54 End Allotment Elevations
- HTA-A_DR_2160_B_YH55 End Avenue Elevations
- HTA-A_DR_2020_B_Beckingham Floor and Roof Plans
- HTA-A_DR_2065_B_Blackthorn Floor and Roof Plans
- HTA-A_DR_2015_B_Blackwater Floor and Roof Plans
- HTA-A_DR_2025_A_Conwy Floor and Roof Plans
- HTA-A_DR_2070_A_Cottage Flats Floor and Roof Plans
- HTA-A_DR_2030_Fairburn Floor and Roof Plans
- HTA-A_DR_2040_A_Flatford Floor and Roof Plans
- HTA-A_DR_2035_A_Minsmere Floor and Roof Plans
- HTA-A_DR_2005_A_Skomer Floor and Roof Plans
- HTA-A_DR_2204_B_Apartment Block Affordable Elevations
- HTA-A_DR_2201_B_Apartment Block Affordable Floor and Roof Plans
- HTA-A_DR_2203_B_Apartment Block Private Elevations
- HTA-A_DR_2200_A_Apartment Block Private Floor and Roof Plans
- HTA-A_DR_2121_C_Beckingham Allotment Elevations
- HTA-A_DR_2120_C_Beckingham Woodland Elevations
- HTA-A_DR_2165_B_Blackthorn Allotment Elevations
- HTA-A_DR_0301_B_Street Elevations 2
- HTA_A_DR_2141_C_Flatford Woodland Var Elevations

4.2.6 Other documents submitted as part of the application but are dealt with as conditional matters from the outline permission (OP) and are therefore not approved as part of this application comprise –

- Sustainability Statement
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (signed)
- Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP)
- Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calc.Excel Spreadsheet

- Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment:- Design Stage- Rev A
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement
- Rural Edge Design Code (1-5)
- Drainage Tech Note
- Drainage Tech Note - with Appendices Rev B--2
- Drainage Tech Note - with Appendices Rev B--3
- Noise Assessment (Rev A)
- Noise Assessment (Rev A) (signed)

4.2.7 A revised layout plan was provided in May 2026 following negotiations with the applicant. Supporting documents have been updated to reflect the updated site layout.

4.3 Key Issues

4.3.1 This application seeks reserved matters approval pursuant to the outline planning permission 21/00504/OP (OP). The OP has established the use of the site for residential purposes as well as the main point of access. The extent of the consideration for this application is limited to the following reserved matters (RM) -

- Layout
- Scale
- Appearance
- Landscaping

4.3.2 As can be appreciated from section 1.0 of this report, applications to discharge conditions imposed as part of the outline permission have been submitted. These have been subject to consultation with the necessary technical consultees. These conditional matters 'interact' with elements of the reserved matters under consideration and have been considered as part of discussions around this RM application. The intention is that, in the event that Members resolve to approve this application, all outstanding conditional matters would be formally agreed following confirmation from relevant technical consultees. As with all conditional matters, such decisions are delegated to the Development and Conservation Manager.

4.3.3 A Strategic Masterplan Document (SMPD) was provided as part of the outline application and the contents of this have been taken into account when negotiating and amending the proposals now presented to Members. Details of this are set out in the following sections of this report. The proposals have been negotiated over the last 12 months and therefore largely predate the publication of the emerging district *Design Code*. Whilst the proposal cannot therefore reasonably be expected to comply with the Code (which at the time of writing this report is still unadopted), discussions and negotiations have considered elements of the *Code*, and these have been included where reasonable.

4.3.4 This report will first set out the background to the application followed by an explanation and analysis on the each of the reserved matters and their compliance with the development plan and the SMPD.

Background

- 4.3.5 The site is allocated for housing in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 (NHLP) under Policy HS1 and is known as LG3. Upon the adoption of the NHLP in November 2022, the site was removed from the Green Belt and now falls within Letchworth Garden City. Members approved outline permission for this allocated housing in July 2023 (application reference 21/00504/OP) subject to a S106 agreement. Officers concluded that the outline application was in accordance with the NPPF and the NHLP and would enable the delivery of a local housing allocation.
- 4.3.6 The outline permission S106 agreement secured the following matters - *Affordable housing, Open Space Scheme and Open Space Management Scheme, Allotment improvements, Financial contributions to HCC, Footpath improvement works, Flint Road and Blackhorse Road Improvement Works and Travel Plan*. The applicant is seeking to vary the affordable housing mix from that set out in the S106. This is being considered separately via a Deed of Variation and does not form part of the consideration of this application (see 4.2.3 of this report).
- 4.3.7 Policy LG3 in the NHLP set out the following site-specific policy criteria for the development of the site -
- i. Structural planting to reinforce Green Belt boundary along the north-eastern perimeter of the site;
 - ii. Appropriate mitigation measures for noise associated with motorway and/or adjoining employment are to potentially include orientation of living spaces
 - iii. Re-provision of allotments if access to the site is from the west. Re-provision prior to commencement of development, within the vicinity of the site and the same or better quality;
 - iv. Proposals to be informed by a site-specific landscape assessment;
 - v. Retention of Public Right of Way Letchworth Garden City 026 and diversion if necessary;
 - vi. Sensitive design and/or lower density housing where the site affects setting of the Norton Conservation Area and nearby Grade II Listed Buildings on Church Lane and Norton Road; and
 - vii. Archaeological survey to be completed prior to development
- 4.3.8 The SMPD submitted as part of the outline application set out the vision and place-making objectives based around a landscape-led design taking account of the site topography and how the site needed to effectively integrate with the existing green infrastructure network and walking, cycling and public transport routes and hubs. A set of framework plans - Land Use, Movement, Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and Landscape and Urban Design Parameters fixed the structure of the masterplan. Also included were Design Principles and an illustrative Masterplan to provide an example of how the site could be developed within the parameters and principles set out in the Strategic Masterplan Framework to achieve design quality and compliance with NHLP policy SP9.
- 4.3.9 The illustrative masterplan within the SMPD includes the following key elements -
- a. wide green corridor to the east to buffer the woodland protect ecology and create a rural fringe to the development
 - b. a green corridor to the west to buffer both the scrub habitat and allotments

- c. generous buffering and additional planting at these landscaped boundaries to screen views into the development and create a landscape setting and woodland character for the built form
- d. Location of green space and additional planting to the north of the site in the most elevated and flattest position to protect setting of Conservation Area, help screen views into the site from the north PROW 26 and provide a transitional space and focal point for the community
- e. Location of new village green to the north of the site as a re-provision and re-interpretation of a historic but lost village green on the primary school site responding to historic character
- f. Re-establishing and reinforcing connections to St Nicholas Church and Church Fields (a significant historic space with cultural associations) green space and wider footpath network through improvements to PROW 26 and positioning of the village green
- g. Working with the topography to locate SUDs and the arrangement of buildings, streets and green spaces
- h. Structural planting to be provided in verges or front gardens along the primary street to create a green, semi-rural environment.
- i. Hedges to be provided in most front gardens and be the preferred boundary treatment reflecting local character
- j. Garden streets (secondary streets) to create east-west habitat continuity and landscape fingers extending the woodland character into the development and benefiting from solar gain
- k. Designing a rural lane to the east of the development to reflect rural edge and transitional area and draw on lane precedents in both Norton and Letchworth Integrating home with large front gardens to reflect local Letchworth character
- l. Tree specimens with large sizes at maturity to be planted in the open spaces (village and entry greens) and form part of the landscape design related to large buildings.
- m. Utilizing a cohesive design approach that includes a uniformity in terms of building line and the creation of street.
- n. Use of focal points, tree lined routes, vistas and group design and simple design approach (either contemporary or traditional) that reflects arts and crafts values
- o. Utilising special corner / marker buildings a common urban feature throughout Letchworth.
- p. Reflecting characteristics of the historic core of Norton in the rural eastern edge such as rural cottages (which follow an irregular building line and varied frontage), rural lanes, generous planting and green spaces
- q. Integrating a simple high-quality material palette influenced by early garden city Arts and Crafts design of Letchworth and rural vernacular of Norton
- r. Limiting the storey height to the north to limit impact of the development on the setting of the Conservation Area and limiting the storey height to 2.5 along the eastern rural edge to respect the rural character.

4.3.10 Compliance with the SMPD and Framework Plans is considered as part of the four reserved matters topics below.

Layout

4.3.11 Layout is defined in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2015 (as amended) as: *'the way in which buildings, routes and open spaces within the development are provided, situated, orientated in relation to each other and to buildings and spaces outside the development...'*

4.3.12 NHLP policies to be considered that are relevant to layout include SP9, SP10, SP12, SP13, HE1, HS1, HS2, HS3, HS5, T1, T2, NE2, NE6, NE7, NE8, D1 and D3. Appendix 5: 'Letchworth Garden City Design Principles' are also considered relevant.

4.3.13 The Urban Design Framework set out in the SMPD sets out a series of place-making principles to support the high-quality design of public space and public realm. These include:

- The use of perimeter blocks to structure the layout
- The primary avenue / street to form the main street through the site
- Secondary streets will act as green streets to connect into the eastern woodland corridor.
- The rural frontage to the east will provide a more irregular and stepped frontage but and include larger detached and semi-detached properties
- A feathered landscaped edge adjacent the existing woodland
- The village green frontages to frame and enclose the village green
- Apartment buildings are located on the lower half of the site and are positioned to form anchor points at visually prominent locations to form wayfinding buildings for the adjacent streets
- Streets that terminate at a development boundary should create green views at that boundary

General layout

4.3.14 The site has a total of seven development blocks either side of the primary street – three to the east and four to the west. The primary street ('The Avenue') will connect to the existing adopted road in the south (Flint Road) and terminate in the north at the village green adjacent to the boundary with Norton. The primary street curves gently working with the topography and includes structural tree planting and SUDs features interspersed with visitor car parking along the edges and verges.

4.3.15 East to west routes function as secondary streets known as 'Garden Streets' and are landscaped to provide green landscaped routes to link to the eastern woodland belt. Secondary streets connect to the primary street through staggered junctions to improve pedestrian safety, reinforce road hierarchy, and create opportunities for corner features to enhance townscape character.

4.3.16 The edge lane along the eastern boundary of the site will have a more informal appearance to reflect its location along the new rural edge of the settlement providing a suitable transition integrate the settlement with the woodland and greenbelt beyond. This route is partially curved and is narrower in width compared to the primary street and draws on the character or the rural lanes found in Norton and Letchworth. The details of the edge lane are secured by condition as part of the outline permission (reference 26/00515/DOC). Although this is a separate matter, the layout as proposed is considered satisfactory and should not prejudice the determination of the condition.

Residential amenity

4.3.17 Each dwelling will include an appropriately sized private garden area to reflect the size of the dwelling. All apartment units will include their own private balconies. The site is bordered by industrial development to the south, allotments to the west, open countryside to the east and a landscaped edge to the north adjacent to Norton. Whilst some of the upper floor balconies to the apartment block along the allotment edge will afford views towards existing residential properties, due to the intervening allotments, existing screening and separation distances (circa 50m), these are not considered to be unreasonable or harmful.

Movement and access

4.3.18 For context, the immediate access and movement network adjacent and outside of the site comprises –

- Vehicular and pedestrian access - via Flint Road in the south (including adjacent allotments)
- Pedestrian and cycle access – PRow 026 runs along the norther boundary and an existing permissive walking route along the eastern site boundary. The National Cycle Route 12 passes along Blackhorse Road which links to Flint Road.

4.3.19 Also, as set out in section 4.3.6 above, the outline permission S106 secured off-site improvements for the following –

- (a) Flint Road and Blackhorse Road including widening of path and dropped kerbs
- (b) PRow 26 widening and nearest bus stops along Norton Road/ Green Lane
- (c) A new access from PRow 26 into St Nicholas Primary School

4.3.20 The primary street includes a vehicular carriageway and segregated pedestrian and cycle surface. The layout provides cycle and pedestrian routes which will link the new development with the existing PRow 26 to the north, the existing permissive path to the east and the existing footpath along Flint Road in the south (which will be widened as part of the outline permission S106).

4.3.21 Secondary 'Green Streets' and the rural edge lane will be shared surfaces. Informal paths are proposed through the woodland to provide alternate recreational paths for residents. Pedestrian connection to the existing allotments west of the site is proposed through the woodland in the south and will complement the existing pedestrian access to the north (PRow 26) and revised vehicular access through the plantation off Flint Road. Following the submission of the original layout, officers and the applicant sought to amend the design of the rural edge lane. The revised layout plan now proposes a shared surface lane designed at 3.0m in width, supported by localised widening at junctions and several passing places including visitor parking bays. Herts CC Highways have previously confirmed agreement to the general site wide road layout. However, in relation to the revised 3.0m wide carriageway to the rural edge lane, a response is awaited pending agreement from Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service. An update on this matter will be given at the meeting.

4.3.22 The proposed footpaths and recreation routes have been located to connect and improve walking and cycling access to Norton village, St Nicholas Primary School and the adjacent industrial area. The site also has access to the Letchworth Greenway route via Blackhorse Road just to the south of the site. This gives access to Baldock to the east, Radwell Meadows to the north. Buses into Letchworth town centre run along Norton Road and Green Lane, both accessible from the footpath running east-west along the north of the site (PRow 026).

4.3.23 The location of the village green and new playground on the desire line to school will also encourage active travel and social interaction. Overall, the proposals will provide good cycle access to Baldock, Radwell and Stotfold as well as Letchworth town centre.

Car parking

- 4.3.24 There are two types of car parking provided as part of the proposals to cater for both residents and visitors. Residents on plot parking has been revised since the original submission with the double garages for the larger properties replaced with single garages and providing between 2 and 3 off street spaces per unit. Smaller units have two on street spaces per unit and apartment units 1 space per unit. In relation to visitor spaces, the original plan had 25 on-street and 5 on-plot parking spaces. The revised layout provides 30 spaces on-street (0.25 spaces per dwelling) and relatively evenly distributed across the site. Overall, the parking arrangements are policy compliant and are considered acceptable.

Cycle parking

- 4.3.25 Resident and visitor cycle parking facilities are proposed across the site. Resident parking for individual dwellings will be provided in either an enlarged garage or a secure shed located in rear gardens. For apartment buildings, detached cycle storage buildings are proposed adjacent to each block. Visitor cycle parking in the form of Sheffield style stands will be provided adjacent the front entrance of each of the three apartment blocks (two stands per block), with an additional two Sheffield cycle stands to be located within each the Gateway and Village Greens. Overall, cycle parking facilities are considered to be policy compliant and acceptable.

Open spaces

- 4.3.26 There are four key open / undeveloped spaces included as part of the site layout –

- (a) Gateway green to the south
- (b) Village Green to the north
- (c) SuDS in the south-eastern corner
- (d) Existing plantation along the southern and eastern site boundaries.

- 4.3.27 These key spaces are supplemented by more minor open spaces along the secondary streets. The proposed layout exceeds Fields in Trust standards as set out in the SMPD. The new open space delivered as part of the scheme will total approximately 0.48ha - 0.36ha combined between the Village and Gateway Greens and 0.12ha from the southern SuDs area. Details of the landscaping of these areas are set out in the *landscaping* section below.

Refuse strategy

- 4.3.28 Each dwelling includes space for four bins with communal bin storage areas proposed for the apartment blocks. The precise details of the site wide waste strategy will be secured via condition 22 from the outline permission. Details have been submitted to the council pursuant to this condition (application reference 26/00368/DOC) and this is under consideration by the Waste Services Team. The existing *East and North Herts Shared Waste Services Waste Storage and Collection Guidance for Developers* sets out bin collection expectations. This confirms that collection of domestic bins should be from kerbside. Where a lorry must reverse in, the bin collection points should be no more than 12m from the junction where it starts reversing. Where this is not possible, developers are required to have designated bin collection points that are on or next to roads that are built to adoptable standards.

- 4.3.29 The applicant has provided a revised refuse collection vehicle tracking diagram to show that a waste collection vehicle can safely travel along the edge lane, and a revised refuse collection strategy, showing a new optimised route and any proposed adjustments to bin collection points to reduce drag distances. An update on this matter will be given at the meeting.

Surface water drainage

- 4.3.30 These are conditional matters which were secured under the outline application (application references 26/00513/DOC, 26/00602/DOC and 26/00603/DOC). The layout drawings include a range of SuDS feature notably the two basins in the Village Green (north) and along the rural edge lane (south) together with some raingarden features along the primary and secondary roads. The LLFA have been consulted in relation to the conditions and have made comments requesting adjustments and clarification. Revised details have been submitted and the updated response from the LLFA is awaited. The layout as currently proposed is not thought to be affected by these revisions and the determination of this RM application will not prejudice the determination of the conditional details.

Conclusion on Layout

- 4.3.31 The layout has been designed to provide a clear and simple street hierarchy well integrated with development blocks and green spaces to create permeability and legibility. It is considered to accord with policy LG3, SMPD Framework and Parameter plans as well as the NPPF and NHLP policies.

Scale

- 4.3.32 Scale is defined in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2015 (as amended) as: *'the height., width and length of each building proposed within the development in relation to its surroundings'*...
- 4.3.33 NHLP policies to be considered that are relevant to *Scale* include SP9, SP10, SP12, SP13, HE1, D1 and D3. Appendix 5: 'Letchworth Garden City Design Principles' are also considered relevant.
- 4.3.34 The Parameter Plan secured as part of the SMPD and outline permission, identified two broad areas to guide the scale of the development – north half and southern half. This was largely influenced by the topography of the site which rises from the lowest point at Flint Road in the south to the PRoW 26 adjacent to the northern boundary. In the southern half, the Parameter Plan indicates a maximum scale of 3 storeys and in the northern half a maximum of 2.5 storeys. In addition, it should be noted that the application site lies within the setting of Norton Conservation Area and listed buildings within its historic core. The officer report at the outline stage confirmed that *'It is considered that the proposed development would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of designated heritage assets through development within their setting, at the bottom of the spectrum of less than substantial harm.'* The heritage planning balance concluded that the identified benefits of the proposal would outweigh the harm identified.
- 4.3.35 The proposed residential development on higher ground to the northern part of the site is no higher than 2.5 storeys in height and the residential development on the lower ground, towards the south of the Site, primarily 2 storeys, with some 3-3.5 storey buildings. The proposed scale of the buildings will be in accordance with the approved parameter plan.

Conclusion on scale

- 4.3.36 In terms of the scale of proposals and their impact on heritage assets and the adjacent countryside and townscape, officers consider that they accord with policy LG3 and SMPD Framework and Parameter plans as well as the NPPF and NHLP policies.

Appearance

- 4.3.37 Appearance is defined in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2015 (as amended) as: *'the aspects of a building or place within the development which determines the visual impression the building or places makes, including the external built form of the development, its architecture, materials, decoration, lighting, colour and texture...'*
- 4.3.38 NHLP policies considered relevant to Appearance include SP9, SP13, DS1 and HS1. Appendix 5: 'Letchworth Garden City Design Principles' are also considered relevant.
- 4.3.39 The approved SMPD confirmed that architectural and materials design principles should include positive architectural features, high quality materials referenced from high quality housing and character in Letchworth Garden City. Apartment buildings should form visual anchor points for the adjacent streets. Main entrances, overall massing and orientation, roof silhouette, façade design, parking solutions, and ground level interface with the public realm must all be carefully considered and well designed.
- 4.3.40 The site has four building character areas and comprise Gateway Green, The Avenue, Allotment Boundary and Woodland Boundary. Generally, the appearance of buildings across the four-character areas will be similar with a range of brick built pitch roof houses. Proposed dwellings and garages include common architectural elements - porches, window surrounds, and bay windows – which are inspired by existing early traditional Letchworth Garden City housing. Careful consideration has also been given to materials which will combine a mixture of red multi facing bricks, off white render, red roof tiles with tile creasing features to gables and eaves and string courses to frame windows and doors. These are also inspired by existing early traditional Letchworth Garden City housing. The material palette and detailing is consistent across the site ensuring tenure neutrality.
- 4.3.41 Where dwellings or apartment blocks are proposed at junctions or key edges, these have been designed to be dual aspect.
- 4.3.42 Ancillary buildings – cycle stores, refuse stores and the substation - will also follow the materials palette as the main residential buildings. The substation will be located at the entrance to the site where the new spur road for allotments is proposed. The applicant has indicated a willingness to create a feature of this building as a site entrance feature. Details of the final finishes to this building can be secured by condition in the event of approval.

Conclusion on Appearance

- 4.3.43 The appearance of buildings has been designed to reflect Letchworth Garden City Principles set out in Appendix 5 of the NHLP whilst respecting the character and appearance of Norton. The proposed details are considered to accord with policy LG3 and SMPD Framework and Parameter plans as well as the NPPF and NHLP policies.

Landscaping

- 4.3.44 Landscaping, in relation to reserved matters applications, is defined in the Town and Country planning (Development Management procedure) Order 2015 (as amended) as: *'the treatment of land (other than buildings) for the purpose of enhancing or*

protecting the amenities of the site and the area in which it is situated and includes:

- a. screening by fences, walls or other means;*
- b. the planting of trees, hedges, shrubs or grass;*
- c. the formation of banks, terraces or other earthworks;*
- d. the laying out of provision of gardens, courts, squares, water features, sculpture or public art; and*
- e. the provision of other amenity features...'*

4.3.45 Relevant NHP policies include Policy ENV3, ENV4, NE1, NE7, NE8, SP9 and SP12. Appendix 5: 'Letchworth Garden City Design Principles' from the NHP are also considered relevant.

4.3.46 The Green Infrastructure Framework set out in the SMPD sets out a series of principles to be considered and included in RM proposals. These are -

- The retention and enhancement of the existing woodland along the east and south edges
- The provision of a village green to the north edge
- The provision of a (i) gateway green to the southern entrance and (ii) a secondary landscaped open space with the potential for a small wetland habitat and infiltration basin.
- On-site biodiversity gain to be delivered through new woodland planting with native ground flora, scrub planting, diversification of hedgerows, new hedgerow trees, wetland planting and the creation of species rich wildflower meadows.
- A buffer of 12m to be maintained adjacent to northern boundary
- Existing hedgerows along the west and existing woodland on the eastern and southern sides retained with buffer
- Multi functional open /play space in accordance with Fields in trust Standards
- Allotment provision will be made by investment into the existing adjoining site
- 0.44ha of Parks and Gardens including a 700sqm play area with appropriate buffers
- Doorstep play provision across the site
- The existing woodland to be enhanced and managed and include some natural play provision

Existing woodland

4.3.47 The application is supported by a tree survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) & Tree Constraints Plan (TCP),) Arboriculture Method Statement (AMS) & Tree Protection Plan (TPP) in accordance with BS5837 Trees In Relation to Construction. The proposed development retains the majority of the existing woodland although the removal of T1 Hawthorn and a section of G2 mixed species to facilitate vehicular access to the site is necessary. These trees are young or of low quality and removal will not significantly impact the amenity of the site. Additional tree planting is proposed to streets and within rear private gardens across the site. This is considered to provide adequate mitigation for trees removed to facilitate the vehicular access to the site.

4.3.48 An amended Arboricultural Method Statement has been provided to clarify impacts and mitigation relating to T5 Sycamore a B Category tree. Details provided of the protective measures during construction for other retained trees on site are considered to be adequate. New mulch recreation paths are proposed through the woodland which are considered acceptable. Some informal natural play opportunities are identified through the woodland although it is unclear if existing trees need to be removed to

allow these. Clarification on this point has been requested from the applicant and a further update will be given at the meeting.

The Avenue (primary road)

- 4.3.49 Hard landscaping proposals - roads and driveways - will generally be block paved with different coloured blocks to public roads and private drives. Macadam black top surfacing will be provided at junctions with Green Streets.
- 4.3.50 Soft landscaping proposals along the street includes tree planting along both sides of the carriageway. These species - *Carpinus* 'Frans Fontaine' and *Tilia* 'Greenspire' should grow to circa 17-22m in height which will help create a uniform appearance ideal for avenue planting and creating vistas. Keeping the species the same on both sides of the primary road to the south will create the uniformity in accord with streets within Letchworth. Larger species trees along the road will provide focal points when viewed from adjoining streets.

Green streets (secondary roads)

- 4.3.51 Hard landscaping proposals will comprise a block paved shared surface roads with integrated rain gardens, seating at road ends, raised growing beds and incidental door step play equipment. Bollards are proposed to street edges to protect from unauthorised parking.
- 4.3.52 Soft landscaping proposals have been revised since the original submission with green spaces between car parking rows having been consolidated into larger areas to provide larger spaces for native street tree planting. Focal tree planting is proposed around junctions. Front boundaries to Green Streets will be open and untreated.

Rural Edge Lane (eastern edge)

- 4.3.53 The rural edge lane will have a different colour block paviour to indicate its less formal status and its narrower carriageway width. As set out at 4.3.16 of this report, the detail of this is subject to a condition from the outline and is not therefore considered in detail as part of this application.

Gateway Green

- 4.3.54 This will create a focal feature for the site upon entry from Flint Road. The space comprises two footpaths together with a focal play platform feature, seating, picnic benches and play equipment framed by tree and ornamental planting set within amenity grassland and wildflower meadow. The Green will provide opportunities for informal doorstep play and create a social space for residents and visitors. Focal tree planting around the entrance junction supplemented by mixed species tree planting within the Green and along the Avenue is proposed. Other features to the green include - mixed ornamental planting, rain garden and bio-swale adjacent to Avenue, species-rich meadow, amenity grassland, gentle earth mounding, door-step play equipment, seating and picnic benches and visitor cycle stands. Of note is the size of the Green which is larger than that set out in the SMPD and the Green Infrastructure Framework Plan.
- 4.3.55 Details as set out in supporting documents and plans are generally satisfactory with the exception of the focal play platform details of which have not been finalised and should therefore be subject to condition in the event of approval.

Village Green (including Green Belt edge)

- 4.3.56 The Village Green will be located adjacent to the northern site boundary and will serve as the primary open space for the development. It will accommodate an equipped play space of approximately 700sqm in area. This will contain 8 pieces of play equipment

with natural appearance. The Green is the flattest area of the site. It will be enclosed with mixed native hedgerow, mixed native species trees, species-rich meadow planting, amenity grassland, a damp-tolerant meadow to SuDS basin with gentle slopes, a garden space with sensory planting, bench seating and picnic benches. The buffer zone planting will include a mixture of smaller and medium sized trees to provide more instant visual reinforcement of Green Belt boundary along the eastern edge.

4.3.57 A 12m buffer is retained along the northern boundary. The proposals include a good mix of native species. Tree sizes and spacings are also acceptable. The developer has been asked that plants be sourced from local provenance tree stock where available. The orchard at the north-east of the site contains a mixture of apple species which should provide more variety but ensuring flowering periods overlap for pollination. Some local heritage varieties should be sourced if available.

4.3.58 Although the Green exceeds the *Fields in Trust Standard* required for a site of this size, it is smaller than that set out in the SMPD and the Green Infrastructure Plan. However, the combined formal Village and Gateway Greens together with other open spaces across the site exceed the cumulative expectations for open space set out in the SMPD and therefore are considered to be a benefit.

Suds Basin (South)

4.3.59 The SuDS basin within the south-eastern corner of the site is larger than that identified in the SMPD and Green Infrastructure Framework Plan. It has been designed with varied gentle sloping bank bounded on the rural edge lane by low level bollards. Damp tolerant planting and meadows along with mixed native tree and shrub planting will frame the basin and help enrich biodiversity and visual amenity. Also included are informal play and climbing features, two seating benches and an informal footpath linking to the existing woodland with play-along-the-way features. The size, design and features included to the basin are considered to exceed the aspirations set out in the SMPD and will provide an additional natural space for residents and visitors to utilise and enjoy.

Boundary treatments

4.3.60 There are four primary boundary treatments proposed across the site - 1.8m high walls to road edges (publicly viewable), 1.8m high close boarded fences to rear gardens (private spaces), bollards to rural edge lane and green streets and hedges to the majority boundary frontages. These are considered to accord with the SMPD and will reflect the character and appearance of Letchworth.

Biodiversity

4.3.61 Condition 14 of the outline permission deals with biodiversity net gain for the development and requires agreement of a management plan. An application to agree these details has been submitted and is pending decision (application reference 26/00282/DOC). It is confirmed that the site will deliver the biodiversity gain required by this condition and will be delivered through the aforementioned spaces and areas.

4.3.62 The council's *Ecologist and Tree and Landscape Officers* have been involved in workshops and discussions with the applicant. They are broadly supportive of the proposals from a landscape, arboricultural and biodiversity perspective. The landscaping proposals currently proposed are not considered to prejudice the determination of the aforementioned biodiversity condition.

Conclusion on Landscaping

- 4.3.63 The layout of the site has been landscape led and includes a variety of open spaces and areas for recreation, which cumulatively, exceed the amount expected as part of the outline SMPD. The landscape proposals – quantity, species, mixture and other details - are acceptable. The landscaping proposals are considered to accord with policy LG3 and the biodiversity and landscape and urban design parameters framework plans, as well as the NPPF and NHLP policies.

Other matters

- 4.3.64 The outline permission includes conditions to deal with *foul drainage, archaeological impacts, drainage excavations, drainage management and maintenance, drainage during construction, rural edge design code, drainage SWMDDS, fire hydrants, BNG management plan, noise assessment, highway improvement works, construction traffic management plan, site waste management plan, Upgrading bus stops, refuse and recycling, swift and bat boxes, sustainability, vehicle access and EV charging points*. These matters are not therefore considered in detail as part of this RM application.
- 4.3.65 Allotment improvements were secured as part of the outline permission S106. A third party has identified the need for a water point for use by the management company to ensure that proposed landscaping is established by regular watering. This can be secured as part of the Allotment Improvements which the council have yet to receive details of.
- 4.3.66 A third party also has asked why no community facilities are proposed as part of this application. As confirmed in the officer report relating to the outline application, the site is too small for the provision of new community facilities. However, as set out above, the development has been designed to maximise pedestrian and cycling connections to surrounding facilities within Norton and adjoining urban areas.
- 4.3.67 Hedgehog friendly boundary treatments (gaps and holes) to allow movement of hedgehogs between green spaces will be accommodated by the proposed details.
- 4.3.68 Sustainability matters are dealt with under condition 19 of the outline permission. Details pursuant to this condition have been submitted and are under consideration (application reference 26/00363/DOC). Whilst not a matter that forms part of this RM application, the applicant has confirmed its commitment to dwellings being constructed with improved thermal values than that require under the current building regulations. Potential solar PV locations have also been identified. As part of the condition, officers will seek clarification on the precise properties which will include solar PV and secure these where appropriate.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 This application for reserved matters follows from the approval of outline application 21/00504/OP. Approval is sought for *layout, scale, appearance and landscaping*.
- 5.2 The application site was removed from the Green Belt as part of the site allocation (LG3) in the NHLP. It now falls within the settlement boundary of Letchworth. This allocated housing is identified for development up to 120 new homes. Policy LG3 set out criteria for consideration in the determination of any relevant applications for the site. The SMPF included as part of the outline application contained a variety of framework and parameter plans setting out how a development should come forward to ensure that it reflects both the prevailing character of both Letchworth and Norton

given its position at the interface between these two settlements and also secures an appropriate new eastern edge to the Green Belt. The layout, scale, appearance and landscaping proposals are considered to result in a sensitive eastern extension to Letchworth. The proposed development is considered to accord with the SMPF and complies with the NPPF and NHLP policies.

- 5.3 The approval of this application will make a contribution to the housing land supply. As the council is currently unable to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply, the tilted balance of paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF is engaged, the collective benefits of the development would be significant. No adverse impacts have been identified and therefore the benefits would not significantly and demonstrably outweighed when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole. The scheme therefore benefits from the presumption in favour of sustainable development which is a further material consideration.
- 5.4 There are no material considerations to indicate that the application should not be determined in accordance with the development plan. For the reasons set out above it is officer's view that the proposed development would accord with the development plan including the NHLP, and that there are no reasons to withhold the approval of reserved matters. As such, details should be approved subject to the following conditions.

6.0 Alternative Options

- 6.1 None applicable

7.0 Pre-Commencement Conditions

- 7.1 I can confirm that the applicant is in agreement with the pre-commencement conditions that are proposed.

8.0 Legal Implications

- 8.1 In making decisions on applications submitted under the Town and Country Planning legislation, the Council is required to have regard to the provisions of the development plan and to any other material considerations. The decision must be in accordance with the plan unless the material considerations indicate otherwise. Where the decision is to refuse or restrictive conditions are attached, the applicant has a right of appeal against the decision.

9.0 Recommendation

- 9.1 That reserved matters be APPROVED subject to the following:

A) providing delegated powers to the Development and Conservation Manager to update conditions with minor amendments as required; and

B) conditions set out below:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the details specified in the application and supporting approved documents and plans listed above.

Reason: To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with details which form the basis of this grant of permission.

2. Within 6 months of the commencement of the development, full details of the play focal feature to the Gateway Green shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the focal feature shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details as part of the wider landscaping details approved as part of this application.

Reason: to ensure a satisfactory play opportunities on the site in the interests of public amenity.

3. Within 2 months of the commencement of development, full details of an entrance feature either adjacent to and /or including the approved substation shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the focal feature shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details as part of the wider landscaping details approved as part of this application.

Reason: to ensure a satisfactory entrance to the site of the site in the interests of public and visual amenity.

4. Any conditions recommended by outstanding consultees.

Proactive Statement

The Council acted proactively through positive engagement with the applicant during the determination process which led to improvements to the scheme and details are aligned to the outline planning permission. The Council has therefore acted proactively in line with the requirements of the Framework (paragraph 38) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.