

<b>ITEM NO:</b>	
<u>Location:</u>	<b>Land At The Junction Of Ashwell Street And Station Road Ashwell Hertfordshire</b>
<u>Applicant:</u>	<b>Oakbridge Bespoke Homes Ltd</b>
<u>Proposal:</u>	<b>Erection of 9 (6 No. Three Bedroom, 3 No. Four bedroom) dwellings with associated parking, amenity space and associated ancillary works, following demolition of existing redundant structures. Creation of new access from Station Road (as amended by plans received on 14/06/19 and 23/07/19)</b>
<u>Ref .No:</u>	19/00455/FP
<u>Officer:</u>	<b>Andrew Hunter</b>

**Date of Expiry of statutory period:** 16<sup>th</sup> May 2019

**Reason for delay:**

An extension of time has been agreed to allow the application to be reported to Planning Committee.

**Reason for referral to Committee:**

Residential development with a site area of more than 0.5 hectares.

**1.0 Policies**

**1.1 North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No. 2 with Alterations (Saved Policies)**

- Policy 6 – Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt
- Policy 7 – Selected Villages beyond the Green Belt
- Policy 14 – Nature Conservation
- Policy 16 – Areas of Archaeological Significance and other Archaeological Areas
- Policy 21 – Landscape and open space pattern in towns
- Policy 26 – Housing Proposals
- Policy 29 – Rural Housing Needs
- Policy 55 – Car Parking Standards
- Policy 57 – Residential Guidelines and Standards

**1.2 Emerging Local Plan 2011 – 2031**

Section 2 – Strategic Policies

- SP1: Sustainable development in North Hertfordshire
- SP2: Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Distribution
- SP6: Sustainable Transport
- SP8: Housing
- SP9: Design and sustainability
- SP11: Natural resources and sustainability
- SP12: Green infrastructure, landscape and biodiversity
- SP13: Historic environment

### Section 3 – Development Management Policies

HS2: Affordable housing

HS3: Housing mix

D1: Sustainable design

D3: Protecting living conditions

D4: Air quality

NE1: Landscape

NEx: Biodiversity and geological sites

NE4: Protecting open space

NE7: Reducing flood risk

NE8: Sustainable drainage systems

NE11: Contaminated land

T1: Assessment of transport matters

T2: Parking

HE1: Designated heritage assets

HE4: Archaeology

#### 1.3 **National Planning Policy Framework 2019**

Section 5: Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

Section 9: Promoting Sustainable Transport

Section 11: Making effective use of land

Section 12: Achieving well-designed places

Section 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

#### 1.4 **Supplementary Planning Documents**

Vehicle Parking Standards at New Development (2011)

Design

Ashwell village design statement

#### 2.0 **Site History**

- 2.1 18/01874/FP - Erection of 9 (6 No. Three Bedroom, 3 No. Four bedroom) dwellings with associated parking, amenity space and associated ancillary works, following demolition of existing redundant structures. Creation of new access from Station Road – Withdrawn 18/10/18.

#### 3.0 **Representations**

- 3.1 **Local Neighbours/Residents** – The following objections were received:

- The site is attractive agricultural land with mature trees, giving green space. The site is not a garden as stated. It leads onto the old Roman Road Ashwell Street, is part of the village heritage. Open spaces are important.
- The site is identified in the Ashwell Village Design Statement as an open space important to the character of the village.
- There has been much development in this area, meaning the nature of Station Road is changing.
- Does not seem to be a need.
- The site is not allocated for housing in the emerging Ashwell Neighbourhood Plan. It's outside the village boundary.
- The appearance and scale of the proposed houses are not in keeping with the existing.
- Loss of views across the site from Ashwell Street.
- Harms the Conservation Area, and the listed building within it.

- Harms the natural environment through the removal of hedges, and damage to trees and hedges. Plans do not show which trees would be removed. Harm to wildlife. Likely to be impacts on SSSI Ashwell Springs.
- Does Ashwell need 3/4 bed houses? The Village Survey reported a need for smaller houses/bungalows.
- Pressure on existing services and transport.
- The development does not fit well with the Arts & Crafts designed houses in Station Road.
- No details of exactly where the access would be.
- How will the development interact with other accesses. No transport assessment.
- Effect on Station Road parking. Concerns about increased traffic flow.
- The site could be accessed from Ashwell Street.
- No footpaths proposed on Station Road so pedestrian access will be poor.
- Lack of detail of boundary with 54 Station Road. Planting should be on this boundary.
- Two appeals have been mentioned, but not one denied last year for the site also in Station Road.
- Insufficient information about the development, and why it is sustainable. Do not consider it to be sustainable development.
- Reliance on the private car for transport.
- Proximity to and impacts on archaeological remains. Lack of archaeological information.
- No drainage information.
- The roof of the pig unit is asbestos.
- If approved, there should be restrictions on garage conversions, extensions and parking on Station Road.
- The application does not cover the whole field, future restrictions on development should be imposed.

Following amended plans received on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2019, the following additional objections were received from No. 59 High Street:

- The land is used to graze horses.
- No references to the Ashwell Village Design Statement, or the emerging Ashwell Neighbourhood Plan.
- The Planning Statement does not mention the Station Road site in Ashwell dismissed at appeal; Ashwell Parish Council objected to the site in the emerging Local Plan, it is not known if it will be removed; it does not acknowledge the arts and crafts dwellings which are the dominant ones in the area.
- The development provides more housing but does not take account of the needs of Ashwell.
- There has been much development in this part of Ashwell in recent years.
- Does not address housing needs identified by the Ashwell Neighbourhood Plan and the 2015 Housing Survey.

### 3.2 **Ashwell Parish Council** – A recommendation that permission be refused.

It was noted that a previous application for this site had been withdrawn by the applicant; the Parish Council had sent objections to it [see appendix]. This application was essentially the same with only minor amendments, however required documents covering ecology, archaeology, and drainage were now included.

The following objections made to the previous application were noted and reiterated;

- Settlement boundary changes. The Parish Council had objected direct to NHDC, in consultations, and at the Examination in Public to the Inspector, to the changes to the boundary drawn by NHDC in the new Local Plan. These changes had resulted in this

site being included inside the line where there would be a 'presumption in favour of development'.

□ Agricultural use. The NHDC pre-application advice had stated, 'The site appears to be a garden area...'. This was incorrect. Cllr David Short reported that he had held an agricultural tenancy with the owner of Townsend Field, the resident of Townsend House Mr Chris Outram, since 2015 and prior to that with the previous owner of the field. He used the field and the buildings on the site to keep his flock of rare breed sheep. The form that the applicant had submitted to NHDC was also incorrect; his name was not listed as an agricultural tenant of the site.

□ Neighbourhood Plan. This was now at a stage when the planning authority should give it weight as emerging policy. It was not supportive of development in this location. Surveys of parishioners had identified the housing needs of the village to be for smaller homes designed for the elderly and those with mobility issues; this application did not meet this need. To safeguard the policy for smaller dwellings permitted development rights should be withdrawn.

□ Conservation Area. The prevailing design in this part of the village was of the Arts & Crafts style of the 1920's and echoed the strong influences of Letchworth Garden City. This had been a factor in a recent planning decision by NHDC further along Station Road. The applicant's proposals were an 'off the shelf' style that did not reflect local design.

□ Highway safety. It was noted that for some years the Parish Council had been petitioning Herts Highways for safety improvements in Station Road. Of particular concern was the lack of adequate footways and crossing points for pedestrians. Additions were essential to ensure safe access to the centre of the village (recreation ground, shops and services) in one direction and the sports facilities and allotments at Small Gains in the other.

□ No clear justification for the development had been put by the applicant nor any demonstration of how it would be sustainable. There were existing concerns over the capacity of the school, doctor's surgery, water and sewage supplies; additional housing would exacerbate these.

In addition to the above points the following views were expressed;

□ Housing need/Neighbourhood Plan.

Cllr David Short reported that the proposals did not meet the housing needs of the village as established by Neighbourhood Plan surveys. The need was for smaller units and units suitable for the elderly and/or those with mobility issues. He noted that the Office for National Statistics (ONS) report of September 2018 had established that by 2041 over 85% of the national housing need would be for over 65's. Ashwell was typical in its requirement for a high level of properties suitable for independent living by older people. He also questioned the soundness of the draft Local Plan re its requirement for 14,000 new housing units when the new national figure was just under 10,000; the NHDC figures should be reworked.

□ Settlement boundary.

The application site was outside the current boundary. The draft Local Plan that proposed changes to the boundary that would incorporate this field, and others along Ashwell Street, had not yet been passed by the Inspector. The Parish Council, and others, maintained their objection to the boundary changes and the loss of green open space.

□ Highway safety. The 20mph zone to be implemented shortly would cover the core of the village but Station Road did not meet the criteria for inclusion. Any proposals for further development should address this issue.

□ Sustainability issues.

Additional strain on water and sewerage had not been adequately addressed. HCC had recently cited the lack of places at the school as a reason for objecting to an application appeal for the 'Land off Station Road'. Statements re transport links were misleading; bus services to local towns and the station were limited.

□ Environmental issues.

It was believed that bats roosted in the old pig units. There was asbestos in these buildings that would have to be dealt with correctly.

Following the amended plans received, the following additional comments were received from the Parish Council:

No adverse comments were made by parish councillors with regard to the details of the proposed amendments. The view was expressed that the amended layout would potentially be of benefit to the trees or which the Parish Council had requested Tree Preservation Orders. See 31.4 above.

A proposal was made to include, (i) the Parish Council's objections to the previous planning application were still valid and should be reiterated to the Planning Officer, (ii) the Parish Council's previous request, should the application be granted permission, for additional footway along the boundary to link the site to the existing footway system and provide safe pedestrian access to the village centre should be reiterated, (iii) should the application be granted permission, Permitted Development Rights should be withdrawn to retain the size of the dwellings and prevent adverse impact on neighbours.

It was resolved that the proposal be accepted.

### 3.3 **Urban Designer and Landscape Architect:**

The amended plans look like they have addressed most of our concerns so I would not object to the overall scheme but request that detailed landscape proposals should be subject to a condition of an approval.

### 3.4 **Hertfordshire County Council highways:**

Does not wish to restrict the grant of permission subject to conditions relating to: Construction Traffics and Management Plan; Footway Connection and Pedestrian Access; Provision of Visibility Splays; Refuse Collection; Cycle Parking, Swept Path Assessment.

### 3.5 **Campaign to Protect Rural England – CPRE Hertfordshire maintains its objections to this application.**

The Applicant again makes the point that while the site is not designated as a potential development site in the Submission Local Plan, the Council has proposed to adjust the settlement boundary to remove the site from the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt. The fact that the Inspector has not referred to this either in the Examination in Public or subsequently, is not relevant. The removal of this site from the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt was objected to at the Examination In Public and to approve development in advance of the Inspector's adjudication would be inappropriate.

We maintain our view that while there is development along the north side of Station Road, there is an absence of residential development along this stretch of the road on the south side. Accordingly, the erection of a group of dwellings on what is currently open pasture will adversely affect the character of this part of the village and impact on the conservation area.

While providing fuller information on the points we have noted above, the application now omits details which were in the original planning statement such as former para. 6.2.2 which stated that “The local school is close to capacity and there may be problems with patient registrations at the Ashwell surgery. If this is the case a scheme of 9 new dwellings might give rise to a degree of social harm.” As before, there is no attempt in the accompanying documentation to assess the likely impact of the development on local services such as the JMI school, health services etc or the ability of residents to access them. Consequently we question the sustainability of the proposal.

The application does not comply with current Local Plan policies nor meet the sustainability criteria in the National Planning Policy Framework. The Examination in Public has yet to conclude and it would be inappropriate and premature to approve it as presented prior to the adoption of the emerging Local Plan.

Consequently we urge the Council to refuse the application.

**3.6 Archaeology** – The location has considerable archaeological potential. Conditions on site do not seem to have been favourable for geophysical survey, and the survey that was carried out was so badly affected by magnetic interference as to make the results effectively unintelligible. The subsequent trial trenching evaluation identified archaeological features in three of the four trenches – a number of ditches, a couple of pits and a posthole. None of these were particularly substantial and none contained any finds.

Given that numerous features were found, and given the proximity of the site to very significant earlier prehistoric monuments, we believe that a programme of archaeological mitigation is required. However, the lack of finds (and therefore dating) and the lack of a likely concentration of features suggests that the most reasonably practicable method of mitigation would be via a programme of archaeological monitoring of the groundworks of the development, rather than a more intensive open area excavation of all or a portion of the site.

I believe that the proposed development is such that it should be regarded as likely to have an impact on heritage assets of archaeological interest and I recommend that the following provisions be made, should you be minded to grant consent:

1. The archaeological monitoring of the groundworks of the development, including preparatory works, ground reduction, landscaping, foundation trenches, service trenches, access roads, and all other ground disturbance. This should include a contingency for further investigation or preservation of any remains encountered;
2. the analysis of the results of the archaeological work with provision for the subsequent production of a report and an archive, and the publication of the results;
3. such other provisions as may be necessary to protect the archaeological interests of the site.

I believe that these recommendations are both reasonable and necessary to provide properly for the likely archaeological implications of this development proposal. I further believe that these recommendations closely follow the policies included within Policy 16 (para. 199, etc.) of the National Planning Policy Framework. In this case three

appropriately worded conditions on any planning consent would be sufficient to provide for the level of investigation that this proposal warrants.

- 3.7 **Waste, Recycling & Street Cleaning** – Advises a condition requiring details of the circulation route for refuse collection vehicles.

It is noted that in many areas residents are expected to pull bins past parking bays. This is not recommended and often leads to bins being left out on the pavements or grassed areas.

The gravel drive makes pulling bins difficult and consideration should be given to whether this surface is the most suitable or whether bins stored closer to the collection point would be more preferable.

- 3.8 **Lead Local Flood Authority** - Following a review of the SuDS Statement carried out by EAS dated 25 February 2019, we can confirm that we the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) have no objection in principle on flood risk grounds and can advise the Local Planning Authority (LPA) that the proposed development site can be adequately drained and can mitigate any potential existing surface water flood risk if carried out in accordance with the submitted drainage strategy.

We therefore recommend the following conditions to the LPA should planning permission be granted.

- 3.9 **Environmental Protection Officer** - I have reviewed the Environmental Protection and Housing (EP) Team records, including the advice provided in 2018 in response to the previous application pertaining to this site, and the information submitted with this application. On that basis there is no objection to the proposed development with regards to land contamination or local air quality. However, it is recommended that the following conditions are included on any permission that may be granted.

- 3.10 **Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service** - Based on the information provided to date we would seek the provision of fire hydrant(s), as set out within HCC's Planning Obligations Toolkit.

- 3.11 **Hertfordshire Ecology**

#### Bats

Thank you for sending me the bat report – Dusk Emergence and Dawn Re-entry Bat Surveys (Middlemarch Environmental, August 2019). This follows a daytime inspection survey carried out 7 March 2019 when potential suitable roosting features were identified in the Former Stables (which had low potential for roosting bats), and associated with two trees (which had high potential for roosting bats). Following best practice guidelines, follow-up dusk emergence / dawn re-entry surveys were recommended to determine presence / absence and to provide appropriate mitigation to safeguard bats if present and affected.

The follow-up dusk emergence and dawn re-entry surveys were undertaken on 3 July, 17 July and 31 July 2019 and five species of bat were recorded foraging / commuting across the site. No bats were recorded emerging from or re-entering the building or trees.

The property is not used by bats for roosting, and consequently their favourable conservation status will not negatively impacted by these development proposals. I consider the LPA now has sufficient information to fully consider European Protected Species (in this case bats) prior to determination.

## Terrestrial mammals, Reptiles, Nesting birds

Badgers, hedgehogs and reptiles are known in the vicinity although not on the site. Appropriate informatives advising the applicant of measures relating to construction are advised.

The removal of trees on site has the potential to impact on nesting birds. These are protected under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. In order to reduce the possibility of an offence taking place the following informative should accompany any consent given.

*“Any vegetation removal should be undertaken outside the nesting bird season (March to August inclusive) to protect breeding birds, their nests, eggs and young. If this is not practicable, a search of the area should be made no more than two days in advance of vegetation clearance by a competent Ecologist and if active nests are found, works should stop until the birds have left the nest.”*

## Biodiversity net gains

I am pleased to see the amended site Plan shows more boundary hedgerows, and hedgerows associated with the individual properties. I consider this is sufficient to achieve overall net gain within the development scheme.

Notwithstanding the above, I would still like to see a plan showing the (native) tree species, as well as location of bat and bird boxes, submitted by Condition (or prior to determination).

## **4.0 Planning Considerations**

### **4.1 Site and Surroundings**

- 4.1.1 The application site comprises a roughly rectangular area of land that slopes up gently from north to south and from east to west. The site is undeveloped apart from two pig sheds in a poor state of repair in the south-west corner. The site is in use as agricultural grazing land. Some mature trees are located within the site and on its boundaries. The east and west boundaries are comprised of a hedge/vegetation. The north boundary with No. 54 Station Road is comprised of a 1m high post-and-rail fence. The south boundary of the site comprises pig sheds and open land, although trees and a hedge/vegetation extend along the north side of Ashwell Street (an un-made highway).
- 4.1.2 Adjacent land to the south of the site between the two included pig sheds and Ashwell Street is in agricultural grazing use and forms a larger agricultural unit with the application site. Four pig sheds adjoin the site on an area of land between the site, Ashwell Street and dwelling No. 24 Lucas Lane to the west – this land is home to small storage sheds and a single garage, but is not in use as a whole. No. 24 Lucas Lane to the south-west is a detached dwelling with large grounds, which extend along the east boundary of the application site. No. 54 Station Road to the north is the other property that adjoins the application site, which is a two storey detached dwelling.
- 4.1.3 The character of the wider locality is residential, with dwellings on the nearby part of Station Road and the new Philosophers Gate development predominantly semi-detached. There are small numbers of detached and terraced dwellings to the east and south-east. The site is within a Conservation Area, and the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt.



## 4.2 **Proposal**

- 4.2.1 Planning permission is sought for the erection of 9 detached two storey dwellings on the site, and the associated change of use of the site to residential. The existing pig sheds would be demolished. A new vehicular access would be created onto Station Road to provide access to each dwelling and their parking areas.
- 4.2.2 Six of the dwellings would have three bedrooms, with the other three (Plots 1, 6 and 9) having four bedrooms. The dwellings would be of a more traditional style and design with pitched roofs and attached garages. The dwellings would have tiled roofs with brick and rendered walls.

## 4.3 **Key Issues**

- 4.3.1 The key material planning considerations are as follows:
- Whether the principle of the development is acceptable
  - Siting and design of the proposal with regard to character and appearance of the locality
  - Impacts on neighbour amenity
  - Future living conditions
  - Highways and parking
  - Trees and landscaping
  - Ecology
  - Archaeology
  - Other matters
- 4.3.2 **Principle of the development**
- 4.3.3 The site is largely undeveloped agricultural land in the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt (RA) which falls outside of a Selected Village (Ashwell) as specified in Policies 6 and 7 of the adopted 1996 Local Plan, albeit the site borders the Ashwell village boundary on its north and east sides. The whole site is within a Conservation Area. Policy 6 sets out what development would normally be allowed in the RA, with an aim of maintaining the existing countryside and villages, and their character. The proposal would not comply with parts i-iv of Policy 6, therefore would not be development acceptable in principle under this policy. The proposal also does not comply with Policy 7 of the adopted Local Plan as the site is not within the main area of Ashwell as shown on the relevant Inset of the Proposals Map. The adopted and emerging Local Plan's do not however contain policies preventing the loss of agricultural land in principle, therefore there are no objections to this.
- 4.3.4 The adopted Local Plan is however relatively old, with local and national planning policies having changed and evolved since its 1996 adoption. The emerging Local Plan (ELP) is now at an advanced stage towards adoption having gone through a public examination process and subsequent Modifications published for public consultation.
- 4.3.5 The ELP as had been put forward for examination (the October 2016 Submissions version) on the relevant Proposals Map for the Northern and Baldock Areas set a Settlement Boundary for Ashwell that includes the application site. The Settlement Boundary has been carried forwards to the Modifications. Policy SP2 of the ELP defines Ashwell as a Category A village, where general development will be allowed within the defined settlement boundary. The principle of new residential development on the application site would therefore be acceptable when assessed against the ELP, which is given significant weight.

- 4.3.6 Objections and concerns have been raised that the proposal conflicts with the Ashwell Neighbourhood Plan (NP). The NP is being progressed, however it is at an early stage in this process where a draft version with policies is not available on the Ashwell Village and North Herts Council websites, therefore the NP cannot be given weight in the assessment of the application.
- 4.3.7 The NPPF is a material consideration which is also given weight. The ELP is considered consistent with the NPPF by implication due to the stage that has been reached towards adoption. The NPPF does not set out the type of development that would be acceptable in principle in the Rural Area. However as above the proposed use of the site for residential development is not acceptable in principle when assessed against the adopted Local Plan.
- 4.3.8 Paragraph 11 d) of the NPPF states that where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless i. or ii. are complied with.
- 4.3.9 Part i. of 11 d) refers to 'the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed', which in footnote 6 includes designated heritage assets being the Ashwell Conservation Area in this instance. Paragraph 11 d) i. is engaged in light of the Council not being able to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites and the location of the site within a Conservation Area.
- 4.3.10 As stated below, the proposal is not considered harmful to the significance of the Conservation Area as a designated heritage asset, therefore this application has to be assessed according to whether any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of delivering new homes, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole. This final assessment will be set out at the end of this report.
- 4.3.11 **Character and appearance, siting and design**
- 4.3.12 There are no objections to the demolition of the existing pig sheds as they are in a dilapidated condition, they are not listed and are not considered to be of significant historic or architectural merit.
- 4.3.13 The application site is largely undeveloped agricultural land, however it is located within Ashwell and has existing residential development on all sides, although the amount and density of dwellings is small to the south-west along Ashwell Street. Given the surrounding residential development in close proximity to the site, I consider the site could accommodate new residential development subject to acceptable siting, design, landscaping etc. The site is listed as an Open space in the Ashwell Village Design Statement (2000), however the Statement does not state that the application site should not be developed.
- 4.3.14 The application is for 9 new dwellings. I consider the density and number of dwellings would not be excessive for the site when compared to existing nearby residential development. The development would have a density of 15 dwellings per hectare, less than that of the 15 dwellings granted planning permission at Walkden's to the south which had a density of 26 per hectare (reference 14/00336/1) and the more recent Philosophers Gate residential development (reference 12/02079/1) which approved 20 new dwellings with a density of 27.9 per hectare. The density also compares favourably with the area comprising the curtilages of Nos. 42-54 Station Road and 30-38 Lucas Lane, which is 21.4 per hectare. On the basis of the above I consider the density of the proposal acceptable in its context.

- 4.3.15 The dwellings would be approximately 8m to 10m from the west edge of Station Road, which would be closer than No. 54 Station Road to the highway (13m) but further away than Nos. 42-52 Station Road. Therefore I do not consider that the development would appear visually dominant within the street scene, and would additionally benefit from softening/screening from the boundary vegetation and planting that would remain. The dwellings would be set back from the other boundaries of the site and would predominantly be detached, therefore it is not considered that the development would appear cramped within the site and locality.
- 4.3.16 The development would be in the form of a cul-de-sac, which is not considered out of character given the Philosopher's Gate and Walkden's cul-de-sacs nearby to the east and south. The dwellings would be of a footprint, size and height comparable to others nearby in Station Road and would in this respect relate acceptably to the character and appearance of the locality.
- 4.3.17 The proposed dwellings would be of two main designs with the Plot 6 dwelling being a slight variation of the Plots 1 and 9 dwellings, the Plot 3 dwelling with a hipped end and first floor render, and the other five dwellings being similar but mirrored. With these differences and those of layout, detailing and materials, the development would be of a mix of dwellings that would be visually interesting within the site and relate to the variety of dwellings nearby. The Council's Landscape and Urban Design Officer has not objected to the layout and design of the scheme, which is given significant weight in favour of the proposal and its impacts on the locality.
- 4.3.18 With regards to the mix of housing proposed, six dwellings would be of three bedrooms and the other three with four. Policy HS3 of the ELP states that planning permission for new homes will be granted provided a. and b. are complied with. Part b. is considered to be complied with as the scheme would provide a density, scale and character of development appropriate to its location and surroundings.
- 4.3.19 Part a. of HS3 has the objective of ensuring an appropriate range of house types and sizes taking into account the overall targets of the ELP; the findings of the most up-to-date evidence; the location and accessibility of the site; and recent completions, existing permissions and sites in the five year supply. Paragraph 8.19 of the ELP states that the majority of completions since 2011 have been for smaller units. No smaller units of two bedrooms or less are proposed, however as larger dwellings at a lower density are more characteristic of the immediate locality and due to the majority of completions being smaller. The submitted Planning Statement in paragraph 6.2.2 refers to the mix of dwellings proposed, citing the August 2016 Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update that there is a need for 75.9% of new houses to be 3 beds and 13.3% to be 4 beds within the Stevenage Housing Market Area which Ashwell falls within, which is accurate. Given the above I consider the mix of dwellings proposed acceptable for this site in this location.
- 4.3.20 Concerns have been raised regarding the potential impacts on local services. With regard to this a material consideration is planning application no. 17/01406/1 at land off Station Road Ashwell, dismissed at appeal on 26/10/18. This application was for 46 new dwellings, with the Inspector in determining the appeal not concluding that local services would be harmed. As the current application is for 9 dwellings, it is also not considered that harmful impacts would result on local services.

- 4.3.21 The external materials of the dwellings are proposed to be tiled roofs with brick and rendered walls, which would be consistent with their more traditional design and character. The majority of dwellings on Station Road north of the entrance to Philosophers Gate are rendered or painted white or cream, with only a small number of brick exterior dwellings. Lighter coloured dwellings are also evident further south along Station Road, Ashwell Street and Walkden's, giving the locality a character of predominantly lighter materials. The four closest proposed dwellings to Station Road would have rendered walls, with the other dwellings being a mix of brick and render. These proposed external materials would be considered to sufficiently relate the proposed dwellings to the external materials and character of the majority of nearby dwellings on Station Road. Samples or details of the external materials to be used would be requested by condition if permission was to be granted. It is not considered that permitted developments should be removed by condition given that they would be limited by virtue of the site being within a Conservation Area.
- 4.3.22 As stated, the site is within a Conservation Area, a designated heritage asset. Great weight should be given to the asset's conservation, as set out in section 16 of the NPPF. The site is almost wholly undeveloped, and does not have vehicular access onto Station Road. The proposal would break through the existing hedge on the Station Road boundary with a vehicular crossover, and would result in an urbanising effect on this site of agricultural land with the dwellings being visible to some extent from Station Road and Ashwell Street. This would be in contrast to its undeveloped character, which is a visual break between development on this west side of Station Road. It is considered that developing the site would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the Conservation Area due to the visibility of the development and its urbanising effect on land which is part of a wider undeveloped area that extends further to the west. The Council's Conservation Officer has verbally given the view that the development would result in less than substantial harm.
- 4.3.23 Less than substantial harm should therefore be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimal viable use. The principle benefit is that the development would approve 9 new dwellings on land that can be relatively easily developed, resulting in an improvement to the District's housing land supply position. On the scale of 'less than substantial harm', the amount of harm is considered to be at the lower end of this as in the wider context of the locality including the Conservation Area the development of the site for residential and the type and quality of residential development are considered acceptable. The development of the site for housing can also be viewed as being a more optimal use for the land given the District's housing land supply position, with weight also given to the proposal to remove the site from the Rural Area in the emerging Local Plan. Overall, as set out above and in this report as a whole, the public benefits are considered to outweigh the relatively small harm to the Conservation Area.
- 4.3.24 For the reasons above the proposed development is considered to be of an appropriate layout and design that would not harm the character and appearance of the locality and the significance of the Conservation Area.
- 4.3.25 **Neighbour amenity**
- 4.3.26 The closest dwellings to the application site that could be affected by the proposal are No. 54 Station Road which adjoins the north boundary, and No. 24 Lucas Lane which adjoins the west boundary. Other nearby dwellings are further to the north, east and south and are separated from the site by highways and the curtilages of other properties, and are considered sufficiently far away to avoid loss of amenity being caused.

- 4.3.27 No. 54 Station Road adjoins the north boundary of the site, which presently comprises a post-and-rail fence approximately 1m high. This existing boundary provides clear open views into the application site, and therefore the five proposed northern dwellings would be clearly visible from the curtilage of No. 54 and particularly its rear garden.
- 4.3.28 The proposed dwellings at two storey level would be approximately 16.5m to 24.5m from the boundary with No. 54, with 4 of the dwellings including a single storey rear projection 2m in depth. No. 54 itself is approximately 8m from its boundary with the application site, therefore there would be a minimum of 24.5m between the closest dwelling on Plot 2 and the side/rear of No. 54. While the northern dwellings would be visible from No. 54, I consider they would be sufficiently far away to avoid loss of light, overshadowing and overbearing impacts. A 1.8m high close boarded fence and hedge is proposed on the north boundary of the site with No. 54, which is considered sufficient to provide a reasonable level of privacy to the rear garden of that dwelling. The southern dwellings would be far from No. 54 and would not affect its amenity.
- 4.3.29 No. 24 Lucas Lane is to the south-west, with the dwelling being approximately 37m from the application site and further from the closest dwelling (Plot 6). These distances are large and would avoid overbearing impacts, loss of light and loss of privacy to any main habitable rooms of No. 24.
- 4.3.30 The rear of the Plot 6 dwelling would face primarily onto the remaining agricultural and storage land adjacent to the south of the site, where views from the first floor rear elevation would not cause loss of privacy to No. 24. The first floor rear elevation of No. 24 would be approximately 26m from the curtilage of No. 24, which is considered sufficient to avoid causing loss of privacy.
- 4.3.31 The Plot 5 dwelling would be the closest to the plot of No. 24, which is extensive and projects north of the north boundary of the application site. The area of No. 24 closest to the Plot 5 dwelling is used as garden land. The first floor and roof of the Plot 5 dwelling would be approximately 4.6m from No. 24, however this dwelling would be substantially obscured by trees and a hedge within No. 24 such that overbearing impacts and overshadowing would be avoided. A first floor side window of the Plot 5 dwelling would face into the garden of No. 24, however this window could be required to be obscure glazed if permission was to be granted as it would serve a bathroom.
- 4.3.32 Impacts on residential amenity are therefore considered acceptable.

#### 4.3.33 **Living conditions**

- 4.3.34 The proposed dwellings would be considered to receive adequate outlook and light for their main habitable rooms and their private rear gardens. The rear gardens for the proposed dwellings would be of a sufficient size and quality to provide an acceptable area of amenity space. Means of enclosure along the side and rear boundaries of the dwellings have not been specified, however this can be secured by a condition requiring these details.
- 4.3.35 The dwellings are sited such that they would not appear overbearing or cause loss of light to their potential occupants. Some of the dwellings include first floor side windows facing other first floor side windows and garden areas which could cause some loss of privacy to future occupiers, however as these windows would serve bathrooms and stairwells these can be required to be obscure glazed by condition if planning permission was to be granted. Living conditions for future occupiers are therefore considered to be acceptable.

#### **4.3.36 Highways, access, layout and parking**

- 4.3.37 The County Council highway authority has not objected to the proposal, subject to requesting conditions relating to the provision of a footway to the north to connect with No. 54 Station Road, a tactile paving crossing point, and visibility splays in relation to the site access and its connectivity. The visibility splays and tactile crossing point are considered reasonable and acceptable. It is not considered necessary or desirable for a footway extending to No. 54 as the southern footway proposed with its tactile crossing point would provide pedestrian access to the wider footway network and the rest of Ashwell, while a northern footway would result in the substantial loss of the existing hedgerow which is not desirable as this would result in harm to ecology and the character of the locality.
- 4.3.38 The other conditions recommended by the County Council highway authority relate to a Construction Management Plan, refuse collection, cycle parking, and a swept path assessment. The Construction Management Plan and swept path conditions are considered reasonable for the development proposed. It is not considered necessary for a cycle parking condition for stands as the dwellings would include garages and private garden areas where bikes could be stored. Refuse collection arrangements can be established by the condition recommended by the Council's Waste, Recycling & Street Cleansing Officer as below.
- 4.3.39 The Council's Waste, Recycling & Street Cleansing Officer has advised that further details of the circulation route for refuse collection vehicles has been submitted and approved as a condition, which could be attached to any permission granted. Bin storage details have not been provided, although it is considered sufficient space would exist at the sides of each dwelling for all bins (final details can be required by condition). Bins would need to be pulled past parking bays, however as the driveways would be a minimum of 3m in width it is considered sufficient space would be available for this.
- 4.3.40 The dwellings would have a minimum of 3 bedrooms each. The Council's 2011 parking standards SPD require each dwelling with two or more bedrooms to have a minimum of 2 parking spaces, with a garage being counted as meeting the standards if it measures at least 7m by 3m internally. All dwellings apart from Plot 6 would have single garages smaller than this therefore they do not meet these standards. The Plot 6 dwelling would include a double garage measuring 5.2m in depth and 5m in width, which is considered sufficient to accommodate one car.
- 4.3.41 The Council parking SPD and other policy documents referring to parking do not set minimum dimensions for parking spaces on driveways. Manual for Streets in paragraphs 8.3.48 to 8.3.54 sets out minimum dimensions for parking spaces perpendicular to a highway of 4.8m by 2.4m.
- 4.3.42 The Plot 6 dwelling would have three parking spaces within its curtilage, which complies with Council parking standards. The other dwellings would have two parking spaces, which are also an acceptable provision of parking spaces.
- 4.3.43 With regards to impacts on the public highway, the layout of the site and parking provision, the proposal is considered to be acceptable.

#### **4.3.44 Landscape and trees**

- 4.3.45 The site contains a small number of trees within it, with a larger number of trees and other vegetation on or close to its boundaries and a small distance outside the site. The east boundary of the site with Station Road is comprised of a continuous hedge/vegetation and some mature trees.
- 4.3.46 Five trees within the site are proposed to be removed, in addition to a small section of hedgerow on the east boundary. The trees to be removed are of lower quality therefore there are no objections to their removal, however their loss should be compensated for by new tree and shrub planting. Such tree planting can be secured by an appropriate condition. The majority of the east boundary hedge would remain which would soften the appearance of the development and help maintain the setting of the Conservation Area and the character of Station Road – any permission granted would include a condition specifying that this hedgerow be retained.
- 4.3.47 The remaining trees within the site would not be affected by the proposed development. It is considered that there would be an acceptable balance of hard and soft landscaping. There are no objections from the Council's Landscape and Urban Design Officer, which is given significant weight.
- 4.3.48 Should planning permission be granted, further details of hard and soft landscaping would be required by condition to ensure the development would be of a high quality appropriate to the location of the site in this part of Ashwell and the Conservation Area.

#### **4.3.49 Ecology**

- 4.3.50 The application was submitted with a detailed Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA), and detailed bat surveys. The bat surveys did not record bats roosting within the site, therefore bats will not be adversely affected by the proposed development. No other protected species were found on the site, although some species could pass through the site and could be affected by construction, however informatives advising the applicant of species protection measures during construction are considered appropriate for these matters.
- 4.3.51 Nesting birds could be affected by the removal of trees. Nesting birds are protected under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. An informative as recommended by Herts Ecology that vegetation removal should be undertaken outside the nesting bird season (March to August) is considered appropriate.
- 4.3.52 More hedgerows are proposed, which are considered sufficient to achieve an overall net gain of biodiversity. It is recommended by Hertfordshire Ecology that the new trees should be of native species or those that benefit wildlife, three bird boxes suitable for swifts be incorporated into the buildings, and a bat mitigation strategy (including bat boxes) should be implemented. These measures should be demonstrated in a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan. Hertfordshire Ecology have recommended such a Plan be submitted to the Local Planning Authority in accordance with an appropriate condition. It is considered that this measure would be sufficient to promote a net gain in biodiversity and safeguard protected species and potential roosts, therefore impacts on ecology are considered acceptable.

#### **4.3.53 Archaeology**

- 4.3.54 The location has considerable archaeological potential, being in close proximity to a Neolithic and Bronze Age funerary/ceremonial landscape, consisting of a henge monument (Historic Environment Record no. 30533), numerous round barrows (several of which are scheduled monuments) and a long barrow, all within the fields just to the south. The henge, one of only two such monuments that have been investigated in Hertfordshire, is just over 50m to the south of the proposed development area.
- 4.3.55 Ashwell itself has Anglo-Saxon origins, and its environs also contain significant Roman archaeology. Of particular relevance to the present site are Ashwell Street (HER no. 4692), of medieval or earlier origins, running nearly adjacent to the proposed development, and a ditch containing Roman pottery (HER no. 17600) found during construction of a new house at 22 Lucas Lane nearby.
- 4.3.56 The Archaeological Evaluation that was submitted with the application identified archaeological features in three of four trenches dug, however none of these were particularly substantial and none contained any finds.
- 4.3.57 The County Council Archaeologist has advised that a programme of archaeological mitigation is required. However the lack of finds and the lack of a concentration of features suggests that the most reasonably practicable method of mitigation would be via a programme of archaeological monitoring of the groundworks of the development. Such monitoring, analysis and recording can be achieved by the imposition of appropriate conditions as recommended by the Archaeologist. I consider these measures sufficient to protect the archaeological interests on the site.

#### **4.3.58 Other matters**

- 4.3.59 The Lead Local Flood Authority have raised no objections in relation to flood risk and drainage, subject to conditions relating to the implementation of the submitted SuDS Statement being implemented. The Council's Environmental Protection Officer has recommended a condition be imposed seeking a land contamination survey given the history of the site to mitigate potential impacts on the dwellings proposed, which is considered reasonable. Nine new dwellings are proposed, which falls under the thresholds for affordable housing under the emerging Local Plan. No planning obligations are considered necessary.

#### **4.5 Alternative Options**

- 4.5.1 None applicable.

#### **4.6 Pre-Commencement Conditions**

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

#### **5.0 Planning Balance and Conclusion**

- 5.1 The Local Planning Authority cannot demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing land as required by the NPPF. Indeed the position soon to be confirmed in the Annual Monitoring Report would be less than 1.5 years. I do not consider that the proposed development would harm the significance of the Conservation Area as a designated heritage asset which the site is within, therefore permission should be granted unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the



benefits of delivering new homes. Appeal decisions have confirmed that the degree of deficit below the five year supply figure is also material, in that the benefits of delivering new homes with a significant deficit must be given more weight in the planning balance than would be the case if the deficit was only just below five years.

5.2 No adverse impacts from the proposed development are apparent. A benefit is that the 9 new dwellings proposed would make a contribution to housing supply in Ashwell and the District. The Examination Inspector dealing with the emerging Local Plan has not questioned the designation of the site within the Ashwell settlement boundary. Overall, I consider that the proposals achieve sustainable development as required by the NPPF.

## 6.0 **Recommendation**

6.1 That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions and informatives:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out wholly 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.

3. Details and/or samples of materials to be used on all external elevations of the development hereby permitted shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the development is commenced and the approved details shall be implemented on site.

Reason: To ensure that the development will have an acceptable appearance which does not detract from the appearance and character of the surrounding area.

4. Prior to the occupation of the approved dwellings the following landscape details to be submitted shall include the following:

a) which, if any, of the existing vegetation inside and adjoining the site is to be removed and which is to be retained

b) what new trees, shrubs, hedges and grassed areas are to be planted, together with the species proposed and the size and density of planting

c) the location and type of any new walls, fences or other means of enclosure and any hardscaping proposed

Landscaping shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure the submitted details are sufficiently comprehensive to enable proper consideration to be given to the appearance of the completed development.

5. The approved details of landscaping shall be carried out before the end of the first planting season following either the first occupation of any of the buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner; and any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased, shall be replaced during the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority agrees in writing to vary or dispense with this requirement.

Reason: To safeguard and enhance the appearance of the completed development and the visual amenity of the locality.

6. The first floor side elevation windows of the approved dwellings shall be obscure glazed, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of privacy and amenity.

7. No development shall commence until a Construction Traffic and Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the construction of the development shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved Plan. The Construction Traffic Management Plan shall include the following details •Construction vehicle numbers, type, routing; •Construction and storage compounds (including areas designated for car parking) •Cleaning of site entrances, site tracks and the adjacent public highway; •Timing of construction activities to avoid school pick up/drop off times; •Provision of sufficient on-site parking prior to commencement of construction activities; •Post construction restoration/reinstatement of the working areas and temporary access to the public highway.

Reason: In order to protect highway safety and the amenity of other users of the public highway and rights of way in accordance with Policies 5, 12, 17 and 22 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).

8. Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted, provision of a tactile paving pedestrians crossing point onto Station Road as shown on drawing (Ref- 263-100, Rev-B) shall be provided.

Reason: In the interests of pedestrian and highway safety.

9. Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted a visibility splay measuring 2.4 x 43 metres in both directions of Station Road and as shown on drawing (Ref-263-100, rev –B) shall be provided and such splays shall thereafter be maintained at all times free from any obstruction between 600mm and 2m above the level of the adjacent highway carriageway.

Reason: To ensure construction of a satisfactory development and in the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policy 5 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).

10. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, a swept path analysis and turning space shall be provided within the site to enable a standard size refuse collection vehicle (12.1m long) to park, turn and re-enter the highway in a forward gear. This area shall be levelled, surfaced and drained in accordance with a detailed scheme submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning

Authority, in consultation with the Highway Authority, and retained thereafter available for that specific use.

Reason: In the interests of satisfactory development and highway safety.

11. No development shall commence until further details of the circulation route for refuse collection vehicles have been submitted to the local planning authority and approved in writing. The required details shall include a full construction specification for the route, and a plan defining the extent of the area to which that specification will be applied. No dwelling forming part of the development shall be occupied until the refuse vehicle circulation route has been laid out and constructed in accordance with the details thus approved, and thereafter the route shall be maintained in accordance with those details.

Reason: To facilitate refuse and recycling collections.

12. Land contamination condition:

(a) No development approved by this permission shall be commenced prior to the submission to, and agreement of the Local Planning Authority of a written preliminary environmental risk assessment (Phase I) report containing a Conceptual Site Model that indicates sources, pathways and receptors. It should identify the current and past land uses of this site (and adjacent sites) with view to determining the presence of contamination likely to be harmful to human health and the built and natural environment.

(b) If the Local Planning Authority is of the opinion that the report which discharges condition (a), above, indicates a reasonable likelihood of harmful contamination then no development approved by this permission shall be commenced until a Site Investigation (Phase II environmental risk assessment) report has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority which includes:

- (i) A full identification of the location and concentration of all pollutants on this site and the presence of relevant receptors, and;
- (ii) The results from the application of an appropriate risk assessment methodology.

(c) No development approved by this permission (other than that necessary for the discharge of this condition) shall be commenced until a Remediation Method Statement report; if required as a result of (b), above; has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

(d) This site shall not be occupied, or brought into use, until:

- (i) All works which form part of the Remediation Method Statement report pursuant to the discharge of condition (c) above have been fully completed & if required a formal agreement is submitted that commits to ongoing monitoring and/or maintenance of the remediation scheme.
- (ii) A Remediation Verification Report confirming that the site is suitable for use has been submitted to, and agreed by, the Local Planning Authority.

(e) Any contamination, other than that reported by virtue of condition (a) and (b), encountered during the development of this site shall be brought to the attention of the Local Planning Authority as soon as practically possible; a scheme to render this contamination harmless shall be submitted to and agreed by, the Local

Planning Authority and subsequently fully implemented prior to the occupation of this site.

Reason: To ensure that any contamination affecting the site is dealt with in a manner that safeguards human health, the built and natural environment and controlled waters.

13. Prior to occupation, the nine dwellings shall incorporate one Electric Vehicle (EV) ready domestic charging point.

Reason: To contribute to the objective of providing a sustainable transport network and to provide the necessary infrastructure to help off-set the adverse impact of the operational phase of the development on local air quality.

14. No demolition/development shall take place/commence until an Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. The scheme shall include an assessment of archaeological significance and research questions; and:
1. The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording
  2. The programme for post investigation assessment
  3. Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording
  4. Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation
  5. Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation
  6. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation.

Reason: In the interests of archaeology.

15. The demolition/development shall take place/commence in accordance with the programme of archaeological works set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition 14.

Reason: In the interests of archaeology.

16. The development shall not be occupied/used until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition 14 and the provision made for analysis and publication where appropriate.

Reason: In the interests of archaeology.

17. The development permitted by this planning permission shall be carried out in accordance with the SuDS Statement carried out by EAS dated 25 February 2019 and the following mitigation measures;
1. Undertake drainage strategy based on infiltration
  2. Provide attenuation to ensure no increase in surface water run-off volumes for all rainfall events up to and including the 1 in 100 year + climate change event.
  3. Implement drainage strategy as indicated on the proposed drainage strategy drawing utilising permeable paving and plot soakaways.

Reason: To reduce the risk of flooding to the proposed development and future occupants.

18. No development shall take place until the final design of the drainage scheme is completed and sent to the LPA for approval. The surface water drainage system will be based on the submitted the SuDS Statement carried out by EAS dated 25 February 2019. The scheme shall also include;
1. Detailed engineered drawings of the proposed SuDS features including their, location, size, volume, depth and any inlet and outlet features including any connecting pipe runs and all corresponding calculations/modelling to ensure the scheme caters for all rainfall events up to and including the 1 in 100 year + 40% allowance climate change event.
  2. Silt traps for protection for any residual tanked elements.
  3. Final detailed management plan to include arrangements for adoption and any other arrangements to secure the operation of the scheme throughout its lifetime.

Reason: To prevent flooding by ensuring the satisfactory storage of and disposal of surface water from the site.

19. Prior to occupation of the approved development, plans and details of proposed trees, bat and bird boxes shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority and approved in writing. The development shall be carried out in accordance with these approved details.

Reason: In the interests of ecology.

### **Proactive Statement**

Planning permission has been granted for this proposal. The Council acted proactively through early engagement with the applicant at the pre-application stage and during the course of the application which led to improvements to the scheme. The Council has therefore acted proactively in line with the requirements of the Framework (paragraphs 186 and 187) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

### **Informatives:**

#### Highways Informatives

Road Deposits: It is an offence under section 148 of the Highways Act 1980 to deposit mud or other debris on the public highway, and section 149 of the same Act gives the Highway Authority powers to remove such material at the expense of the party responsible. Therefore, best practical means shall be taken at all times to ensure that all vehicles leaving the site during construction of the development are in a condition such as not to emit dust or deposit mud, slurry or other debris on the highway. Further information is available via the website <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/highways-roads-and-pavements.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047

Storage of materials: The applicant is advised that the storage of materials associated with the construction of this development should be provided within the site on land which is not public highway, and the use of such areas must not interfere with the public highway. If this is not possible, authorisation should be sought from the Highway Authority before construction works commence. Further information is available via the website

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/business-licences/business-licences.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047

### Environmental Protection Informative

#### EV Charging Point Specification:

Each charging point shall be installed by an appropriately certified electrician/electrical contractor in accordance with the following specification. The necessary certification of electrical installation should be submitted as evidence of appropriate installation to meet the requirements of Part P of the most current Building Regulations.

Cable and circuitry ratings should be of adequate size to ensure a minimum continuous current demand for the vehicle of 16A and a maximum demand of 32A (which is recommended for Eco developments).

- A separate dedicated circuit protected by an RBCO should be provided from the main distribution board, to a suitably enclosed termination point within a garage or an accessible enclosed termination point for future connection to an external charge point.
  - The electrical circuit shall comply with the Electrical requirements of BS7671: 2008 as well as conform to the IET code of practice on Electric Vehicle Charging Equipment installation 2012 ISBN 978-1-84919-515-7 (PDF). This includes requirements such as ensuring the Charging Equipment integral protective device shall be at least Type A RCD (required to comply with BS EN 61851 Mode 3 charging).
  - If installed in a garage all conductive surfaces should be protected by supplementary protective equipotential bonding. For vehicle connecting points installed such that the vehicle can only be charged within the building, e.g. in a garage with a (non-extended) tethered lead, the PME earth may be used. For external installations the risk assessment outlined in the IET code of practice must be adopted, and may require additional earth stake or mat for the EV charging circuit. This should be installed as part of the EV ready installation to avoid significant on cost later.
  - A list of authorised installers (for the Government's Electric Vehicle Homecharge Scheme) can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/office-for-low-emission-vehicles>

### Hertfordshire Ecology

Any excavations left open overnight should be covered or have mammal ramps (reinforced plywood board >60cm wide set at an angle of no greater than 30 degrees to the base of the pit) to ensure that any animals that enter can safely escape. Any open pipework with an outside diameter of greater than 120mm must be covered at the end of each working day to prevent animals entering / becoming trapped. To avoid killing or injuring of hedgehogs it is best practice for any brash piles to be cleared by hand. It is also possible to provide enhancements for hedgehogs by making small holes (13cm x 13cm) within any boundary fencing. This allows foraging hedgehogs to be able to pass freely throughout a site but will be too small for most pets.

### **Reasonable Avoidance Measures**

Keep any areas of grass as short as possible up to, and including, the time when the works take place so that it remains / becomes unsuitable for reptiles to cross. Clearance of existing vegetation should be undertaken progressively using hand-held tools, where appropriate, towards boundaries to allow any animals present to escape to contiguous areas of retained habitat.

Where any, long grass is to be cleared, this work should be carried out in two phases. The first cut should be to >100mm to decrease the suitability of the vegetation for reptiles and encourage any reptiles present to move to retained areas of habitat.

Where potential for reptiles to be present remains, following a minimum period of seven days, a second cut to ground level should be carried out in order to render the habitat unsuitable; cleared areas should be maintained to prevent re-colonisation prior to works commencing; and potential hibernacula or refugia such as loose stones or dead wood should be removed by hand.

Stored building materials (that might act as temporary resting places) are raised off the ground e.g. on pallets or batons away from hedgerows on site. Caution should be taken when moving debris piles or building materials as any sheltering animals could be impacted.

Any vegetation removal should be undertaken outside the nesting bird season (March to August inclusive) to protect breeding birds, their nests, eggs and young. If this is not practicable, a search of the area should be made no more than two days in advance of vegetation clearance by a competent Ecologist and if active nests are found, works should stop until the birds have left the nest.