

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE
THURSDAY 22 SEPTEMBER AT 10AM
STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Agenda No.

3

APPLICATION FOR THE CREATION OF A SIGNALISED JUNCTION TO REPLACE THE EXISTING ROUNDABOUT, INCLUDING ASSOCIATED EXTENSIONS AT HERTFORD ROAD, SOUTH-EAST STEVENAGE, WITHIN THE AREA KNOWN AS BRAGBURY END, HERTFORDSHIRE.

Report of the Chief Executive and Director of Environment

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Local Member: Councillor Sherma Batson

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 To consider planning application reference number 2/0372-16 for highway works at Hertford Road, South-East Stevenage, within the area known as Bragbury End.

2 Summary

2.1 The County Council are seeking to improve the A602 between Stevenage and Ware, through a series of proposals at a total of seven sites along this primary road. This application forms part of that wider scheme, and will development highway improvements of its own.

2.2 This application seeks planning permission for the creation of a signalised junction to replace the existing roundabout, including associated extensions at Hertford Road, South-East Stevenage, within the area known as Bragbury End. The development is also considered under the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2011 (updated 2015) and is accompanied by an Environmental Statement.

2.3 The application site is located on the south east corner of the urban area of the town of Stevenage. There is a wide grassed verge on either side of the A602, and a grassed central reservation. The land to the north and east of the A602 is dominantly by a landscape of open fields and farmland. The area to the south is characterised by residential development, at the urban fringe of Stevenage.

2.4 Footways and cycleways run parallel to the existing roundabout, with a linking subway underneath the A602.

2.5 The application site is not located within or adjacent to any national, local landscape designated site or ecologically designated sites.

- 2.6 The application site is within the confines of the existing highway boundary. Ordinarily, such works would not require express planning permission, if carried out in isolation of any other road improvements. However, the applicant seeks to make improvements at a further three sections on the A602 between Stevenage and Ware. The County Planning Authority determined that the separate sections of the wider proposal were integral to each other.
- 2.7 Although they may benefit from separate planning applications, delivery contracts and bring their own benefits, the proposals seek to upgrade the A602 for the interlinked purpose of facilitating traffic along the route between Stevenage and Ware. As the total area of development exceeds the threshold of one hectare, the separate planning applications are accompanied by a (shared) Environmental Statement.
- 2.8 The General Arrangement plan is included at Appendix 1. A plan showing the wider proposals for the A602 is shown at Appendix 2. The non-technical summary of the Environmental Statement is included at Appendix 5.
- 2.9 The main planning issues of the application can be summarised as:
- Need and justification
 - Impact on highways and transport
 - Quality of design
 - Landscape and visual impact
 - Impact on ecology and biodiversity
 - Impact on residential amenity (noise, dust, light)
- 2.10 The report recommends that the Chief Executive and Director of Environment should be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the following TWELVE conditions: -
1. Time limit for commencement
 2. Approved plans and documents
 3. Landscaping plan; including tree protection and habitat improvements
 4. Materials used in construction
 5. Drainage strategy
 6. Flood risk assessment
 7. Connection to sewer network
 8. Ground investigations
 9. Traffic management plan
 10. Construction management plan; including compound details, hours of construction and wheel/chassis cleaning
 11. Lighting
 12. Fencing/boundary treatment

3 Description of the site

- 3.1 The application site forms part of the A602, which provides the key road link from junction 7 of the A1(M) on the edge of Stevenage, in the west, to the junction with A10 at Ware, in the east.
- 3.2 The proposed development is for highway improvements is an existing three-arm roundabout on the urban fringe of the south east of Stevenage. The roundabout allows traffic from Hertford Road, which is a minor road, to join the A602. Hertford Road leads to a housing estate to the west of the roundabout, which is then bounded by the train line which runs into central London. Hertford Road provides an alternative to the B197 for those in southern Stevenage to travel to Knebworth.
- 3.3 Stevenage Golf Course and Conference Centre is located to the north east of the A602, and Stevenage Brook runs through the Centre's grounds.
- 3.4 Approximately 200 metres along the A602, travelling towards the south east, is the area of Bragbury End. This is an existing small residential housing estate, and the area has been identified for a housing allocation of 550 houses in the emerging Borough Plan 2011 – 2031.
- 3.5 There are wide grassed verges along both sides of the A602. The residential properties to the north-west are set back from the A602, and benefit from well-established planting as screening. A cycleway and footpath runs between the houses and the A602, with a link underneath the carriageway to provide non-vehicular access to Sacombe Mews, and Aston beyond.
- 3.6 The existing lighting, which is compliant with Hertfordshire County Council standards, will be realigned in order to match the new junction layout.
- 3.7 The site is bounded by the Metropolitan Green Belt to the north east.
- 3.8 Three ancient lanes and associated hedgerows are identified in relatively close proximity to the road junction; the proposed development does not impact or otherwise require the removal of any of these environmental assets. The site is not located within or adjacent to any national, local landscape designation or ecologically designated sites, the closest being the Stevenage Brook Marsh.
- 3.9 The site is in Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding) and is in Groundwater Source Protection Zone 3 (lowest zone for source protection).
- 3.10 Records show that there have been no previous planning applications sought from Hertfordshire County Council, for the A602 roundabout within the area known as Bragbury End.

- 3.11 A previous application (3/1914-06) for improvements to the A602 adjacent to Heath Mount School was approved by the Development Control Committee in November 2006, but was not implemented.

4 Description of the proposed development

- 4.1 The proposal is to replace the existing roundabout with a traffic signal T-junction operating on a full time basis.
- 4.2 Further, it is proposed to widen the carriageway on each of three arms, to allow for a two lane approach. A short right-hand turn lane (into Hertford Road) is also proposed in the southbound direction. This will largely be achieved by taking land to the east of the carriageway, which currently forms the wide grass verge. To facilitate this road widening, the subways will be extended, and footpath and cycleway to the south east of the junction will be aligned within the existing highway boundary.
- 4.3 The lighting columns will be relocated to reflect the revised junction alignment, but they have already been upgraded to new LED technology which has a lesser residual impact or spill.
- 4.4 The proposed development would require the removal of a number of trees along Hertford Road, and the southern carriageway of the A602. A compound area to the south of the junction will be constructed above ground level to ensure root protection of existing trees. Compensatory planting is proposed.
- 4.5 The land take is all within the existing highway boundary.

5 Consultations

- 5.1 A total of 1314 properties were consulted in respect of the application. A press notice was placed in the Hertfordshire Mercury, and site notices were erected on 2 June 2016.
- 5.2 Stevenage Borough Council as District Planning Authority raises no objection to the proposed junction improvement works. The council highlights the emerging Local Plan policies which are to be read in conjunction with the extant saved policies of the adopted Local Plan (2004), in addition to the allocation of up to 550 dwellings in close proximity to the proposed development. The consultation response is included at Appendix 3.
- 5.3 Stevenage Borough Council Arboricultural Officer considers the removal of trees as identified on the submitted plans as acceptable. It is recommended that replacement trees should be secured through condition, and carried out as part of an agreed landscaping scheme. A second condition should be imposed to protect all retained trees as set out in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment.
- 5.4 The Environment Agency has no comment to make on the application.

- 5.5 Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority does not wish to restrict the grant of planning permission. There are no highway safety issues associated with these proposals and therefore the Highway Authority has no objection to the proposal.
- 5.6 Highways England offers no objection to the proposed development.
- 5.7 Hertfordshire County Council Flood Risk Management has no objection to the development on flood risk grounds. Conditions requiring that the works be carried out in compliance with the approved drainage strategy and mitigation measures from the Flood Risk Assessment, and that no development should be commenced prior to confirmation of permission to connect discharge point(s) into the sewer network are recommended.
- 5.8 Natural England has no comments to make on the application, on the basis that the development is not likely to result in significant impacts on statutory designated nature conservation sites or landscapes.
- 5.9 Herts Ecology did not consider there to be any ecological constraints associated with the proposals. The fauna and flora in the vicinity of the proposed development are considered to have little ecological significance. The proposed mitigation in terms of timing of works, pre-checking for nesting birds, habitat replacement and the provision of bat boxes are considered acceptable, although further habitat improvements should be achieved through condition.
- 5.10 The Landscape Officer from Hertfordshire County Council advised that, while there will be moderate to large adverse landscape impacts during the construction phase, this will be short term and temporary. Overall, the proposed development does not result in any unacceptable adverse landscape and visual effects. It is recommended that the condition requiring a landscaping scheme should be applied to ensure that the loss of any planting is adequately mitigated and compensated for. A copy of the full consultation response is included at Appendix 4.
- 5.11 No other statutory consultation responses were received.

5.12 Public consultation

A total of 21 responses have been received. One response was in support of the proposal, one asking questions and a third was to confirm that the consultee had no comment to make. There were 18 responses either objecting to, or raising concerns in respect of the proposed development.

5.13 The objections can be summarised as follows:-

Objection 1 – Need

- Traffic congestion is only an issue for a very limited period of each weekday
- Waste of money
- Not an accident blackspot

- Money should be spent on resurfacing the roads or improving access to A1(M)

Objection 2 – Design of the development

- Preference for a roundabout over a signalised junction
- Junction is in the wrong place; should be at junction with Broadwater Crescent
- Will make it harder to turn right out of Broadwater Crescent
- Lights will favour A602 over Bragbury End making it harder for residents to join the carriageway
- It will be harder to join Hertford Road due to lights on junction
- Proposal takes in private residential land

Objection 3 – Road Safety

- Accidents will increase
- Congestion will only be moved to a different location
- No measures to reduce speed of vehicles
- Need to reflect more consideration of cyclists

Objection 4 – Wildlife Impact

- Rooks are present in area identified as a compound off Blenheim Way

Objection 5 – Residential Amenity

- Noise, disruption and inconvenience during construction phase

6 The Development Plan

- 6.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. For the purposes the Act, the development plan comprises The Local Plan for Stevenage 2004 (District Plan Second Review), and the saved policies within it.
- 6.2 Material consideration is also given to the new Stevenage Borough Local Plan, which is due to be formally adopted in December 2016 following the conclusion of the most recent consultation in February 2016.
- 6.3 The most relevant planning policies to consider for this application are:

Stevenage Local Plan (adopted 2004)

Policy TW1	Sustainable development
Policy TW2	Structural open space
Policy TW9	Quality in design
Policy T6	Design standards
Policy T13	Cycleways
Policy T14	Pedestrians
Policy EN12	Loss of woodland

Policy EN13	Trees in development
Policy EN15	Ancient lanes and associated hedgerows
Policy EN17	Wildlife sites and Regionally important geological sites
Policy EN18	Natural habitats in adjoining local authorities
Policy EN21	Other sites of nature conservation importance
Policy EN27	Noise pollution
Policy EN29	Light pollution
Policy EN36	Water conservation

Emerging Stevenage Borough Plan 2011 - 2031

Policy SP1	Presumption in favour of sustainable development
Policy SP5	Infrastructure
Policy SP8	Good design
Policy SP12	Green Infrastructure and the natural environment
Policy IT4	Transport assessments and travel plans
Policy IT5	Parking and access
Policy IT7	New and improved links for pedestrians and cyclists
Policy GD1	High Quality Design
Policy NH2	Wildlife Sites
Policy NH5	Trees and Woodland
Policy FP7	Pollution

- 6.4 Hertfordshire County Council Local Transport Plan (2011 – 2031) sets out the County Council's vision and strategy for the long term development of transport within the county.
- 6.5 These policies are considered alongside national guidance in the form of The National Planning Policy Framework.

7 Planning Issues

- 7.1 The principal planning issues to be taken into account in determining this application can be summarised as:
- Need and justification
 - Impact on highways and transport
 - Quality of design
 - Landscape and visual impact
 - Impact on ecology and biodiversity
 - Impact on residential amenity (noise, dust, light)

Need and justification

- 7.2 The site is part of the wider proposals for improvements to the A602, which are considered necessary to reduce overall journey times and reliability on the route between Stevenage (A1(M)) and Ware (A10). This route is considered to be of a low standard for a primary route, within junction and alignment issues, and poor visibility.
- 7.3 The traffic flows often exceed the capacity of the major junctions on the route, which is anticipated to come under increasing pressure with major

housing growth planned in the draft Local Plan proposals for Stevenage and East Hertfordshire. Residents and businesses will be heavily reliant on the A602 to facilitate movement in and around the county.

- 7.4 The Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) has highlighted, within the Strategic Economic Plan¹ (SEP) that the road network is chronically congested, and that this is a major constraint to growth in both housing and jobs.
- 7.5 It is considered that the proposed improvements to the A602 would meet the key objectives of the 2011 Government Transport White Paper², which provides key objectives for future transport investment, namely:
- to create growth in the economy and to tackle climate change by cutting carbon emissions; and,
 - to tackle places where congestion causes slow and unreliable journeys with significant impacts on the economy and environment;
- 7.6 The White Paper also highlights that public transport does not represent a viable alternative to the private car for all journeys. There is limited provision of east-west public transport links between Stevenage and Ware, with the train lines running into the transport hubs of Central London.
- 7.7 The wider A602 improvements have been identified as one of the top three scoring schemes against deliverability and achievement of Local Transport Plan goals. It was one of three schemes submitted to the Department of Transport in July 2013, as the Local Transport Bodies' (LTB) priority list of major transport schemes to be delivered from 2015 – 2019. The LTB is tasked to prioritise transport investment.
- 7.8 The Hertford Road roundabout is identified as limiting the through flow of traffic, which results in significant queues during peak morning and evening periods. This is attributed to the capacity of the junction, in terms of the number of lanes available on the approach. The congestion is compounded by the lack of control over traffic flow priority.
- 7.9 The proposal is to remove the roundabout and provide a signalised T-Junction. Traffic signals provide for better control of the junction and to allow more vehicles along the A602, especially at peak times. Traffic signals also give a greater capacity at the junction and can allow for greater future flexibility. Additionally, Hertford Road will have its own phase which will allow vehicles to exit the junction in a safer manner.
- 7.10 Objections have been raised on the basis that the traffic lights will be operational full time, to address congestion issues which are experienced during the morning and evening rush hours, and

¹ Perfectly Placed for Business: Hertfordshire's Strategic Economic Plan. March 2014

² Department for Transport, 2011, Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon. Making Sustainable Local Transport Happen

predominantly limited to weekdays. The traffic lights are required all day to ensure the safe operation of the junction, given the change in the nature of the junction from a roundabout which operates on a give way basis. Traffic lights will ensure that vehicles from Hertford Road will have safe opportunity to join the A602.

- 7.11 The proposal is therefore compliant with the overarching sustainability aims of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and aims of Local Plan Policy TW1, in seeking to deliver a long term solution to economic and social issues, by facilitating housing growth, job creation and movement of goods and people, while minimising the additional land take from the development. This is further supported by Emerging Local Plan Policies SP1, IT5 and IT7, to which material weight is to be given.

Impact on highways and transport

- 7.12 The proposal seeks to provide junction improvements which will improve the throughput and flow of traffic, and to increase the capacity of the constraint offered by the existing carriageway layout. The roundabout is currently operating above its theoretical capacity threshold during peak hours, resulting in delayed and unreliable journeys on a primary route within the county.
- 7.13 The traffic in the area is projected to continue to grow, thereby exacerbating future capacity issues at the Hertford Road roundabout. However, the Transport Assessment found that proposed signal controlled junction would operate within the theoretical capacity threshold forecast for 2024.
- 7.14 The development is not sought to address road safety issues; the site is not an accident blackspot and there is no specific concern in respect of vehicle speed, other than would be regulated by the speed limit of 40mph set on the A602 at this point. The planning aim of the development is to address traffic flow, given that the existing roundabout is inadequate to handle the existing volume of traffic, with further housing allocation proposed in close proximity.
- 7.15 The A602 will remain open during the works and travellers would only be affected during short periods of construction, with some temporary potential for an increase in journey times due to the need for local diversions and traffic management. Once completed, the development would serve to improve the travelling experience for private road users and buses, reduce driver stress, provide more consistent journey times and reduce vehicle emissions. This is therefore consistent with the sustainability considerations as set out at paragraph 7.11, and provides a safe and efficient highway network as supported by Emerging Local Plan Policies SP5 and IT4.
- 7.16 Consideration is also given to the effect on other travellers; non-motorised users (NMUs), pedestrians, public right of way, cyclists and equestrians. The rural nature of the A602 means that there is limited

use along the length of the road between Stevenage and Ware by NMUs. The predominant NMU are cyclists, and this activity is concentrated at weekends and on summertime evenings, reflecting its recreational nature as opposed to a method of commuting.

- 7.17 The urban nature of the land in and around the Hertford Road roundabout means that there is an increased use by pedestrians and cyclists. Sustrans highlights that there is a traffic free cycle route next to the A602 in Stevenage and this continues through a subway beneath the existing junction.
- 7.18 This can be used by both cyclists and pedestrians. During the realignment and extension of the existing subway, the footpath and cycleway on the opposite side of the A602 will remain available for use. It is therefore considered that the construction phase will have a slight adverse impact, but that this will be a temporary period and once operational wider scheme is considered to have a slight beneficial effect. The benefit is only measured as slight due to the low number of cyclists and pedestrians using the wider scheme.
- 7.19 The completed scheme at Hertford Road would provide a planned highway infrastructure with segregated cycleways and footways as set out in Emerging Local Plan Policy SP6fii, and facilitates movement of groups in accordance with the Route User Hierarchy is set out in Manual for Streets (MfS); disabled users, pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users, specialist service vehicles, other motor traffic.
- 7.20 The proposal at Hertford Road junction is therefore in compliance with Local Plan Policies T13 and T14 and Emerging Local Plan Policies IT5 and IT7, and in support of paragraph 35 of the National Planning Policy Framework and the Local Transport Plan.
- 7.21 The proposed scheme across the wider route will maintain all public Rights of Way affected. While there may be a small increase in length of some routes, the significance of the effect is considered to be neutral and it is further noted that the number of people using these routes is low.
- 7.22 There are likely to be no equestrian flows at the Hertford Road junction. The wider scheme is anticipated to have a slight adverse impact during construction but deliver a slight beneficial effect in the longer term.
- 7.23 A Traffic Management Plan can be secured through condition to minimise driver stress and frustration, and to ensure the appropriate and timely sharing of information regarding works which may impact journey routes or times.
- 7.24 No rail routes would be impacted by the proposed development, or the wider scheme.

Quality of design

- 7.25 All elements of the proposed improvements to the A602 have been designed in accordance with the latest guidance set from the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB). The details of any materials to be used in construction can be agreed by condition to ensure a cohesive design as relates to the local environment.
- 7.26 There are limited opportunities to make a design statement, given the relatively small scale of the project and the need to prioritise safety of road users, pedestrians, cyclists and other users. However, the proposal provides a broad and open subway to help to minimise the risk of crime, and allow for planting to enhance the junction setting. The design of the realigned junction at Hertford Road incorporates the requirements in Local Plan Policies TW9 and T6, in addition to Emerging Plan Policies GD1 and SP8.
- 7.27 A signalised roundabout would need to be significantly bigger, it require private land from the golf course and compromise the provision of a highway verge. This would be contrary to the provisions of Local Plan Policy TW2 Structural open space

Landscape and visual impact

- 7.28 A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been submitted with the application. This considers the effect of the development on landscape and visual amenity.
- 7.29 The area to the east of the Hertford Road junction is described as 'Lowland Settled Farmlands', which is characterised as a settled agricultural landscape containing medium sized fields and a network of hedged and occasionally sunken lanes. This landscape is considered to be of moderate value and with a moderate susceptibility to change in relation to the proposed development.
- 7.30 The overall significance of effect during the construction phase on this landscape is considered to be neutral/slight adverse, with a neutral impact on the Aston Estate Farmland due to the localised nature of the proposed development.
- 7.31 The impact on these two landscapes during the operation phase is considered to be neutral, as vegetation removed during the construction process will be replaced and new hedgerows planted to link with existing hedgerows.
- 7.32 The Hertford Road junction is at the south-eastern extent of the Stevenage Urban Area, and dominated by mid-20th Century housing. This landscape is identified as being of low value and with a low susceptibility to change in relation to the proposed development.

- 7.33 The major impact in this area is resultant from the construction compound in an area of grass to the east of Blenheim Way, which will be visible from the rear upstairs windows of the residential properties. Measures can be taken to mitigate these impacts, such as conditions to limit the directional spray of floodlighting and the protecting the existing and retained mature trees. The LVIA finds that there would be no residual significant adverse effects on residential receptors from this element of the wider scheme.
- 7.34 The conclusions of the LVIA are supported by the Hertfordshire County Council Landscape Officer, who finds that any adverse impacts are small scale and limited to the construction phase. The loss of any planting should be mitigated for by the imposition of a condition requiring a submission of a detailed landscaping scheme for approval.
- 7.35 The scheme requires the removal of a total of 17 trees in and around the Hertford Road junction, in order to facilitate the development. The Arboricultural Officer of Stevenage Borough Council, finds that the removal of trees acceptable, in that they are not of significant value, but replacements are to be secured by condition. The Hertfordshire County Council Landscape Officer recommends replacement trees to be planted on a two for one basis.
- 7.36 Further, the Landscape Officer supports the proposed native hedgerow and planting mix specified within the submitted Landscape Strategy, which includes oak, maple and hornbeam planted at irregular spacing thereby reflecting the local setting.
- 7.37 The development is therefore compliant with Local Plan Policies EN12 and EN13, and with Emerging Local Plan Policy NH5. An arboricultural report has been submitted, and provisional mitigation proposals have been submitted which demonstrates the applicant's commitment to provide compensatory planting.

Impact on ecology and biodiversity

- 7.38 The NPPF states that the planning system should seek to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment, and to provide net biodiversity gains. The Environment Statement provides details of the desk studies and field studies which have been carried out across the wider proposed scheme, including the Hertford Road junction.
- 7.39 The proposed works at Hertford Road junction take place entirely within the existing highway boundary and the associated verges. This is a mown grassland with some scrub and plantation woodland, which is considered to be of a low ecological value. Such an environment does not provide a suitable habitat for protected or notable species. This view supported in the consultation response of Herts Ecology.

- 7.40 The highway compound is to be situated in an area of woodland and mown grassland, off Blenheim Way, which forms part of the Structural Open Space alongside the A602. A neighbour response raised a concern regarding nesting rooks in this area.
- 7.41 Rooks, and all wild birds (including their nests and their eggs), are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Countryside and Right of Way Act 2000. The nesting and breeding area of these birds can be protected through a Construction Management Plan, and required by condition. A further condition can require all trees which are to be retained to be protected in line with the details set out in the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment.
- 7.42 There is to be no impact on the ancient hedgerows of Aston Lane, Bragbury Lane or Watton Lane, as none of these hedgerows are to be removed. The proposed development area is distinct from the Stevenage Brook Marsh wildlife site, and has no impact on it.
- 7.43 The proposed development is therefore compliant with Local Plan Policies TW2, EN17, EN18 and EN21 and Emerging Local Plan Policy NH2, NH5 and SP12.

Impact on residential amenity (e.g. noise, light, air quality)

- 7.44 The Environmental Statement has considered the potential impact of sound, noise and vibration arising from both the construction and operational phases of the proposed development on residential and non-residential receptors within 300 metres of the proposed scheme, and consistent with the recommendations of BS5228-1:2009+A1:2014 Code of practice for noise and vibration control on construction and open sites: Part 1 Noise and Part 2 Vibration (British Standards Institution, 2014).
- 7.45 While there is likely to be significant noise or vibration effects during the construction phase of the proposed development, these are anticipated to be short term and taking a total of 26 weeks, with the only night-time operations relating to the 10 week surfacing work. In the longer term, due to the positioning of the realigned junction as compared to the existing junction, there is no significant change expected to the traffic flows and speeds that would trigger a noise level change threshold.
- 7.46 It will be possible to reduce the scale of the potential noise and vibration impacts by adopting the measures set out in BS5228 including, but not limited to, switching off engines when not in use, minimised drop heights of materials, the use of screening. These measures can be included the Construction Management Plan, which itself can be secured through a pre-commencement condition.
- 7.47 Elements of the wider A602 Improvement Scheme are likely to have a greater noise and vibration impact, given the closer proximity of residential properties to construction works. The Environmental

Statement concludes that those impacts can be effectively mitigated. The proposed development is therefore compliant with Local Plan Policy EN27 and Emerging Local Plan Policy FP7.

- 7.48 The existing lighting columns have already been upgraded to LED technology and are compliant with Hertfordshire County Council standards, minimising glare and light spillage. These columns will be repositioned to reflect the realigned junction, and therefore achieve compliance with Local Plan Policy EN29 and Emerging Plan Policies FP7 and GD1g.
- 7.49 The proposed scheme is not within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), and therefore this issue was not assessed further in the Environmental Statement.
- 7.50 However, the close proximity of the residential properties, which are classed as sensitive receptors means that there is a high sensitivity to dust which may be generated during the construction phase. This can be limited by adopted mitigation and control measures, in line with IAQM (Institute of Air Quality Management) guidance, and incorporated within a Construction Management Plan. The plan itself can be secured through a pre-commencement condition. The proposed development is therefore compliant with Emerging Local Plan Policy FP7.

Environmental Statement

- 7.51 An Environmental Statement has been submitted to accompany the application. This is as the wider proposed scheme of development to improve the A602 between Stevenage and Ware falls within Category 10(f) Schedule 2 of the Environmental Regulations as the total development, outside of the highway boundary, is greater than the application threshold of one hectare.
- 7.52 The characteristics, location and potential impacts are determined to be potentially significant. The Non-Technical Summary is attached at Appendix 5.

Environmental Statement – Cultural Heritage

- 7.53 A desk-based review of the historical information within 1 kilometre of the A602 was undertaken, with additional research within the footprint of the Ware Road re-alignment which forms part of the wider scheme.
- 7.54 There are 25 non designated cultural heritage assets within 1 kilometre of the central alignment of the Hertford Road junction. The specific works sought to improve the junction are to be carried out in an area already disturbed by the construction of the existing area, and would not impact on the 25 heritage assets.

Environmental Statement – Geology, Soils and Materials

- 7.55 The Environmental Statement considers the impact of the wider proposed scheme on the geology, soils and materials of a study area defined as 500 metres either side of the proposed scheme central alignment. This was based on both the construction and operation phase.
- 7.56 It is found that by adopting mitigation measures, the risk from accidental spills and leaks, and earthworks can be reduced to negligible through adopting best practice techniques. There are no specific concerns in respect of the Hertford Road junction.
- 7.57 During the operation of the wider scheme, there is the potential for risk of accidental spills and leaks, in respect of road traffic accidents. The design of the scheme incorporates pollution interceptors, and a ground investigation can be secured through condition to ensure that an informed technical design protects against the potential for dissolution of chalk. There are no specific concerns in respect of the Hertford Road junction.

Environmental Statement – Community and Private Assets

- 7.58 There are expected to be no significant adverse effects to the community services in and around the A602, as a result of the wider proposed scheme.
- 7.59 No buildings are affected by the proposed scheme.
- 7.60 The adjoining agricultural fields are of the best and most versatile for agricultural use, and are afforded protection under the principles of the National Planning Policy Framework. It is considered that any impacts can be managed through adopted a best practice approach and a soil resources plan. However, there are no private assets impacted by the Hertford Road junction improvements.

Environmental Statement – Road Drainage and the Water Environment

- 7.61 A Construction Management Plan, secured by condition, can be adopted to regulate matters including but not limited to sediment control, controlled storage of materials, restricting the use of polluting materials near receptors and local flood control to reduce the potential for adverse impacts on the water environment.
- 7.62 It is considered that the proposed changes to the existing road network at Hertford Road junction would have a neutral impact, given that robust measures are already in place to protect the water environment. This can be further enhanced through a revised Plan, thereby offering additional protection to Stevenage Brook and maintaining the low flooding risk in this Flood Zone 1 location.

8 Conclusion

- 8.1 This report has identified a number of impacts that could occur but which can be adequately managed by the imposition of appropriate conditions.
- 8.2 The proposed works in respect of the realignment of the Hertford Road junction are all contained within the highway boundary, and if considered in isolation, the applicant would not have had to seek express planning permission.
- 8.3 The highway improvements will allow the upgrading of a sub-standard primary route, and help to deliver more reliable journey times, meeting a legitimate planning need.
- 8.4 The development is compliant with principles of the National Planning Policy Framework, and the Local Transport Plan 2011 – 2031 in delivering highway improvements to deliver a safe and resilient transport system. While potential adverse impacts have been identified, the imposition of robust conditions can protect against harm to landscape, visual impact, ecology, biodiversity and residential amenity.

9 Conditions

- 9.1 The recommendation to approve the proposed development is subject to conditions.
 1. Time limit for commencement
 2. Approved plans and documents
 3. Landscaping plan; including tree protection and habitat improvements
 4. Materials used in construction
 5. Drainage strategy
 6. Flood risk assessment
 7. Connection to sewer network
 8. Ground investigations
 9. Traffic management plan
 10. Construction management plan; including compound details, hours of construction and wheel/chassis cleaning
 11. Lighting
 12. Fencing/boundary treatment

Background information used by the author in compiling this report

Planning application reference 2/0372-16 including supporting documents and environmental statement

Consultee responses

Relevant policy documents:

National Planning Policy Framework 2012

Stevenage Local Plan (adopted 2004)

Emerging Stevenage Borough Plan 2011 - 2031

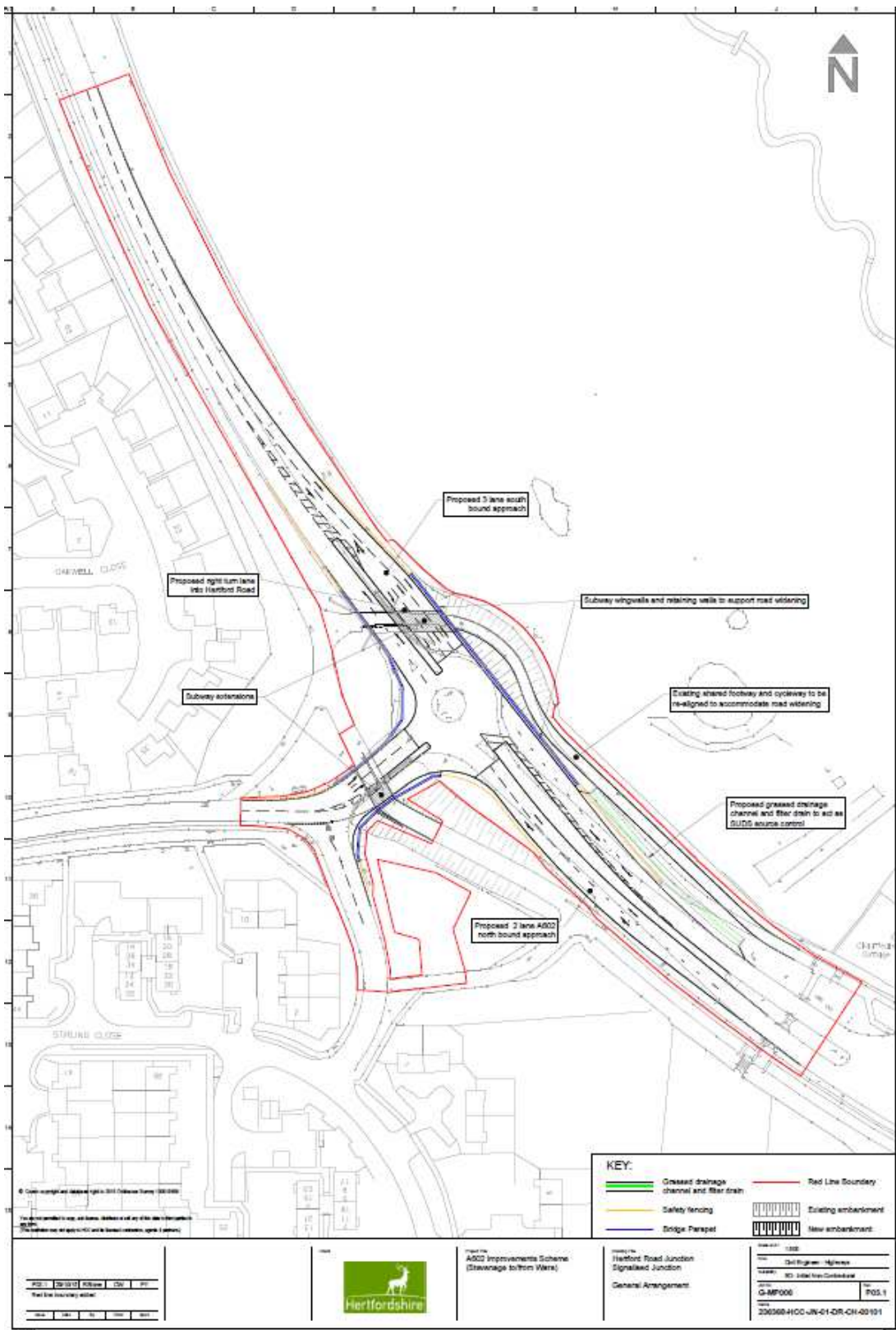
Hertfordshire County Council Local Transport Plan (2011 – 2031)

Stevenage Urban Transport Plan 2010

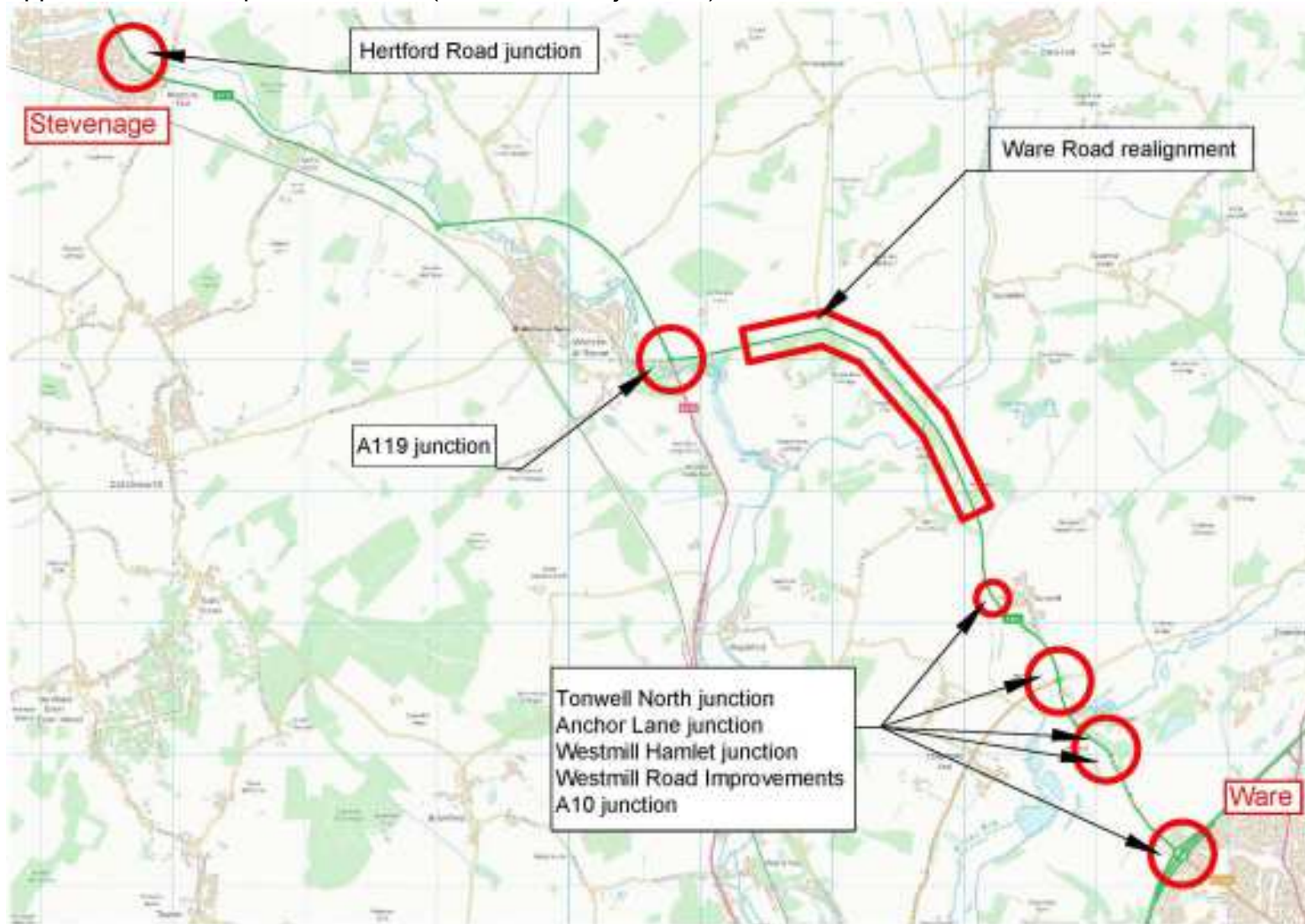
Appendices

1. General Arrangement
2. The Proposed Scheme (Hertford Road junction) within the wider area
3. Consultation response from Stevenage Borough Council
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5. Environmental Statement: Volume 1 – Non-technical summary

Appendix 1 – General Arrangement (do not scale)



Appendix 2 The Proposed Scheme (Hertford Road junction) within the wider area



Appendix 3
Consultation response from Stevenage Borough Council

Dear Mr Owen,

Planning application reference: SLUP/CM0996a PL\0794\16

RE: Proposed creation of a signalised junction to replace the existing roundabout, including associated extensions to subways and changes to verges, lighting, drainage, landscaping and associated engineering works at Hertford Road, south-east Stevenage, within area known as Bragbury End.

At: Junction of Hertford Road and Broadhall Way, Stevenage.

I refer to your letter dated 26th May regarding the above.

Following a review of the application submission, I can advise that Stevenage Borough Council raises no objection to the proposed junction improvements works at Hertford Road/Broadhall Way. However, under Policy H04 (South East of Stevenage) of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031 Publication Draft 2011 - 2031 land as defined in the Council's Proposals Map is allocated for the development of 550 dwellings.

The site as identified by the aforementioned policy would be developed as two separate parcels:

- North of the A602 (150 dwellings); and
- South of the A602 (400 dwellings).

Given the above, the increase in the number of future dwellings could impact on this junction over the course and beyond the Council's Draft Local Plan period. Given this, it is recommended that these additional dwelling units should be taken into consideration in the traffic and junction modelling which has been undertaken as part of this proposal.

Separate to the above, I have been asked to refer you to a list of the adopted District Plan Policies (2004) against their respective replacement Policies which are contained within the Stevenage Borough Draft Local Plan (2016) in the table below:

Table 1: Schedule of policies contained within the adopted Local Plan (2004) to be read in conjunction with the policies contained with the respective replacement policies in the Draft Local Plan (2016).

District Local Plan Second Review Policy	Replacement Policy contained within the Draft Stevenage Local Plan
Policy TW1: Sustainable Development	Policy SP2: Sustainable Development in Stevenage
Policy TW2: Structural Open Space	Policy SP12: Green Infrastructure and the natural environment Policy NH1: Principal Open Spaces Policy NH6: General Protection for Open Space Policy NH7: Open Space Standards
Policy TW9: Quality in Design	Policy SP8: Good Design
Policy T6: Design Standards	Policy GD1: High Quality Design
Policy T13: Cycleways	Policy GD1: High Quality Design Policy IT5: Parking and Access Policy IT7: New and improved links for pedestrians and cyclists

Policy T14: Pedestrians

Policy IT5: Parking and Access

Policy IT7: New and improved links for pedestrians and cyclists

Policy EN12: Loss of Woodland

Policy NH5: Trees and Woodland.

Policy EN27: Noise Pollution

Policy FP7: Light and Noise Pollution

Policy EN13: Trees in development

Policy NH5: Trees and Woodland.

Policy EN17: Wildlife Sites and Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS)

Policy NH2: Wildlife Site

Policy EN29: Light Pollution

Policy FP7; Light and Noise Pollution

Policy EN36: Water Conservation

Policy FP1: Climate Change

Separately, it is noted that a number of trees and groups (partial groups) of trees as detailed on the Arboricultural Impact Assessment drawing: Arbtech AIA 01 (Sheet 1) Rev B are to be removed as part of the proposed development works (including a number of category B-trees). Following consultation with the Council's Arboricultural Officer, it is considered that the proposed removal of the tree identified in the Arbtech drawings are considered to be acceptable. However, it is recommended by Officers that suitable replacement planting should be provided to compensate for the loss of these trees. This should be secured through the imposition of a condition attached to any permission issued requiring replacement planting to be carried out as part of any agreed landscaping scheme. Further to this, it is also recommended that if planning permission was to be granted, a condition should be imposed requiring all trees which are to be retained should be protected in line with the details set out in the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss the content of this letter or seek any clarification. I trust the information contained in this letter is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely.

Mr James Chettleburgh

Senior Planning Officer

For and behalf of the HEAD OF PLANNING AND ENGINEERING

Appendix 4

Consultation response from Hertfordshire County Council Landscape Officer

Landscape Report	11th August 2016
From: HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL Landscape Officer, Natural Historic and Built Environment Advisory Team	To: HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL Planning Officer, Spatial Planning
Application No.	2/0372-16
Location:	Hertford Road, south-east Stevenage, within area known as Bragbury End
Proposal:	Application for the proposed creation of a signalised junction to replace the existing roundabout, including associated extensions to subways and changes to verges, lighting, drainage, landscaping and associated engineering works

Landscape Policy & Guidelines³

National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF⁴ promotes the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment and good design, ensuring that developments respond to local character and are visually attractive as a result of good landscape design.

Landscape and Visual⁵

The site is located along a section of highway that marks the boundary between the urban edge of Stevenage to the west, and the open area of Stevenage golf club to the east. The proposal is for the conversion of an existing roundabout into a signalised junction, including the extension of an existing subway and the introduction of typical highways features such as verges, lighting, drainage and landscaping.

In determining landscape and visual effects consideration is given for the combined effects of the existing development and the proposed amendments, to ensure that together they conserve and enhance landscape character and visual amenity.

Construction

- From the submitted Environmental Statement (ES) it is understood that the construction of Hertford Road junction is currently due to commence in 2016 for a period of 26 weeks, with works lasting into 2017.
- With regards landscape and visual effects as a result of the construction stage, the findings of the ES are supported. Due to the relatively intrusive nature of the construction works, they are likely to result in some significant moderate to large adverse effects. However, based on the temporary and short term duration of the works, this is not deemed unacceptable.

³ The policy and guidance listed is not exhaustive, refer to NPPF and relevant Local Plans

⁴ National Planning Policy Framework (7 Requiring Good Design & 11 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment)

⁵ Comments are given in line with current best practice guidance "Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third edition, Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental management and Assessment." (GLVIA3)

Operation

- With regards landscape and visual effects at the operational stage (the completed development with established landscape mitigation planting) the findings of the ES are again supported. The development is likely to result in some permanent neutral to slight beneficial effects, with one slight adverse visual effects identified for a residential receptor on Oakwell Close that is not deemed significant.
- Overall the proposal is for the amendment of an existing highway scheme, the principle of this type and scale of highways development within this context is therefore deemed acceptable.
- It is suggested that one of the most sensitive aspects of the scheme, in both landscape and visual terms, is the eastern site boundary with the open golf course.

With reference to the Environmental Mitigation Drawing contained within the Landscape Strategy, it is proposed to introduce new tree and hedgerow planting along the eastern boundary. This approach is fully supported and should help strengthen the line of the existing hedgerow and soften views of the development from within the golf course.

The location and quantity of replacement/new trees do not appear to be provided at this stage. With reference to the Arboricultural Report and associated plans it appears that a total of 17 trees are proposed for removal. Where the removal of any tree is unavoidable its loss should be compensated for with new tree planting. In general it is recommended that for each tree removed, two new replacement trees should be planted.

The native hedgerow and tree mix specified within section '3.1 Planting' of the Landscape Strategy is supported.

- The submitted Landscape Strategy is fully supported, in particular with regards the following aspects that should be reflected within the detailed design:
 - Planting of native species, of local provenance, consistent with existing site species
 - Fencing and signs, used only where necessary, to reduce visual clutter
 - Directional lighting to reduce light spill
 - Limited signage, only where necessary

Conclusion

Overall the proposed development does not result in any unacceptable adverse landscape and visual effects.

The proposed amendments are typical of a highways scheme, and are viewed in context with the existing highway, helping reduce their overall effects on landscape character and visual amenity.

It is proposed to remove a total of 17 trees, a detailed landscape scheme should ensure that the loss of any planting is adequately mitigated and compensated for.