

**HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE**

WEDNESDAY 19 OCTOBER AT 10AM

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

Agenda No.

1

APPLICATION FOR AN ENLARGED ROUNDABOUT AT ANCHOR LANE AND THE A602; A SMOOTHER ALIGNMENT OF WESTMILL ROAD BETWEEN THE ENTRANCE TO WESTMILL QUARRY IN THE NORTH, AND SOUTH OF THE WESTMILL FARM ENTRANCE; AND A WIDENED WESTBOUND APPROACH AND INSTALLATION OF TRAFFIC SIGNALS AT THE JUNCTION OF THE A602 AND THE A10, INCLUDING THE CHANGES TO VERGES, LIGHTING, DRAINAGE, LANDSCAPING, AND ASSOCIATED ENGINEERING OPERATIONS NORTH-WEST OF WARE, HERTFORDSHIRE.

Report of the Chief Executive and Director of Environment

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Local Members: Councillor Andrew Stevenson
Councillor Ken Crofton
Councillor David Andrews

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 To consider planning application reference number 3/1245-16 for highway works on the A602 at the Anchor Lane junction, Westmill Road and the A10 junction to the north-west of Ware, Hertfordshire.

2 Summary

2.1 The County Council is 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 deliver highway improvements of its own.

2.2 This application seeks planning permission for an enlarged roundabout at Anchor Lane and the A602; a smoother alignment of Westmill Road between the entrance to Westmill Quarry in the north, and south of the Westmill Farm entrance; and a widened westbound approach and installation of traffic signals at the junction of the A602 and the A10, including changes to verges, lighting, drainage, landscaping, and associated engineering operations northwest of Ware, Hertfordshire. 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 split across four locations along the A602, between the village of Tonwell and the town of Ware. The road moves through a landscape of open fields and farmland in the area surrounding Tonwell, alongside the hamlet of Westmill and then to the urban fringe of Ware.
- 2.4 The eastbound approach into Ware along the A602 sees a Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC), Westmill Quarry on the left hand (northern) side of the carriageway, with the Westmill Farm leisure and retail complex to the south. Ermine Point Business Park is located at the northern junction of the A602 and the A10, with detached houses to the south. The eastern side of the A10 is characterised by residential development in and around the time of the 1960s.
- 2.5 Footways are available along parts of the A602 between Tonwell and Ware, but they do not provide a continuous link for pedestrian use parallel to the carriageway.
- 2.6 The application site is not located within or adjacent to any national, local landscape designated site or ecologically designated sites. There are a total of 14 non-statutory designated Local Wildlife Sites within 500 metres of the wider scheme which have been considered in the Environmental Statement.
- 2.7 The area subject of this application is largely washed over by the Metropolitan Green Belt. The area to the north of the Anchor Lane roundabout is in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt. Paragraph 90 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and supported by the Green Belt policies of the Local Plan, finds that local transport infrastructure may not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
- 2.8 The improvements are sought on an existing primary route through the Green Belt, and the accompanying Transport Assessment has shown the need to address the existing constraints on traffic flow and journey time reliability. The development is therefore “needed” in a Green Belt location. The small scale of the physical development, in support of the improvements, does not adversely impact on the openness of the Green Belt or the purpose of including land within it. The proposals are therefore not inappropriate in the Green Belt.
- 2.9 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 intrinsically linked to each other, and formed EIA development for which express planning permission is required.

2.10 The General Arrangement plans are 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.

2.11 The main planning issues of the application can be summarised as:

- Green Belt development
- 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)

2.12 The report concludes that the Chief Executive and Director of Environment should be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the following ELEVEN conditions: -

1. Time limit for commencement
2. Approved plans and documents
3. Landscaping plan; including tree protection and habitat improvements
4. Drainage strategy
5. Infiltration tests
6. Landfill gas monitoring
7. Ground investigations
8. Traffic management plan
9. Construction environmental management plan
10. Lighting
11. Fencing/boundary treatment

3 Description of the site

- 3.1 The application site forms part of the A602, which provides the primary 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 encompasses four separate locations within the single application, over a distance of 1.6 miles or 2600 metres. The estimated journey time, without traffic is approximately 3 minutes. The development is for highway improvements to an existing primary carriageway which is insufficient to cope with current traffic levels and sections of which do not meet current highway design standards.
- 3.3 The A602 at Tonwell is an area characterised by a landscape of open fields and farmlands, which moves into an increasingly developed landscape including a Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC), a landfill and residential properties on the approach to the town of Ware. The A602 intersects both with the B158, which provides a route into the town of Hertford, and the A10 linking central London to the port town of King's Lynn in Norfolk.
- 3.4 The length of the A602 proposed for improvement benefits from wildflower grass verges of varying widths, as well as a mix of mature hedgerows and standard trees. There is also a concentration of woodland planting adjacent to the business park, alongside the northbound slip road onto the A10. These areas of planting provide well-established screening to the hamlet of Westmill, and soften the view of the semi-urban development on the approach into Ware.
- 3.5 There are a number of public footpaths running adjacent to, or in close proximity to the A602. FP006 and FP007 are on the western boundary of the A602, opposite the proposed deceleration lane to Tonwell, although these routes will not be adversely impacted by any development.
- 3.6 FP010, FP026 and FP025 provide an east-west link under the A602 to the north of the hamlet of Westmill, with a further east-west link formed by the FP096, FP028 and FP022 to the north of the business park adjacent to the junction of the A602 and A10. Again, these public rights of way will not be significantly adversely impacted by the proposals, and the scheme provides additional footpath linkage.
- 3.7 The site is washed over by the Metropolitan Green Belt, and the area to the north of the Anchor Lane roundabout towards Tonwell is in the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt.
- 3.8 The proposed development relating to the realignment of Westmill Road is distinct from the area of archaeological interest in and around Westmill Farm.

- 3.9 The site is in Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding). The land to the south of the Anchor Lane roundabout, where the River Rib passes under the A602 is identified as having an increased risk of flooding, and this has been assessed in the accompanying Flood Risk Assessment.
- 3.10 The majority of the site is in Groundwater Source Protection Zone 2. The area of the proposed site compound and extending north towards Tonwell is within Zone 3 (lowest zone for source protection).
- 3.11 Records show that there have been no recent planning applications sought from Hertfordshire County Council, for works along the Tonwell to/from Ware section A602 or within the highway boundary.
- 3.12 Planning permission was granted by the Development Control Committee in September 2016 for improvements to the Hertford Road in Stevenage.
- 3.13 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

Tonwell North Junction

- 4.1 It is proposed to create a deceleration lane from the existing grass verge, to allow vehicles travelling from Stevenage to Ware to turn left from the A602 into the village of Tonwell. This would require the realignment of the public footpath. The land is within the highway boundary.
- 4.2 It is not proposed to remove any trees to facilitate this element of the development. The remaining grass verge will be reseeded with a wildflower mix.

Anchor Lane Junction

- 4.3 The proposal is to reposition and increase the size of the existing roundabout in order to provide two lane entries for all four arms. The exits onto the B158 Wadesmill Road and the minor road Anchor Lane will remain a single lane. The exit onto the A602 will remain two lanes towards Tonwell, with two lanes merging into one in the direction of the hamlet of Westmill. The land is within the highway boundary.
- 4.4 The proposal includes a new footpath to the southeast quadrant of the roundabout connecting to FP026, to provide a continuous pedestrian link from Tonwell to the hamlet of Westmill. This element of the proposal, and the repositioning of the larger roundabout will require the removal of part of a grouping of trees including Prunus and Oakland Maple. This is in addition to a Common Oak adjacent to the A602 and south of Tonwell, and compensatory planting is proposed.

- 4.5 The lighting columns will be relocated to reflect the revised junction alignment and upgraded to new LED technology which has a lesser residual impact or spill. Additional lighting columns are also proposed, although the roundabout will remain non-signalised.
- 4.6 A temporary compound is proposed on the northwest quadrant of the roundabout. Such development would ordinarily be permissible under Part 9, Schedule A of the General Permitted Development Order 2015.
- 4.7 The application also seeks to prohibit vehicles travelling towards Stevenage to make a right turn from the A602 into the hamlet of Westmill. Instead, road users would be required to take a U-turn at the roundabout.
- 4.8 The trees in proximity of the Westmill junction would be trimmed to improve sight lines for road users joining the A602.

Westmill Road

- 4.9 It is proposed to realign the existing carriageway, moving it to the south west, between the turning for CEMEX's Sand & Gravel distribution depot and Readymix Concrete Plant, and the Biffa's landfill facility. This will remove the sharp bend and allow for a deceleration lane to facilitate off-street parking for vehicles turning left into the HWRC out of the way of the A602 traffic at peak times, thereby improving road safety. The land is within the highway boundary.
- 4.10 The existing verge to the south and west of the carriageway would be used to facilitate the development, and this can allow the retention of the well-established hedgerow. The original carriageway would be restored to a verge and seeded with a wildflower grass.
- 4.11 Consistent with the current road arrangement, there are no proposals to provide lighting at this section.

A10 Junction

- 4.12 The proposals at the junction of the A602 and the A10 seek to provide two lanes on each of the four entry arms of the existing roundabout, with the flow of vehicles regulated by the part-time traffic signals.
- 4.13 To facilitate this development, the carriageway on the south east of the A10 as vehicles exit and egress Ware would need to be widened, although the overall size of the roundabout in terms of the central island and circulatory carriageway would not be changed.
- 4.14 Improved pedestrian and cycle links, with additional crossing points are proposed to improve access from Ware to the business park on the northern side of the A10, which would in turn link into the public footpath network beyond. The existing footpath that passes around the south of the junction would also be widened and improved.

- 4.15 As necessary, the existing lighting would be replaced with new LED technology.
- 4.16 The land is within the existing highway boundary as controlled by the applicant. The land required to widen the carriageway at the northwest quadrant of the junction was transferred to the control of the county council in 2009. This element of the scheme would result in the loss of established woodland planting beyond the verge which soften views for the residential properties opposite. Mitigation planting and screening is proposed.

5 Consultations

- 5.1 A total of 418 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 East Herts Council as District Planning Authority raises no objections to the application but identifies two locations where pedestrian crossing could be improved and questions whether it would be more costs effective and attractive to only re-align the north bound lane of the A602. The district council also requests to be consulted on subsequent landscaping schemes, in the interest of amenity. The consultation response is included at Appendix 3.
- 5.3 East Herts Council Environmental Health does not wish to restrict the grant of planning permission.
- 5.4 The Environment Agency originally objected to the application on the misunderstanding that the development increased flood risk at Dane End Brook. Dane End Brook is not within the area of the current application, and therefore the Environment Agency removed the objection to the Tonwell to/from Ware scheme.
- 5.5 The regulating officers for Westmill Landfill from the Environment Agency requested that a condition be applied requiring the submission of proposals for landfill gas monitoring and extraction systems, to be approved by and installed as agreed with the County Planning Authority.
- 5.6 Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority advised of the S278 application by Biffa Waste Services to install an Armco barrier to prevent vehicles queuing on and damaging the verge. No comment was made on the wider scheme.
- 5.7 Affinity Water advises that the application site is within the Groundwater Source Protection Zone of Musley Lane Pumping Station. Best practice should be adopted for the construction and operation of the development, in accordance with the relevant British Standards and Best Management Practises.

- 5.8 Herts Ecology finds that the overall ecological value of the proposed development site is low, consistent with roadsides, and that these will not be compromised given the mitigation measures included in the scheme proposals.
- 5.9 Historic England do not wish to offer any comments.
- 5.10 Highways England have no comments to make on the application as the site is remote from the Strategic Road Network.
- 5.11 HCC Flood Risk Management as Lead Local Flood Authority has no objection to the development on flood risk grounds. The LLFA recommends two conditions, requiring works to be carried out in accordance with the drainage strategy and mitigation measures as detailed in the submitted Flood Risk Assessment and to carry out infiltration tests to inform the proposed surface water drainage strategy.
- 5.12 The Landscape Officer from Hertfordshire County Council has advised that the works at Westmill Road, Tonwell Junction and the A10 roundabout are supported. Subject to further details in respect of the proposed tree works, it is deemed that the proposals at Westmill Hamlet are acceptable.
- 5.13 With regard to Anchor Lane Roundabout, the loss of existing trees should be better compensated for, to enhance the vegetated character of the highway setting and to soften views between the residential property (Green Banks) and the highway. A copy of the full consultation response is included at Appendix 4.
- 5.14 National Grid advises that the contractor is to contact National Grid prior to the commencement of works due to the proximity of National Grid apparatus.
- 5.15 Natural England has no comments to make on the application, on the basis that the proposal is unlikely to affect any statutorily protected sites or landscapes. The proposal has not been assessed for impacts on protected species, and Natural England refers to its Standing Advice.
- 5.16 Rights of Way has no comments to make on the application.
- 5.17 No other statutory consultation responses were received.
- 5.18 Public consultation

19 responses were received. There were 16 responses either objecting to, or raising concerns in respect of the proposed development. Two responses raised questions about the development, and the final response was in respect of a part of the wider scheme, and not part of the current application.

5.19 The objections can be summarised as follows:-

Objection 1 – Need

- Query whether traffic lights are needed on the A602/A10 roundabout
- Traffic lights are expensive and untested
- Scheme is unnecessary and funds could be better used elsewhere
- The A602 is quiet outside of peak hours
- The deceleration lane into Tonwell will be unused for the majority of the time
- No need for the junction changes at Tonwell
- Residents have always been able to right turn into Westmill hamlet; any restriction should only be in peak hours
- Improvements can be achieved through cutting back vegetation
- Drivers should have better lane discipline, assisted by re-painting the lines
- Traffic is held up by the landfill road sweeper

Objection 2 – Design of the development

- It will be harder for residents of Tonwell to both join and leave the A602
- Concern at difficulty of residents joining the A602 from the properties on Westmill Road (to the west of the A602/A10 junction)
- Deceleration lane into Tonwell should be more acute to force drivers to slow down
- No provision to improve safety for cyclists
- There should be a proper cycle way between Anchor Lane and the A10
- Traffic lights at the A602/A10 should be used full time to assist pedestrian crossing
- Verge and footpath improvements required to increase ease of use and access to Public Footpaths

Objection 3 – Road Safety

- No measures to reduce existing speed limits; the Westmill section should be reduced to 40mph
- No measures to monitor road speed, such as speed cameras
- Increased risk of accidents for people using the Tonwell junction
- Flattening the bend at Westmill will lead to increased speeds
- Widening the carriageway will allow vehicles to travel faster
- Harder for pedestrians to safely cross the A602 at Tonwell, between the footpaths
- Speed limit should be reduced to 20mph in Tonwell
- Application does not address issue of lorries parking on verge prior to entering the Biffa site

Objection 4 – Landscape Impact

- Reducing the grass verge at Tonwell will have an adverse landscape impact
- The existing mature trees provide screening from the industrial estate for Westmill Road residents
- No trees should be removed from the Anchor Lane roundabout
- Details should be provided as to how root damage will be avoided

Objection 5 – Wildlife Impact

- Realignment of highway at Tonwell will disturb the habitat of hedgehogs and hazel dormice using the hedgerow

Objection 6 – Residential Amenity

- Noise, disruption and inconvenience during construction phase
- Adverse impact on the quality of life of Westmill Road residents
- Contractors vehicles will block access to residential properties on Westmill Road and create litter
- Increase in road noise due to increase traffic flow
- Increase in road noise due to removal of screening
- Disturbance from night time working
- Noise should be kept to a minimum to prevent disturbing a baby

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 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review 2007, and the saved policies within it.
- 6.2 The Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been adopted, and supplements Policy GBC14 of the East Herts Local Plan. It is therefore a material consideration to determining planning applications.
- 6.3 The emerging District Plan will be subject to a Pre-Submission (or Regulation 19) consultation from 3 November 2016 until 15 December 2016. The plan has not been subject to consideration by the Planning Inspectorate and therefore great weight cannot be given to the draft policies contained within it. However, it is noted that the Key Diagram identifies the A602 for road improvements, and it is listed as a strategic infrastructure requirement under Proposed Policy DPS5 – Infrastructure Requirements.
- 6.4 The most relevant planning policies to consider for this application are:

East Herts Local Plan

- Policy GBC1 Appropriate Development in the Green Belt
- Policy GBC2 The Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt

- Policy GBC3 Appropriate Development in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt
- Policy GBC14 Landscape Character
- Policy TR1 Traffic Reduction in New Developments
- Policy TR3 Transport Assessments
- Policy TR9 Cycling – Cycle Routes
- Policy TR22 Surplus Transport Sites
- Policy ENV1 Design and Environmental Quality
- Policy ENV2 Landscaping
- Policy ENV11 Protection of Existing Hedgerows and Trees
- Policy ENV14 Local Sites
- Policy ENV17 Wildlife Habitats
- Policy ENV18 Water Environment
- Policy ENV19 Development in Areas Liable to Flood
- Policy ENV20 Groundwater Protection
- Policy ENV21 Surface Water Drainage
- Policy ENV23 Light Pollution and Floodlighting
- Policy ENV24 Noise Generating Development
- Policy ENV25 Noise Sensitive Development
- Policy ENV27 Air Quality
- Policy LRC9 Public Rights of Way

- 6.5 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.
- 6.6 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:
 - Green Belt development
 - 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)

Green Belt development

- 7.2 The application seeks development in the Green Belt. Paragraph 90 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that certain forms of development are not inappropriate in the Green Belt, provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt. One such use is “local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location”.

- 7.3 The existing route of the A602 passes through the Metropolitan Green Belt, and the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt. The Transport Assessment submitted in support of the application has demonstrated the requirement for the improvements, in that there are capacity constraints and visibility issues between Tonwell and Ware.
- 7.4 The proposed development is sought on an existing primary route through the Green Belt, and the modelling in the Transport Assessment has shown the development would deliver improvements to traffic flow and journey time reliability. The development is therefore “needed” in a Green Belt location, with further details set out in paragraphs 7.7 to 7.20.
- 7.5 The scale of the physical development is relatively small, with the relocation of lighting columns, in line with the reconfigured junctions. The proposals do not encroach on the openness of the Green Belt, and are also confined to the highway boundary. Where replacement has not already occurred, the columns will be replaced with LED technology that has a reduced spill and therefore reduces the impact on the Green Belt.
- 7.6 The proposal does not adversely impact the openness of the Green Belt, or the purpose of including land within it. The development is for local transport infrastructure needed in a Green Belt location, and is therefore deemed not to be inappropriate in the Green Belt. The application is in compliance with Paragraph 90 of the NPPF and with Local Plan Policies GBC1, GBC2 and GBC3, which also protect against inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Need and justification

- 7.7 The application 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.
- 7.8 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 both Stevenage and East Hertfordshire. Residents and businesses are heavily reliant on the A602 to facilitate movement in and around the county.
- 7.9 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.

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

- 7.10 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;
- 7.11 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.
- 7.12 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.
- 7.13 Journey time surveys have found that road users experience delays in both directions during the morning and evening peaks, with the worst delays occurring on the eastbound (i.e. from Stevenage towards Ware) during the morning peaks. These delays are anticipated to increase with projected housing growth, which is likely to increase traffic on the A602.
- 7.14 The scheme is proposed in order to improve the overall standard of the road, ease congestion, reduce journey times and improve journey time reliability along the A602 between Stevenage and Ware.
- 7.15 The Anchor Lane roundabout is identified as limiting the through flow of traffic, which results in queues and slow moving traffic, particularly during the morning peak. This is attributed to the capacity of the junction in terms of the number of lanes available on approach. The proposal is to create two lane approaches on each arm, with two lane exits on the A602. The single lane exits, albeit it realigned, would be retained on Anchor Lane and Wadesmill Road.
- 7.16 Additional peak time queues are experienced by users of the A602/A10 roundabout, which it is sought to manage through carriageway widening and the installation of part-time traffic signals on three of the four entry arms.
- 7.17 Objections have been raised on the need for the development, and that the available money could be better used on alternative road improvements. The proposal is to provide highway improvements and as a County Planning Authority, the decision has to be made on the

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

merits of the planning proposals as set out in the application. The Highway Authority, as the applicant, have applied to a specific funding pot that is only available to support major road schemes, rather than, for example, the repair of potholes.

- 7.18 Respondents have also suggested that the congestion at the A602/A10 roundabout could be readily overcome by improved driver lane discipline. The proposal includes carriageway widening which will facilitate better lane discipline, but their appropriate use is ultimately reliant on individual drivers.
- 7.19 It was also suggested that sufficient improvements could be achieved through cutting back the vegetation at the highway boundary. While this would offer a short term improvement in visibility, the section of Westmill Road fails to meet current design standards. The aim of the proposed scheme is to address a number of highway concerns including, but not limited to sight lines. The necessary improvements, and increase in capacity, can only be delivered through more fundamental changes to the existing road network.
- 7.20 The proposal is also compliant with the overarching sustainability aims of the NPPF, and addressing Challenge 1.1 of the Local Transport Plan 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. The proposals are supported by the finding of a Transport Assessment, in compliance with Local Plan Policy TR3.

Impact on highways and transport

- 7.21 The proposal seeks to provide junction improvements which will improve the throughput and flow of traffic, and to increase the capacity as compared to the existing carriageway configuration.
- 7.22 The capacity improvements for the Anchor Lane roundabout have been set out at paragraph 4.3 above. The right turn ban into the hamlet of Westmill and the deceleration lane left into Tonwell are both required in support of the improved flow of traffic on the A602.
- 7.23 Objections have been received on the basis that the deceleration lane into Tonwell will be unused for the majority of the time. It is acknowledged that the wider scheme seeks to improve the reliability of peak time journey times and traffic flow, but that the deceleration lane supports that wider scheme and improves the safety of drivers leaving the main carriageway.
- 7.24 The angle of the deceleration lane, and the overall junction configuration, will meet current design standards, in order to facilitate a safe exit from the A602 and allow entry into the village of Tonwell at an appropriate speed. A more acute angle may force rapid deceleration, and compromise highway safety.

- 7.25 Requests for the speed limit within the village of Tonwell to be reduced to 20mph do not form part of the current scheme, and is not part of the A602 carriageway. Any request to reduce the speed limit, either in Tonwell or any other location, would need to be raised separately from the town planning process, seeking a Traffic Regulation Order through Hertfordshire Highways.
- 7.26 A right turn ban into the hamlet of Westmill is proposed to improve the flow of traffic on the A602, and in turn to protect the safety of drivers. While in place since the original construction of the A602, this does not confer a right in perpetuity; revisions can occur as design standards change and in response to observed highway conditions. Vehicles requiring access to Westmill hamlet will be able to perform a U-turn at the Anchor Lane roundabout, adding approximately 600 metres to their journey distance.
- 7.27 The Westmill Road section of the A602, adjacent to the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) does not meet current design standard due to the sharp bend and resultant restricted visibility. The realignment will improve the safety of the road at this point.
- 7.28 The application also seeks improved right turn lanes into the HWRC, the landfill site and into Westmill Road. Traffic queuing to enter these sites compromises the flow of traffic due to the obstruction of the main carriageway. Deceleration left-turn lanes are proposed into both the HWRC and the landfill site, to provide off-road (off of the main carriageway) parking for vehicles seeking to enter either location.
- 7.29 The redundant section of the A602, resultant from the realignment of the main carriageway will be used for the deceleration lane into the HWRC, although the majority of this land will be returned to a verge. This is compliant with Local Plan Policy TR22.
- 7.30 The second deceleration lane for the landfill site will help to address the concerns of landfill vehicles parking on the verge. Separate from this round of funding and improvements, there are proposals by Biffa Waste Services to install an Armco barrier. This does not form part of the current application.
- 7.31 The A602/A10 roundabout is identified as operating above its theoretical capacity threshold during peak hours, resulting in delayed and unreliable journeys on this primary route. It is proposed to relieve this constraint through carriageway widening and part time signalisation of the junction (see paragraph 4.12)
- 7.32 Traffic in the area is projected to continue to grow, thereby exacerbating future capacity issues at the A602/A10 roundabout. However, the Transport Assessment found that the proposed widening of the A602 Westmill Road approach and signal control on three entry arms would allow for significant improvements in traffic flow and reduction of congestion, although the junction still would operate above its theoretical

capacity threshold forecast for 2024.

- 7.33 The development does not specifically seek to reduce road speed; there is no specific concern in respect of vehicle speed, other than as regulated by the existing speed limits on the A602 between Tonwell and Ware, which are enforced by the Police. The planning aim of the development is to address traffic flow, congestion and visibility issues, given the existing and forecast volume of traffic, and that sections of the road do not meet current design standards.
- 7.34 The A602 would 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 consistent with the sustainability considerations as set out at paragraph 7.20, and improves traffic flows through traffic management and (relatively) small scale intervention as set out in the 'Congestion' policy statement of the Local Transport Plan.
- 7.35 Consideration is also given to the effect on other travellers; non-motorised users (NMUs), pedestrians, 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.
- 7.36 The predominant NMU are cyclists, this activity is concentrated at weekends and on summertime evenings, reflecting its recreational nature as opposed to a method of commuting. There are no measures specifically to increase cycling as a mode of transport. This element of the scheme does not meet the aims of Local Plan Policy TR9, but this must be balanced against the available land within the highway boundary and the reliability of flow of motorised traffic on the A602.
- 7.37 It is proposed to continue the existing footpath across the Anchor Lane roundabout to link up the FP026, providing a direct link from Tonwell to the hamlet of Westmill and the public footpath network beyond. The proposal also includes a new cycleway and footpath along the northern section of the A602/A10 junction linking Westmill Road and Gentleman's Field to the urban fringe of Ware. These elements of the scheme meet the aims of Local Plan Policy TR1(a).
- 7.38 Walkers have advised that it will be harder to cross the A602 at Tonwell at the point where the FP06 meets the main carriageway. To address this concern, the existing central traffic island will be retained and the footway on the eastern verge would be realigned to meet the crossing point.
- 7.39 Concern has been raised that the traffic lights will only be operational part-time during the morning and evening peaks. It is considered that full time light will cause delays to off-peak cars, and that there will be

sufficient opportunity for pedestrian to cross safely. However, this can be monitored and amended at a later date, as necessary.

- 7.40 Further comment is made that traffic is delayed by the road sweeper from the landfill site. The surveys of the traffic flow demonstrate the wider junction at the A602/A10 is operating above capacity, and this cannot be attributed to the road sweeper. The road sweeper is used to clear mud and debris from the highway, to reduce skid risk.
- 7.41 Residents of the properties opposite the business park have raised concerns about the increased difficulty in joining the A602. The applicant has advised that the phasing of the part time lights would allow vehicles to pull out during the lights changeover and that a central hatched area would allow for a two-phase crossing, if necessary. During off-peak times, the junction would operate as existing, and the lower number of vehicles in the off-peak periods provides sufficient opportunity to join the carriageway safely.
- 7.42 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 once the scheme is operational and it is further noted that the number of people using these routes is low. The scheme is therefore compliant with Local Plan Policy LRC9.
- 7.43 There are likely to be no equestrian flows between Tonwell and Ware along the A602 due to the nature of the carriageway.
- 7.44 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 that may impact journey routes or times.
- 7.45 No rail routes would be impacted by the proposed development, or the wider scheme.
- 7.46 The proposed highway improvements between Tonwell and Ware are in support of Paragraph 35 of the National Planning Policy Framework and the Local Transport Plan.

Quality of design

- 7.47 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). There are limited opportunities to make a design statement, given that the development relates to highway furniture. However, the proposals provide a cohesive design as relates to the existing highway infrastructure. It is therefore consistent with Local Plan Policy ENV1.

Landscape and visual impact

- 7.48 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.
- 7.49 The predominant regional landscape topology between Tonwell and Ware is described as 'Lowland Village Chalklands', which is characterised as a low lying, but gently rolling arable landscape. There are local landmarks, and field sizes are medium to large and enclosed by hawthorn hedges. This landscape is described as tranquil with long distance views and is considered to be of moderate value and with a moderate susceptibility to change in relation to the proposed development.
- 7.50 The tranquillity of the landscape in proximity to areas of mineral extraction and other development is significantly reduced.
- 7.51 Further assessment is available in the form of Local Landscape Character. Much of the area of development is defined as 'Ware Parklands', which is a "Gently undulating ridge above river valleys with narrow steep slopes to Lea and Rib rivers, with small pasture and arable fields." It is noted that the road transport network has a strong influence in the area and the landscape is considered to be in poor condition. The hamlet of Westmill is within the Lower Rib Valley, and also described as in poor condition.
- 7.52 The overall significance of effect during the construction phase on this landscape is considered to be neutral/slight adverse, with a moderate adverse impacts for recreational users of the public rights of way who have a high sensitivity to landscape change.
- 7.53 The operational impacts on the landscape is generally measured as neutral, with a negligible adverse impact generated by the realigned roundabout at Anchor Lane due to the scale of the development.
- 7.54 The mitigation of landscape and visual impacts during the construction phase can be achieved through a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), and secured by condition. This can include, but would not be limited to, the control of lighting to construction compounds and haul roads, and the sensitive design of site hoardings. The CEMP should also address how the roots of existing trees will be protected.
- 7.55 The LVIA finds that there would be no significant residual adverse effects on receptors from the scheme, a conclusion supported by the HCC Landscape Officer. The loss of any planting is to be mitigated for by the imposition of a condition requiring a submission of a detailed landscaping scheme for approval, with improvement to the draft replacement proposals at Anchor Lane roundabout and confirmation of the extent of works to trees at the hamlet of Westmill.

- 7.56 The development is therefore compliant with Local Plan Policies GBC14, ENV2 and ENV11. An arboricultural report has been submitted, and provisional mitigation proposals have been submitted which demonstrates the applicant's commitment to provide compensatory planting for the loss of one tree, one group and three partial groups of trees.
- 7.57 Where replacement has not already occurred, the existing lighting columns will be upgraded to LED technology to meet compliance with HCC standards, minimising glare and light spillage. As necessary, the columns will be repositioned to reflect the realigned carriageway and junction configuration, and in compliance with Local Plan Policy ENV23.

Impact on ecology and biodiversity

- 7.58 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 area between Tonwell and Ware.
- 7.59 Effects to ecological resources of a district or higher level are potentially significant and may be a material consideration in the determination of the planning application. The Environmental Statement has therefore considered the effects predicted on the Dane End Tributary, Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs), Great Crested Newts (GCNs), barn owls and bats.
- 7.60 The proposed works between Tonwell and the A10 junction take place largely within the existing highway boundary and associated verges. This is a mown grassland with some scrub and plantation woodland, 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.
- 7.61 While sections of hedgerow would be lost to facilitate the development, the draft landscaping scheme proposes like for like replacement. The species composition would either match the existing or be species rich, resulting in a permanent beneficial improvement at a local level, overcoming the significant adverse effect during the construction phase.
- 7.62 Earthworks to facilitate the expansion of the Anchor Lane roundabout would result in a temporary loss within the Watton Springs LWS; the area to be lost does not represent the wet woodland or broad-leaved semi-natural woodland habitat types for which the LWS is designated, and therefore the impact is not considered significant.
- 7.63 There are no issues in respect of GCNs, barn owls or bats in this section of the wider scheme, other than the consideration of the lighting required for night time working so as not to impact the passing routes of bats. This can be included within a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), and required by condition. The nesting and breeding area

of birds can be similarly protected.

- 7.64 The proposed development is therefore compliant with Local Plan Policies ENV11, ENV14 and ENV17, and the over-arching aims of Chapter 11 of the NPPF (Conserving and enhancing the natural environment).

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

- 7.65 The Environmental Statement has considered the potential impact of 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. The assessment is 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).
- 7.66 While there are 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 between Tonwell and Ware. The works at the two roundabouts are scheduled for during the daytime, with day and night-time works on the Westmill Road section.
- 7.67 The Environmental Statement finds that the works at Westmill Road are not predicted to exceed the threshold for potential adverse noise effects on residential receptors at any stage during construction. The works at the Anchor Lane and the A602/A10 roundabouts are predicted to exceed the threshold of potential noise adverse effects at residential receptors as a worse case noise levels during site clearance, earthworks and surfacing.
- 7.68 The noise levels can be regulated through good practise, and where necessary with formal resolution via the statutory Section 61 Control of Pollution Act 1974 procedure. However, there are no night-time works anticipated on the two roundabouts within this section of the wider scheme, and night-times on Westmill Road are not anticipated to be required regularly or to last for more than one night.
- 7.69 In the longer term, due to the positioning of the realigned junctions and carriageway as compared to the existing highway configuration, there is no significant change expected to the traffic flows and speeds that would trigger a noise level change threshold.
- 7.70 It is anticipated that worse case internal vibration from earthworks at the two roundabouts will exceed the threshold of adverse effects at residential receptors. However, these works are temporary and not anticipated to last more than one week.

- 7.71 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 Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).
- 7.72 The Environmental Statement concludes that noise and vibration impacts can be effectively mitigated. The proposed development is therefore compliant with Local Plan Policy ENV24 and ENV25.
- 7.73 The proposed scheme is not within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), and therefore this issue was not assessed further in the Environmental Statement.
- 7.74 However, the close proximity of the residential properties means that there is a high sensitivity to dust that 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 into a CEMP. The proposed development is therefore compliant with Local Plan Policy ENV27.
- 7.75 Concerns regarding the contractor behaviour, in terms blocking access to residential properties and creating litter can be addressed by appropriate site management behaviour, and requesting that contractors park within the site compound.

Environmental Statement

- 7.76 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.
- 7.77 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

- 7.78 It was considered that due to the limited nature of the works within the highway boundary between Tonwell to/from Ware, that setting impacts on designated assets would only be likely to occur within 100 metres of the proposed development. A desk-based study of designated assets was completed on this basis. The review of non-designated assets was widened to a 1 kilometre study area to provide context of potential archaeological remains.
- 7.79 There is one designated asset present within 100 metres of the study area. This is Paynes Hall, a Grade II Listed structure, in close proximity

to the Anchor Lane roundabout. The application proposes compensatory planting to screen the setting of Paynes Hall, in compliance with Local Plan Policy ENV1.

7.80 There are 44 non designated cultural heritage assets within 1 kilometre of the central alignment of the A602 between Tonwell and the A10. The specific works sought to improve this primary road are to be carried out in an area already disturbed by the construction of the existing road, and would not impact on the 44 heritage assets.

Environmental Statement – Geology, Soils and Materials

7.81 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 for both the construction and operation phases.

7.82 The greatest risk was found to occur during the construction phase in proximity to the carriageway realignment at Westmill, where there are a number of quarries, which have or are being used for landfill. This presents a moderate risk as earthworks and excavations can mobilise historic landfill, with the potential to cause a short term impact on human health.

7.83 A ground investigation prior to construction can be required by condition. This would identify any unexpected contamination that can be addressed through actions and mitigation to be agreed with the appropriate regulatory body. The Environment Agency has recommended the inclusion of landfill gas monitoring and extraction schemes, in proximity to the Westmill Landfill.

7.84 During the construction phase, a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) can be required by condition to minimise the risk from accidental spills and leaks to negligible through adopting best practice techniques. The CEMP is to include guidance on the soil stripping, stockpiling and re-use, to ensure that soils can be returned to agricultural use.

7.85 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 section from Tonwell to/from Ware.

7.86 The proposed development is therefore compliant with Local Plan Policies ENV20 and ENV21.

Environmental Statement – Community and Private Assets

- 7.87 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.
- 7.88 No buildings are affected by the proposed scheme.
- 7.89 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 Tonwell to/from Ware improvements.

Environmental Statement – Road Drainage and the Water Environment

- 7.90 A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), 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.
- 7.91 The Flood Risk Assessment finds that the proposed development would not impact the flood risk characteristics of the River Rib.
- 7.92 It is considered that the proposed changes to the existing road network Tonwell to/from Ware would have a neutral impact during the construction phase, as there is unlikely to be a measurable change to the River Rib or the underlying groundwater regime. The overall risk is characterised as low.
- 7.93 The proposal incorporates SuDS in order to limit the risk of surface water flooding. However, it is acknowledged within the Flood Risk Assessment that the reduction in height between the ground level of the road and the kerb on the Anchor Lane roundabout puts the verge area to the south at risk of flooding. It is proposed to install a shallow ditch to the south of Anchor Lane to increase surfacewater storage, and to prevent the flow of water southwards towards Paynes Hall.
- 7.94 The proposed development is therefore compliant with Local Plan Policies ENV18, ENV19, ENV20 and ENV21.

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 improvements to the A602 between Tonwell and the junction of the A602/A10 at Ware are contained

with 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 seeking local transport infrastructure improvements for which the need in a Green Belt location has been demonstrated. The proposals do not adversely impact on the openness of the Green Belt, or the purpose of including land within the Green Belt. The physical scale of the development is relatively small, and the purpose of the development is to improve traffic flow and journey time reliability, rather than increase the number of vehicles passing through the area of Green Belt. The development is therefore not inappropriate in the Green Belt.
- 8.5 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, and referral to the Secretary of State.
 1. Time limit for commencement
 2. Approved plans and documents
 3. Landscaping plan; including tree protection and habitat improvements
 4. Drainage strategy
 5. Infiltration tests
 6. Landfill gas monitoring
 7. Ground investigations
 8. Traffic management plan
 9. Construction environmental management plan
 10. Lighting
 11. Fencing/boundary treatment

Background information used by the author in compiling this report

Planning application reference 3/1245-16 including supporting documents and environmental statement

Consultee responses

Relevant policy documents:

National Planning Policy Framework 2012

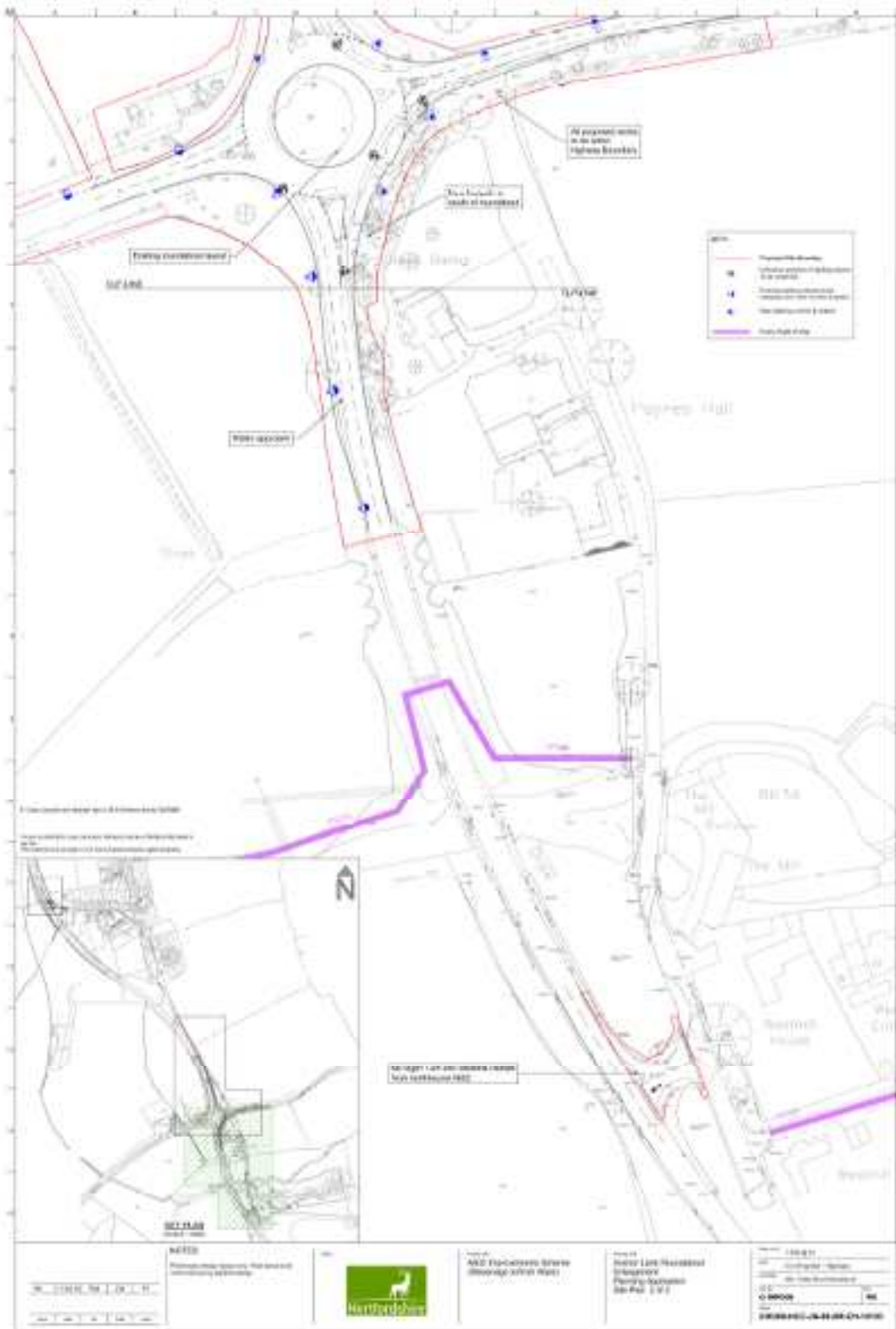
East Herts Local Plan Second Review 2007

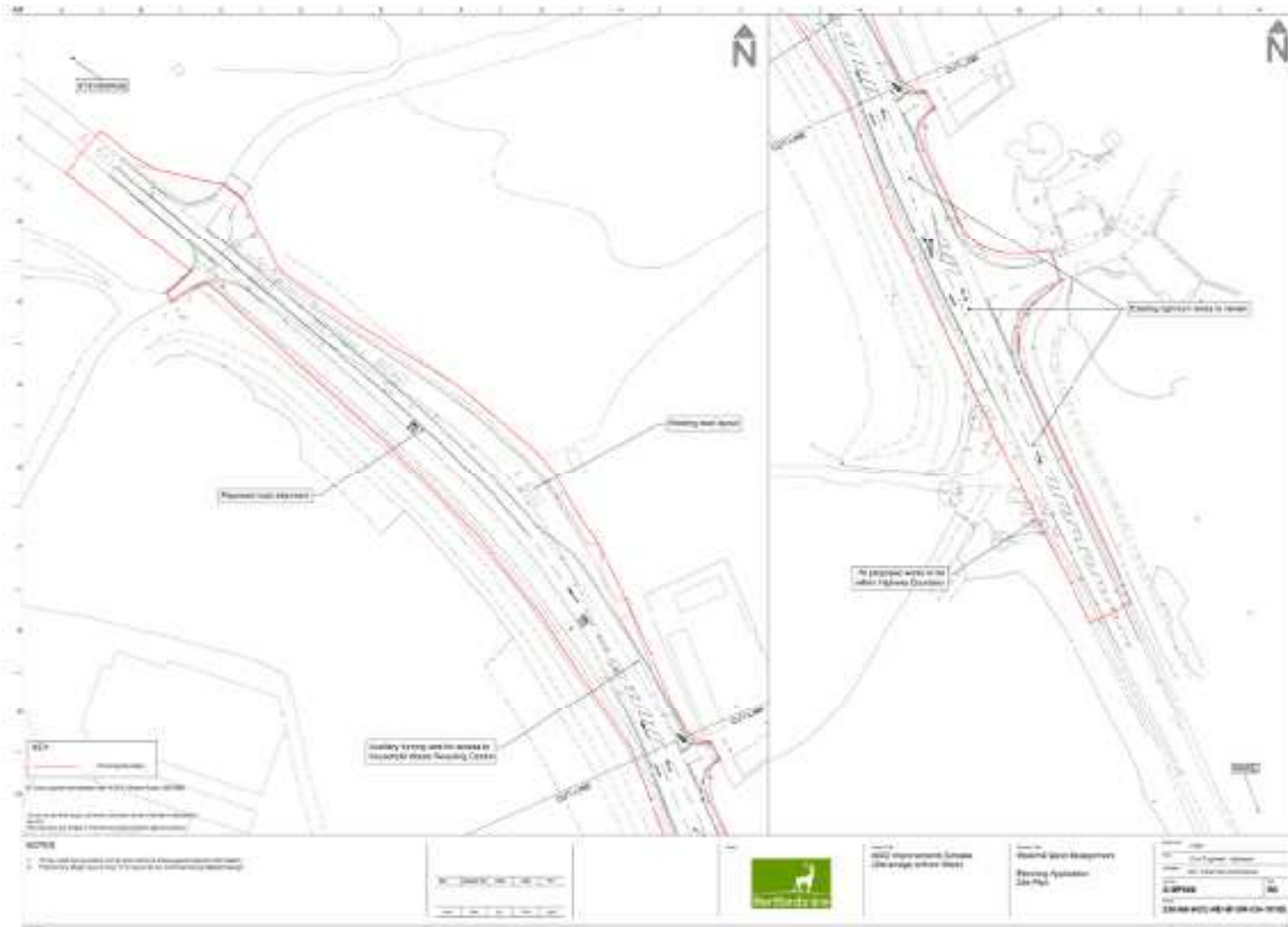
Landscape Character Assessment SPD

Hertfordshire County Council Local Transport Plan (2011 – 2031)

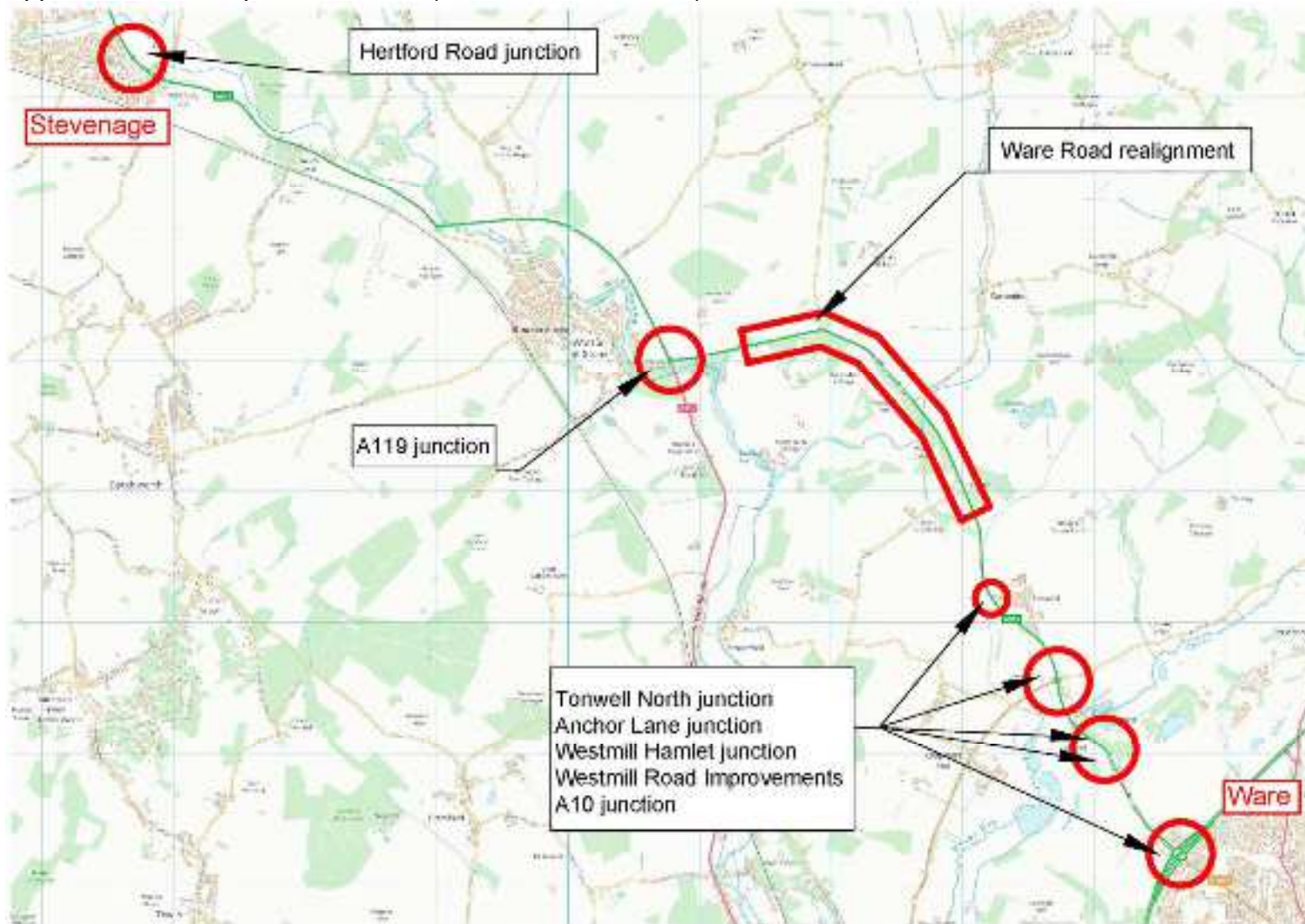
Appendices

1. General Arrangement (four plans)
2. The Proposed Scheme (Tonwell to/from Ware) within the wider area
3. Consultation response from East Herts Council
4. Consultation response from HCC Landscape Officer
5. Environmental Statement: Volume 1 – Non-technical summary





Appendix 2 The Proposed Scheme (Tonwell to/from Ware) within the wider area



Appendix 3
Consultation response from East Herts Council



East Herts Council
Walfields, Pags Lane
Hertford, Herts
SG13 8EQ
Tel: 01279 655261

Sharon Threlfall
Spatial Planning & Economy
CHN216,
County Hall
Hertford
SG13 8DN

Your contact: Lisa Page
Ext: 1578
Fax: 01992 531440
Our Ref: 3/16/1245/CPO
Your Ref: SLUP/CM0966
Date: 17th June 2016

Dear Sharon Threlfall,

RE: Enlarged roundabout at Anchor Lane and the A602 and various road improvements to the A602 between the Anchor Lane roundabout and the A10

I write in response to your letter dated 25 May 2016 seeking comments in respect of an application you have received to enlarge the roundabout at Anchor Lane and the A602, together with road improvements to the A602 between the Anchor Lane roundabout and the A10, including traffic signals at the junction of the A602 and A10.

Having reviewed the application, I would comment that while East Herts Council raises no objections to the application there are two locations where pedestrian crossings could be improved, possibly by the provision of a refuge or raised crossing, as:

- The crossing between FP002 and FP002 on Westmill Road
- The crossing from FP002 to Tonesell which will be widened (this is a very fine stretch of road).

Furthermore, I would question whether it would be more cost effective and attractive to only re-align the north bound land of the A602 (Westmill Road).

Additionally, I would also be pleased to be consulted on the associated landscaping of the scheme which is important in the interest of amenity.

Yours sincerely

Tim Haggard
Development Control Team Manager



www.eastherts.gov.uk

Appendix 4
 Consultation response from HCC Landscape Officer

Landscape Report	2nd September 2016
From: HCC Landscape Officer, Natural Historic and Built Environment Advisory Team	To: HCC Planning Officer, Spatial Planning
Application No.	3/1245-16
Location:	A602 and A10, North-West, Ware, Hertfordshire
Proposal:	Proposed application for an enlarged roundabout at Anchor Lane and the A602; a smoother alignment of Westmill road between the entrance to Westmill quarry in the north, and south of the Westmill Farm entrance; and a widened westbound approach and the installation of traffic signals at the junction of the A602 and A10, including associated changes to verges, lighting, drainage, landscaping, and associated engineering operations North-West of Ware, East Hertfordshire

1 Landscape Policy & Guidelines³

1.1 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.

2 Background

The Landscape Officer and other stakeholders have been consulted on the proposals at the pre-application stage, and broad principles were established regarding the approach to the landscape strategy.

3 Landscape and Visual Comments⁵

3.1 Construction

From the submitted Environmental Statement (ES) it is understood that the proposed development is currently due to commence in 2017 for a period of 26 weeks, with a 2 month advanced works period.

The construction period is likely to result in adverse landscape and visual effects of varying levels of significance depending on the magnitude of works.

With regards the duration of the construction stage and any adverse effects, the findings of the ES are supported, in that they will be temporary however long term due to the phasing of each element of works over at least 26 weeks.

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)

The landscape strategy proposes that all temporary construction compounds will be returned to their previous Landuse, mostly agricultural land.

Overall the landscape and visual effects as a result of the construction period are not deemed unacceptable.

3.2 Operation

The landscape and visual effects of the proposed development at operation is considered for each site below.

1. Tonwell Junction

The proposed works include a new deceleration lane within the existing verge, plus a replacement footpath. Proposed planting includes restoration of verge with wildflower grass.

The proposed works are considered small scale, they are well accommodated within the existing verge and highway boundary and do not impact upon any important landscape features or views.

Conclusion

Overall the works do not result in any significant negative landscape and visual effects and are therefore deemed acceptable.

2. Anchor Lane Roundabout

The proposed works include increasing the size of the existing roundabout, extending it in a north east direction, and incorporating two-lane entry on all four arms. It is also proposed to extend the existing footpath along the A602 in a southerly direction.

The proposed works are considered large scale; however remain well accommodated within the highway boundary.

Trees

With reference to the submitted Arboricultural Development Report and supporting plans, the proposed works affect a number of existing trees including the partial removal of two tree groups that front the roundabout (G10 and G11), and the removal of a Common Oak (188) on the eastern side of the northern approach.

With reference to the arboricultural impact assessment (sheet 10), the proposed works to tree group G10 appear relatively small scale and comprise the removal of a thin slither of trees/vegetation fronting the northern approach arm.

The proposed works to tree group G11 appear more substantial and comprise the removal of a relatively large area of trees, roughly estimated to be at least 60% of the group. The removal of trees negatively impacts upon the rural setting of the road and opens up views between the residential properties (Green Banks), the highway and the wider landscape to the west.

The proposed landscape strategy shows three new standard trees to screen views from the properties; however they appear to overlap an area where the trees are to be retained. On balance, considering the area of trees to be removed, the opportunity to provide more substantial replacement planting should be explored and extended along the eastern side of the southern approach to replace that lost to the front of the residential property (Green Banks).

Wildflower

The proposed wildflower grass is supported.

Hard landscape detail

The approach to the footpath (black bitmac) and lighting/signs are supported.

Conclusion

Overall providing the loss of existing trees are compensated for, to enhance the vegetated character of the highway setting and to soften views between the residential property (Green Banks) and the highway, the works are not considered to result in any significant negative landscape and visual effects and are therefore deemed acceptable.

3. Westmill Hamlet

The proposal is for a right turn into Westmill Hamlet and deceleration taper.

The proposed works are considered small scale and are well accommodated within the existing highway boundary.

Trees

The proposals state that the trees will be trimmed back to allow for better sight lines however these works do not appear to be shown in the submitted Arboricultural Development Report and supporting plans.

Conclusion

Subject to details regarding the proposed tree works, the works do not result in any significant negative landscape and visual effects and are therefore deemed acceptable.

4. Westmill Road

The proposed works include the realignment of the carriageway to remove the bend, with new access points and a deceleration provided into the HWRC and landfill site.

The proposed works are considered relatively large scale; however remain well accommodated within the highway boundary.

Trees

There does not appear to be any trees affected by the proposed works.

Wildflower

The proposed wildflower grass is supported.

Conclusion

Overall the works do not result in any significant negative landscape and visual effects and are therefore deemed acceptable.

5. A10 Roundabout

The proposed works include the installation of traffic signals, widening of the eastbound approach, the provision of a footway/cycleway and crossing points.

The proposed works are considered relatively large scale; however the majority are well accommodated within the highway boundary.

Trees

With reference to the submitted Arboricultural Development Report and supporting plans, the partial removal of a group of trees (G15) is proposed.

The proposed landscape strategy shows an area of new woodland planting to mitigate for that lost to the works and should help conserve the wooded setting of the highway and amenity of views.

The proposed standard tree planting to screen the business park is supported.

Wildflower

The proposed wildflower grass is supported.

Hard landscape detail

The approach to the footpath (black bitmac) and lighting/signs are supported.

Conclusion

Overall the works do not result in any significant negative landscape and visual effects and are therefore deemed acceptable.

4 Conclusion

- The proposed works at **Westmill Road, Tonwell Junction** and the **A10 Roundabout** are supported.
- With regards **Anchor Lane Roundabout** the loss of existing trees should be better compensated for, to enhance the vegetated character of the highway setting and to soften views between the residential property (Green Banks) and the highway
- With regards **Westmill Hamlet** the extent of works to trees should be confirmed.

DRAFT CONDITIONS

Time Limit

- 1. The development to which this planning permission relates shall be begun no later than three years from the date of this permission.**

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Act 1990 (as amended).

Approved Plans

- 2. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the details submitted in the application dated 11 May 2016 (*Plan numbers to be added*).**

- **Site plan**
- **Location plan**
- **General arrangement plans**
- **Subway extension elevations**
- **Environmental Statement***
- **Flood Risk Assessment***
- **Landscape Strategy***
- **Arboricultural Report***

* shared supporting document

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt.

Landscaping plan; including tree protection and habitat improvements

- 3. Prior to commencement, a detailed landscaping scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority which shall include the following details:**
 - **The details of those trees to be removed as identified in the submitted Arboricultural Report,**
 - **Measures for the protection of the retained trees and vegetation during the course of the development in line with the details in the submitted Arboricultural Report,**
 - **Location of bat boxes,**
 - **Details of the hedgerow to be planted along the northern boundary of the A602,**
 - **Details of the size, species, density and location of trees, consistent with the tree mix set out in section 3.1 of the submitted Landscape Strategy,**
 - **Details of wildflower seeding to enhance the open grassland,**
 - **Protection measures to be provided for new planting,**
 - **The programme for the implementation of the proposed planting; and**

- The five year programme of management of planting, maintenance and replanting of any trees or shrubs which die, become diseased or are damaged.

The landscape scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved programme hereafter.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenity and the habitat enhancement of the area.

Drainage strategy (LLFA)

4. The development permitted by this planning permission shall be carried out in accordance with the approved drainage strategy report undertaken by ARUP named *A602 Improvements (Stevenage to/from Ware) Flood Risk Assessment*, reference 236368-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-RP-XX-00050 issued on 22 March 2016 and the following mitigation measures detailed within the FRA:

- Implementing appropriate SuDS measures as shown on drawings:
 - 236368-HCC-JN-06-DR-CD- 00101, title Anchor Lane Enlargement Preliminary Drainage design
 - 236368-HCC-JN-07-DR-CD- 00101, title Westmill Bend realignment Preliminary Drainage design
 - 236368-HCC-JN-08-DR-CD- 00101, title A10 Junction Preliminary Drainage design
- Provide storage volume of
 - 42m³ within the proposed geocellular infrastructure for the Anchor Lane roundabout;
 - 19 m³ of attenuation storage in the filter drains as well as any additional pipework along the Westmill road section of the A602;

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.

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

Infiltration tests (LLFA)

5. Prior to the commencement of any development hereby permitted, infiltration tests shall be carried out in accordance with BRE Digest 365 to ensure existing flows to the existing drainage network is unchanged and the additional water generated by the additional hardstanding will be managed by infiltration.

The test results and all final design of the proposed surface water drainage

solution shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority.

Reason: To prevent the increased risk of flooding, both on and off site.

Landfill gas monitoring (Environment Agency – Regulating Officers)

- 6. Prior to the commencement of any development hereby permitted, submit details of the landfill gas monitoring and extraction systems under Westmill Road within the planning application boundary. The scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority, and implemented as approved in full.**

Reason: To prevent the build-up of landfill gas in the highway infrastructure and drainage systems and so not to allow explosive atmospheres to develop or create new pathways towards other nearby receptors.

Ground investigations

- 7. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, ground investigations shall be carried out to establish the chemical and physical properties of the sub soil, and thereby ensure an informed technical design.**

Reason: To protect against the collapse of chalk in the sub soil.

Traffic management plan

- 8. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, a Traffic Management Plan will be submitted for the approval of the County Planning Authority. This shall include the details of the timing and routes of diversions, road closures, and anticipated delays. The traffic management plan shall be implemented in accordance with the approved plan hereafter.**

Reason: To reduce driver stress by clearly setting out the impact of the construction works on journey times and providing alternative routes to limit disruption

Construction environmental management plan

- 9. Prior to the commencement of the approved development the applicant shall submit a construction management plan for approval by the County Planning Authority setting out details of the construction compound, storage of construction material, parking of construction vehicles, the duration of construction period, hours of construction, wheel/chassis cleaning etc. and operational mitigation measures in line with BS5228 and IAQM guidance. The construction management plan shall be implemented in accordance with the approved plan hereafter.**

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity.

Lighting

- 10. No additional lighting will be provided without the prior approval of the County Planning Authority, other than in accordance with the approved plans in Condition 2. The existing lighting columns will be relocated to reflect the revised junction alignment.**

Reason: To minimise light pollution and in the interests of residential amenity.

Fencing/boundary treatment

- 11. Construction work shall not commence until fencing, of a type to be approved by the County Planning Authority, setting out the boundaries of the development hereby permitted has been erected. The fencing shall be maintained throughout the period of construction and unless otherwise agreed in advance in writing by the County Planning Authority, there shall be no working, storage of surplus material or incursion of construction vehicles outside of the area so defined.**

Reason: To define the permitted area of development and to restrict unauthorised entry to the construction site.

INFORMATIVES

Affinity Water

For further information, we refer you to CIRIA Publication C532 "Control of water pollution from construction - guidance for consultants and contractors".

Lead Local Flood Authority

For further guidance on HCC's policies on SuDS, HCC Developers Guide and Checklist and links to national policy and industry best practice guidance please refer to our surface water drainage webpage

<http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/envplan/water/floods/surfacewaterdrainage/>

HCC Landscape Officer

- With regards **Anchor Lane Roundabout** the loss of existing trees should be better compensated for, to enhance the vegetated character of the highway setting and to soften views between the residential property (Green Banks) and the highway
- With regards **Westmill Hamlet** the extent of works to trees should be confirmed.

National Grid

Assessment (1)

Affected Apparatus

The National Grid apparatus that has been identified as being in the vicinity of your proposed works is:

- High or Intermediate pressure (above 2 bar) Gas Pipelines and associated equipment

As your proposal is in proximity to National Grid's apparatus, we have referred your enquiry / consultation to the following department(s) for further assessment:

- Gas Distribution Pipelines Team

Requirements

BEFORE carrying out any work you must:

- Ensure that no works are undertaken in the vicinity of our gas pipelines and that no heavy plant, machinery or vehicles cross the route of the pipeline until detailed consultation has taken place.
- Carefully read these requirements including the attached guidance documents and maps showing the location of National Grid apparatus.
- Contact the landowner and ensure any proposed works in private land do not infringe National Grid's legal rights (i.e. easements or wayleaves). If the works are in the road or footpath the relevant local authority should be contacted.
- Ensure that all persons, including direct labour and contractors, working for you on or near National Grid's apparatus follow the requirements of the HSE Guidance Notes HSG47 - 'Avoiding Danger from Underground Services' and GS6 – 'Avoidance of danger from overhead electric power lines'. This guidance can be downloaded free of charge at <http://www.hse.gov.uk>

- In line with the above guidance, verify and establish the actual position of mains, pipes, cables, services and other apparatus on site before any activities are undertaken.

ASSESSMENT (2)

Affected Apparatus

The National Grid apparatus that has been identified as being in the vicinity of your proposed works is:

- Low or Medium pressure (below 2 bar) gas pipes and associated equipment. (As a result it is highly likely that there are gas services and associated apparatus in the vicinity)
- Above ground gas sites and equipment

Requirements

BEFORE carrying out any work you must:

- Note the presence of an Above Ground Installation (AGI) in proximity to your site. You must ensure that you have been contacted by National Grid prior to undertaking any works within 10m of this site.
- Carefully read these requirements including the attached guidance documents and maps showing the location of National Grid apparatus.
- Contact the landowner and ensure any proposed works in private land do not infringe National Grid's legal rights (i.e. easements or wayleaves). If the works are in the road or footpath the relevant local authority should be contacted.
- Ensure that all persons, including direct labour and contractors, working for you on or near National Grid's apparatus follow the requirements of the HSE Guidance Notes HSG47 - 'Avoiding Danger from Underground Services' and GS6 – 'Avoidance of danger from overhead electric power lines'. This guidance can be downloaded free of charge at <http://www.hse.gov.uk>
- In line with the above guidance, verify and establish the actual position of mains, pipes, cables, services and other apparatus on site before any activities are undertaken.