

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, 25 JANUARY 2018 AT 10.00AM**

Agenda Item
No.

3

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

APPLICATION FOR THE REALIGNMENT OF WARE ROAD BETWEEN A POINT WEST OF THE ACCESS ROAD TO HEATH MOUNT SCHOOL, TO THE EXISTING SOUTHERN-MOST STONY HILLS JUNCTION; WITH REALIGNMENTS AT ALL JUNCTIONS WITHIN THIS SECTION; INCLUDING ASSOCIATED CHANGES TO VERGES, LIGHTING, DRAINAGE, LANDSCAPING, AND ASSOCIATED ENGINEERING OPERATIONS EAST OF WATTON-AT-STONE, HERTFORDSHIRE.

Report of the Chief Executive and Director of Environment

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Local Member: Ken Crofton

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To consider planning application reference number 3/1770-17 for highway works on the A602 between a point west of the access road to Heath Mount School to the existing southern-most Stony Hills junction, east of Watton-at-Stone, 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 In September 2016 and October 2016, the Development Control Committee granted planning permission for highway improvements work along the A602 at Hertford Road, Stevenage and for a series of works between the village of Tonwell and the A10 junction. The delivery of the approved schemes commenced in August 2017.
- 2.3 This application seeks planning permission for the realignment of Ware Road between a point west of the access road to Heath Mount School, to the existing southern-most Stony Hill junction; with realignments to all junctions within this section; including associated changes to verges, lighting, drainage, landscaping and engineering operations east of Watton-at-Stone.
- 2.4 The development is also considered under the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (EIA) 2011 (updated 2015) and is accompanied

by an Environmental Statement. As the Scoping Opinion was sought prior to the adoption of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2017, the scheme is considered against the 2011 Regulations under the transitional arrangements set out under Regulation 76 of the 2017 Regulations.

- 2.5 The application site is from a point west of the access to Heath Mount School to the existing southern-most Stony Hills junction along the A602, approximately 2.65 kilometres (1.65 miles) to the east. The road moves through a landscape of open fields and farmland, and runs parallel to the Woodhall Park Estate, a Grade II* Registered Park and Garden. The Listed park wall forms the southern boundary of the site area.
- 2.6 The A602 is a single carriageway road, both within the application area itself and from the Bragbury End junction in Stevenage to the junction with the A10 in Ware, which encompasses the wider area of works. It is characterised by a series of sharp turns, is undulating, has restricted visibility and shading from trees that are particularly close to the highway boundary. The road alignment between the junction with Whempstead Road and the Sacombe Hill Farm access does not meet current design standards.
- 2.7 There are no footways along this section of the A602, although there are a number of public Rights of Way that adjoin the highway within the application area.
- 2.8 The application site is on the edge of the Metropolitan Green Belt; designated as in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt. The local plan policy framework seeks to be no more restrictive than for the Green Belt. Paragraph 90 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), with support from the Green Belt policies of the Local Plan, finds that local transport infrastructure may not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, and thus also in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt.
- 2.9 The improvements are sought on an existing primary route through the Rural Area Beyond 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 Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt location.
- 2.10 The Riding Wood and Grove Wildlife Site abuts the A602 at the eastern end of the application area, and is impacted by the proposed development. 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.
- 2.11 The application includes a 2.65 kilometre (1.65 miles) carriageway realignment that requires existing agricultural land to be brought within the highway boundary. The applicant has sought to make improvements at a further three sections on the A602 between Stevenage and Ware; the County Planning Authority has determined that the separate sections

of the wider proposal are intrinsically linked to each other. It is due to the scale of this off-line development, and cumulative development along the A602, that the application constitutes EIA development for which express planning permission is required. The accompanying Environmental Statement has been prepared on this basis.

2.12 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 6.

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

- Development in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt
- 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)
- Impact on cultural heritage

2.14 The report concludes that the Chief Executive and Director of Environment should be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the following FIFTEEN 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. Drainage strategy option
7. Ground investigations
8. Traffic management plan
9. Construction environmental management plan
10. Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation (1)
11. Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation (2)
12. Dane End Tributary Realignment (1)
13. Dane End Tributary Realignment (2)
14. Fencing/boundary treatment
15. Lighting

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 application area stretches approximately 2.65 kilometres in length, along which there are currently eight vehicular access points, in addition to three public Rights of Way. The A602 passes to the south of an area that matches the Regional Landscape Character typology 'Wooded Chalk Valley'. This is an area characterised by steep sided, wooded valleys with a surrounding upland plateau. The land has a mixed use of arable farmland and pasture, with patches of ancient woodland, and enclosure patterns defined by mature, species rich woodlands.
- 3.3 The surrounding landscape also includes 'Plateau Estate Farmlands'; an ordered arable landscape characterised by estate farms and small villages. The realigned section of the A602 seeks to take in agricultural land currently in the ownership of the Woodhall Estate. The realignment would move the carriageway away from the extensive red brick wall, which is a strong and visible feature of the planned parkland. The Woodhall Estate is itself a Grade II* Registered Park and Garden, and the Listed wall forms the southern boundary of the application area, demarcating the highway boundary.
- 3.4 Much of this section of the A602 carriageway is shaded by large mature trees and hedgerows, which are sited close to the edge of the carriageway, as it follows through the valley. This strictly constrains the opportunities to widen the single carriageway, either to the dual the road or to provide dedicated non-motorised vehicle lanes.
- 3.5 With the exception of Watton Lodge at the entrance to Heath Mount School, there are no residential properties abutting the carriageway within the application area. A series of small hamlets and isolated properties are set back from the road, although they have limited direct views due to the mature vegetation.
- 3.6 There are a number of public Rights of Way that adjoin the A602, although there is limited linkage to the wider network of public access routes in this area. The Watton-at-Stone FP007 is 250m to the west of Watton Lodge, on the northern side of the carriageway, with no continuation on the opposite side of the road. There are no proposed works in the immediate vicinity of this footpath.
- 3.7 The Sacombe FP013 links into the A602 opposite the Sacombe Pound where significant works are proposed as the main carriageway is to be realigned to the north, and junction improvements are sought to facilitate westbound traffic turning right. This requires the extension of the footpath to join the realigned carriageway. There is no continuation of the footpath to the north, although the footpath links into an extensive

network of public Rights of Way towards Watton-at-Stone, Wadesmill and Hertford, in the south.

- 3.8 The Bengoe Rural 023 Bridleway is at the southern most point of the application area, and shares the access to Sacombe Park. As part of the proposed works around the Stony Hills junction, the highway carriageway is to be removed and the bridleway extended.
- 3.9 The application area is defined as in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt.
- 3.10 The proposed development relating to the realignment of Ware Road is distinct from the areas of archaeological interest in and around Woodhall Park, and the estate's land holdings.
- 3.11 The majority of the application site is in Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding). The land around Sacombe Pound forms the Dane End Tributary, which is defined as having a high probability of flooding and is in Flood Zone 3.
- 3.12 The application area passes from Groundwater Source Protection Zone 3 (lowest zone for source protection) through Zone 2 to Zone 1, from west to east along the A602.
- 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. This application did not include amendments to any other sections of the A602.
- 3.14 Planning permission was granted by the Development Control Committee in September 2016 for improvements to the Hertford Road in Stevenage, and in October 2016 for improvements between Tonwell and the A10.

4 Description of the proposed development

- 4.1 The primary element of the proposed development is the realignment to the north and the widening of the A602, from a point west of the entrance of Heath Mount School to the Sacombe Park. The new road will be single carriageway with additional width to include hard-strips, and localised widening to incorporate central right-turn lanes; this will also improve sight lines for road users.
- 4.2 The access to Heath Mount School is to have a physical island on both sides of the junction to prevent overtaking in either direction of approach. Eastbound traffic will have use of a ghost island to turn into the school, and westbound traffic will benefit from a deceleration lane. The egress will only allow traffic to turn left, towards the A119 roundabout, where traffic seeking to travel towards Ware can turn.
- 4.3 The access to Whempstead Road will have a short deceleration taper for

eastbound traffic turning left off the A602. There will be physical islands either side of the entrance to prevent overtaking, and a ghost island for right turning traffic travelling west. It is proposed to include a construction compound to the west of the junction, for the duration of the temporary works.

- 4.4 The access points to Garden House and Beehive Cottage to the south of the realigned A602, and the Sacombe Hill Farm access to the north, are both proposed to have physical islands at either side of the junction, and a ghost island for right turning traffic. It is not proposed to incorporate deceleration lanes at either of these junctions.
- 4.5 The section of the A602 in and around Sacombe Pound incorporates the most significant changes in terms of road reconfiguration. The A602 is to include single lane dualling for right turning traffic in and out of the junction, and a 'jug handle' for Non-Motorised Users (NMUs) to cross the A602 into Sacombe Pound. In order to accommodate the realignment of the road, the Dane End Tributary, which is to the east of Sacombe Pound will also need to be realigned and the adjoining land reprofiled for flood compensation. A large drainage attenuation basin is also proposed to the east of the junction of the A602 and Sacombe Pound.
- 4.6 Further significant changes are proposed at the Stony Hills junction, albeit on the existing A602 alignment. The Stony Hills carriageway is to be realigned, to provide an improved left hand turn for westbound traffic that will approach the junction via a new deceleration lane. This will also pull the access to Ware Lodge back from the A602 carriageway. Physical islands are proposed either side of the junction, in addition to a ghost island for right turning eastbound traffic, and a 'jug handle' to allow cyclists to turn right.
- 4.7 It is proposed to close the existing westbound left turn opposite Sacombe Park to motorised vehicles, and remove part of the carriageway, returning it to the landowner. The egress from the A602 is to be re-designated as a bridleway and extended to join the minor road Stony Hills.
- 4.8 The works would require the woodland clearance of the copse between Bardolph's Cottages and Heath Mount School (north side of road), the copse to the east of Whempstead Road, and the copse to the west of Sacombe Hill Farm access. Vegetation will also need to be reduced at junctions along the A602 to improve visibility, thereby improving safety. It is proposed to mitigate the loss of vegetation with the planting of hedgerows, and areas of trees, to include mature specimens.
- 4.9 The road is only lit at the junction with Whempstead Road, and it is intended to remove, and not to replace, the existing lighting with the improvements to the junction.
- 4.10 The area of land between the old and new sections of the A602 carriageway is to be landscaped and returned to the landowner.

5 Consultations

- 5.1 A total of 7 properties were consulted in respect of the application. A press notice was placed in the Hertfordshire Mercury, and site notices were erected on 27 July 2017.
- 5.2 East Herts Council as District Planning Authority has no fundamental objections to the proposal taking into the account the likely benefits.
- 5.3 The Environment Agency originally objected to the application on the basis that the climate change allowances used to calculate the Flood Risk Analysis, with particular concern for the area around the Dane End Tributary. The Environment Agency removed their objection, subject to conditions, following additional analysis submitted by the applicant. A full copy of their final consultation response is provided at Appendix 3.
- 5.4 Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority has no objection to the proposal. Additional details regarding the scheme are required for mandatory design checks, should planning permission be granted.
- 5.5 Affinity Water advises that the application site is within the Groundwater Source Protection Zone corresponding to Sacombe Pumping Station. The construction works and operation of the proposed development site should be done in accordance with the relevant British Standards and Best Management Practices, thereby significantly reducing the groundwater pollution risk. It should be noted that the construction works may exacerbate any existing pollution. If any pollution is found at the site then the appropriate monitoring and remediation methods will need to be undertaken.
- 5.6 Hertfordshire Gardens Trust raise no objection as the trust is satisfied with the mitigation measures proposed, and that the realignment of the carriageway and additional planting may enhance the landscape of Woodhall Park.
- 5.7 Herts Ecology finds that the overall ecological value of the proposed development site is low, consistent with roadsides, and that these do not present a constraint. The impact on the ancient semi-natural woodland is stated as low.
- 5.8 The Officer raises concerns at the potential for habitat gain, in respect of the landlocked area between the original and realigned sections of carriageway; this needs to be positively managed to avoid the old section of road degrading into an amenity issue, attracting litter, fly-tipping, and vandalism.
- 5.9 The Herts Trail Riders Fellowship (TRF) has no objection.
- 5.10 Historic England do not wish to offer any comments.
- 5.11 Highways England offer no objection as the Highway Act Section 175B is not relevant to the application.

- 5.12 HCC Flood Risk Management as Lead Local Flood Authority has no objection to the development on flood risk grounds. The LLFA recommends three conditions, requiring works to be carried out in accordance with the drainage strategy and mitigation measures as detailed in the submitted Flood Risk Assessment, to carry out infiltration tests to inform the proposed surface water drainage strategy, and to clarify which drainage layout option will be used.
- 5.13 The Landscape Officer from Hertfordshire County Council finds that the introduction of large scale and intrusive engineered structures will detract from the local landscape character and visual amenity. These adverse impacts will diminish as the planting becomes established. However, it is noted that a more comprehensive package of landscape and visual mitigation is required; a detailed planting plan, schedule and specifications are necessary.
- 5.14 Key concerns raised by the Landscape Officer include a strong objection to the applicant's assertion that 'The ratio of trees removed to trees replanted should not necessarily be 1:1'. The Officer's view is that for each tree removed, two new replacement trees (medium to large native species) are to be planted within the site. Strong concern is also expressed for the potential removal of irreplaceable designated Ancient Semi Natural Woodland.
- 5.15 A copy of the full consultation response is included at Appendix 4, and also identifies the need for more robust planting around the sensitive Sacombe Pound area, a reconsideration of the hard engineered drainage ponds and that the concrete clad panels of the bridge fail to reflect the rural character of the local landscape.
- 5.16 The Natural, Historic and Built Environment Advisory Team finds that the application site is an area of known, significant archaeology, including Late Iron Age/Early Roman and Medieval finds. The Team suggests that the proposed development is likely to have an impact on heritage assets of archaeological interest and, accordingly, recommends three conditions to ensure that the features are protected and recorded.
- 5.17 The Traffic Management Unit of Cambridgeshire Constabulary has no comments to make at this stage.
- 5.18 Watton at Stone Parish Council has no comment to make on the application.
- 5.19 The Woodland Trust objects on the basis of damage and loss to Riding Wood, an Ancient Semi Natural Woodland designated as such on Natural England's Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI), an irreplaceable habitat.
- 5.20 No other statutory consultation responses were received.

Public consultation

- 5.21 Cycling UK Stevenage submitted concerns with regard to the proposed development. They state that the A602 is a barrier to journeys, and that right hand turns are difficult due to the fast moving traffic, the inconsistent light and that cyclists are required to stop. The group requests a bridge.
- 5.22 South Herts CTC advised that few cyclists would wish to cycle along the A602 due to the amount of fast, heavy traffic on a narrow main road. It states that should a road require 'jug handles' to improve safety that the road should have a cycleway alongside it. It further states that a 'jug handle' would not be able to accommodate a group of club cyclists. Concerns are raised that the narrow width of the road, along with fast moving traffic, double white lines and physical islands will encourage traffic to make close passes to cyclists on the main carriageway. The group also seek that the bridleways are of a standard suitable to road cyclists. A full copy of the response is included at Appendix 5.
- 5.23 A total of 17 responses were received, either objecting to, or raising concerns in respect of the proposed development. One of those responses also sought clarification on some aspects of the improvements.
- 5.24 The objections can be summarised as follows:-

Objection 1 – Cyclist safety

- The bridleway must provide level access to Sacombe Park for cyclists
- Stony Hills to Sacombe Park crossing requires a bridge under the A602 and over the river
- Drivers will be able to travel faster putting cyclists at increased risk
- No safe right turn towards Dane End
- Bollards and traffic islands create pinch points

Objection 2 – Design of the development

- The extended bridlepath at Stony Hills must be a surface suitable for use by cyclists
- The design should include a cycleway alongside the A602
- Insufficient details of handling of old section of A602
- Inadequate provision for cyclists
- The changes make the road more dangerous for cyclists, walkers and runners
- Failure to address the goals and challenges of the Local Transport Plan
- Jug handles require awkward manoeuvres and are not preferred by cyclists

Objection 3 – Landscape Impact

- The foliage will take a long time to grow back

- Extent of tree loss is unclear; it appears to be hundreds
- Insufficient landscaping details in terms of both removal and remediation

Objection 4 – Other

- The Planning Statement does not include a Cost Benefit Analysis
- The proposal is not generally supported by the local community as stated in supporting documents
- Changes are a waste of money

6 The Development Plan

- 6.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires proposals to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. For the purposes of 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. Similarly, the Historic Parks and Gardens SPD supplements Policy BH16. These documents are therefore a material consideration to determining planning applications.
- 6.3 The emerging District Plan has been the subject of a public examination by the Planning Inspectorate, which concluded in December 2017. Some weight can be given to the draft policies contained within it. 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 Second Review 2007

Policy GBC2	The Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt
Policy GBC3	Appropriate Development in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt
Policy GBC12	Agricultural Land
Policy GBC14	Landscape Character
Policy TR1	Traffic Reduction in New Developments
Policy TR3	Transport Assessments
Policy TR9	Cycling – Cycle Routes
Policy TR12	Cycle Routes – New Development
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 BH2 Archaeological Evaluations and Assessments
Policy BH3 Archaeological Conditions and Agreements
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. The current version is LTP3, and the draft document LTP4 is out to consultation, concluding on 23 January 2018.
- 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:
- Development in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt
 - 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)
 - Impact on cultural heritage

Development in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt

- 7.2 The application seeks development in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt. The East Herts Local Plan identifies a number of uses which are considered “not inappropriate” in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt, and includes “other essential small scale facilities, services or uses of land which meet a local need, are appropriate to a rural area and which assist rural diversification.”
- 7.3 The existing route of the A602 passes through 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 Watton-at-Stone and Tonwell. The development would deliver improvements to traffic flow and journey time reliability, thereby meeting a local need in a Rural Area location. Further details in respect of ‘need’ are set out in paragraphs 7.8 to 7.18.

- 7.4 The scale of the physical development is relatively small, with the realignment of approximately 2.65 kilometres of highway, and reconfigured junctions. The original carriageway is to be reprofiled and returned to agriculture. The small scale of the physical development, in support of the improvements, does not adversely impact on the openness of the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt or the purpose of including land within it. The proposals are therefore not inappropriate in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt.
- 7.5 There is some concern raised by the Landscape Officer that the proposed development would introduce large scale and intrusive engineered structures that detract from the local landscape character and visual amenity. Specific reference is made to the area in and around the Dane End Tributary with the introduction of a new bridge and large attenuation drainage pond. The full response of the Landscape Officer is included at Appendix 4, and includes recommendations as to how the development could be made more appropriate to the rural area.
- 7.6 Therefore, subject to the imposition of robust conditions to ensure that the impact on the landscape is minimised, it is considered that the proposal represents a small scale development, appropriate to the rural area, meeting a proven need and as such it supports rural diversification by providing a reliable transport link. The development needed in a Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt, and is deemed not to be inappropriate in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt.
- 7.7 The application is in compliance with Local Plan Policies GBC2 and GBC3, which protect against inappropriate development in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt.

Need and justification

- 7.8 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, with junction and alignment issues, and poor visibility. The 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
- 7.9 The traffic flows often exceed the capacity of the major junctions, with the worst delays occurring on the eastbound route (i.e. from Stevenage towards Ware) during the morning peaks. Residents and businesses are heavily reliant on the A602 to facilitate movement in and around the county. 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, with major housing growth planned in the draft Local Plan proposals for both Stevenage and East Hertfordshire.

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. 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.

7.12 The primary need for the realignment of this section of the A602 arises from the number of bends and gradient disparities which restrict driver visibility, particularly at the junction of Whempstead Road and the Sacombe Hill Farm access. This section of the A602 does not meet current design standards, and visibility is particularly impacted by the boundary wall to the Woodhall Estate. This wall forms part of the listing of the estate, and therefore strictly limits changes that take place to the existing carriageway.

7.13 The existing Heath Mount School junction primarily causes problem for eastbound traffic; vehicles currently queue to turn right into the school, causing delay on the carriageway and impacting the A119 roundabout, 750 metres away. The application seeks to address this with a ghost right turn lane. The realignment of the carriageway serves to improve sight lines for vehicles exiting the junction.

7.14 At the junctions adjoining the A602, there are currently no ghost islands to facilitate right turns off the main carriageway. The resultant queues impede the flow of traffic on the A602, which the proposed development seeks to address. The single lane dualling at the Sacombe Pound junction will address the danger posed to vehicles turning off the A602; the downhill gradient and straight alignment of the road encourages eastbound traffic to approach the junction at higher speeds.

7.15 There are several issues with the existing configuration of the Stony Hills

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

junction, which provides access to the A602 at points approximately 400 metres apart on the main carriageway. Both junctions are limited by a poor geometry and the two roads to Stony Hills intersect the A602 at acute angles. This results in vehicles overswinging into the opposing carriageway, and means that vehicles are not at 90 degrees to the A602 when waiting at the give way line, which impacts visibility lines. The necessary improvements can only be delivered through the realignment of the carriageway due to the constraints of the existing vegetation and local topology.

- 7.16 Objections have been raised in terms of 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 merits of the planning proposals as set out in the application. The Highway Authority, as the applicant, has applied to a specific funding pot that is only available to support major road schemes, rather than, for example, the repair of potholes.
- 7.17 The proposed development does not seek to address the capacity constraint imposed by the single carriageway road link; as the road is already busy, it is considered that the likelihood of additional traffic being attracted to the route at peak times is low, as it remains a single carriageway road. The highway capacity improvements are focussed on the junctions, with the aim to reduce queuing.
- 7.18 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

- 7.19 The proposal seeks to provide junction improvements that will improve the throughput and flow of traffic, and thereby increase the junction capacity as compared to the existing carriageway configuration. The Transport Assessment includes PICADY analysis for the Heath Mount School access, Whempstead Road, Sacombe Pound and the Stony Hills (north) junctions, which assesses the junction capacity during the morning and evening peaks.
- 7.20 The analysis finds that with the exception of the Stony Hills junction, the existing configuration means that the junctions are operating over capacity and that the resultant volume of traffic means allows for only limited gaps in traffic flow for vehicles to make turns. The modelled improvements find that the junctions at Sacombe Pound and Stony Hills would both operate within their theoretical capacity at 2024, demonstrating a significant improvement. The results do acknowledge

that some capacity issues would remain for traffic turning out of Heath Mount School in the evening, and that the Whempstead Road junction would continue to operate over capacity, however both these junctions would still benefit from measureable capacity improvements.

- 7.21 Objections have been received on the basis that the realignment of the carriageway will simply allow motorised vehicles to travel faster on the road. However, while it is acknowledged that the wider scheme seeks to improve the reliability of peak time journey times and traffic flow, the realignment also seeks to address the existing design and safety flaws of the existing route.
- 7.22 The redundant section of the A602, resultant from the realignment of the main carriageway will be reprofiled and returned to the landowner. This is compliant with Local Plan Policy TR22.
- 7.23 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 7.18, 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.
- 7.24 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.
- 7.25 Local Plan Policy TR1 seeks to incorporate alternative transport options to the private motor car, with measures that are commensurate with the scale of additional traffic generated. As set out at paragraph 7.17, the development of itself is not anticipated to generate additional traffic movements, but to improve existing reliability of journey times and address design and safety flaws.
- 7.26 The predominant NMUs 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 and adjacent to the highway boundary and the improved reliability of flow of motorised traffic on the A602.
- 7.27 A number of cyclists have called for the provision of a segregated cycleway running parallel to the A602, both within the specific application area and along the A602 as a whole. Specific concern is raised in

respect of the eastbound journey from (the western junction of) Stony Hills to Sacombe Pound. The absence of such a cycleway is contrary to the aims of Local Plan Policies TR1, TR9 and TR12, however each policy recognises the need to adopt a practical and feasible approach.

- 7.28 The scheme does include two 'jug handles' to facilitate right turns from the A602 into Sacombe Pound and to the reconfigured Stony Hills junction, which aim to improve cyclist safety. The extended bridleway at Stony Hills will provide an alternative to the A602 for cyclists wishing to access Sacombe Park; however, the surface for the bridleway has not been confirmed by the applicant, and the statutory requirement is that a bridleway is constructed of a surface suitable for horses rather than specifically for cyclists, although the provision of a surface suitable for cyclists would be encouraged by the planning authority.
- 7.29 Additional guidance is given at paragraph 35 of the NPPF which, inter alia, states that developments should be designed to give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements where practical (my emphasis). In this instance, a segregated cycleway would not be a practical and proportionate addition to the highway.
- 7.30 Cyclists raised this concern during the early, pre-application, consultation stages which were carried out by the applicant. The response is included at page 26 of the Statement of Consultation, which is submitted as a supporting document. The applicant has designed the scheme to the current standards set out in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges. This scheme was subject to a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit in accordance with HD19/15 of the DMRB (Road Safety Audit), and no issues relating to safety for cyclists were highlighted; this is a technical highways document and does not form part of the planning application. The scheme was reviewed and redesigned to address the issues raised in the audit, prior to the submission of the planning application.
- 7.31 If planning permission is granted, the scheme will be subject to a further road safety audit, to consider safety issues in more detail. The road safety checklist for a Stage 2 Road Safety Audit includes a requirement to ensure that the needs of cyclists have been considered, especially at junctions and roundabouts
- 7.32 The realignment of the A602 will require two of the public Rights of Way, in proximity to Heath Mount School and opposite Sacombe Pound, to be modified in order that they tie into the new section of road. These works may require the temporary closure of the routes, in order to protect pedestrian and cyclist safety during construction, but the impact is considered to be only slightly adverse given their temporary nature.
- 7.33 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.

- 7.34 There are likely to be no equestrian flows along the A602 due to the nature of the carriageway.
- 7.35 A Traffic Management Plan can be secured through condition to minimise driver stress and frustration during the construction period. This would ensure the appropriate and timely sharing of information regarding works that may impact journey routes or times.
- 7.36 No rail routes would be impacted by the proposed development, or the wider scheme.
- 7.37 The proposed highway improvements, incorporating the realignment of the A602, are in support of Paragraph 35 of the National Planning Policy Framework and the Local Transport Plan, to accommodate the efficient delivery of goods and supplies through more reliable journey times.

Quality of design

- 7.38 The proposed scheme is the applicant's preferred option after the consideration of several high level options. The junction and alignment improvements were taken forward as the only feasible solution within available funding resources and an ability to be delivered within the funding timescales.
- 7.39 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.
- 7.40 The Landscape Officer has highlighted that the proposal to clad the bridge in concrete panel does not respect the rural landscape character and incorporate local materials. Therefore, while the existing proposals provide a cohesive design as relates to the existing highway infrastructure, improvements to the quality of design can be secured through a pre-commencement conditions in respect of the external materials used in construction. The proposed development is therefore consistent with Local Plan Policy ENV1.

Landscape and visual impact

- 7.41 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.
- 7.42 The predominant regional landscape topologies within the area of the proposed development are 'Wooded Chalk Valleys', 'Plateau Estate Farmlands' and 'Lowland Village Chalklands'. These are all characterised by an gently rolling arable farming landscape, and also

tend to include some mature hedgerows as a form of field enclosure and ancient woodland.

- 7.43 This rural and tranquil landscape is identified as being of moderate value, and having moderate susceptibility to change in relation to the proposed development, with a high susceptibility to change in closer proximity to the Grade II* Registered Park and Garden Woodhall Park with the associated wildlife sites and ancient woodlands.
- 7.44 Further assessment is available in the form of Local Landscape Character (LCAs), which defines the area of the proposed realignment of the A602 as including 'Woodhall Park & Watton-at-Stone Slopes', 'Benington/Sacombe Ridge', 'Munden Valley', 'Stony Hills' and 'Sacombe Park Estate Farmland'. While much of these landscapes are of moderate value, the area of 'Woodhall Park & Watton-at-Stone Slopes' is of high value, described as having a strong strength of character that should be safeguarded and managed due to the presence of Woodhall Park and the associated exotic tree species.
- 7.45 The overall significance of effect during the construction phase on this landscape is considered to be neutral/slight adverse, with the exception of the area around Woodhall Park given the significance of the landscape.
- 7.46 The Landscape Officer largely supports the conclusions of the submitted Landscape Visual Impact Assessment, which finds that there are no very large adverse visual impacts for commercial and public receptors during the construction phase due to the screening effects of the existing vegetation and rolling landforms. However, it is acknowledged that recreational users of the public rights of way have a high sensitivity to landscape change. Further, there are more open and elevated views of the Dane End Tributary, as a result of its location within the valley, and so there are likely to be residual impacts from the development while the new landscaping matures.
- 7.47 The landscape effects and visual effects of the development are generally measured as neutral by Year 15, with a slight adverse impact for 'Munden Valley'. The Landscape Officer finds that the significance of the impact for Munden Valley, in proximity to the Dane End Tributary, should be higher. This is due to the open nature of the viewpoint, but this impact can reasonably be minimised by a review of the concrete cladding on the bridge, as set out at paragraph 7.40, and careful consideration of the landscaping around the drainage balancing pond.
- 7.48 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. A draft CEMP has been included within the submitted Environmental Statement.

- 7.49 The LVIA finds that there would be no significant residual adverse effects on receptors from the scheme. The Landscape Officer finds that in order to mitigate the permanent adverse residual landscape and visual effects, a more comprehensive landscape strategy is required. As detailed at Appendix 4, there are a number of reports outstanding including, but not limited to, detailed planting plans, schedules and specifications. Such details can be agreed and secured through condition.
- 7.50 An arboricultural report has been submitted, and provisional mitigation proposals have been submitted, although there is a strong objection to the applicant's assertion that 'The ratio of trees removed to trees replanted should not necessarily be 1:1'. The detailed plan would require a commitment to provide compensatory planting on a basis of two (medium to large native species) for one to be planted within the site, and this can be secured through condition.
- 7.51 The development is therefore compliant with Local Plan Policies GBC14, ENV2 and ENV11, subject to the imposition of robust conditions as set out above.

Impact on ecology and biodiversity

- 7.52 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 of the proposed realignment of the A602.
- 7.53 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, bats and other protected species.
- 7.54 The proposed works to realign the Ware Road will largely take areas of improved grassland, semi-improved grassland and some scrub and woodland plantation. Such habitats are considered to be of low ecological value and are common across Hertfordshire, reflective of the highway boundary location and it is a view supported by Herts Ecology.
- 7.55 However, there are areas of broad-leaved plantation woodland that are of parish value, and compensatory planting can be secured as set out in paragraphs 7.49 and 7.50. Herts Ecology note that the Ancient Woodland is largely avoided, apart from a thin strip along part of the boundary road edge, and that this impact is so limited that it is insignificant in biodiversity terms.
- 7.56 While sections of hedgerow would be lost to facilitate the development, potentially isolating population of certain species during the construction

phase, the draft landscaping scheme proposes hedgerow 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 and providing a near continual hedgerow border between the A119 roundabout and Stony Hills, and a net gain of 2 kilometres of hedgerow across the wider scheme.

- 7.57 A 100 metre stretch of the Dane End Tributary is to be realigned during construction, which will require the channel to be closed off and diverted. The new channel is designed to match the existing channel in terms of cross section and longitudinal profile, with erosion protection in place while habitat establishes. It is anticipated that the channel will perform in a manner closely reflecting the existing watercourse.
- 7.58 There are no issues in respect of GCNs in this section of the wider scheme, although all development works would need to be regulated by a mitigation licence from Natural England. The consideration of the lighting required for night time working, so as not to impact the passing routes of bats, 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.
- 7.59 The proposal to include a tunnel for badgers to pass under the new road, and the bridge at Sacombe Pound will be of sufficient height to allow bats and barn owls to pass through. It is also proposed to install bat roost boxes to replace roosting features lost from existing trees. This is supported by Herts Ecology, in addition to the wildflower seeding which will increase the foraging habitat for the Roman Snail.
- 7.60 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)

- 7.61 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).
- 7.62 The noise impact of the operational phase of the proposed development on residential receptors and on Heath Mount School has been scoped out through the Environmental Statement, as it is anticipated that there would be no significant increase in traffic due to the capacity limitations set out at paragraph 7.17. Notwithstanding, 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. There are no night-time works anticipated within this section of the wider scheme.

- 7.63 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.
- 7.64 It is anticipated that worse case internal vibration from earthworks will exceed the threshold of potential adverse effects at residential receptors at Watton Lodge during the construction earthworks. Watton Lodge is located at the entrance to Heath Mount School, where a deceleration lane is proposed on the westbound carriageway. However, these works are temporary and not anticipated to last more than one week.
- 7.65 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).
- 7.66 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.
- 7.67 The proposed scheme is not within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), and therefore this issue was not assessed further in the Environmental Statement.
- 7.68 There is a small grouping of residential farm properties on the edge of the proposed construction area, in addition to Watton Lodge, which means that there is a high sensitivity to dust that may be generated during the construction phase. Dust emissions 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.

Impact on Cultural Heritage

- 7.69 It was considered that due to the limited nature of the works within and adjacent to the highway boundary in proximity along the Ware Road, 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.
- 7.70 There are 23 Listed Buildings present within 100 metres of the study

area, which incorporates the A602/A119 roundabout and the adjoining proposed highway improvements along the A602 towards Tonwell. The Grade II* Registered Woodhall Park is present within the study area, and the Watton-at-Stone Conversation Area lies to the west of the proposed scheme and beyond the development boundary. There are a further 59 non-designated assets or findspots recorded in the Historic Environment Records.

- 7.71 It is considered that the proposed development would have a slight to moderate adverse direct impact on areas of archaeological potential, but that the features in these areas are common in Hertfordshire and therefore considered to be of low importance.
- 7.72 The construction activity would have a negligible impact on the setting of the Grade II* Registered Woodhall Park and its constituent elements, due to the screening offered by existing vegetation. In the longer term, Woodhall Park will slightly benefit from the realigned carriageway moving away from the park boundary, in compliance with Local Plan Policy ENV1. However, this is balanced against the impact on the Listed milestone which is within the construction area; this must be moved to protect the asset, yet it derives significance specifically from its location.
- 7.73 Guidance on the mitigation of the potential impacts on archaeology is provided by the Natural, Historic and Built Environment Advisory Team. It is advised that the archaeological assets can be protected through investigation, as regulated by the imposition of conditions. The proposed development is therefore in compliance with Local Plan Policies BH2 and BH3, and the guidance in paragraph 141 of the NPPF.

Environmental Statement

- 7.74 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.
- 7.75 The characteristics, location and potential impacts are determined to be potentially significant. The Non-Technical Summary is attached at Appendix 6.

Environmental Statement – Geology, Soils and Materials

- 7.76 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. 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.

- 7.77 There are a number of disused pits and quarries along the route which may coincide with earthworks, but many of these predate the formal process of regulation. Aerial photography shows that these former pits are now restored or overgrown, and as their composition is not known, there is some potential for contamination.
- 7.78 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. On this basis, the significance of the risk to surface and groundwater receptors, and to human health is reduced from moderate adverse to negligible.
- 7.79 The CEMP is also to include guidance on the soil stripping, stockpiling and re-use, to ensure that soils can be returned to agricultural use.
- 7.80 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.
- 7.81 It is considered that the scheme will not have significant adverse effects on potential receptors, and is therefore compliant with Local Plan Policies ENV20 and ENV21.

Environmental Statement – Community and Private Assets

- 7.82 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.
- 7.83 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.
- 7.84 However, the realignment of the carriageway will require the permanent use of agricultural land from the Woodhall Park Estate. The proposed scheme seeks to minimise and mitigate the risk of severance through the planting of wildflower grass and replacement trees, which are to be secured through an approved landscaping scheme.

Environmental Statement – Road Drainage and the Water Environment

- 7.85 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.
- 7.86 The Flood Risk Assessment has considered the crossing of the Dane End Tributary against the Exception Test, as it is not appropriate to consider moving the works to location entirely outside of Flood Zone 1. The realignment of the carriageway requires works to be carried out within Flood Zone 3, which is at the highest probability of flooding. The Exception Test must show that the development provides wide sustainability benefits that outweigh the flood risk, and that there is no increased flood risk elsewhere.
- 7.87 The Environment Agency response is included at Appendix 3, and concludes that subject to the imposition of conditions, changes can be made to the adjacent agricultural land to mitigate changes to fluvial flood risk resultant from the proposed development. Flood levels are returned to within 7mm of their baseline conditions at the 5 year flood event and are reduced for all other flood events. This does not affect the operational levels of any of the pumping stations based on the levels proved to the applicant by Affinity Water. The Environment Agency support the findings of the Flood Risk Analysis that the proposed design will not change the overall fluvial flood risk conditions along the Dane End Tributary as appropriate mitigation measures have been implemented into the design. Similarly, the proposed scheme does not change the groundwater flood risk, and the potential increase in surface water discharges have been identified and mitigated against.
- 7.88 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 proposed new embankment located near the A602/Sacombe Hill Farm track junction will need to be mitigated against, to ensure that surface water which is known to flood the area does not find a new overland flow route. This is delivered through profiling the land to the north east of the new embankment, to accommodate displaced water.
- 7.89 There is a risk of pollution during the construction phase of the proposed development, particularly from the uncontrolled discharge of sediment and construction related substances, or the spillage or leak of fuels and oils. However, construction activities are to be undertaken in accordance with the relevant Pollution Prevention Guidance (PPG), and secured through the CEMP, with reference to supporting regulatory bodies.
- 7.90 The proposed development is therefore compliant with Local Plan Policies ENV18, ENV19, ENV20 and ENV21.

Environmental Statement – Cumulative Effects

- 7.91 Schedule 4, Part 1 of the EIA regulations require that the cumulative effects of a development are assessment as part of the Environmental Statement. Potential cumulative impacts arise from the interaction between environmental impacts identified above, and from the interaction of the proposed development and other development projects.
- 7.92 There are no other committed development projects along the A602 east of Watton-at-Stone and west of the village of Tonwell, other than the proposed improvements to the A602/A119 roundabout, which is the subject of a separate planning application. Therefore, the Environmental Statement has considered the interaction between the identified environmental impacts.
- 7.93 The Statement identifies a cumulative impact during the construction phase on the local landscape and character of Woodhall Park & Watton-at-Stone Slopes. Given the sensitivity of the landscape, and the magnitude of the impact, the overall significance of the cumulative impact is expected to be moderate adverse. The longer term impact is considered to be slightly beneficial, once mitigation and compensatory planting has matured over a 15 year period.

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, after taking into account the submitted Environmental Impact Assessment.
- 8.2 On balance, it is determined that the highway improvements of upgrading a sub-standard primary route, and the delivery of more reliable journey times, outweigh the slight adverse harm caused by residual impacts and thereby meeting a legitimate planning need. It is considered that the residual impacts will continue to reduce during the operational phase of the development as the landscaping matures.
- 8.3 The development is seeking local transport infrastructure improvements for which the need in a Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt location has been demonstrated. The proposals do not adversely impact on openness, or the purpose of including land in the Rural Area Beyond 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 Rural Area. The development is therefore not inappropriate in the Rural Area Beyond Green Belt.
- 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 minimise against harm to landscape, visual impact, ecology, biodiversity, residential amenity and cultural heritage.

9 Conditions

9.1 The recommendation to approve the proposed development is subject to the following FIFTEEN 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. Drainage strategy option
7. Ground investigations
8. Traffic management plan
9. Construction environmental management plan
10. Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation (1)
11. Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation (2)
12. Dane End Tributary Realignment (1)
13. Dane End Tributary Realignment (2)
14. Fencing/boundary treatment
15. Lighting

Background information used by the author in compiling this report

Planning application reference 3/1770-17 including supporting documents and environmental statement

Consultee responses

Relevant policy documents:

National Planning Policy Framework 2012

East Herts Local Plan Second Review 2007

Historic Parks & Gardens SPD 2007

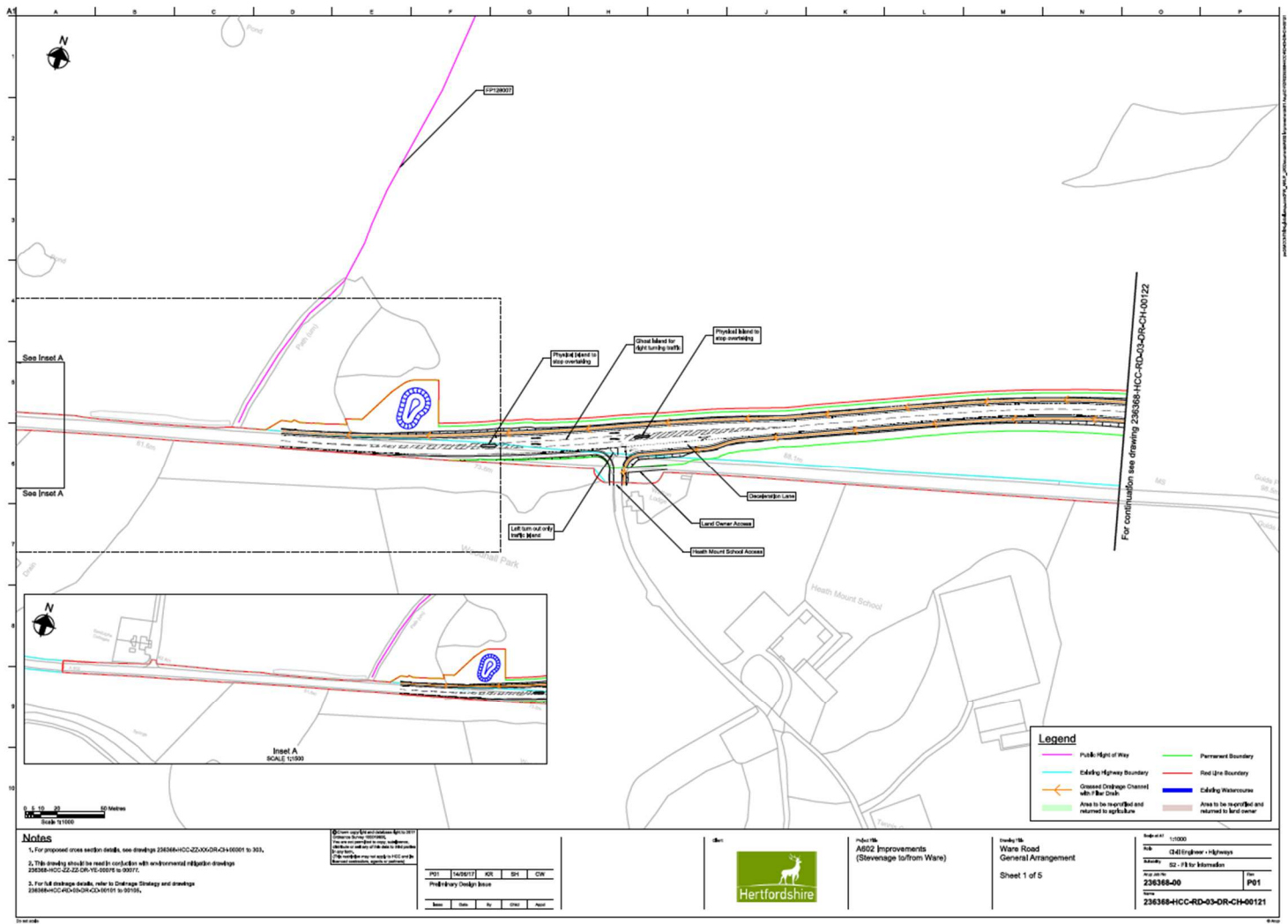
Landscape Character Assessment SPD

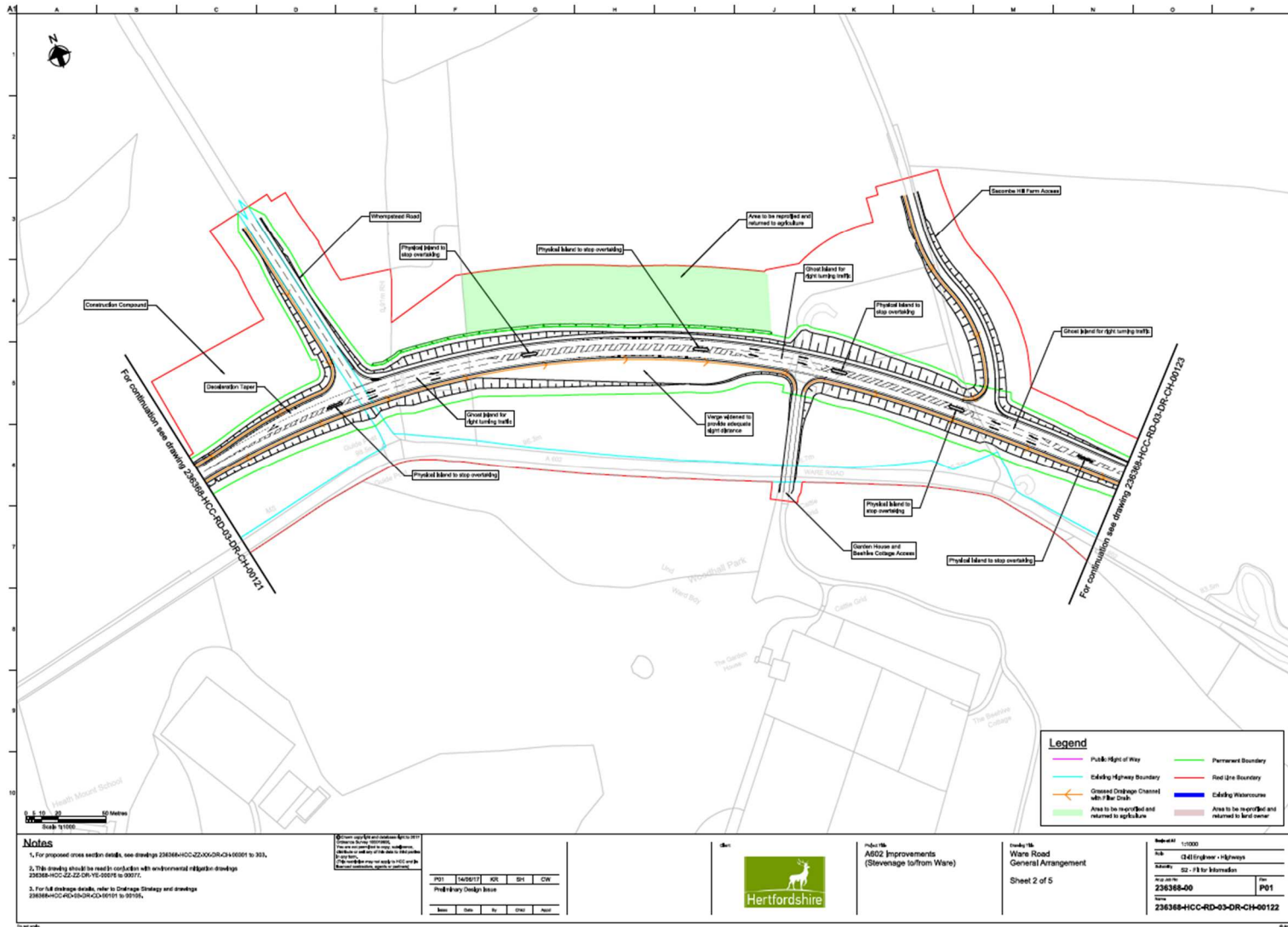
Hertfordshire County Council Local Transport Plan (2011 – 2031)

Appendices

1. General Arrangement (5 plans)
2. The Proposed Scheme (Ware Road alignment) within the wider area
3. Consultation response from the Environment Agency
4. Consultation response from HCC Landscape Officer
5. Consultation response from South Herts CTC
6. Environmental Statement: Volume 1 – Non-technical summary

Appendix 1 – General Arrangement (do not scale)





Notes

1. For proposed cross section details, see drawings 236368-HCC-RD-03-DR-CH-00121 to 00123, 236368-HCC-RD-03-DR-YD-00010 to 00012.
2. This drawing should be read in conjunction with environmental mitigation drawings.
3. For full drainage details, refer to Drainage, Outlets and Drawings 236368-HCC-RD-03-DR-CH-00101 to 00104.

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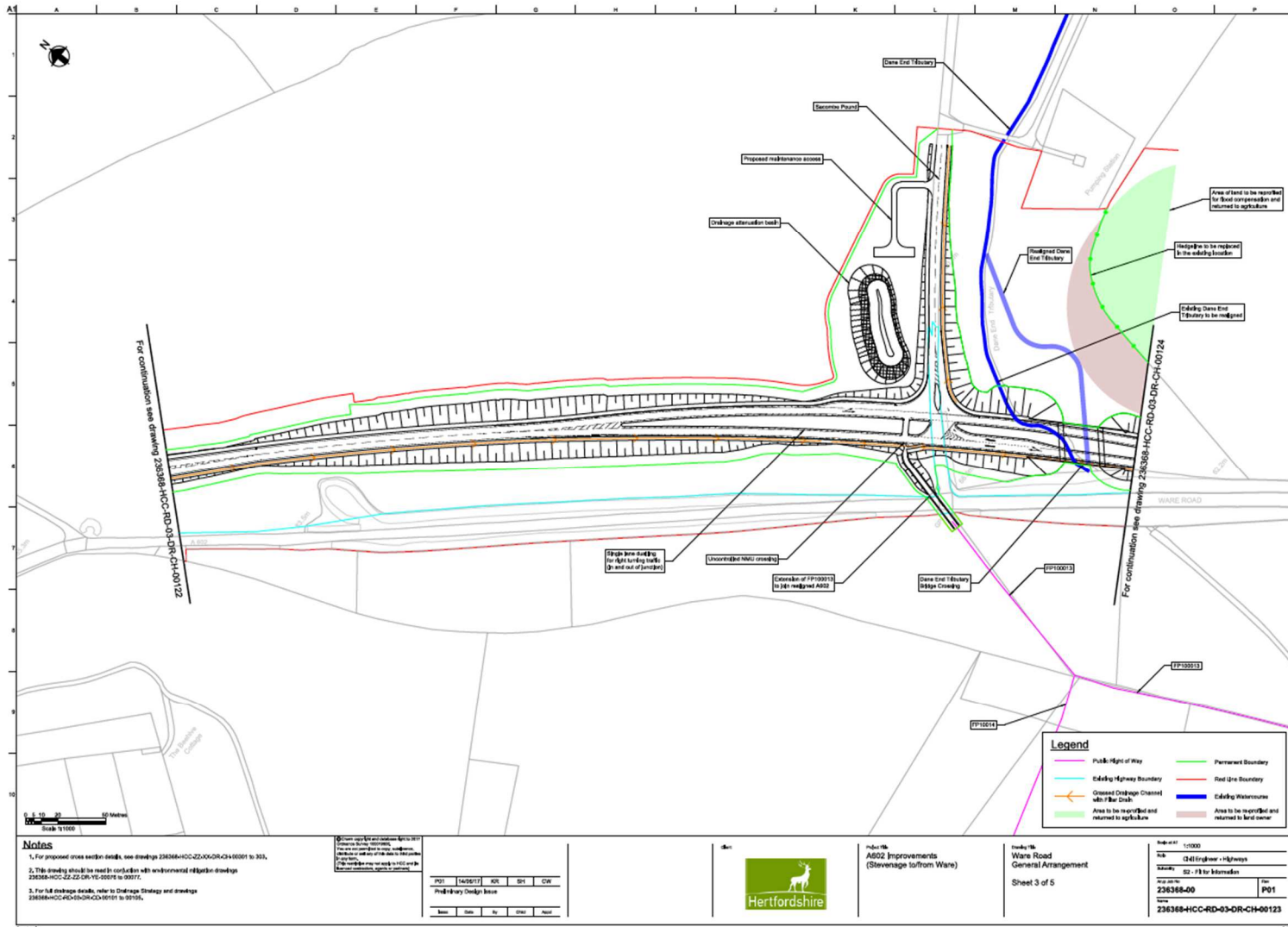
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Preliminary Design Issues				
Issue	Date	To	From	Notes

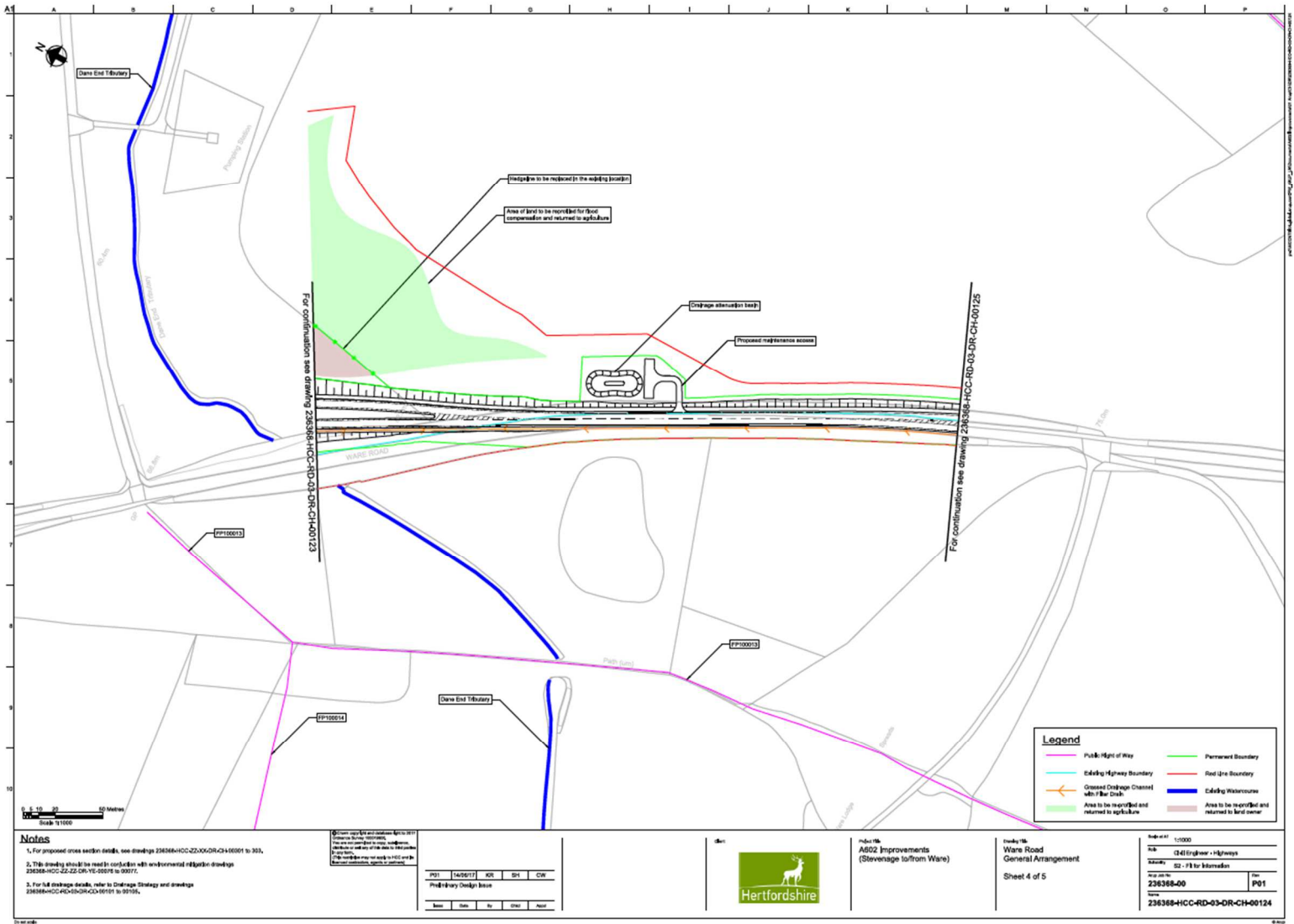


Project No:
A602 Improvements
(Stovenage to/from Ware)

Drawing No:
Ware Road
General Arrangement
Sheet 2 of 5

Scale: 1:1000	Drawn by: J41 Engineer - Highways
Checked by: J2 - J4 for Information	Date: 14/05/17
Project No: 236368-00	Sheet No: 001
Drawing Title: 236368-HCC-RD-03-DR-CH-00122	





Notes

1. For proposed cross section details, see drawings 238368-HCC-ZZ-03-DR-CH-00101 to 303.
2. This drawing should be read in conjunction with environmental mitigation drawings 238368-HCC-ZZ-02-DR-VE-00101 to 00107.
3. For all drainage details, refer to Drainage Strategy and drawings 238368-HCC-DR-03-DR-CD-00101 to 00109.

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REV	DATE	BY	CHKD	APPD
P01	14/02/17	KR	SP	CR

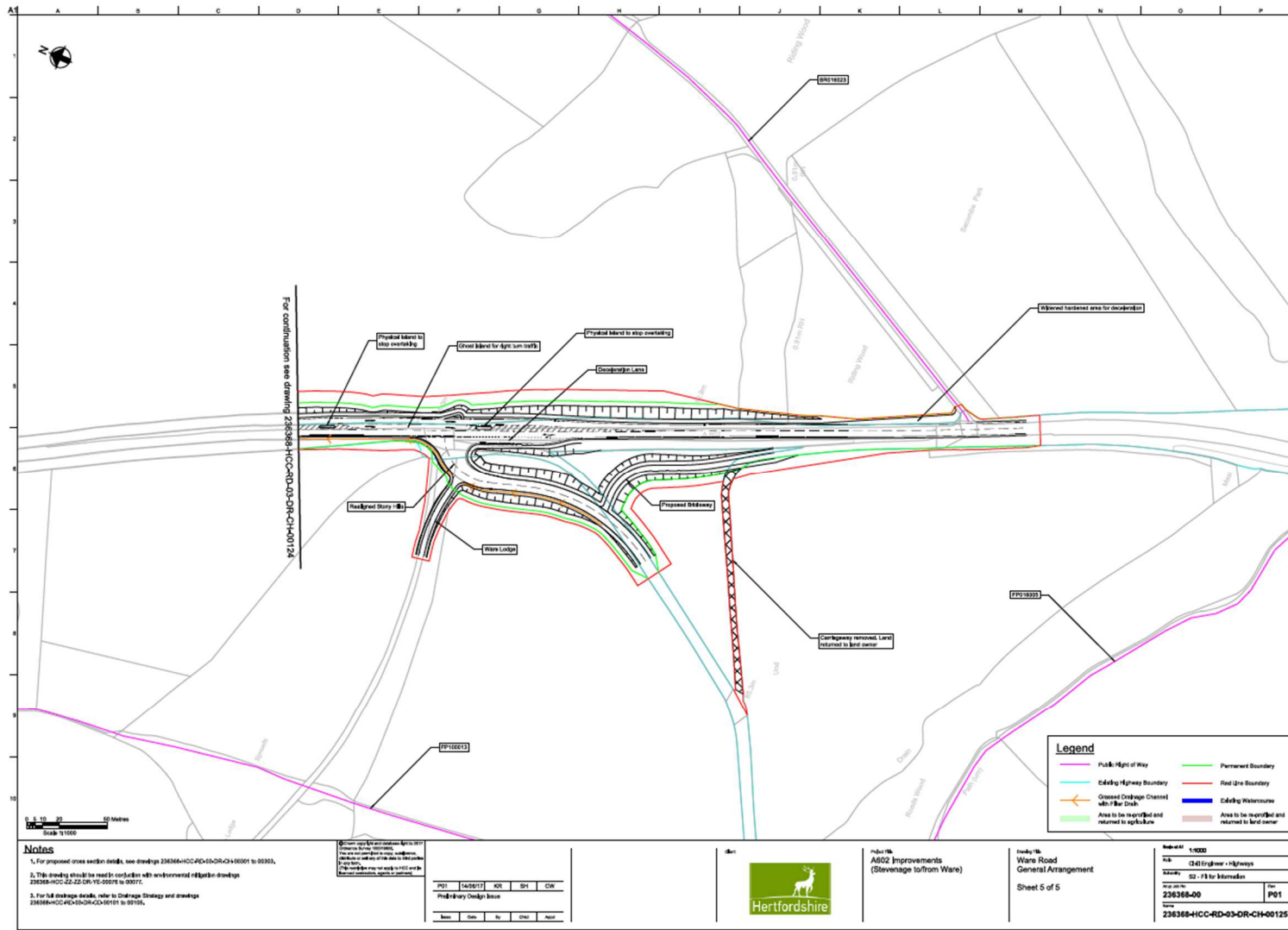
Pre-Feasibility Design Basis



Project No. A692 Improvements (Stewenage to/from Ware)

Project No. Ware Road General Arrangement
Sheet 4 of 5

Scale: 1:2000	Date: 14/02/17
Client: CH4 Engineer - Highways	Drawn by: SR - PS for Information
Project No: 238368-00	Sheet No: P01
Drawing Title: 238368-HCC-RD-03-DR-CH-00124	



Notes

1. For proposed cross section details, see drawings 236366-HCC-RD-03-DR-CH-0001 to 0003.
2. This drawing should be read in conjunction with environmental condition drawings 236366-HCC-ZZ-ZZ-DR-YE-0007 to 0011.
3. For all drainage details, refer to Drainage Strategy and drawings 236366-HCC-CH-DR-CH-0010 to 0015.

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POI	14/05/17	KSL	SH	CW
Preliminary Design Issues				
Issue	Date	By	Checked	Approved

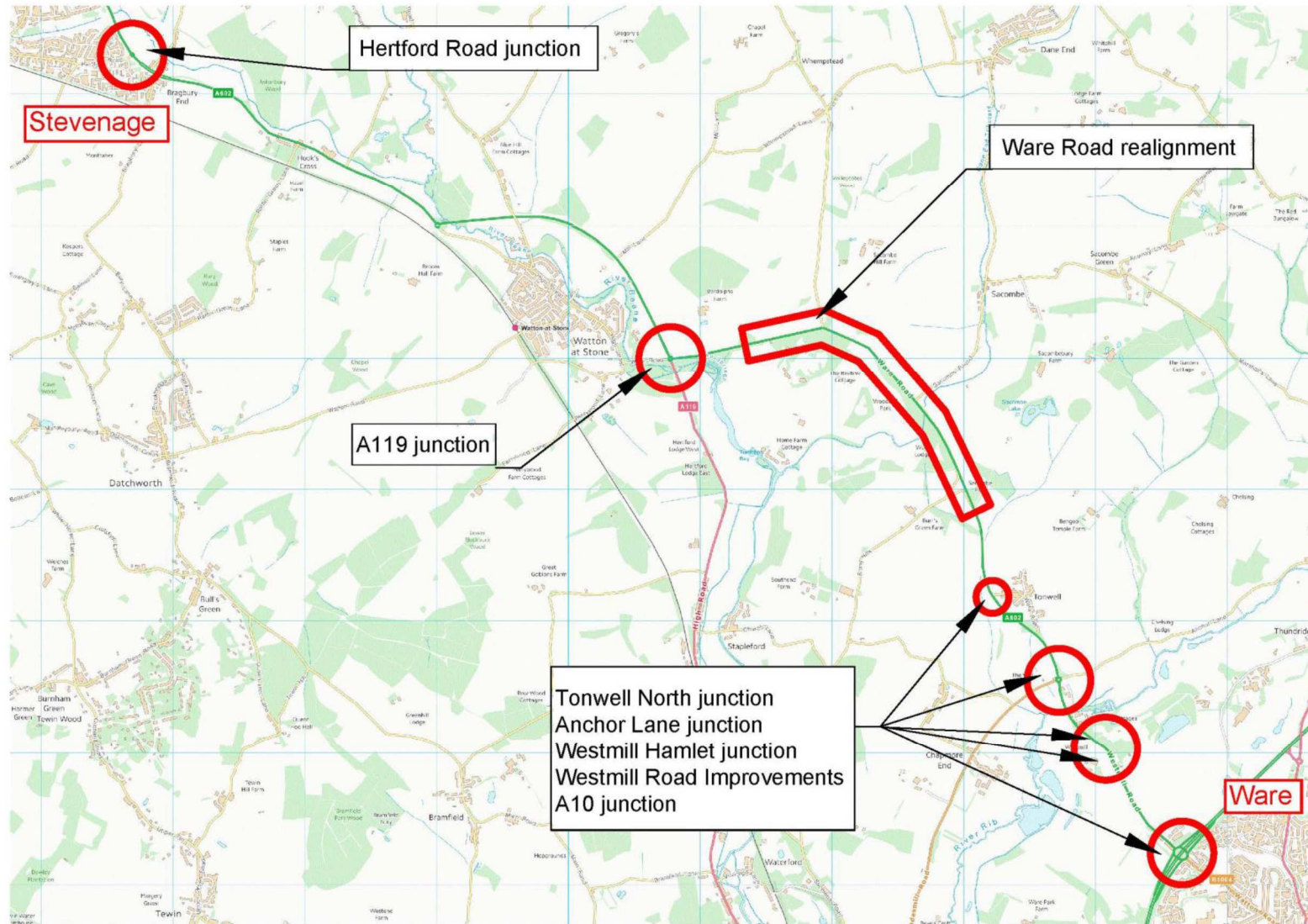


Project No: A602 Improvements (Stevenage to/from Ware)

Drawing No: Ware Road General Arrangement
 Sheet 5 of 5

Project No:	A602
Client:	124101@hert.hk/hertsex
Scale:	A2 - 1:5 for Information
Drawn by:	236366-00
Checked by:	PO1
Project No:	236366-HCC-RD-03-DR-CH-00125

Appendix 2 The Proposed Scheme (Ware Road realignment) within the wider area



Appendix 3 Consultation response from the Environment Agency

creating a better place



Mrs Sharon Threlfall
Hertfordshire County Council
County Development Unit
County Hall
Hertford
Hertfordshire
SG13 8DE

Our ref: NE/2017/127287/04-L01
Your ref: PL\0852\17
Date: 28 November 2017

Dear Sharon

Application For The Proposed Realignment Of Ware Road Between A Point West Of The Access Road To Heath Mount School, To The Existing Southern-Most Stony Hill Junction; With Realignments At All Junctions Within This Section; Including Associated Changes To Verges, Lighting, Drainage, Landscaping And Engineering Operations

A602, West Of Entrance To Heath Mount School, To Existing Stony Hills Junction In The South-East

Thank you for consulting us on this latest information. My apologies for our late response; this is due to resource pressures in our Sustainable Places team.

We are now satisfied with the findings of the Flood Risk Assessment and are able to remove our flood risk objection. The proposed development will be acceptable if the following planning conditions are included on any planning permission granted.

Condition 1

No development shall take place until a detailed scheme for the Dane End Tributary realignment has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority. Thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme and any subsequent amendments shall be agreed in writing with the local planning authority.

The scheme shall include:

- channel cross sections, in-channel design and planform alignment
- plans showing the extent and layout of the buffer zone
- details of any proposed planting scheme (for example, native species)
- details demonstrating how the buffer zone will be protected during development and managed/maintained over the longer term
- details of any proposed footpaths, fencing, lighting etc.

Cont/d..



Reason

River realignments can have a potentially severe impact on the ecology and geomorphology of the whole river corridor. The applicant needs to demonstrate that the risks posed by the development can be satisfactorily avoided, mitigated or compensated for. Our position is supported by East Hertfordshire's Local Plan policies ENV17 on Wildlife Habitats and ENV18 on the Water Environment.

The Water Framework Directive requires the restoration and enhancement of water bodies to prevent deterioration and promote recovery of water bodies. The proposal could cause deterioration of a quality element to a lower status class, therefore more detailed plans are needed.

This condition is further supported by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), paragraph 109 which recognises that the planning system should aim to conserve and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible. Paragraph 118 of the NPPF also states that opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged. This will contribute to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act requires Local Authorities to have regard to nature conservation. Article 10 of the Habitats Directive stresses the importance of natural networks of linked corridors to allow movement of species between suitable habitats, and promote the expansion of biodiversity.

Condition 2

No development shall take place until a method statement detailing how the realignment will be constructed, and how environmental degradation will be mitigated against and managed, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. This shall deal with the treatment of any environmentally sensitive areas, their aftercare and maintenance as well as a plan detailing the works to be carried out showing how the environment will be protected during the works.

Such a scheme shall include details of the following:

- timing of the works
- construction methods
- measures to be used in order to minimise environmental impact of the works (considering both potential disturbance and pollution)
- a map or plan showing habitat areas to be specifically protected
- any necessary mitigation for protected species
- any necessary pollution protection methods

The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved method statement.

Reason

This condition is necessary to ensure the protection of wildlife and supporting habitat, and secure opportunities for the enhancement of the nature conservation value of the site in line with national planning policy. Our position is supported by East Hertfordshire's Local Plan policies ENV17 on Wildlife Habitats and ENV18 on the Water Environment.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 109 recognises that the planning system should aim to conserve and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where

Cont/d..

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possible. Paragraph 118 of the NPPF states that if significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused, and that opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged.

Article 10 of the Habitats Directive stresses the importance of natural networks of linked habitat corridors to allow the movement of species between suitable habitats, and promote the expansion of biodiversity. River corridors are particularly effective in this way. Such networks and corridors may also help wildlife adapt to climate change.

Do let me know if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

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End

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Appendix 4 Consultation response from HCC Landscape Officer

Landscape Report	22nd August 2017
From: HCC Landscape Officer, Natural Historic and Built Environment Advisory Team	To: HCC Planning Officer, Spatial Planning
Application No.	3/1770-17
Location:	A602, West of entrance to Heath Mount School, to existing Stony Hills junction in the south-east
Proposal:	Application for the proposed realignment of Ware Road between a point west of the access road to Heath Mount School, to the existing southern-most Stony Hill junction; with realignments at all junctions within this section; including associated changes to verges, lighting, drainage, landscaping and engineering operations

1 Background

The proposed development between the entrance to Heath Mount School and Stony Hills Junction is one of four schemes within a package of works along the A602. Separate planning applications have been approved, or are currently being determined, for the following schemes:

- Hertford Road Roundabout in Stevenage (permitted)
- Northwest Ware (permitted)
- A602 and A119 Roundabout (awaiting determination)
- A602 (Ware Road) between Heath Mount School and Stony Hills junction (awaiting determination (subject of this report))

The Landscape Officer has previously been consulted on the pre-application proposals. At that stage broad principles were established regarding the approach to the landscape strategy.

2 Summary & Conclusions

2.1 Landscape and visual effects

Overall, the proposed construction stage gives rise to significant³ landscape and visual effects, due to the large scale and intrusive nature of the works, outside of the existing highway boundary, within the open landscape. However, the significance of effects is deemed acceptable due to the temporary and short term duration of effects for the total construction period of 64 weeks.

On implementation of the landscape mitigation planting and commencement of the operational stage at year 1, the proposed development gives rise to

³ Effects that are moderate or above are deemed significant in EIA terms

significant adverse effects upon landscape character and visual amenity within the distinct valley landscape of the Dane End Tributary.⁴

This is due to the introduction of large scale and intrusive engineered structures, that detract from local landscape character and visual amenity, and include the highway and junction with single lane dualling on a raised embankment, broad highways verge, attenuation ponds and access tracks, realigned tributary and floodplain, new bridge, and large areas of re-profiled ground.

As the landscape mitigation planting becomes established the significance of effects diminishes to an extent, however many of the detracting features remain apparent within the landscape and views and give rise to **permanent adverse residual landscape and visual effects. It is therefore advised that a more comprehensive package of landscape and visual mitigation is required. See comments regarding landscape strategy.**

2.2 Landscape strategy

In order to mitigate the permanent adverse residual landscape and visual effects of the proposed development, a more comprehensive landscape strategy is required, especially within the section of development towards Sacombe Pound. In addition to providing a more robust landscape framework, to assimilate the scheme within its rural setting and views, the strategy should address the following issues:

- Mitigation measures to avoid/reduce/compensate for the partial removal of irreplaceable Ancient Semi Natural Woodland at Riding Wood (W6)
- Detailed planting plans, schedules and specifications
- Approach to wildflower verge and tree planting between the estate wall and the proposed road
- Enhanced planting to highways embankments and areas of re-profiled ground
- Detailed design and layout of drainage pond compounds and boundaries to provide landscape and visual mitigation
- Detailed bridge design to reflect locally distinct materials

3 Landscape and Visual Effects⁵

3.1 Construction Stage

The construction stage, which includes 12 weeks of advanced works and 52 weeks of construction works, comprises the following aspects that are likely to result in landscape and visual effects:

- Erection of temporary tree protection fencing
- Erection of temporary construction compounds and fencing

⁴ 'Munden Valley' landscape character area

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)

- Removal of existing landcover and vegetation
- Temporary removal and storage of soils
- Alteration of gradients and levels, cuttings, embankments and ground profiling
- Highways engineering operations (new highway / junction realignments / new bridge)
- Surface water management engineering operations (Dane End Tributary realignment and floodplain / attenuation basins and access tracks)
- Environmental aspects (e.g. lighting, vehicular noise and movement)

3.1.1 Landscape effects

The submitted Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment⁶ (LVIA) concludes that the construction stage results in large adverse effects for ‘Woodhall Park and Watton-at-Stone Slopes’ landscape character area (LCA),⁷ and slight adverse effects for ‘Benington/Sacombe Ridge,’ ‘Munden Valley’ and ‘Sacombe Park Estate Farmland,’ LCAs.

With regards ‘Woodhall Park and Watton-at-Stone Slopes’ LCA, there is concern for the LVIA methodology that provides an assessment of the proposed construction stage in combination with the proposed construction stage for the scheme at the A602 and A119 Roundabout, which is subject to a separate planning application. The construction stages for each area are not timetabled to occur *concurrently*, and therefore do not result in an overall landscape effect.

Despite concerns for the approach to the assessment, the findings are generally supported with the exception of the significance of effects for ‘Munden Valley’ LCA that should be higher.

It is proposed to carry out the majority of the large scale and intrusive engineering works within the ‘Munden Valley’ LCA, within the distinct valley landscape of the Dane End Tributary, that extends between the existing A602 highway and the village of Dane End to the north.

The existing A602 highway runs along the boundary of Woodhall Park and is well assimilated within the wider landscape due to the mitigating effect of the established parkland and roadside vegetation. It is proposed to construct the new highway and associated infrastructure offline, outside of the existing highway boundary, within the open landscape.

The proposed construction stage comprises a number of activities that give rise to significant adverse landscape effects and include the stripping and storage of soils, the excavation and deposition of materials to create embankments, ground re-profiling, the construction of hard engineered structures, plus associated heavy plant machinery.

⁶ Environmental Statement, Chapter 8 Landscape

⁷ 8.7.1.1. Landscape Effects (It should be noted that the assessment for Woodhall Park and Watton-at-Stone Slopes also takes account of the proposed works at the A602 and A119 Roundabout)

With regards duration, it is proposed to carry out the construction stage for a period of 64 weeks that is considered temporary and short term.⁸

Overall the construction stage results in slight adverse landscape effects to large adverse landscape effects.

3.1.2 Visual effects

With regards the assessment of visual effects, viewpoints (VP) 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20 are most relevant to the proposed development. The LVIA⁹ concludes that the construction stage results in neutral visual effects for VPs 10, 13, 14, 16, 17 and 20, slight adverse visual effects for 15 and 18, and large adverse visual effects for 19.

These judgements are generally supported. For the majority of viewpoints the impact of the proposed construction works upon views is generally mitigated by the screening effect of the intervening vegetation and sloping landform. However there are more open and elevated views from within the distinct valley landform of the Dane End Tributary, as demonstrated in VP19.

Overall the construction stage results in neutral visual effects to large adverse visual effects.

3.2 Operational Stage Year 1

3.2.1 Landscape effects

The LVIA concludes that the operational stage at year 1 results in moderate adverse effects for 'Woodhall Park and Watton-at-Stone Slopes' landscape character area (LCA),¹⁰ and slight adverse effects for 'Benington/Sacombe Ridge,' 'Munden Valley' and 'Sacombe Park Estate Farmland,' LCAs.

With regards 'Woodhall Park and Watton-at-Stone Slopes' LCA, there is concern for the LVIA methodology that provides an assessment of the proposed operational stage in combination with the proposed operational stage for the scheme at the A602 and A119 roundabout, which is subject to a separate planning application. The operational stages for each area at year 1 are not timetabled to occur *concurrently* and therefore do not result in an overall landscape effect.

Despite concerns for the approach to the assessment, the findings are generally supported with the exception of the significance of effects for 'Munden Valley' LCA that should be higher. It is proposed to introduce the majority of the large scale and intrusive engineering works within the 'Munden Valley' LCA towards Sacombe Pound, including the substantial junction with single lane dualling on a

⁸ In a generations experience

⁹ Appendix C: Visual Effects Schedule

¹⁰ 8.7.2.1. Landscape Effects (It should be noted that the assessment for Woodhall Park and Watton-at-Stone Slopes also takes account of the proposed works at the A602 and A119 Roundabout)

raised embankment, attenuation ponds and access tracks, realigned tributary and floodplain, new bridge, and large areas of re-profiled ground.

Landcover

At year 1 operation, the new hedgerow and tree planting, and wildflower grass, is in the early stages of establishment and offers limited landscape mitigation. The use of standard trees is fully supported and will help enhance landscape character to an extent at this early stage.

The existing landcover pattern, within the distinct valley landscape of the Dane End Tributary (DET), is characterised by grassland within the flat valley floor, and arable cultivation across the sloping valley sides. It is proposed to introduce new engineered features and areas of associated grassland, such as the new wildflower verge with tree planting, highways embankments, and attenuation pond compounds, across the arable valley slopes that are at odds with the local landcover pattern.

There is particular concern for the engineered appearance of the proposed attenuation basins, and their open and elevated location on the valley slopes. Water bodies typically occur in low-lying area, such as the flat valley floor, and should have a natural profile that ties in seamlessly with the surrounding landform.

Landform

The proposed development comprises the introduction of several engineered slopes that appear contrived and at odds with the local sloping valley landform. In particular the raised highways embankment cuts across the valley. There are also contrived landforms as a result of the ground re-profiling to the floodplain and the creation of the attenuation ponds.

Overall the operational stage at year 1 results in slight adverse landscape effects to moderate - large adverse landscape effects.

3.2.2 Visual effects

The LVIA concludes that the operational stage at year 1 results in neutral visual effects for VPs 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 20,¹¹ and moderate adverse visual effects for VP19.¹²

These judgements are generally supported, with the exception of VP19 that may be higher.

At year 1 operation, the new hedgerow and tree planting, and wildflower grass, is in the early stages of establishment and offers limited visual mitigation. The use of standard trees is fully supported and will help enhance visual amenity to an extent at this early stage.

¹¹ Appendix C: Visual Effects Schedule

¹² 8.7.2.2 Visual Effects

For the majority of viewpoints the impact of the proposed development upon views is generally mitigated by the screening effect of the intervening vegetation and sloping landform. However there are highly sensitive views from within the distinct valley landform of the Dane End Tributary, as demonstrated in the submitted photomontage for VP19.

From here, there are open and elevated views across the valley towards Sacombe Pound and the cluster of hard engineered features, such as the raised highways embankment and re-profiled ground, attenuation pond compounds and new bridge, which appear contrived within the rural valley setting and detract from visual amenity.

Overall the operational stage at year 1 results in neutral visual effects to moderate - large adverse visual effects.

3.3 Operational Stage Year 15

3.3.1 Landscape effects

The LVIA concludes that the operational stage at year 15 results in neutral effects for 'Woodhall Park and Watton-at-Stone Slopes,' 'Benington/Sacombe Ridge,' and 'Sacombe Park Estate Farmland,' LCAs, and slight adverse effects for 'Munden Valley.'

These judgements are generally supported with the exception of the significance of effects for 'Munden Valley' LCA that should be higher.

Landcover

At year 15 operation, the new hedgerow and tree planting, and wildflower grass, is well established and delivers maximum potential landscape mitigation.

The establishment of the linear planting strips and hedgerows help to give structure and definition to the proposed floodplain within the flat valley floor. However the open grassland appearance of the wildflower verge, attenuation pond compounds, and some sections of the highways embankments remain at odds with the local landcover pattern.

Landform

The establishment of planting along the toe of the highways embankment, helps assimilate the development with its rural setting to an extent, however the engineered slopes largely remain at odds with the local sloping valley landform

3.3.2 Visual effects

The LVIA concludes that the operational stage at year 15 results in **neutral visual effects** on VPs 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 20,¹³ and **slight adverse visual effects** on VP19.¹⁴

¹³ Appendix C: Visual Effects Schedule

¹⁴ 8.7.2.2 Visual Effects

These judgements are generally supported, with the exception of the significance of effects for VP19 that should be higher.

At year 1 operation, the new hedgerow and tree planting, and wildflower grass, is well established and delivers maximum potential visual mitigation.

For the majority of viewpoints the impact of the proposed development upon views is generally mitigated by the screening effect of the intervening vegetation and sloping landform. However there remains strong concern for the impact upon highly sensitive open and elevated views across the valley towards Sacombe Pound and the cluster of hard engineered features, such as the raised highways embankment and re-profiled ground, attenuation pond compounds and new bridge, which appear contrived within the rural valley setting and detract from visual amenity.

3.4 Cumulative Effects

Cumulative landscape and visual effects as a result of the proposed package of works along the A602 is a key consideration.

The proposed development in combination with the proposed development at the A602 and A119 roundabout give rise to cumulative landscape and visual effects due to their location next to each other, across neighbouring landscape character areas, and where they appear as elements within the same view.

On completion of the A602 and A119 roundabout, it is intended to start construction works at Ware Road. It is suggested that the sites will give rise to some **negligible to slight adverse cumulative landscape and visual effects** within the first 0-5 years until the new planting at the A602 and A119 roundabout has become established and delivers effective landscape mitigation.

The proposed development in combination with the proposed package of works along the A602 gives rise to some **adverse cumulative visual effects** for commuters using the A602. Along here, travellers experience transient views of the schemes at various stages of construction and operation, over a period of at least 164 weeks (approx. 3 years).

4 Landscape Design and Layout

4.1 Arboricultural report

The findings and recommendations of the Arboricultural Report (and accompanying Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Tree Protection Plan) are broadly supported.

However there is strong objection to the statement that *'The ratio of trees removed to trees replanted should not necessarily be 1:1.'*¹⁵ Where the removal

¹⁵ Landscaping, page 30

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 within the site. New trees should be medium to large-scale native species that deliver maximum benefits for local character, visual amenity and biodiversity.

It is proposed to remove 7 individual trees (nos. 34, 55-60, 164-167, and 179-183), and partially remove 3 blocks of woodland (W2-W4 and W6) and 1 tree group (G8). It is noted that the Arboricultural Impact Assessment plans show a strip of planting (G9) for partial removal however this has not been included within the tree works summary.

With regards W6 (Riding Wood), there is strong concern for the removal of this woodland that is designated Ancient Semi Natural Woodland and irreplaceable. This approach does not meet the landscape strategy approach, and recognised opportunity to *'Protect the area's ancient woodland cover by ensuring construction works avoid these areas where possible.'*¹⁶

4.2 Landscape strategy

4.2.1 Planting plan

With reference to the Landscape Strategy dated May 2017, the proposed planting palette of wildflower grass, hedgerow planting with standard trees and woodland is supported in principle.

A detailed planting plan, schedule and specifications are required.

4.2.2 Wildflower verge

It is proposed to plant tree groups in the *'wildflower areas between the estate wall and the proposed road, to provide visual screening, tie in with...the wider landscape pattern...'* There is concern for how the informal groups of tree planting will appear in the landscape and views, and deliver effective mitigation, especially for the development towards Sacombe Pound. In this more sensitive area, within the open valley landscape, the proposed planting would benefit from being more robust.

4.2.3 Drainage ponds

The detailed design of the drainage ponds, that will not hold any permanent water, are hard engineered features that lack any response to the landscape setting. Where the actual design of the pond profile cannot be altered, then there needs to be a more considered approach to the landscape design of the compounds and treatment of their boundaries.

¹⁶ Landscape Strategy May2017 Section 2.3 Opportunities and constraints

4.2.4 Bridge Design

From the submitted EIA it is proposed to clad the bridge in concrete panels, this approach does not meet the landscape strategy opportunity for *'Bridge design finishes to respect rural landscape character and incorporate local materials.'*¹⁷

¹⁷ Landscape Strategy May2017 Section 2.3 Opportunities and constraints

Appendix 5 Consultation response from South Herts CTC

This response to the planning application for the Ware Road is from South Herts CTC, the local group of Cycling UK. We represent the interests of over 1,000 members living in South Hertfordshire and North London. We have discussed the application with local cyclists and others on CycleScape, including The FortyPlus CC, which has many members in Hertford.

The Ware Road is the A602, west of entrance to Heath Mount School, to the existing Stony Hills junction in the south-east and is part of the overall scheme A602 improvements, Stevenage to / from Ware. Although permitted, very few cyclists would want to cycle along this length of the A602 due to the amount of fast, heavy traffic on a narrow main road.

Our over-riding concern is to preserve and enhance permeability for cyclists crossing the A602, specifically between Stony Hills and Sacombe Pound. This is a crucial link for cyclists travelling between Hertford and Dane End and beyond.

A secondary concern is the crossing from Stony Hills, directly over the A602, onto the bridleway leading through Sacombe Park to Sacombe Green. This is a crucial link for leisure cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians into an attractive park and beyond, which removes the need to travel along the A602. It also avoids having to climb the steep hill from Sacombe to Sacombe Green.

Hertfordshire Council's transport policy for cycling states *"We will promote cycling through infrastructure improvements and softer measures such as campaigns, information and education and ensure that as far as practicable all of its policies and programmes work together to encourage modal shift to sustainable forms of transport including cycling."*

There is a huge opportunity to improve facilities for cyclists and others to cross the Ware Road and we will address each of our concerns in turn:

Stony Hills – A602 junction

We refer to drawing: Ware Road General Arrangement Sheet 5 of 5 (236368-HCC-RD-03-DR-CH-00125).

We welcome the right-turn lane and the protection provided by the physical islands to prevent overtaking.

The use of 'jug handle' turns at busy non-priority crossings was included in the 2008 guidance 'LTN 2-08 Cycle Infrastructure Design' to assist cyclists turning right in two steps. However, we believe that the jug handle treatment is a symptom of poor infrastructure design. If the road is busy (and hostile) enough to merit a 'jug handle', then – in the interests of making cycling genuinely safe and attractive – this road should have a cycleway running alongside it. 'Club cyclists', who are confident enough to cycle along the main road, will not be slowing down to swing into a jug handle in the verge, coming to a complete stop to make a right turn; they will just turn right regardless, avoiding it. It's doubtful whether a group of a dozen or more cyclists would fit into the jug handle anyway. And anyone who

doesn't fancy cycling on this road (the vast majority of people) won't be helped by this new bit of infrastructure, because they won't be cycling here in the first place.

A602 between Stony Hills and Sacombe Pound

Best practice is now covered in the Oct 2016 guidance 'IAN195/16 Cycle Traffic and the Strategic Road Network' by Highways England, which says the minimum provision where the speed limit is 40 mph and over is for cycle tracks. Although the A602 is not part of the strategic road network, we argue there is a very strong case for following the best practice provided in IAN195/16 along the part of the A602 between Stony Hills and Sacombe Pound and that a cycle track should be provided.

A further argument in favour of having a separate cycle track is that LTN 2-08 (table 2.3) says the total width required for a bus/HGV overtaking a cyclist is 5.05 metres. The carriageway width proposed for the A602 is 3.65 metres (as shown on previous consultation drawings). Oncoming traffic, double white lines and physical islands will prevent safe overtaking and traffic flow will be hindered by cyclists having to use the main carriageway. Traffic will be tempted to perform close passes within the lane and this will endanger the lives of cyclists.

We believe that the only alternative to providing a cycle track beside the A602 here, would be to improve the direct crossing into Sacombe Park and to improve and maintain the surface quality of bridleways within the park to a standard acceptable to road cyclists.

Sacombe Pound – A602 junction

We refer to drawing: Ware Road General Arrangement Sheet 3 of 5 (236368-HCC-RD-03-DR-CH-00123).

We welcome the right-turn lane and the protection provided by physical islands to prevent overtaking. Our comments on the use of 'jug handle' turns are the same as for the Stony Hills junction above.

Stony Hills to Sacombe Park crossing

We refer to drawing: Ware Road General Arrangement Sheet 5 of 5 (236368-HCC-RD-03-DR-CH-00125).

We accept that the southern fork of Stony Hills will be returned to farmland and cyclists will be required to use a new, short bridleway link instead. We seek assurances that the surface quality of this new bridleway will be equivalent to the existing lane and that it will be well maintained.

We are most concerned that no physical traffic islands are shown at the A602 crossing point at Sacombe Park. The overall A602 scheme is designed to speed the flow of traffic and we believe it is an absolutely essential safety requirement to provide a central refuge to allow this busy road, at the brow of a hill, with very limited visibility in either direction, to be crossed in two steps. This is needed for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians to use this crossing. The ideal provision here would be user operated traffic lights (Pegasus Crossing).

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 5 July 2017 (*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 (Landscape Officer)

- 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 11 May 2017 and the following mitigation measures detailed within the Surface Water Management Strategy (appendix D):
 - Implementing appropriate SuDS measures as shown on Drawings :
 - 236368-HCC-JN-02-DR-CD-00101, A119 Roundabout Preliminary Drainage layout
 - 236368-HCC-RD-03-DR-CD-00101, Ware road Preliminary Drainage layout, sheet 1 of 5
 - 236368-HCC-RD-03-DR-CD-00102, Ware road Preliminary Drainage layout, sheet 2 of 5
 - 236368-HCC-RD-03-DR-CD-00103, Ware road Preliminary Drainage layout, sheet 3 of 5
 - 236368-HCC-RD-03-DR-CD-00104, Ware road Preliminary Drainage layout, sheet 4 of 5
 - 236368-HCC-RD-03-DR-CD-00105, Ware road Preliminary Drainage layout, sheet 5 of 5
 - 236368-HCC- RD-03-DR-CD-00110, Ware road Preliminary Drainage layout, sheet 1 of 5, Alternative outfall option
 - Provision of storage volume of
 - 190 m³ for the first catchment known as western extent immediately east of Bardolphs Cottages, in form of linear SuDS feature and either underground geocellular crates at the roundabout A119/A602 or attenuation basin
 - 462 m³ for the second catchment which extends from Whempstead Road to the northern side of the Danes End Tributary crossing ,in form of attenuation pond and infiltration ditch/trench
 - 220 m³ for the third catchment which extends from the southern side of the Danes End Tributary crossing and includes the proposed works at Stony Hills junction, in form of attenuation pond

- **Ensuring rates of runoff generated by the impermeable area will not exceed the greenfield runoff rate in accordance with the rates in Table 2 by using flow control devices**
- **Ensuring sustainable treatment train in advance of discharge to the ground, to the Dane end Tributary or to the River Beane**

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 to the commencement of any development hereby permitted, infiltration tests shall be carried out in accordance with BRE Digest 365 to ensure the ground has the capacity to infiltrate the volume of surface water to be intercepted by the cut off ditches from the adjacent lands.**

Tests should be carried out in the specific location where infiltration features are proposed. (Sacombe Pound junction)

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.

Drainage strategy option (LLFA)

6. **Prior to the commencement of any development hereby permitted the choice to implement either the main option (236368-HCC-RD-03-DR-CD-00101, Ware Road Preliminary Drainage layout, sheet 1 of 5) or the alternative option outfall (236368-HCC- RD-03-DR-CD-00110, Ware road Preliminary Drainage layout, sheet 1 of 5, Alternative outfall option) at the western extent of the works must be confirmed and supported by technical evidence.**

The proposed surface water management infrastructure at the roundabout A119/A602 should be workable before connecting any pipe from the Ware road section into it.

Or

If the culvert near to Bardolphs Cottages will be used to convey the surface water coming from the new attenuation feature under the A602, its condition and its suitability for purpose should be confirmed.

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

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.

Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation (1) (Historic Environment)

10. **No demolition/development shall take place/commence until an Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation has been submitted to and approved by the County Planning Authority in writing. The scheme shall include an assessment of archaeological significance and research questions; and:**

- **The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording**
- **The programme for post investigation assessment**
- **Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording**
- **Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation.**
- **Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation**

- **Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation.**

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

Reason: To protect the archaeological interests of the site.

Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation (2) (Historic Environment)

- 11. The development shall not be occupied/used until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition 6 and the provision made for analysis and publication where appropriate.**

Reason: To protect the archaeological interests of the site.

Dane End Tributary Realignment (1) (Environment Agency)

- 12. No development shall take place until a detailed scheme for the Dane End Tributary realignment has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority. Thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme and any subsequent amendments shall be agreed in writing with the County Planning Authority.**

The scheme shall include:

- **channel cross sections, in-channel design and planform alignment**
- **plans showing the extent and layout of the buffer zone**
- **details of any proposed planting scheme (for example, native species)**
- **details demonstrating how the buffer zone will be protected during development and managed/maintained over the longer term**
- **details of any proposed footpaths, fencing, lighting etc.**

Reason: River realignments can have a potentially severe impact on the ecology and geomorphology of the whole river corridor. The applicant needs to demonstrate that the risks posed by the development can be satisfactorily avoided, mitigated or compensated for.

Dane End Tributary Realignment (2) (Environment Agency)

- 13. No development shall take place until a method statement detailing how the realignment will be constructed, and how environmental degradation will be mitigated against and managed, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. This shall deal with the treatment of any environmentally sensitive areas, their aftercare and maintenance as**

well as a plan detailing the works to be carried out showing how the environment will be protected during the works.

Such a scheme shall include details of the following:

- timing of the works
- construction methods
- measures to be used in order to minimise environmental impact of the works (considering both potential disturbance and pollution)
- a map or plan showing habitat areas to be specifically protected
- any necessary mitigation for protected species
- any necessary pollution protection methods

The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved method statement.

Reason: This condition is necessary to ensure the protection of wildlife and supporting habitat, and secure opportunities for the enhancement of the nature conservation value of the site.

Fencing/boundary treatment

14. 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.

Lighting

15. 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.

Reason: To minimise light pollution and to minimise the disruption of bat flight lines.