

ITEM NUMBER: 5b

24/01593/MFA	Change of use from agricultural land to Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) with associated access and car park.	
Site Address:	Land East Of Green Lane Gaddesden Lane Gaddesden Row Hemel Hempstead Hertfordshire	
Applicant/Agent:	Vistry Homes and Richard Blair	Miss Ella Murfet
Case Officer:	Heather Edey	
Parish/Ward:	Flamstead Parish Council	Watling
Referral to Committee:	Contrary View to Parish Council	

1. RECOMMENDATION

1.1 That the application be **delegated with a view to APPROVAL** subject to the completion of an agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) which secures, inter alia, the management and maintenance of the land as SANG for a minimum period of 80 years, and subject to the conditions set out below.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 The proposed development would constitute inappropriate in the Green Belt, for it would, in part, not preserve the openness of the Green Belt and would conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. It is however concluded that very special circumstances exist which would outweigh the proposals' harm to the Green Belt, therein justifying the works and according with Policy CS5 of the Dacorum Borough Core Strategy (2013) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024).

2.2 The grant of planning permission for this application would permit the above change of use but would not automatically result in the site constituting a SANG (Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace). However, as the description includes reference to a SANG, it is appropriate to consider whether the land is, in fact, capable of becoming a SANG. Following an assessment of the criteria set out in the Chiltern Beechwoods Mitigation Strategy, the site is concluded to be suitable and capable of becoming a SANG. Natural England are also in agreement that the site complies with the relevant criterion and is a good candidate for a SANG. The proposed level of parking is in accordance with Natural England Guidance and thus does not give rise to concerns.

2.3 The proposal would reduce the cumulative impacts of new development in the Borough and reduce visitor pressure on a sensitive site, (i.e. on the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation, CBSAC). Whilst the development would create some harm to the character and appearance of the countryside, by virtue of the urbanising effect of the new access and car park, this harm would be minimal and would be significantly outweighed by the benefits of the scheme, including the offsetting of harm to the CBSAC, enabling the Council to deliver the required housing numbers within the Borough and the provision of a public open space.

2.4 The Highway Authority are satisfied that the proposal will not have an unacceptable or severe impact on the safety and operation of the surrounding highway. The proposed SANG would result in a high-quality open space that is accessible to the public and would encourage the enjoyment of the countryside.

2.5 As detailed in the following assessment, the proposed change of use from agricultural land to informal outdoor recreation, together with new access, car park, paths, fencing and landscaping is in accordance with Policies CS5, CS8, CS11, CS12, CS24, CS26 and CS27 of the Dacorum Borough Core Strategy (2013), the Dcaorum Borough Local Plan (2004) and the NPPF (2024).

3. SITE DESCRIPTION

3.1 The application site comprises a rectangular parcel of land with an area of 16.31 hectares, situated to the east of Green Lane and north of Gaddesden Lane, within the Metropolitan Green Belt. It is bounded to the north and east by agricultural land, with the nearest neighbouring properties Green Lane Barn, Green Lane Stables and Green Lane Farm set at distances of over 60m away from the northern site boundary.

3.2 Whilst sited outside of the Chilterns National Landscape, (formerly Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, AONB), the site lies adjacent to its boundary, which extends along the opposite side of Green Lane. The site is located approximately 7.4km east of the CBSAC, with designated Ancient Woodland Hay Wood located approximately 267m to the south-west of the site.

3.3 No Public Rights of Way (PRoW) extend across the site or along its boundaries, however, there are a number of PRoW's in the wider area, including Footpaths 40 and 41 which extend to the north of the site, and a Public Bridleway Great Gaddesden 46, which extends to the south.

3.4 Overhead power cables run north along the eastern site boundary, with two pylons located on the western site boundary, connecting to the north eastern corner of the site. Two underground gas pipelines also extend across the site, (i.e. the Feeder Peters Green to Hedgerley pipeline and Kinsbourne Green to Picotts End pipeline). The site comprises a gentle undulating topography, with ground levels sloping towards Gaddesden Lane. The western site boundary with Green Lane comprises a mix of bracken, bramble scrub and native hedgerow, whilst the southern boundary to Gaddesden Lane comprises bramble scrub and small trees.

4. PROPOSAL

4.1 Planning permission is sought for a change of use of the site from agriculture to outdoor recreation space with a view to it becoming a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG). The proposal would also involve the construction of a car park and other ancillary development.

4.2 In order to facilitate the conversion of the site into a SANG, it is proposed that the existing arable farmland will be reverted to grassland, sown with native meadow seed mixture, with additional landscaping introduced to the southern and western boundaries and within the site.

4.3 A network of mown paths are also proposed to enhance the experience of those visiting the SANG, (and comply with Dacorum and Natural England's SANG criteria), with viewpoints proposed at higher ground levels within the SANG to facilitate long distance views. Ancillary development in the form of interpretation boards, waste/dog bins and benches are proposed to be interspersed throughout the site at convenient locations.

4.4 The proposed new car park will be located to the south of the site and accessed via Gaddesden Lane, with a 6m carriageway and 6m radii. The car park would facilitate off-street car parking provision for 25 cars, and would be enclosed by way of new hedgerow and thicket planting. The entrance to the car park would include a height restriction barrier, and visitors would be afforded direct access to the SANG land via a gate at the northern end of the car park.

5. BACKGROUND

SANG and Interaction with Planning Permission

5.1 Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace, or "SANG", is the term given to greenspaces that are created or enhanced with the specific purpose of absorbing recreational pressure that would

otherwise occur at National Sites, such as Ashridge Commons and Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). New SANGs can be created, or existing greenspaces enhanced to create a SANG, in order to absorb the level of additional recreation pressure associated with new development.

5.2 The grant of planning permission for this application would permit a change of use from agriculture to informal outdoor recreation, but would not automatically result in the site constituting a SANG. This is because whether the site is ultimately considered to be a SANG will depend on the outcome of an Appropriate Assessment carried out pursuant to Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 in relation to whichever application(s) rely on it for mitigation.

5.3 Therefore, this application should be seen as an important first step in the site becoming a SANG for which housing developments can rely on for mitigation. Nonetheless, as the description includes reference to SANG, it is appropriate to consider whether the land is, in fact, capable of becoming a SANG. This will be addressed during a later section of the report.

The Need for Private SANG in Dacorum

5.4 There are currently two Council-led Strategic SANGs that provide mitigation capacity for developments within their catchments and which were instrumental in allowing a partial lifting of the moratorium on new housing that was in effect from March to November 2022. Since November 2022, qualifying developments have been able to avail of SANG capacity, enabling new housing to be approved.

5.5 The Council's SANG sites are located within the south and east of the borough. This, combined with the SANG catchment area, results in the Council not being able to offer its SANG capacity to developments of ten or more new homes in Berkhamsted, Tring or the west of the Borough.

5.6 The capacity of a SANG, (i.e. the number of dwellings it can mitigate for), is directly proportional to its size. As the capacity of Council-led strategic SANG is finite, an allocations protocol has been instituted to ensure that a SANG solution is provided only to those developments where it is genuinely not possible for provision to take place on site, and in order to ensure a continual and predictable supply of new homes across the Borough. It is important to note that once Council-led strategic SANG capacity has been exhausted, new housing which does not provide its own SANG solution cannot be granted. This would disproportionately affect sites which, due to their limited size, would not be able to provide their own on-site SANG.

5.7 Consequently, the Council will need to bring more SANG sites online in order to provide a future supply for new homes. At present there are a total of four sites in Council ownership under consideration – i.e. Gadebridge Park, Margaret Lloyd Park, Howe Grove and an extension to Bunkers Park.

5.8 Until such point as the adverse impacts of recreational pressure on the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation are reversed, the Council will continually be required to identify and bring forward new SANG solutions. This is currently being done by utilising land already in the Council's ownership, but there will clearly come a point where there are no further suitable sites that can be upgraded and used for SANG; therefore, it is submitted that third party SANG solutions have an important and complementary role to play in the Development Management process.

5.9 Members granted planning permission for two private SANGs at Haresfoot Farm and Castle Hill, which were the first applications for developer-led SANG solutions in the Borough. This application is predicated on similar grounds – i.e. it would complement the Council-led SANG and enable new housing to be approved. The fact that two developer-led SANG's have been approved does not render the capacity that would be created by this site surplus to requirement; rather, for

the foreseeable future there will be a need for both new Council-led and developer-led SANG solutions if the Council is to provide the number of homes identified as necessary in the Borough.

5.10 The proposal would secure 16.3 hectares of SANG land that would mitigate up to 847 new dwellings within 4km of the site, (on the basis of 52 dwellings per hectare). The SANG has been developed in consultation with Natural England and meets it's SANG criteria as noted in the section on 'Suitability of Site for SANG' (below).

5.11 The allocation of SANG credits would remain within the control of the Applicants, however the credits are predominantly intended to provide mitigation for the residential development approved under application 4/02539/16/MOA (Spencer's Park), which granted permission for up to 600 dwellings across two authority areas of Dacorum and St. Albans City and District. The development would therefore aid in reducing pressure on Council-led SANG and assist in enabling new housing to built within the Borough.

6. PLANNING HISTORY

Planning Applications:

None.

Appeals:

None.

7. CONSTRAINTS

Former Land Use (Risk Zone)

Two Gas Pipelines extend across the site

Green Belt

Opposite boundary of Chilterns National Landscape

EA Source Protection Zone 3

8. REPRESENTATIONS

Consultation responses

8.1 These are reproduced in full at Appendix A.

Neighbour notification/site notice responses

8.2 These are reproduced in full at Appendix B.

9. PLANNING POLICIES

Main Documents:

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

Dacorum Borough Core Strategy 2006-2031 (adopted September 2013)

Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1999-2011 (adopted April 2004)

Relevant Policies:

Core Strategy

NP1 - Supporting Development

CS1 - Distribution of Development

CS5 – The Green Belt
CS8 – Sustainable Transport
CS10 - Quality of Settlement Design
CS11 - Quality of Neighbourhood Design
CS12 - Quality of Site Design
CS25 – Landscape Character
CS26 – Green Infrastructure
CS27 – Quality of Historic Environment
CS29 - Sustainable Design and Construction
CS31 – Water Management
CS32 – Air, Soil and Water Quality

Local Plan

Policy 51 – Development and Transport Impacts
Policy 54 – Highway Design
Policy 55 – Traffic Management
Policy 79 – Footpath Network
Policy 80 – Bridleway Network
Policy 99 – Preservation of Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands
Policy 101 – Tree and Woodland Management
Policy 108 – High Quality Agricultural Land

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents

Highways Place and Movement Planning and Design Guide (2024)
Chiltern Beechwoods Mitigation Strategy (2022)
Accessibility Zones for the Application of Car Parking Standards (2020)
Planning Obligations (2011)
Landscape Character Assessment for Dacorum (2004)

10. CONSIDERATIONS

Main Issues

10.1 The main issues to consider are:

The policy and principle justification for the proposal;
The quality of design and impact on visual amenity;
The impact on residential amenity; and
The impact on highway safety and car parking.

Principle of Development

Policy

10.2 The application site is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt. Paragraph 143 of the NPPF (2024) states that the Green Belt serves the following five purposes:

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*

e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.'

10.3 Whilst development is heavily restricted within the Green Belt, Paragraphs 154 and 155 of the NPPF (2024) do however proceed to set out a number of examples of appropriate development in this location. The development has been considered against the exceptions of most relevance below.

10.4 Whilst Paragraph 154 of the NPPF (2024) predominantly sets out exceptions for the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt, the following exception is deemed of relevance when considering whether the ancillary development proposed to support the change of use, (i.e. acoustic fencing, benches, bins and signage etc.), is acceptable in principle:

'b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use), including buildings, for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.'

10.5 Exception h), Paragraph 155 of the NPPF (2024) states that certain other forms of development are acceptable in the Green Belt, provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. It is felt that the construction of the car park and associated landscape bund and landscape swale can reasonably be considered to constitute engineering operations, (as set out under exception ii), whilst the change of use of the land from agriculture to an informal recreational use would fall under the following exception; *'v. material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds).'*

10.6 Policy CS5 of the Dacorum Borough Core Strategy (2013) states that the Council will apply national Green Belt policy¹ to protect the openness and character of the Green Belt, local distinctiveness and the physical separation of settlements.

Assessment

Ancillary Development

10.7 The submitted plans indicate that interpretation boards, benches, signage, means of enclosure, (i.e. gates and fencing), and bins would be installed on the site in connection with the site's use as a SANG. It is however noted that the exact siting and overall number of these additions has not been formally confirmed.

10.8 It is however anticipated that the proposed ancillary development would be interspersed throughout different locations on the site, and would by nature, be modest in terms of their overall scale. Subject to a condition securing further details with respect to these additions, (i.e. securing details relating to their overall number and proposed siting), it is not felt that these additions would have any appreciable impact on the openness of the Green Belt. Accordingly, it is concluded that the Green Belt's openness would be preserved, and that the ancillary development would accord with exception b, Paragraph 154 of the NPPF (2024).

Change of Use from Agriculture to Recreational Use

10.9 With the exception of the addition of minor ancillary development, (as referenced earlier) and car park, (to be separately considered), the site would remain undeveloped, with the proposed new walking trail on the site consisting of minimal intervention mown paths. Furthermore, primary

¹ As set out under Section 13 of the NPPF (2023).

visual changes to the site would consist of the planting of additional landscaping and the creation of a grassland meadow.

10.10 Whilst the development would likely result in an intensification of the use of the site, (with an increased number of people likely to access and use the site), the development would retain an open and verdant character by reason of its absence of significant built form.

10.11 The proposed change of use of the land is therefore concluded to have a negligible impact on Green Belt openness, as the site would remain in a natural state, being generally free from development or built form. It is therefore concluded that the change of use of the site would amount to appropriate development in the Green Belt, according with exception h), v, Paragraph 155 of the NPPF (2024).

Car Park

10.12 The submitted drawings indicate that the new car park would be constructed in hoggin, (a compactable groundcover composed of a mixture of clay, gravel, sand or granite dust that produces a buff-coloured bund surface), accessed to the south of the site off Gaddesden Lane, with an associated landscape bund and landscape swale.

10.13 Given their nature, (i.e. noting that the additions would involve significant ground level/excavation works), it is felt that the new landscape bund and swale can reasonably be considered to amount to engineering operations. Whilst full details of these elements of the proposal have yet to be confirmed, (and it is recommended that these details be secured by way of planning condition), given the scale, siting and nature of these additions, it is felt that these additions would preserve the Green Belt's openness and would not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

10.14 Whilst the submitted plans indicate that the new car park would be subject to significant screening from woodland planting mix, (therein restricting views of the car park and parked cars), by reason of its layout and associated 6m wide access, views of the car park and associated parked cars would be achieved from Gaddesden Lane. Furthermore, whilst planting is proposed to visually soften and screen views of the car park and access from the north of the site, given the site's topography and proposed 780mm increase to the ground levels of the new car park/access, it is considered likely that long distance obscure views of the car park and associated parked cars would be achieved from public vantage points around the site.

10.15 Whilst notably set on raised ground levels, in itself, the hard surfacing of the car park is considered to have a limited spatial impact on the openness of the Green Belt. Given the location of the SANG, it is however reasonable to assume that the majority of visitors would arrive by way of motorised vehicles, and that the car park would be utilised.

10.16 Whilst the lack of permanent facilities on the site, (e.g. toilets, café etc.), would result in it being unlikely that cars would be parked overnight, the concentration of 25 cars parked within a self-contained area could appear as a man-made development, resulting in a modest adverse impact on spatial openness. It is not therefore felt that this element of the scheme would preserve the Green Belt's openness.

10.17 Given that the site and surrounding area is characterised as being significantly rural in character and devoid of urban development, concerns are also raised that the new car park would encroach into the countryside, therein conflicting with one of the purposes of the Green Belt.

Very Special Circumstances (VSCs)

Policy

10.18 Given that the proposed car park is not considered to amount to appropriate development, very special circumstances are required to justify the works and outweigh the developments' harm to the Green Belt's openness.

10.19 Paragraph 153 of the NPPF (2024) states that, 'very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.'

Substantial SANG Land with capacity for other developments (i.e. Spencer's Park)

10.20 As noted during an earlier section of the report, the development would create 16.3 hectares of SANG land that would mitigate up to 847 new dwellings within 4km of the site, (on the basis of 52 dwellings per hectare). The SANG has been developed in consultation with Natural England and meets its SANG criteria as noted in the section on '*Suitability of Site for SANG*' (below).

10.21 Whilst allocation of SANG credits would remain within the control of the Applicants, it is proposed that the development could be used for mitigating a live application at Spencer's Park² as well as supporting future residential development in St Albans.

10.22 Given the government drive for increased housing provision in the south of England, and in light of the situation the Council finds itself in, (in terms of the Chiltern Beechwoods and the effect this will have on housing provision within the Borough), it is considered that the provision of SANG should be afforded moderate weight.

Outdoor Recreation

10.23 Whilst noting that the primary reason for the application is to provide SANG capacity for a specific development, it would essentially result in the provision of a new public park which would be free for anyone to use at all times, although the car park would be subject to opening restrictions.

10.24 Paragraphs 96 and 125 of the NPPF (2024) state that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places and beautiful buildings which '*enable and support healthy lifestyles...for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure....*' as well as encouraging '*multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains – such as developments that would enable new habitat creation or improve public access to the countryside*'.

10.25 The importance of access to open space in terms of physical and mental well-being was brought into stark relief during the COVID-19 pandemic, and there is strong policy support in the NPPF (2024) for the provision of green infrastructure and improvements to public access to the countryside. Accordingly, it is considered that the provision of free public open-space is a benefit of this scheme and should be afforded moderate weight in the planning balance.

Conclusion

10.26 A final view as to whether the above factors justify the development cannot be made until the 'any other harm' referred to in Paragraph 153 of the NPPF (2024) has been fully assessed during the course of this report. This is relevant in light of the Court of Appeal Judgement in *Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government v Redhill Aerodrome Ltd [2014] EWCA*

² 23/02034/MFA.

Civ 1386, which confirmed that the interpretation given to ‘any other harm’ is such that it applies to any planning harm; a balancing exercise will take place at the conclusion of this report.

Suitability of Site for SANG

10.27 The Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation Mitigation Strategy was approved by cabinet at a meeting held on 15th November 2022. The Mitigation Strategy sets out the SANG criteria likely to be accepted by the Council (as Competent Authority) and Natural England.

10.28 The criteria have been set out below along with the case officer’s view as to whether this has been complied with or not (green indicates compliance and red indicates non-compliance):

SANG Feature	Criteria	Expected / Desirable	Comment
Paths	A minimum circular walk of 2.3-2.5 kilometres to be provided.	Expected	A circular walk of 2.3km is being provided.
	Paths easily used and well maintained but mostly unsurfaced.	Expected	The paths would comprise of mown grass, thereby providing an appropriate naturalistic aesthetic.
	Where parking is provided, circular path should start and finish at that location.	Expected	The circular path starts and finishes at the car park.
	Paths should be safe, easily identifiable and kept clear of obstructions, such as scrub cover for example.	Expected	The proposed paths will be kept clear of scrub cover as part of the ongoing management and maintenance, which are to be secured by way of condition and legal agreement. The proposed 2.3km route is out in the open for its entirety, with any tree and scrub located away to the boundaries.
	Information boards and/or signage at access points outlining the layout of the site and routes available to visitors.	Desirable	The submitted plans indicate that information boards are to be provided.
Parking	Parking, including for cyclists, to be provided on sites larger than four hectares, unless the site is solely intended for residents within 500 metres only	Expected	A car park with capacity for 25 cars, as well as 4 cycle spaces, is to be provided to the south of the site.
	Parking areas are to be easily and safely accessible by car and to be clearly sign posted.	Expected	The car park will be accessed from the existing highway network. No details of sign-posting are shown on the plans; however, this matter can be reserved by condition.
	Visitor to be able to take dogs from the parking area to the site safely off the lead.	Desirable	The provision of dog-proof fencing around the edge of the site provides confidence that visitors can let their dog off the lead.
Access	Access points to be provided based on the intended visitors of the SANG.	Expected	The SANG will be accessible from the north of the car park.

	Safe access route on foot from nearest car park and/or footpath	Expected	The entrance from the car park leads safely and directly into the SANG.
	Access should be unrestricted within the site, with plenty of space for dogs to exercise freely and safely off the lead.	Expected	The site will be fully enclosed thus allowing free access for dogs to be exercised off the lead.
Character of Space	Needs to be semi-natural, or perceived as such where close to existing development.	Expected	The site is currently arable land that would become grassland. The site would retain an open and rural character, with mown paths and landscaping planted to create visual interest.
	If the site is larger than 12 hectares, a range of habitats should be present.	Expected	The submitted Ecological survey indicates that a range of habitats would be provided.
	No unnatural intrusions (e.g. odour from sewage treatment works, noise from busy roads).	Expected	The surrounding highway network is considered to be a very minor intrusion. The site already feels natural, and this would be enhanced by further planting.
	There should be little intrusion of built structures such as dwellings, buildings, fencing (not constructed using natural materials), etc.	Expected	The existing site comprises pylons, but is otherwise devoid of built form. Built form proposed on the site is minimal (predominantly consisting of ancillary development). Whilst the new car park would be constructed from hoggin, it would be subject to screening.
	Naturalistic space with areas of open countryside with dense and scattered trees and shrubs.	Desirable	The site is predominantly open countryside and would retain an open rural feel following the implementation of the development.
	Gentle undulating topography. Steep slopes are likely to deter visitors.	Desirable	The site features a gently undulating topography. The SANG has been designed to utilise higher ground levels to facilitate long distance views.
	Focal point such as a viewpoint or monument within the site and accessible via walking routes.	Desirable	The topography of the site provides high points with opportunities for long distance views which add interest to the SANG.
	Provision of open water, however large areas of open water cannot count towards SANG capacity.	Desirable	No areas of open water are provided.

10.29 The Applicant has developed the scheme for the proposed SANG in accordance with the advice provided by Natural England at pre-application stage, with amendments made to the proposed mown paths and car parking arrangements on the basis of Natural England's' advice.

10.30 Natural England have reviewed the current scheme and raised no objections to the works, confirming the site to be a good candidate for a SANG, providing a catchment area of 4km on the basis of its scale.

10.31 In their consultation response, Natural England have confirmed that the proposed new SANG does meet the Natural England SANG Quality Guidelines and, in principle, have no issue with it being designated a SANG, subject to the following points:

- 1. The SANG is to be created as set out in the SANG Landscape Strategy (CSA, June 2024), the SANG Management Statement for Green Lane, Redbourn (CSA, May 2024) and the Design and Access Statement: Green Lane, Redbourn (CSA, July 2024), all three of which should be made a condition of the planning consent, to ensure that the SANG is created and managed according to the NE SANG Guidelines (2021).*
- 2. A management company, trust/charity or the LPA is to be named as managers of the SANG prior to approving the SANG for mitigation, and a legal agreement secured between the applicant / their client and the management company/body, to secure the funding of the SANG management via a commuted sum/endowment (see additional advice below).*
- 3. A legal agreement between the applicant / their client and the LPA regarding step-in rights and management of the SANG in perpetuity has been signed by both parties if required (see additional advice below).*

10.32 Natural England's order of preference for transferring long-term management of the SANG to a management body is: 1) the LPA; 2) the Land Trust or similar body; or 3) a new management company set up by the applicant. If the SANG is to be managed by a third-party management company, step-in rights would be agreed in writing with the LPA. Step-in rights would not be required if a charity is the managing body as, in the unlikely event that the charity were to be dissolved, the site and the ring-fenced endowment would, by virtue of Article 17 of its articles and as a matter of charity law, pass to another organisation with similar charitable purposes.

10.33 The Land Trust has confirmed in writing (letter dated 16th August 2024) that they are willing to take formal ownership of the proposed SANG, subject to Board approval, contract and payment of an agreed endowment, and would thereafter remain responsible for its provision and maintenance in perpetuity (no less than 80 years).

10.34 In summary, the site is considered to be both suitable and capable of becoming a SANG. Whether or not the site actually serves as SANG for housing developments within the Borough will be a subsequent matter for the relevant planning officer or, as the case may be, the Development Management Committee.

Impact on the Chilterns National Landscape

Policy

10.35 Whilst set outside of the Chilterns National Landscape, the application site is set within close proximity of its boundary, which extends on the opposite side of Green Lane.

10.36 Policy CS24 of the Core Strategy, Saved Policy 97 of the Local Plan and Paragraph 189 of the NPPF (2024) all seek to ensure that the scenic beauty of this area is conserved and that new development is sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on this designated area.

10.37 Furthermore, Saved Policy 97 of the Local Plan (2004) states that, in the Chilterns National Landscape, the prime consideration is the conservation of the beauty of the area and that any

development must be satisfactory assimilated into the landscape. Open air recreation is specifically addressed in Policy 97, where it states that:

'Informal outdoor recreation allowing the quiet enjoyment of the countryside is encouraged, but careful attention will be paid to the provision of associated ancillary facilities such as car parks and toilets in order to minimise their impact on the local scene.'

Assessment

10.38 Views of the site from public vantage points within the Chilterns National Landscape would be significantly restricted, given that the soft landscaped edge to the west of the site boundary, (extending along Green Lane), would be retained. Furthermore, whilst ancillary development would be introduced on the site, given its modest scale and nature, it is not felt that these additions would appear prominent additions if subject to obscure views within the Chilterns National Landscape.

10.39 The site would predominantly retain a rural character and feel by reason its significant absence of built form, with the predominant features within the site consisting of new areas of planting, grassland meadow and mown paths.

10.40 Whilst the new car park would to some extent have an urbanising influence, despite being set on raised ground levels, views of this addition would be significantly obscured by way of the woodland planting installed around the car park and by boundary landscaping. It is therefore felt that the visual harm of this addition would be sufficiently mitigated, and that the scenic beauty of the Chilterns National Landscape would be preserved.

10.41 The proposal is therefore acceptable in terms of its impact on the Chilterns National Landscape, according with Policy CS24 of the Core Strategy, Saved Policy 97 of the Local Plan, Saved Policy 97 of the Local Plan (2004) and Paragraph 189 of the NPPF (2024).

Impact on Landscape Character

Policy

10.42 Policy CS11 of the Dacorum Borough Core Strategy (2013) seeks to ensure that development preserves attractive streetscapes and enhances any positive linkages between character areas. Furthermore, Policy CS25 of the Dacorum Borough Core Strategy (2013) states that all development will help conserve and enhance Dacorum's natural and historic landscape and should take full account of the Landscape Character Assessment for Dacorum (2004).

10.43 The site lies within the Landscape Character Area of Revel End Plateau (Area 95), which is defined by:

'An area of gently undulating upland with a discontinuous field corridor bordering the M1 slopes define the character area boundary. The limit of the settlement of Redbourn coincides with the edge of the plateau to the east. Arable farmland and isolated patches of pasture linked to the farmsteads are the predominant land uses. A nursery, recreation ground and school playing fields influence the area's character on the northern edges of Redbourn and the M1 corridor interrupts the area's unity.'

10.44 The Strategy and Guidelines for Managing Change seek, inter alia, to:

- Promote hedgerow restoration and creation throughout the area to provide visual and ecological links between existing and proposed woodland areas;

- Encourage planting native species on settlement boundaries, with exotic/ornamental species only to internal faces
- Promote awareness and consideration of the setting of the AONB, and views to and from it, when considering development and land use change proposals on sites adjacent to the AONB.

Assessment

10.45 The existing hedgerow/soft boundary landscaping to the western site boundary along Green Lane would be retained, with additional hedgerow and tree planting introduced to the northern and southern site boundaries. As such, the development would accord with the strategy and guidelines for managing change in the Landscape Character Area of Revel End Plateau.

10.46 The proposed SANG has been designed to comprise a largely rural appearance, with the new public open space predominantly consisting of a grassland meadow, with new areas of planting and mown paths. Whilst ancillary development would be introduced onto the site, these additions would be modest in terms of their scale and would be sufficiently interspersed across the site, therein reducing their visual prominence.

10.47 The proposed new car park would have an urbanising effect, both by way of the introduction of a large new area of hardstanding and through the addition of parked cars. Given that this addition would be sited within close proximity of Gaddesden Lane and would be subject to significant screening, views of this addition and associated parked cars would be limited.

10.48 On balance, it is not therefore felt that the development would cause significant harm to the landscape character of the area. The proposal therefore accords with Policy CS11 of and CS12 the Dacorum Borough Core Strategy (2013) and the Landscape Character Assessment for Dacorum (2004).

Impact on Residential Amenity

Policy

10.49 The NPPF (2024) outlines the importance of planning in securing good standards of amenity for existing and future occupiers of land and buildings. Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013) states that new development should avoid visual intrusion, loss of sunlight and daylight, loss of privacy and disturbance to properties in the surrounding area.

10.50 Furthermore, Saved Appendix 3 of the Local Plan (2004) states that residential development should be designed and positioned to maintain a satisfactory level of sunlight and daylight for existing and proposed dwellings.

Assessment

10.51 The rural location of the site is such that only a limited number of properties have the potential to be directly affected by the proposed development. The nearest residential properties are sited within the Green Lane Farm converted barn complex, comprising Green Lane Barn, Green Lane Stables and Green Lane Farm which are sited to the north of the site, at distances of over approximately 60m away from the northern boundary.

10.52 Given the separation distances retained between the development and the above referenced neighbouring properties, and given the nature of the works, it is not felt that the development would have any adverse impacts on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties in terms of being visually intrusive or resulting in a significant loss of light or privacy.

10.53 Objections have however been received on the grounds that the development would cause harmful levels of noise and disturbance, particularly by way of the car park that could facilitate anti-social behaviour.

10.54 Whilst it is acknowledged that the use of the site would be intensified by way of its change of use, it is not felt that the use of the site for outdoor recreational purposes as proposed is inherently noisy.

10.55 With respect to anti-social behaviour, it is felt that the new height restriction barrier would prevent the overnight parking of large vehicles/trailers etc. As limited details have been provided with respect to this element of the scheme, it is recommended that additional details be secured by way of planning condition. Furthermore, subject to the imposition of a condition restricting the use of the car park in non-daylight hours, it is felt that the site would not be at greater risk of anti-social behaviour than public open space elsewhere in the Borough. In the event that instances of anti-social behaviour were to be witnessed, this would be a police matter that could be dealt with under criminal law, where appropriate.

10.56 On the basis of everything above, the proposal is deemed acceptable in terms of its impact on residential amenity, according with Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013), Saved Appendix 3 of the Local Plan (2004) and the NPPF (2024).

Impact on Highway Safety and Parking

Policy

10.57 Policies CS8 and CS12 of the Dacorum Borough Core Strategy (2013) seek to ensure that safe and satisfactory means of access are secured for all users. Furthermore, Paragraph 116 of the NPPF (2024) states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

10.58 Furthermore, Saved Policy 51 of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan (2004) states that the acceptability of all development proposals will be assessed specifically in highway and traffic terms and should have no significant impact upon, inter alia:

- the nature, capacity and use of the highway network and its ability to accommodate the traffic generated by the development; and
- the environmental and safety implications of the traffic generated by the development.

Assessment

Highway Safety

10.59 A new 6m wide bellmouth access with a radii of 6m would be constructed to the south of the site, facilitating access to and from the new car park off Gaddesden Lane. The submitted details also confirm that vehicular visibility splays of 2.4 x 113.12m to the east and 2.4 x 110.96m to the west of the car park.

10.60 The Highways Authority have reviewed these arrangements and have confirmed that they are satisfied that the level of vehicle visibility provided is acceptable, with the proposed arrangements deemed sufficient to enable two vehicles to safely pass each other. From an officer perspective, there are no cogent reasons to disagree with this assessment.

10.61 With respect to vehicle movements, a trip generation assessment has been submitted and included as part of the submitted Transport Statement by Pegasus Group (dated May 2024). The

Highways Authority have reviewed this document and confirmed the approach used to carry out these works to be reasonable, (noting the lack of comparable sites on the TRICS database), and have confirmed that they are satisfied that the *'impact on the operation of the surrounding highway network from a trip generation perspective would not be a reason to recommend refusal from a highways perspective.'*

10.62 In summary, it is considered that the vehicular access arrangements and the resultant impact on the highway network arising from vehicular movements associated with the SANG would not have a significant adverse impact on highway safety. Thus, the development is considered to accord with Policies CS8 and CS12 of the Dacorum Borough Core Strategy (2013), Saved Policy 51 of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan (2004) and Paragraph 116 of the NPPF (2024).

Parking

10.63 The Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document (2020) does not include guidance in terms of parking requirements for areas of public open space. However, the Council's Mitigation Strategy for Ashridge Commons and Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest provides guidance on the suggested level of parking for SANG purposes. This is set out in paragraph 3.5.25:

'3.5.25. The amount and nature of parking provision should reflect the anticipated use of the site by visitors and the catchment size of the SANG. A guide to parking provision should be in the region of 1.5 spaces per hectare of SANG. Parking should be clearly signposted, easily accessed and advertised as necessary for potential visitors.'

10.64 The proposed SANG would have an area of 16.3 hectares, and as such, based on the above policy, there is a requirement for 25 parking spaces to be provided. Given that the proposed car park has been designed to facilitate off-street car parking provision for 25 cars, with 4 cycle parking spaces provided, it is concluded that sufficient car parking provision would be provided.

10.65 The submitted plans indicate that the new parking spaces would measure 2.5m wide and 5m long, therein according with the Hertfordshire Place and Movement Planning and Design Guide (2024). Furthermore, given that the submitted plans indicate that a distance of 6m would be retained between each row of parking, it is concluded that sufficient space for vehicles would be provided, enabling vehicles to enter the car park, manoeuvre and exit in a forward gear.

10.66 Accordingly, it is considered that the development would provide safe and sufficient parking, according with Policies CS8 and CS12 of the Dacorum Core Strategy (2013).

Impact on Ecology

10.67 Policies CS26 and CS29 of the Dacorum Borough Core Strategy (2013) seek to ensure that, amongst other things, development management action contributes towards the conservation and restoration of habitats and species, the strengthening of biodiversity corridors, the creation of better public access and links through green space, and minimising impacts on biodiversity and incorporating positive measures to support wildlife.

10.68 The application has been supported by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) prepared by CSA Environmental.

10.69 This document notes that the proposed SANG would introduce new habitats of higher ecological value and diversity, including other neutral grassland, priority ponds, mixed scrub and broadleaved woodland, and indicates that no protected species would be adversely affected by the development.

10.70 These arrangements have been reviewed by the County Ecologist who has similarly agreed with these conclusions, and as such, it is concluded that the development would accord with Policies CS26 and CS29 of the Dacorum Borough Core Strategy (2013).

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

10.71 Using the Biodiversity Metric, the PEA demonstrates that a biodiversity net gain (BNG) in excess of the mandatory 10% would be achieved as follows:

Habitat Units BNG

Baseline: 32.62 units

Post-development: 103.76 units

Net change in units: +71.14 units or **+218.07%**

Hedgerow Units BNG

Baseline: 2.4 units

Post-development: 12.17 units

Net change in units: +9.77 units or **+407.26%**

10.72 Given that the figures above indicate that the proposal would exceed the mandatory 10% BNG increase, the proposal is acceptable in this regard. The County Ecologist has supported these conclusions, but have also commented that a Biodiversity Gain Condition should be attached to the formal planning consent and that a Habitat Management and Maintenance Plan (HMMP) should be secured by way of legal agreement.

10.73 Whilst additional BNG credits can be used to off-set other developments, the County Ecologist has challenged the submitted calculations on the basis that the woodland and thicket planting should not be included as part of these calculations. In particular, they note that these additions are required to ensure that the circular walk functions as intended, and are therefore necessary to the SANG. These discrepancies are currently under negotiation and due to be resolved by way of legal agreement.

10.74 Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposed change of use of the site would result in more human activity across the site; given the site area, the level (and type) of activity that is likely to occur, the duration of an average visit and the proposed habitat creation, it is not considered that there would be any adverse impacts on ecology, subject to appropriate planning conditions/legal agreement. Accordingly, the development is in accordance with Policies CS26 and CS29 of the Core Strategy (2013).

Other Material Planning Considerations

Loss of Agricultural Land

10.75 Paragraph 187 of the NPPF (2024) seeks to ensure that planning policies and decisions contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by, inter alia, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.

10.76 Furthermore, Saved Policy 108 of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan (2004) seeks to protect the 'best and most versatile' (BMV) agricultural land. The Agricultural Land Classification (East Region) map illustrates that the site is 'Good to Moderate' Grade 3 agricultural land, meaning that the land is not classified as Grade 2 'Very Good' or Grade 1 'Excellent' in terms of its agricultural quality, according to Natural England's Agricultural Land Classification map.

10.77 With the exception of the car park, the built form is considered de-minimus from an agricultural land perspective, with the application site remaining undeveloped. It follows that despite the change of use of the land and the requirement that the land be maintained and managed as SANG for a minimum of 80 years, in reality there would be no permanent loss. Furthermore, given the nature of the proposed landscaping works, it is felt that the restoration of the site to an agricultural use at a later stage is a realistic possibility. No objections have been raised by Natural England in that regard.

Flood Risk

10.78 Policy CS31 of the Core Strategy (2013) states that developments will be required to avoid Flood Zones 2 and 3, unless it is for a compatible use. Furthermore, Paragraph 170 of the NPPF (2024) is clear that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk of flooding. Additionally, Paragraph 181 of the NPPF (2024) explains that when determining planning applications, Local Planning Authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere.

10.79 Whilst the site falls within Flood Zone 1 and the Environment Agency's Surface Water (Pluvial) Flood Mapping indicates that the majority of the site is at low risk of flooding, this mapping also indicates that the southern boundary of the site is an area at medium to high risk of surface water flooding. Given that the new car park/access would be built within this existing flow path, concerns were originally raised that the car park would be at risk of flooding and that the development could increase flood risk elsewhere.

10.80 In order to address these concerns, the developers have liaised with the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) and undertaken further technical testing, (including Hydraulic Modelling and BRE365 Infiltration Testing). The submitted Drainage Strategy – Engineer's Response (dated December) and Hydraulic Modelling Technical Note (dated 2024) conclude that subject to the proposed mitigation measures, (i.e. increasing the ground levels of the car park by 780mm, installing a landscape bund and landscape swale), the development would ensure that the car park would not be subject to flooding and would remain operational. These documents also indicate that the proposed mitigation measures would be sufficient to ensure that the development amounts to no increase in flood risk to land outside of the application boundary.

10.81 The proposed mitigation measures and results of the technical testing completed by the developer have been reviewed by the LLFA. Whilst concluding the proposed mitigation measures to be sufficient to mitigate potential flood risk, they have recommended that three conditions be attached to the formal planning consent, including a pre-commencement condition requiring the submission of additional details relating to the proposed surface water drainage network and associated sustainable drainage components.

10.82 The developer has reviewed the recommended conditions and agreed to these conditions being included as part of the formal planning consent.

Land Contamination

10.83 Given that the site falls within a Former Land Risk use zone for ground contamination, the DBC Scientific Officer was consulted as part of the application and asked to assess whether the development would be likely to have any adverse impacts with regards to land contamination.

10.84 They have notably commented that there are no objections to the scheme on the grounds of land contamination and that there is no requirement for further contaminated land information to be provided or for contaminated land planning conditions to be recommended.

Archaeology

10.85 The County Archaeologist has reviewed the submitted Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (dated May 2024) by CSA Environmental and disagrees with its conclusions, noting that the ground works proposed in connection with the creation of the new car park could have a significant impact on heritage assets of archaeological interest.

10.86 They have therefore recommended the inclusion of a pre-commencement condition. This condition has been agreed with the Agent.

Impact on Trees and Landscaping

10.87 Saved Policy 99 of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan (2004) encourages the preservation of trees, hedgerows and woodlands throughout the Borough, with a high priority being given to their retention and protection during development.

10.88 An Arboricultural Impact Assessment (dated July 2024) has been undertaken by Barton Hyett Arboricultural Consultants. This document confirms that no trees or hedges will be removed in order to facilitate the development and that no tree protection measures are required in this instance, given the nature of the works proposed (i.e. in particular, noting that the new car park would be set significantly away from existing trees).

10.89 This document proceeds to note that the development would have an '*overwhelmingly positive impact on the Arboricultural value of the site by increasing tree canopy cover, species diversity and biodiversity.*'

Planning Obligations

10.90 A Section 106 Legal Agreement is in the process of being drafted which would require the site to be managed as a SANG for a period of at least 80 years. At this stage, the applicant's preferred management partner is the Land Trust (<https://thelandtrust.org.uk/>) who are a charitable organisation with a track record of managing areas of public open spaces for community benefit. The Land Trust has confirmed in writing (letter dated 16th August 2024) that they would be able to take formal ownership of the proposed SANG and would thereafter remain responsible for its provision and maintenance in perpetuity.

Consultation Responses

10.90 Seven neighbours have raised objection to the scheme – these objections have been briefly summarised below:

- The proposed new SANG is in an unsuitable location and would not therefore be easily accessible by foot;
- The proposal would have adverse impacts on the safety and operation of the existing highway network, therein generating highway safety concerns;
- The proposal would give rise to flooding;
- There is a lack of clarity with respect to what residential housing development the SANG would serve; and
- Insufficient details have been provided with respect to the maintenance of the SANG.

10.91 The Parish Council have also raised objection to the scheme, raising the following concerns:

- The proposal would give rise to flooding;
- The proposal would have adverse impacts on the safety and operation of the existing highway network, therein generating highway safety concerns;
- The development would have an urbanising effect, detracting from the character of the rural area and nearby Chilterns National Landscape;

- There is a lack of clarity with regards to elements of the scheme, (i.e. number/nature of planting, and number/siting of ancillary development);
- There is a lack of clarity with respect to the management and maintenance of the SANG; and
- The proposal could give rise to anti-social behaviour.

10.92 All of the above points have been considered and addressed during earlier sections of the report.

11. CONCLUSION

Planning Balance

11.1 The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. Paragraph 153 of the NPPF (2024) states that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt.

11.2 It was determined that the car park would result in modest harm to both the visual and spatial openness of the Green Belt, and that it would conflict with the Green Belt purpose of protecting the countryside from encroachment. It would also be harmful by definition. The other elements of the scheme, including the material change of use, would not result in a reduction in visual or spatial openness, nor would they conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt; therefore, they are afforded neutral weight.

11.3 The VSC section of the report determined that the provision of land capable of becoming a SANG, (with the stated intention being it ultimately be designated as such), should be afforded moderate weight in the planning balance. The provision of a new area of public open space was also considered to accrue moderate weight in the planning balance.

11.4 No further planning harm has been identified in the assessment and therefore no further matters are to be weighed in the balancing exercise.

11.5 In having due regard to all relevant material planning considerations, as a matter of planning judgement and notwithstanding the substantial weight which should be given to any harm to the Green Belt, it is considered that the harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is outweighed by the benefit of much needed additional SANG capacity and a new area of high-quality public open space.

11.6 The SANG will unlock development within an area of the Borough not currently served by a Council-led Strategic SANG solution. In addition, new standalone public open space that is genuinely available for members of the public, (not simply an intrinsic part of an existing development), is considered to be a considerable benefit.

12. RECOMMENDATION

12.1 That planning permission be delegated with a view to **APPROVAL** subject to the completion of a section 106 agreement which secures, inter alia, the management and maintenance of the land as SANG for a minimum period of 80 years.

Condition(s) and Reason(s):

1. **The development hereby permitted shall begin before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.**

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 (1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by Section 51 (1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans/documents:

CSA/6751/108 Rev A
CSA/6751/01 Rev A
CSA/6751/107 Rev E
CSA/6751/109
CSA/6751/06
240848-RAP-XX-XX-DR-D-4000 Rev P01
240848-RAP-XX-XX-DR-D-4001 Rev P01
Design and Access Statement by CSA Environmental (dated July 2024)
Flood Risk Assessment by Rappor Consultants Ltd (dated October 2024)
Planning Statement by Turley (dated July 2024)
Transport Statement by Pegasus Group (dated May 2024)
Flood Risk and Drainage Non-Technical Summary – Additional Submission (dated December 2024)
Drainage Strategy – Engineer’s Response (dated December 2024)
Hydraulic Modelling Technical Note (dated December 2024)

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. No development shall commence until an Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing. The scheme shall include an assessment of significance and research questions; and:

- (a) The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording.
- (b) The programme for post investigation assessment.
- (c) Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording.
- (d) Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation.
- (e) Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation.
- (f) Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the Written Scheme of Investigation.

Reason: To ensure that reasonable facilities are made available to record archaeological evidence in accordance with saved Policy 118 of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan (2004), Policy CS27 of the Dacorum Borough Core Strategy (2013) and Paragraph 200 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

This condition needs to be pre-commencement as there is a possibility that below ground heritage assets could be irreparably damaged if appropriate groundwork does not place upfront.

4. i) Development shall take place in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under Condition 3.

ii) The development shall not be occupied 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 3; and the provision made for analysis, publication and dissemination of results and archive deposition has been secured.

Reason: To ensure that reasonable facilities are made available to record archaeological evidence in accordance with saved Policy 118 of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan (2004), Policy CS27 of the Dacorum Borough Core Strategy (2013) and Paragraph 200 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

- 5. Prior to the commencement of the development, construction drawings of the surface water drainage network, associated sustainable drainage components (Swales, Earth Bunds and Porous Paving) and a construction method statement shall be submitted and agreed in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall then be constructed as per the agreed drawings, method statement, FRA & Drainage Strategy (by Rappor and dated October 2024) and Drawings (by Rappor and dated 10 January 2025) and remaining in perpetuity for the lifetime of the development unless agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No alteration to the agreed drainage scheme shall occur without prior written approval from the Local Authority.**

Reason: To ensure that the site is subject to an acceptable drainage system serving the development and to prevent flooding by ensuring the satisfactory storage of and disposal of surface water from the site in accordance with Policies CS29 and CS31 of the Dacorum Borough Core Strategy (2013) and Paragraph 181 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

This condition needs to be pre-commencement as there needs to be certainty that the detailed drainage scheme has been properly designed, is fit for purpose and will not increase flood risk elsewhere.

- 6. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied/used until details of the maintenance and management of the sustainable drainage scheme have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The drainage scheme shall be implemented prior to the first usage of the development hereby approved and thereafter managed and maintained in accordance with the approved details in perpetuity. The Local Planning Authority shall be granted access to inspect the sustainable drainage scheme for the lifetime of the development. The details of the scheme to be submitted for approval shall include:**

I. a timetable for its implementation.

II. details of SuDS feature and connecting drainage structures and maintenance requirement for each aspect including a drawing showing where they are located.

III. a management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development which shall include the arrangements for adoption by any public body or statutory undertaker, or any other arrangements to secure the operation of the sustainable drainage scheme throughout its lifetime. This will include the name and contact details of any appointed management company.

Reason: To ensure that the site is subject to an acceptable drainage system serving the development and to prevent flooding by ensuring the satisfactory storage of and disposal of surface water from the site in accordance with Policies CS29 and CS31 of the Dacorum Borough Core Strategy (2013) and Paragraph 181 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

- 7. Upon completion of the surface water drainage system, including any SuDS features, and prior to the first use of the development; a survey and verification report from an independent surveyor shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The survey and report shall demonstrate that the surface water drainage system has been constructed in accordance with the details approved pursuant to Condition 5. Where necessary, details of corrective works to**

be carried out along with a timetable for their completion, shall be included for approval in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any corrective works required shall be carried out in accordance with the approved timetable and subsequently re-surveyed with the findings submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the site is subject to an acceptable drainage system serving the development and to prevent flooding by ensuring the satisfactory storage of and disposal of surface water from the site in accordance with Policies CS29 and CS31 of the Dacorum Borough Core Strategy (2013) and Paragraph 181 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

- 8. Prior to the first use of the development hereby permitted a visibility splay shall be provided in full accordance with the details indicated on the approved drawing number P21-2444 FIGURE 4.1. The splay shall thereafter be retained at all times free from any obstruction between 600mm and 2m above the level of the adjacent highway carriageway.**

Reason: To ensure that the level of visibility for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles is satisfactory in the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policies CS8 and CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013), Saved Policy 51 of the Local Plan (2004) and the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

- 9. Prior to construction of the car park hereby approved, a detailed plan illustrating the quantum and location of standard vehicle parking spaces, disabled/accessible vehicle spaces and on site cycle parking shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and shall thereafter be retained for those purposes and maintained in a good condition for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To ensure suitable, safe and satisfactory planning and development of the site and to ensure a satisfactory level of parking in accordance with Policies CS8 and CS12 of the Dacorum Borough Core Strategy (2013) and the Dacorum Parking Standards SPD (2020).

- 10. Prior to first use of the site, full details of off landscape works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include:**

- means of enclosure;
- soft landscape works including a planting scheme with the number, size, species and position of trees, plants and shrubs; and
- minor artefacts and structures (e.g. benches, signage, interpretation boards, bins etc.)

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and thereafter maintained for the lifetime of the development.

The planting must be carried out within one planting season of completing the development. Any tree or shrub which forms part of the approved landscaping scheme which within a period of 5 years from planting fails to become established, becomes seriously damaged or diseased, dies or for any reason is removed shall be

replaced in the next planting season by a tree or shrub of a similar species, size and maturity.

Reason: To improve the appearance of the development and its contribution to biodiversity and the local environment, as required by saved Policy 99 of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan (2004) and Policy CS12 (e) of the Dacorum Borough Council Core Strategy (2013).

- 11. Prior to the first use of the development hereby permitted, the proposed access and all other highway works, on-site hardstanding and turning areas shall be laid out, demarcated, levelled, surfaced and drained in accordance with the approved plans and retained thereafter available for that specific use.**

Reason: To ensure construction of a satisfactory development and in the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policies CS8 and CS12 of the Dacorum Borough Core Strategy (2013) and Policies 51 and 54 of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan (2004).

- 12. There shall be no use of the SANG car park between sunset and sunrise (as set out by the Met Office). During these hours the gate / barrier(s) to the site shall be permanently locked, and details of its operation are to be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to the car park being first brought into use.**

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of neighbouring properties and in order to reduce / limit the potential / fear of crime, in accordance with Policy CS12 of the Dacorum Core Strategy (2013) and Paragraph 96 (b) of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

- 13. Prior to the first use of the development hereby approved, full details of the height restriction barrier shown on the submitted SANG Landscape Strategy Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the first use of the development and thereafter retained for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To ensure satisfactory appearance to the development and to safeguard the visual character of the area, in accordance with Policies CS11, CS12 and CS24 of the Dacorum Borough Core Strategy (2013).

- 14. The SANG shall be permanently open to members of the public 7 days per week, 365 days a year for no charge.**

Reason: To ensure that the site offers a credible alternative to Ashridge Woods and Common for the purposes of outdoor recreation, and for the avoidance of doubt.

- 15. The car park hereby approved shall be surfaced in hoggin.**

Reason: To ensure that the appearance of the car park is suitable and that it contributes to the character of the area in accordance with Policies CS11 and CS12 of the Dacorum Borough Core Strategy (2013).

Informatives:

1. Planning permission has been granted for this proposal. Discussion with the applicant to seek an acceptable solution was not necessary in this instance. The Council has therefore

acted pro-actively in line with the requirements of the Framework (paragraph 38) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment No. 2) Order 2015.

2. HIGHWAY INFORMATIVES

HCC as Highway Authority recommends inclusion of the following Advisory Note (AN) / highway informative to ensure that any works within the highway are carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Highway Act 1980:

AN1) Storage of materials: The applicant is advised that the storage of materials associated with the construction of this development should be provided within the site on land which is not public highway, and the use of such areas must not interfere with the public highway. If this is not possible, authorisation should be sought from the Highway Authority before construction works commence.

Further information is available via the County Council website at:

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

AN2) Obstruction of highway: It is an offence under section 137 of the Highways Act 1980 for any person, without lawful authority or excuse, in any way to wilfully obstruct the free passage along a highway or public right of way. If this development is likely to result in the public highway or public right of way network becoming routinely blocked (fully or partly) the applicant must contact the Highway Authority to obtain their permission and requirements before construction works commence.

Further information is available via the County Council website at:

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

AN3) Debris and deposits on the highway: It is an offence under section 148 of the Highways Act 1980 to deposit compost, dung or other material for dressing land, or any rubbish on a made up carriageway, or any or other debris on a highway to the interruption of any highway user. Section 149 of the same Act gives the Highway Authority powers to remove such material at the expense of the party responsible. Therefore, best practical means shall be taken at all times to ensure that all vehicles leaving the site during construction of the development and use thereafter are in a condition such as not to emit dust or deposit mud, slurry or other debris on the highway. Further information is available by telephoning 0300 1234047.

AN4) Works within the highway (section 278): The applicant is advised that in order to comply with this permission it will be necessary for the developer of the site to enter into an agreement with Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority under Section 278 of the Highways Act 1980 to ensure the satisfactory completion of the access and associated road improvements. The construction of such works must be undertaken to the satisfaction and specification of the Highway Authority, and by a contractor who is authorised to work in the public highway. Before works commence the applicant will need to apply to the Highway Authority to obtain their permission and requirements.

Further information is available via the County Council website at:

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

AN5) Construction Management Plan (CMP): The purpose of the CMP is to help developers minimise construction impacts and relates to all construction activity both on and off site that impacts on the wider environment. It is intended to be a live document whereby different stages will be completed and submitted for application as the development progresses. A completed and signed CMP must address the way in which any impacts associated with the proposed works, and any cumulative impacts of other nearby construction sites will be mitigated and managed. The level of detail required in a CMP will depend on the scale and nature of development. The CMP would need to include elements of the Construction Logistics and Community Safety (CLOCS) standards as set out in our Construction Management template, a copy of which is available on the County Council's website at:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/development-management/highways-development-management.aspx>

3. BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN INFORMATIVES

Advice about how to prepare a Biodiversity Gain Plan and a template can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/submit-a-biodiversity-gain-plan>.

APPENDIX A: CONSULTEE RESPONSES

Consultee	Comments
CPRE Hertfordshire	<p>Application no. 24/01593/MFA Land East of Green Lane, Gaddesden Lane, Gaddesden, Row Hemel Hempstead</p> <p>Change of use from agricultural land to Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) with associated access and car park.</p> <p>I write with regard to the above planning application and would comment as follows.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CPRE Hertfordshire supports the overarching objective of mitigating the damage already done to the special habitats of the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and preventing future damage due to the high numbers of human and canine visitors. We also support the provision of more Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) as a means of opening up more of the countryside for public access and recreational enjoyment through the Dacorum Mitigation Strategy. 2. It is important that SANG is suitably located and well-designed to achieve the objectives of reducing development in the setting of the SAC. The implications of this requirement are that SANG should be located as close as possible to proposed residential development so

	<p>that new residents are able to access open space easily, conveniently and preferably on foot or by cycle, thus reducing for them the attraction of the SAC.</p> <p>3. If SANG is not readily accessible on foot or by cycle, residents may drive either to SANG or the SAC, thereby defeating the purpose of the designation and the objectives of the Council's Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy. The proposed site is in an isolated, rural location that is not accessible on foot from any existing or proposed residential area.</p> <p>4. The site is accessed via Gaddesden Lane which is a narrow (one car width) country lane with busy vehicle traffic and there are no verges or pavements for pedestrians, leading to safety concerns. There are no Public Rights of Way (footpaths, bridleways, etc) crossing the site or adjacent to the site, so the only access to the site is via Gaddesden Lane.</p> <p>5. The requirements for SANG are that the landscapes should be sufficiently natural, interesting and appealing so that people will want to visit them. The proposed sixteen hectares is relatively small for a SANG, and Natural England's minimum requirement for a circular footpath of 2.3 kilometres can only be achieved with an unnatural pathway that winds back and forth over much of the site.</p> <p>6. It is proposed that most of the rest of the site would be seeded as meadow land. We question whether SANG of this size and design would satisfy the requirements for interest and appeal to attract visitors, particularly when pedestrian access is difficult as noted above.</p> <p>7. CPRE Hertfordshire supports the Chilterns Conservation Board position that SANG provision should be considered as part of the Local Plan process as well as being subject to robust planning criteria concerning access, design and quality. We do not believe that this proposal satisfies the requirements of SANG criteria and we would urge the Council to seek more extensive and appropriate SANG provision from developers so that the objectives of the Dacorum Mitigation Strategy may be achieved.</p>
British Pipeline Agency	<p>Planning Application 24/01593/MFA - Not Affected</p> <p>Thank you for your correspondence regarding the above noted planning application.</p> <p>Having reviewed the information provided, the BPA pipeline(s) is not affected by these proposals, and therefore BPA does not wish to</p>

	<p>make any comments on this application. However, if any details of the works or location should change, please advise us of the amendments and we will again review this application.</p> <p>Whilst we try to ensure the information we provided is accurate, the information is provided Without Prejudice and we accept no liability for claims arising from any inaccuracy, omissions or errors contained herein.</p>
<p>Hertfordshire Highways (HCC)</p>	<p>Proposal Change of use from agricultural land to Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) with associated access and car park</p> <p>Recommendation Notice is given under article 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 that Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority does not wish to restrict the grant of permission subject to the following conditions:</p> <p>1. Prior to the first use of the development hereby permitted the vehicular access shall be completed and thereafter retained as shown on drawing number P21-2444 FIGURE 4.1 in accordance with details/specifications to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the highway authority. Prior to use appropriate arrangements shall be made for surface water to be intercepted and disposed of separately so that it does not discharge from or onto the highway carriageway.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure satisfactory access into the site and avoid carriage of extraneous material or surface water from or onto the highway in accordance with Policy 5 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).</p> <p>2. Provision of Visibility Splays - Dimensioned on Approved Plan Prior to the first use of the development hereby permitted a visibility splay shall be provided in full accordance with the details indicated on the approved drawing number P21-2444 FIGURE 4.1. The splay shall thereafter be retained at all times free from any obstruction between 600mm and 2m above the level of the adjacent highway carriageway.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure that the level of visibility for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles is satisfactory in the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policy 5 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).</p>

HCC as Highway Authority recommends inclusion of the following Advisory Note (AN) / highway informative to ensure that any works within the highway are carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Highway Act 1980:

AN1) Storage of materials: The applicant is advised that the storage of materials associated with the construction of this development should be provided within the site on land which is not public highway, and the use of such areas must not interfere with the public highway. If this is not possible, authorisation should be sought from the Highway Authority before construction works commence.

Further information is available via the County Council website at: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/business-licences/business-licences.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

AN2) Obstruction of highway: It is an offence under section 137 of the Highways Act 1980 for any person, without lawful authority or excuse, in any way to wilfully obstruct the free passage along a highway or public right of way. If this development is likely to result in the public highway or public right of way network becoming routinely blocked (fully or partly) the applicant must contact the Highway Authority to obtain their permission and requirements before construction works commence. Further information is available via the County Council website at: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/business-licences/business-licences.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

AN3) Debris and deposits on the highway: It is an offence under section 148 of the Highways Act 1980 to deposit compost, dung or other material for dressing land, or any rubbish on a made upcarriageway, or any or other debris on a highway to the interruption of any highway user. Section 149 of the same Act gives the Highway Authority powers to remove such material at the expense of the party responsible. Therefore, best practical means shall be taken at all times to ensure that all vehicles leaving the site during construction of the development and use thereafter are in a condition such as not to emit dust or deposit mud, slurry or other debris on the highway. Further information is available by telephoning 0300 1234047.

AN4) Works within the highway (section 278): The applicant is advised that in order to comply with this permission it will be necessary for the developer of the site to enter into an agreement with Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority under Section 278 of the

Highways Act 1980 to ensure the satisfactory completion of the access and associated road improvements. The construction of such works must be undertaken to the satisfaction and specification of the Highway Authority, and by a contractor who is authorised to work in the public highway. Before works commence the applicant will need to apply to the Highway Authority to obtain their permission and requirements. Further information is available via the County Council website at:

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

AN5) Construction Management Plan (CMP): The purpose of the CMP is to help developers minimise construction impacts and relates to all construction activity both on and off site that impacts on the wider environment. It is intended to be a live document whereby different stages will be completed and submitted for application as the development progresses. A completed and signed CMP must address the way in which any impacts associated with the proposed works, and any cumulative impacts of other nearby construction sites will be mitigated and managed. The level of detail required in a CMP will depend on the scale and nature of development.

The CMP would need to include elements of the Construction Logistics and Community Safety (CLOCS) standards as set out in our Construction Management template, a copy of which is available on the County Council's website at:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/development-management/highways-development-management.aspx>

Comments/Analysis

Description of Proposal

Change of use from agricultural land to Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) with associated access and carpark

Site and Surroundings

Gaddesden Lane is a classified C local access route subject to a 60mph speed limit which is highway maintainable at public expense. As per Hertfordshire County Council's new design guide (Place and Movement Planning Design Guide (PMPDG)) Gaddesden is classified as a P1/M1 (e.g. Rural Lane). The site is located in a rural area to the north of Hemel Hempstead, the site as existing is an empty agricultural field. Gaddesden Lane is approximately 4.5m wide according to the

Transport Statement, making it a single width carriageway, it is noted there are a number of passing points along this route. The TS and Design and Access Statement discuss pedestrian access into the site, however as there is no footway fronting the site and no links from the site directly onto the nearby public right of way, Flamstead Footpath 040; therefore, HCC would not necessarily consider the site to be accessible to walk to for all users.

Access and Parking

The application proposes a new access onto Gaddesden Lane from the site. According to the Transport Statement, the access is to be formed by a bellmouth with a 6m junction radii with a 6m internal carriageway into the site, these arrangements ensure that two vehicles can safely pass each other. An ATC has been conducted at the proposed location of the access to calculate the 85th percentile speed; using the data which has been provided and DMRB standards, the required visibility splays from the access would have to be 109m eastbound and 111m westbound. The visibility splays provided within the application, shown on drawing number P21-2444 Figure 4.1, are setback by 2.4m (which given the size of the proposed scheme would be considered acceptable) and are a length of 110.96m and 113.12m. Given the requirements under DMRB standards these proposed visibility splays would be acceptable. As per the attached condition, these splays must be kept clear from a height of 0.6m and above to ensure optimum visibility can be maintained, this would include the regular maintenance of any vegetation to the front of the site. No collisions have occurred in the located of the proposed access within the last 5 years, but it is noted there has been one collision of slight severity within 300m to the east of the site.

A trip generation assessment for the proposed use has been included as part of the TS, the approach of which is considered reasonable when taking into account the nature of the use (and lack of comparable sites on the TRICS database). Following assessment of the provided assessment, the impact on the surrounding highway network from a trip generation perspective would not be a reason to recommend refusal from a highway perspective.

Ultimately the LPA will have to be satisfied with the parking provision, but HCC would like to comment that 25 parking spaces have been provided at the site using standards taken from the 'Visitor Survey, Recreation Impact Assessment and Mitigation Requirements for the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC and the Dacorum Local Plan'. It would be recommended that the level of car parking is reviewed in future if there are any detrimental impacts from vehicles parking on, or potentially causing an obstruction to, the surrounding highway, especially given the small width of Gaddesden Lane. The parking spaces at the site

	<p>have been shown to measure 2.5m x 5m in size, this is considered suitable in line with HCC's Place and Movement Planning and Design Guidance (PMPDG). A manoeuvring area of 6m has been provided to the rear of the spaces to ensure that all vehicles can turn around on site and egress onto the highway in forward gear. It is noted that there</p> <p>does not appear to be any disabled / accessible car parking spaces shown and therefore an appropriate number would need to be provided in this respect, with spaces dimensioned in line with HCC's PMPDG. Cycle parking has been provided with four spaces as no specific standards for cycle parking at SANGs is available. As with vehicle parking, cycle parking should be reviewed in future to ensure that the need for cycle parking is met.</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>HCC as Highway Authority has considered the application and are satisfied that the proposal would not have an unreasonable impact on the safety and operation of the adjoining highway and therefore, has no objections on highway grounds to this application, subject to the above conditions.</p>
<p>Environmental And Community Protection (DBC)</p>	<p>CONTAMINATED LAND</p> <p>Having reviewed the application submission and the Environmental and Community Protection Team records I am able to confirm that there is no objection on the grounds of land contamination. Also, there is no requirement for further contaminated land information to be provided, or for contaminated land planning conditions to be recommended in relation to this application.</p>
<p>Hertfordshire Ecology</p>	<p>Overall Recommendation:</p> <p>Further information and/or amendments required before application can be determined.</p> <p>Summary of Advice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In sufficient information to define the components of the SANG, specifically those elements required for screening. - The calculation of the number of BU in addition to those required by the scheme has not taken into consideration the screening elements of the SANG. - Step-in rights need to be included in the management requirements. <p>Supporting documents:</p>

I have made use of the following documents in providing this advice:

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal CSA Ecology May 2024
CSA/6751/01/A
- SANG Management Statement CSA Ecology May 2024
CSA/6751/06
- Land at Green Lane Redbourn SANG: Landscape, Visual and Green Belt Technical Note CSA Ecology
- SANG landscape Strategy CSA/6751/107 rev D 26/06/2024
- Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) Planning Statement July 2024

ECOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Thank you for consulting this office on the above application.

Hertfordshire Environmental records Centre has no specific data for this site which is an arable field with hedgerow boundaries. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been submitted I consider that overall, the PEA assessment of the site and recommendations for mitigation are fit for purpose.

SANG

In its response, Natural England has confirmed that the site meets the SANG Quality Guidelines and given clear reasons why. I have no reason to disagree with this and, given Natural England's response there is no reason for me to reiterate this here. However, NE in their response also emphasised the need for to ensure that there was a minimum of 100m in grassland between sections of path, to avoid the feeling of being on a conveyor belt. This gap can be reduced where there is effective screening. The included maps of the proposed lay out does not include a scale, however, given the overall width of the site, there are a number pinch points in the path layout that would likely require this screening. This view is supported by NE who state that "In places the circular walk relies on effective screening from thickets and woodland planting". Given this these areas of planting should be considered as part of the sang and not additional to it. NE further advise that areas proposed for BNG planting should be identified as such in the SANG Management Plan. As SANGS must be secured for 80 years and BNG only for 30 an understanding of what is part of the SANG and what is additional is essential. Given this I advise that the scheme is amended so that the areas of thicket and woodland planting required as a functional part of the scheme are specified and shown on appropriate plans.

A SANG Management Statement sets out suitable management prescriptions for the habitats proposed the management of the SANG should be secured via a condition or s106 agreement.

Natural England in their assessment of the SANG have described the need for step-in rights. I endorse these views and there is no need for me to state anything further other than to emphasise the importance of Natural England's advice as the statutory adviser on this matter.

Accordingly, post-determination, until legal and other arrangements relating to the management body and step-in rights are resolved, we will advise the Council to not consent any applications for housing that seek to rely on the this SANG as mitigation for adverse impacts on the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC. Otherwise, the strict tests demanded by the Habitats Regulations 2017 (as amended) that the Council must be able to ascertain the absence of an adverse effect on the integrity of the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC prior to determination may not be satisfied.

Biodiversity net gain: The Submitted Metric Calculates a significant biodiversity net gain, with habitat units increasing from 32.62 to 103.76 units (+218.07%) and hedgerow units from 2.40 to 12.17 units (+407.26%). Consequently, this is substantially above the mandatory 10%.

Biodiversity Gain Plan:

The application is automatically subject to a General Biodiversity Gain Condition, which requires the delivery of a Biodiversity Gain Plan. It is recommended that the plan provided is in line with the DEFRA Biodiversity Gain Plan template.

Whilst the Biodiversity Gain Plan is a post determination matter, I have no reason in this case to consider that the general biodiversity condition will not be met.

Significant Onsite Enhancement: The BNG required for the SANG should by reason of its scale be considered Significant and should be secured by either a condition subject to which the planning permission is granted, a planning obligation, for at least 30 years after the development is complete.

Habitat Management and Maintenance Plan (HMMP): This will demonstrate how the habitat enhancement and creation, and subsequent target habitat conditions will be created, enhanced and monitored over the 30-year period following the completion of the capital works required to create them. It is therefore, recommended that the HMMP should follow the HMMP template produced by DEFRA. Consideration should also be given within any legal agreement to secure resources to allow adequate monitoring over the

	<p>30-year period. I advise the use of an appropriate HMMP should be secured by Condition.</p> <p>Additionality: As stated above areas of the thicket and woodland should be considered an essential part of the SANG without which its attractiveness and consequently effectiveness as an alternative location would be lost.</p> <p>The biodiversity net gain claimed by the site must be additional to those measures required by the SANG. In addition to any net gain required by the SANG itself. NE, in their response, acknowledged the potential for planting within the SANG site to provide offsite biodiversity units for other developments, but reiterated that any such planting must be in addition to planting which is essential for the SANG to function.</p> <p>Additional units available to off-set other developments. The applicant is arguing that significant weight in the planning balance should be given to the substantial net gain for biodiversity delivered by the scheme.</p> <p>The proposal states that of the 103.76 BU, after consideration of those required for the mandatory 10% 67.87 BU are available for offsetting. However, this calculation assumes that all of the woodland and thicket planting is additional to the requirements of the SANG. Consequently, this figure would need to be recalculated to exclude the thicket and woodland planting required, as screening to ensure that the circular walk functions as intended. Specifically, any planting that is required as screening where paths are not separated by 100m in grassland.</p>
<p>Lead Local Flood Authority (HCC)</p>	<p>RE: 24/01593/MFA - Change of use from agricultural land to Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) with associated access and car park - Land East of Green Lane Gaddesden Lane Gaddesden Row Hemel Hempstead AL3 7AP</p> <p>Thank you for your consultation on the above site, received on 16 July 2024. We have reviewed the application as submitted and wish to make the following comments.</p> <p>The LLFA note that no flood risk assessment and drainage strategy has been submitted for the access and car park along with the application details.</p> <p>The Environment Agency Surface Water Flood Maps show the proposed site is a medium to high risk of surface water flooding in the</p>

south direction. This is due to flow path but there is also, in the north, a small portion of site is at very low risk of surface water flooding. The proposed site is going to build a car park in the flow path. As the development being a change of use, the LLFA would highlight that FRA and drainage strategy would be required as part of this application to demonstrate that the flood risk will not increase elsewhere, and the users of the site will not be at risk of flooding.

We object to this planning application in the absence of an acceptable Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and Drainage Strategy relating to:

- The site access and car park are at high risk of surface water flooding and does not follow the sequential approach. Safe access and egress should also be considered.
- There is no information on how the car park will not increase flood risk elsewhere as there is no drainage scheme, but it is unclear if one could be provided as the whole car park is at risk of flooding.
- The development is not complying with NPPF, PPG or policy CS29 - SuDS and policy CS31, flood risk objective 1, flood risk objective 2 and flood risk objective 3 under local planning policies.

Reason

To prevent flooding in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 173, 175 and 180 by ensuring the satisfactory management of local flood risk, surface water flow paths, storage, and disposal of surface water from the site in a range of rainfall events and ensuring the SuDS proposed operates as designed for the lifetime of the development.

FURTHER COMMENTS

Thank you for your re-consultation on the above site, received on 3 January 2025. We have reviewed the application as submitted and wish to make the following comments.

The applicant has provided a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and Drainage Strategy (as listed in the Annex). These are to account for the local flood risk issues and surface water drainage at this location. Following a review of the submitted documents, the details are in accordance with NPPF and local planning policy (Dacorum) DM34-Flood risk and protection, Policy CS31-Water Management, and Policy-CS29 Sustainable design and construction.

We have **no objection subject to conditions being attached to any consent** if this application is approved. We suggest the following wording.

Condition 1: Prior to the commencement of development, construction drawings of the surface water drainage network, associated sustainable drainage components (Swales, Earth Bunds and Porous Paving) and a construction method statement shall be submitted and agreed in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall then be constructed as per the agreed drawings, method statement, FRA & Drainage Strategy (by Rappor and dated October 2024) and Drawings (by Rappor and dated 10 January 2025) and remaining in perpetuity for the lifetime of the development unless agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No alteration to the agreed drainage scheme shall occur without prior written approval from the Local Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the development achieves a high standard of sustainability and to comply with NPPF Policies of Dacorum Council.

Condition 2: The development hereby approved shall not be occupied/used until details of the maintenance and management of the sustainable drainage scheme have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The drainage scheme shall be implemented prior to the first usage of the development hereby approved and thereafter managed and maintained in accordance with the approved details in perpetuity. The Local Planning Authority shall be granted access to inspect the sustainable drainage scheme for the lifetime of the development. The details of the scheme to be submitted for approval shall include:

- I. a timetable for its implementation.
- II. details of SuDS feature and connecting drainage structures and maintenance requirement for each aspect including a drawing showing where they are located.
- III. a management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development which shall include the arrangements for adoption by any public body or statutory undertaker, or any other arrangements to secure the operation of the sustainable drainage scheme throughout its lifetime. This will include the name and contact details of any appointed management company.

Reason: To ensure that the development achieves a high standard of sustainability and ensure the flood risk is adequately addressed for each new dwelling and not increased in accordance with NPPF and Policies of Dacorum Council.

Condition 3: Upon completion of the surface water drainage system, including any SuDS features, and prior to the first use of the development; a survey and verification report from an independent surveyor shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The survey and report shall demonstrate that the surface water drainage system has been constructed in accordance with the details approved pursuant to condition 1. Where necessary, details of corrective works to be carried out along with a timetable for their completion, shall be included for approval in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any corrective works required shall be carried out in accordance with the approved timetable and subsequently re-

	<p>surveyed with the findings submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure the flood risk is adequately addressed, not increased and users remain safe for the lifetime of the development in accordance with NPPF and Policies of Dacorum Council.</p> <p>We acknowledge that the applicant has submitted suitable evidence of BRE365 infiltration testing, and the hydraulic calculations account for the worst infiltration rate. We also acknowledge that the hydraulic calculations have been updated to use FEH 2013 rainfall data and a CV value of 1.0. The LLFA noted that the car park will be raised by 700mm, provision of swales to divert the water, earth bunds along the Gaddesden Lane to avoid flooding, porous paving on car park to address the flood risk from surface water flow path on Gaddesden Lane. The LLFA noted that the connection to the SANG walking route from the car park will not flood in 1 in 100 year + 40% climate change events.</p>
<p>Natural England</p>	<p>SUMMARY OF NATURAL ENGLAND'S ADVICE NO OBJECTION - TECHNICAL SANG COMMENTS</p> <p>Based on the plans submitted, Natural England considers that the proposed development will not have significant adverse impacts on statutorily protected nature conservation sites or landscapes.</p> <p>HOWEVER</p> <p>The planning application documents do not include a legal agreement between the LPA and the applicant regarding step-in rights and future SANG management.</p> <p>Without these safeguards, there is risk that default could be made upon the SANG; it then ceases to displace people away from the SAC. NE is of the opinion, as it stands, that there is insufficient information to satisfy us that the site could function as mitigation for adverse impacts on the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC for in perpetuity.</p> <p>Thus, NE will object to any proposed housing developments that rely on the Green Lane SANG as mitigation for adverse impacts on the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC, until such time that a legal agreement between the applicant and the LPA regarding step-in rights has been signed and more information has been provided regarding the in-perpetuity management of the SANG.</p> <p>Please notify NE once progress on the above has been made, and we can then reconsider our position.</p> <p>The application is for a change of use from agricultural land to a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), together with</p>

provision of a new car park, and has been the subject of a pre-application Discretionary Advice Service contract between the developer and Natural England.

NE advice on SANG design

CSA Environmental, on behalf of Vistry Group, asked Natural England to provide advice on Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) at Green Lane, Hemel Hempstead, which included one site visit, conducted on 15 January 2023.

The proposed site occupies the northern slope of an east-west dry valley, around 2.5km to the west of the village of Redbourn. The landform rises within the proposed site to a localised high point further north, where Green Acre Farm is situated.

The proposed SANG at Green Lane is currently in use as arable farmland; the SANG Landscape Strategy envisages converting the land to a mix of long and short sward grassland, thickets and woodland planting, with a circular mown path of at least 2.3km. The proposed SANG will be bounded by new and existing/enhanced hedgerows and stock-proof fencing with mesh to ensure that it is also dog-proof. This mix of habitats is acceptable to Natural England.

The location of the site means it has the potential to intercept visitors travelling west from Redbourn to the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and may also attract residents from the northern edge of Hemel Hempstead, with easy access by car along Gaddesden Lane. The proposed SANG has a rural feel, with little need for screening other than in the vicinity of the new SANG car park. The site is in a location away from the M1 motorway, so there are no noise issues or unnatural intrusions, such as odour from sewage treatment works etc.

There is currently no public access to the proposed SANG, as there are no Public Rights of Way (PRoW) across the land, and the site has no permissive access. As such, a visitor survey is not required as part of the SANG proposal.

Natural England advises that the proposed SANG will meet NE's requirements and we are pleased that the whole SANG will be delivered as one phase. The site is approximately 16.31ha in area, so will have a catchment distance of 4km. Note that this catchment (of 4km) is less than the 5km catchment mentioned in in the Planning Statement (Turley, July 2024), though the Design and Access Statement (CSA, July 2024) correctly refers to the 4km SANG catchment.

The NE SANG Guidelines (2021) include the following statement: *Avoid convoluted paths and pinch points in SANG design. By maintaining a minimum width between paths of 100 m in open ground and 50 m in dense woodland.* Natural England notes that care has been taken to ensure that the circular path is screened by new woodland and thickets to break up views between paths on the circular walk, given that the distance between the paths is, at times, less than 100m. The new woodland and thickets are deemed by Natural England to be an essential component of the SANG creation. As such, these areas of new planting should not be included within the calculation of 'spare' Biodiversity Net Gain for future sale (termed 'Additional to SANG requirement' on page 18 of the *Preliminary Ecological Appraisal: Green Lane* (CSA, May 2024)). The BNG calculation for the SANG may need to be updated as a result.

Overall, the Landscape Strategy for the proposed SANG will provide a good recreational opportunity for visitors. The rise in the landscape towards the northwest corner away from the car park, combined with the proposed planting, offers visitors the opportunity of long views from a couple of viewpoints, which add to the interest of the proposed SANG.

Natural England has reviewed the SANG Management Statement (CSA, May 2024) and agrees with the overall content. As discussed in the Management Statement, a more detailed SANG Management Plan will need to be agreed with the ultimate Management Partner, as part of a S106 agreement following planning permission (if/when granted) to secure the management of the SANG in perpetuity (see below for further information).

Natural England notes that the key to the SANG Landscape Strategy drawing (CSA, June 2024) includes 'bench', but the plan does not show the location of any benches. In terms of the visitor experience to the SANG, the inclusion of one or more benches at strategic viewpoint locations throughout the site, for those wishing to make the most of walking the whole site, is a valued addition to the SANG for those less able to walk without pausing now and then. We suggest that some benches are included in an updated plan as part of discussions on the detailed SANG Management Plan with the ultimate Management Partner, so that the maintenance/replacement of the benches can be included in the ongoing costs of managing and maintaining the SANG in perpetuity.

Chilterns National Landscape

The proposed SANG site is located immediately adjacent to the Chilterns National Landscape and forms 'the setting' to the National

Landscape. The statutory purpose of the National Landscape is to conserve and enhance the area's natural beauty. The area's landscape character, which is a continuation of the Chilterns plateau and dipslope landscape character area, complements that of the adjacent designated area and therefore supports the delivery of the AONB's statutory purpose i.e. to conserve and enhance the area's natural beauty.

Natural England support the principle of a change in land use to SANG in this location. We are keen to capitalise on the opportunity that the change in use of this site offers to conserve and enhance the character of the local landscape, particularly as this site forms a part of the setting to the National Landscape and is visible within views from the National Landscape.

The character of the local area has been given consideration in forming the proposals for the landscape design of the SANG, with reference made to the Revel End Plateau landscape character area and the car park has been located within the lowest topographical area on site which will reduce its visibility within the wider landscape. We are particularly pleased to see proposals for extensive hedgerow enhancement and new hedgerow planting to the north and east of the site and that hedgerow trees will be planted as part of this. This site and surrounding land were historically subdivided into a series of smaller scale fields. This historic field pattern has now been lost though field amalgamation and hedgerow removal and unfortunately this has degraded the quality of the landscape and its scenic quality within the setting to the National Landscape. Although the proposed site boundaries do not align exactly to the old field boundaries, and consequently the proposed northern and eastern hedgerows are not being re-created in their exact historical position, we are pleased to see the re-introduction of hedgerow being proposed close to where historic hedgerows once existed, as can be seen on the 1884 OS six Inch map of Hertfordshire.

There exists in the redevelopment of this site good potential to screen and filter views to overhead power lines OHLs adjacent to the eastern site boundary, both from within the site for future users of the proposed SANG, but also from wider views within the local landscape. This includes the potential to better screen / filter views from roads adjacent to the site (Green Lane, Gaddesden Lane) and, potentially from views towards the site from Public Rights of Way within the local area, including from within the Chilterns National Landscape. Every effort should be made within the detailed design of the landscape masterplan to capitalise on the opportunity to place tree and thicket planting where it will visually screen or filter views towards these existing pylons to best effect from both views within the site and

further afield as previously outlined. From desktop review the proposed woodland planting adjacent to the northernmost OHL is a positive addition to screening views from the southwest and hedgerow tree planting will make a positive contribution towards filtering views to the OHLs from the wider landscape. However, further consideration should be given to how the southernmost OHL could be better screened with planting on site within the immediate vicinity of the pylon. This would also provide the benefit of better screening of the pylons for eventual SANG site users and from within views across the site from Gaddesden Lane and Green Lane to the south and east of the site, respectively. It would also lessen the visual impact of the pylon on the skyline by providing a planted background to the pylon when experienced in views from the west i.e. along the western approach to the site from Gaddesden Lane. We appreciate that this is a constrained site with multiple underground pipelines and easements criss-crossing the site which restrict the extent, type and height of planting that is possible in this location. Nevertheless, we strongly recommend that the possibility of more landscape scale tree planting this area is investigated as there appears to be an opportunity for this pylon to be better screened working within the constraints and guidelines for planting around these than is currently indicated on the Landscape Strategy Plan.

We also strongly recommend that appropriate tree, hedgerow and scrub species mixes and locations are agreed and secured for the site via the appropriate planning mechanism to ensure that planting proposals reflect the character and vernacular of the local landscape and provide robust screening for OHLs and for the proposed car park. Local Landscape Character Assessments provide one source of further guidance on what is locally appropriate. The Revel End Plateau landscape character area states: '*Woodlands on the slopes typically comprise oak, ash, beech and cherry while on the plateau oak and hornbeam dominate. Hedgerows are largely hazel, hawthorn, elm and holly, and mostly ancient relict hedgerows.*'

We advise that the planning authority uses national and local policies, together with local landscape expertise and information to determine the proposal. The policy and statutory framework to guide their decision and the role of local advice are explained below. Their decision should be guided by paragraph 182 and 183 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which requires great weight to be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty within National Landscapes, National Parks, and the Broads and states that the scale and extent of development within all these areas should be limited. Paragraph 183 requires exceptional circumstances to be demonstrated to justify major development within a designated

landscape and sets out criteria which should be applied in considering this proposal.

Alongside national policy, the LPA should also apply landscape policies set out in their development plan, or appropriate saved policies.

We advise that you, as applicants, consult the Chilterns Conservation Board. Their knowledge of the site and its wider landscape setting, together with the aims and objectives of the area's statutory management plan, will be a valuable contribution to the planning decision. Section 245 (Protected Landscapes) of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 places a duty on relevant authorities (which includes local authorities) in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in a National Park, the Broads or an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England, to seek to further the statutory purposes of the area. This duty also applies to proposals outside the designated area but impacting on its natural beauty. The Chilterns Conservation Board may be able to offer advice in relation to the duty, including on how the proposed development aligns with and contributes to delivering the aims and objectives of the area's statutory management plan.

Natural England confirms that the proposed Green Lane SANG does meet the NE SANG Quality Guidelines and, in principle, we have no issue with it being designated a SANG, pending the following points.

1. The SANG is to be created as set out in the *SANG Landscape Strategy* (CSA, June 2024), the *SANG Management Statement for Green Lane, Redbourn* (CSA, May 2024) and the *Design and Access Statement: Green Lane, Redbourn* (CSA, July 2024), all three of which should be made a condition of the planning consent, to ensure that the SANG is created and managed according to the NE SANG Guidelines (2021).
2. A management company, trust/charity or the LPA is to be named as managers of the SANG prior to approving the SANG for mitigation, and a legal agreement secured between the applicant / their client and the management company/body, to secure the funding of the SANG management via a commuted sum/endowment (see additional advice below).
3. A legal agreement between the applicant / their client and the LPA regarding step-in rights and management of the SANG in perpetuity has been signed by both parties if required (see additional advice below).

Additional Advice – Relating to the use of this proposed SANG as mitigation in future

The Green Lane SANG is to be relied upon to mitigate adverse recreational pressure impacts on the integrity of the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) of developments within the 5km catchment area of the SANG. As such, the SANG must be approved by Natural England and is expected to follow Natural England's published SANG Guidelines. This is in order that an appropriate assessment undertaken by the Responsible Authority (in this case Dacorum Borough Council) can conclude that there is sufficient certainty that the Green Lane SANG mitigation measure will make an effective contribution to avoiding harm, guaranteeing beyond all reasonable doubt that a planning application which relies on the SANG mitigation will not adversely affect the integrity of the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC.

Lack of clarity regarding management agent for the SANG

The *SANG Management Statement for Green Lane, Redbourn (CSA, May 2024)* includes a section on General Management Aims & Arrangements. Paragraph 2.5 states that '*Full details of the future management and maintenance of the SANG is anticipated to be secured via planning condition and/or the s106 agreement*'.

Natural England requires a management company, trust/charity or LPA to be named as managers of the SANG prior to approving the SANG for mitigation, and a legal agreement secured between the applicant / their client and the management company/body, to secure the funding of the SANG management via a commuted sum/endowment. This requirement ensures that SANG management is secured and funded in perpetuity (taken to be a minimum of 80 years).

Natural England's order of preference for transferring long-term management of the SANG to a management body is as follows:

- 1) the Local Planning Authority, who may wish to make use of any spare capacity as they see fit in return for agreeing to manage the SANG in perpetuity;
- 2) The Land Trust, or similar body;
- 3) A new management company set up by the applicant / their client.

If the SANG is to be managed by a third-party management company, step-in rights will need to be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The LPA should provide confirmation that they will provide step-in-rights for the proposed SANG management company. Step-in rights will not be required if charities such as the Land Trust are the managing body. If step-in rights are needed, NE would require written confirmation of the LPA's agreement to take on the site and

	<p>appropriate wording to be incorporated in the legal agreement. This is to ensure that the SANG would be managed by the LPA in perpetuity should the management company cease trading.</p> <p>Without a legal agreement between the applicant / their client and the LPA regarding step-in rights and subsequent securing of the SANG management, NE is of the opinion that the SANG may not be adequately managed in perpetuity to fulfil its function as mitigation for adverse impacts on the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC.</p> <p>In addition to charities such as the Land Trust, National Trust, Box Moor Trust and local Wildlife Trust, step-in-rights are not required if the managing agent is English Estates, provided that the SANG land and endowment to manage it in perpetuity (taken to be 80 years) are held within the Greenspace Trust Community Interest Company (CIC), which English Estates has set up for that purpose.</p> <p>As it currently stands, NE will object to any housing developments that rely on the Green Lane SANG as mitigation for adverse impacts on the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC.</p> <p>If you have any queries relating to the advice in this letter, please contact me via fiona.martin@naturalengland.org.uk.</p>
Historic England	<p>Thank you for your letter of 16 July 2024 regarding the above application for planning permission.</p> <p>Historic England provides advice when our engagement can add most value. In this case we are not offering advice. This should not be interpreted as comment on the merits of the application.</p> <p>We suggest that you seek the views of your specialist conservation and archaeological advisers. You may also find it helpful to refer to our published advice at https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/find/ It is not necessary to consult us on this application again, unless there are material changes to the proposals. However, if you would like advice from us, please contact us to explain your request.</p>
Historic Environment (HCC)	<p>Please note that the following advice is based on the policies contained in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).</p> <p>The Archaeological Desk Based Assessment (DBA) (CSA Environmental 2024) submitted with the application provides a thorough assessment of the site and the archaeology identified in the wider area. This includes cropmarks of possible Bronze Age barrows [Historic Environment Record no. 4097], cropmarks which may represent a Roman villa [HER no. 12977] and the possible route of a</p>

Roman road [HER no. 4575]. The DBA also notes the archaeological investigations that have taken place in the area surrounding the site, including a watching brief and targeted excavation associated with a water mains line between Boxted and Frias Wash, crossing 50m north-west of the site at its closest point. It is noted that access to the report had been requested from the Historic Environment Record, but the results of the report were not included in the assessment.

Although the DBA recommends no further archaeological works for the proposed development based on their evidence of significant archaeological remains, our office disagrees. The aforementioned 2006 watching brief and targeted excavation of the water line identified a number of significant archaeological remains as described in the final report (Network Archaeology Ltd 2009). In particular, Plots 18, 20 and 22, the areas closest to the projected Roman Road [HER no. 4575] found extensive evidence of prolonged occupation, from the prehistoric and Roman periods onward. Excavations identified a Neolithic pit, Iron Age ditches, an Iron Age trackway, two possible Iron Age structures, two Iron Age enclosure ditches and evidence of Iron Age metalworking. Furthermore, two Roman enclosure ditches, a possible Roman surface, and evidence of the Roman Road was also encountered in Plot 18.

I believe that the location of the proposed car park is such that it should be regarded as likely to have an impact on significant heritage assets. I recommend, therefore, that the following provisions be made, should you be minded to grant consent:

1. The archaeological monitoring of all groundworks related to the development of the car park, including ground reduction, levelling, hard landscaping, and any other ground impact; this should include a contingency for preservation or further investigation of any remains encountered;
2. the analysis of the results of the archaeological work with provision for the subsequent production of a report and an archive, and the publication of the results;
3. such other provisions as may be necessary to protect the archaeological interests of the site.

I believe that these recommendations are both reasonable and necessary to provide properly for the likely archaeological implications of this development proposal. I further believe that these recommendations closely follow para. 211, etc. of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021), and the relevant guidance contained in the National Planning Practice Guidance, and in the Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2:

	<p>Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (Historic England, 2015).</p> <p>In this case two appropriately worded conditions on any planning consent would be sufficient to provide for the level of investigation that this proposal warrants. I suggest the following wording:</p> <p>Condition A No demolition/development shall take place/commence until a Written Scheme of Investigation has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. The scheme shall include an assessment of significance and research questions; and:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording 2. The programme for post investigation assessment 3. Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording 4. Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation 5. Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation 6. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the Written Scheme of Investigation. <p>Condition B</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) Demolition/development shall take place in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition (A). ii) Each phase of the development shall not be occupied until the site investigation has been completed and the provision made for analysis in accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition (A). The final phase of development shall not be occupied until the site investigation has been completed and the provision made for analysis in accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition (A) and the provision made for analysis, publication and dissemination of results and archive deposition has been secured. <p>If planning consent is granted, then this office will be able to provide detailed advice concerning the requirements for the investigation and to provide information on accredited archaeological contractors who may be able to carry out the work.</p> <p>I hope that you will be able to accommodate the above recommendations.</p>
<p>Flamstead Parish Council</p>	<p>The Parish Council object strongly to this proposal. The site is wholly inappropriate as the access road from Redbourn is a single track,</p>

popular with cyclists but perilously dangerous due to the dreadful state of the road. All passing points which have been carved out of the verge are massively rutted and hazardous to all cars. The junction of Green Lane and Gaddesden Lane has poor sight lines as it is not possible to easily see the traffic coming from Gaddesden Row. Green Lane is very narrow and prone to serious flooding as is the field in question from where the water pours.

Constructing a contrived "recreation space" in a random field purchased by house builders in order to offset a potential housing development in a radius of 5 miles is not the most effective way of managing open spaces. You can plonk an open space there and not necessarily have any visitors due to the random nature of its location.

Cyclists are unlikely to go there just to cycle round and round a 2.3 km track apparently full of pedestrians. Cyclists will just want to carry on on their route.

The road is not in a fit state for any pedestrians and in 26 years of living here I have never seen anyone walk from Redbourn along Gaddesden Lane to Gaddesden Row. All visitors will have to drive there, so you are by default increasing the number of vehicle movements for a short term 2.3 km wander round a short track. This does not meet with any reduction in carbon footprint targets. The site does not link up with any footpaths.

Adding extra signage directing traffic to the open space will give an urbanising effect in this rural area and most likely get knocked down as do most of the road signs in this area due to the narrow roads.

This is proposed as an area for dog walking as it will be fenced to prevent dogs escaping. By default this will stop deer and other large wildlife from moving freely through this current open corridor. There are large deer herds in this area as well as badger, foxes, stoats etc. All will be deterred from crossing this enclosed field. This has the potential of becoming a dog toilet in an area where you state there will be no intrusion of smells.

The proposal claims that the recreation area will bring a range of benefits to the village of Redbourn and the Borough. The field is in the parish of Flamstead and will bring no benefits at all to that parish.

The proposals claim that 20 trees will be planted, with no reference to the size or maturity of these trees. There are no benches on the plans although these are mentioned in the proposal. There is no reference to rubbish bins so presumably you will be expecting all visitors to take their rubbish home. I would ask the question: how many park benches

	<p>do you sit at where there is not a plastic drinks bottle left behind with an empty bag of crisps. How, therefore will rubbish be managed?</p> <p>There is no mention of how this land will be managed and maintained except by the local council. If this is expected to be the Parish Council, then clearly that is not acceptable as it is not a facility giving any benefit to Flamstead, nor does the parish have the resources for that.</p> <p>This field overlooks AONB so having a resin bound gravel car park with all the required signage and boards will look out of character in this rural environment. Bound resin gravel is more fitting for large stately homes and high footfall visitor attractions, not in this rural setting.</p> <p>Because the site is quite remote and not close to any dwellings, it has the potential to become a drug dealing and fly tipping spot.</p> <p>Clearly the developers are tempting farmers by buying up parts of their land as they tick the biodiversity box so they can be well armed to have met the criteria for house building in the future.</p> <p>This is a very badly thought out proposal as the location is wholly inappropriate.</p> <p>Strong objection</p>
Sport England	<p>Thank you for consulting Sport England on the above application.</p> <p>The proposed development does not fall within either our statutory remit (Statutory Instrument 2015/595), or non-statutory remit (National Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) Par. 003 Ref. ID: 37-003-20140306) and, therefore, Sport England has not provided a detailed response in this case, but would wish to give the following advice to aid the assessment of this application.</p> <p>General guidance and advice can however be found on our website:</p> <p>https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport#planning_applications</p> <p>If the proposal involves the loss of any sports facility, then full consideration should be given to whether the proposal meets Par. 103 of National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is in accordance with local policies to protect social infrastructure and meets any approved Playing Pitch Strategy or Built Sports Facility Strategy that the local authority has in place.</p>

	<p>If the proposal involves the provision of a new sports facility, then consideration should be given to the recommendations and priorities set out in any approved Playing Pitch Strategy or Built Sports Facility Strategy that the local authority may have in place. In addition, to ensure they are fit for purpose, such facilities should be designed in accordance with Sport England, or the relevant National Governing Body, design guidance notes: http://sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/</p> <p>If the proposal involves the provision of additional housing, then it will generate additional demand for sport. If existing sports facilities do not have the capacity to absorb the additional demand, then new and/or improved sports facilities should be secured and delivered in accordance with any approved local policy for social infrastructure, and priorities set out in any Playing Pitch Strategy or Built Sports Facility Strategy that the local authority has in place.</p> <p>In line with the Government's NPPF (including Section 8) and PPG (Health and wellbeing section), consideration should also be given to how any new development, especially for new housing, will provide opportunities for people to lead healthy lifestyles and create healthy communities. Sport England's Active Design guidance can be used to help with this when developing or assessing a proposal. Active Design provides ten principles to help ensure the design and layout of development encourages and promotes participation in sport and physical activity.</p> <p>NPPF Section 8: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/8-promoting-healthy-communities</p> <p>PPG Health and wellbeing section: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/health-and-wellbeing</p> <p>Sport England's Active Design Guidance: https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/active-design</p> <p>Please note: this response relates to Sport England's planning function only. It is not associated with our funding role or any grant application/award that may relate to the site.</p>
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APPENDIX B: NEIGHBOUR RESPONSES

Number of Neighbour Comments

Neighbour	Contributors	Neutral	Objections	Support
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Consultations				
20	6	0	6	0

Neighbour Responses

Address	Comments
Green Acre Farm Green Lane Flamstead St Albans Hertfordshire AL3 8BB	<p>Objections to proposed SANG on Green Lane, Flamstead.</p> <p>We object to this development for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The proposal is to offset the potential development of 300 houses in Redbourn. It should therefore be easily accessible by foot to the people of Redbourn which it is not. - The map in the proposal shows Gaddesden Lane as a straight-ish road which is simply not the case. The proposed access to the site is along a narrow country lane with dangerous double bends, numerous very large potholes and inadequate passing places. This stretch of road is an accident hot spot, particularly for cyclists. Pedestrians cannot walk along this stretch of road as it is simply too dangerous. - As stated in the proposal, the site is not directly accessible from any other public right of way. The rights of way stated in the proposal like many others in the area are extremely overgrown, poorly maintained and often unusable. The only viable access would be by car increasing traffic and accident risk. <p>We have the following concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Natural England and the proposed plan state that the 'local council' will be responsible for maintaining the site. Would that be Redbourn or Flamstead Parish? Are there financial provisions within these councils to fund the maintenance? - Green Lane regularly floods just before the junction with Gaddesden Lane. Last winter waterfalls cascaded from the fields on the opposite side of the road to the proposed site for a 300-meter length, cumulating in Green Lane often making the road impassable. We are concerned the development will exacerbate the flooding issue, and should the plan go ahead feel the site should include a natural pond as a soak away. This will also increase biodiversity to the site. <p>To conclude, we feel the site would be unsuitable and there is a far more suitable site further along Gaddesden Lane closer to Redbourn where walkers regularly park to exercise their dogs along the Nicky line. This would link up with the Nicky Line on a wider, safer stretch of road. This would be easily and safely accessible on foot for the people of Redbourn should they choose not to take advantage of the spacious common already available to them.</p> <p>We would invite the planning team to visit the site and investigate the access, particularly Gaddesden Lane and the junction with Green lane, and the local rights of way.</p> <p>We hope that you can make use of the information provided for this case.</p>

<p>Gadd row Gaddesden Row Great Gaddesden Hemel Hempstead Hertfordshire HP2 6HJ</p>	<p>Gaddesden Lane is a single-track road that already attracts a high level of traffic. Many parents from the local private school, Beechwood Park, use this road as an approach to the school. It is also part of the Chiltern Cycleway, attracting a high volume of cyclists, and is used for certain road bike races. When the M1 or the B487 are busy, it is also used as a rat run, leading to total standstill on numerous occasions. The road has some passing places that are in a terrible state of repair, and these conditions would only deteriorate further if the proposed development proceeds, as a result of increased traffic.</p> <p>The proposal claims that the recreation area will bring a range of benefits to the village of Redbourn and the Borough. The field is in the parish of Flamstead and will bring no benefits at all to that parish. The proposals claim that 20 trees will be planted, with no reference to the size or maturity of these trees. There are no benches on the plans although these are mentioned in the proposal. There is no reference to rubbish bins so presumably you will be expecting all visitors to take their rubbish home. I would ask the question: how many park benches do you sit at where there is not a plastic drinks bottle left behind with an empty bag of crisps. How, therefore will rubbish be managed. There is no mention of how this land will be managed and maintained except by the local council. If this is expected to be the Parish Council, then clearly that is not acceptable as it is not a facility giving any benefit to Flamstead, nor does the parish have the resources for that. This field overlooks AONB so having a resin bound gravel car park with all the required signage and boards will look out of character in this rural environment. Bound resin gravel is more fitting for large stately homes and high footfall visitor attractions, not in this rural setting because the site is quite remote and not close to any dwellings, it has the potential to become a drug dealing and fly tipping spot. Clearly the developers are tempting farmers by buying up parts of their land as they tick the biodiversity box so they can be well armed to have met the criteria for house building in the future.</p> <p>As a local resident, I have firsthand experience of the frequent flooding that occurs on both Green Lane and Gaddesden Lane during inclement weather. There is extensive runoff from the fields and down the hill, and I am surprised that the flood report did not adequately reflect the extent of this issue. This flooding would undoubtedly impact the development of the SANG.</p> <p>Strong objection</p>
<p>1 Saberton Close Redbourn AL37DS</p>	<p>This development is speculation - seemingly offering SANG, but for an unclear and unspecified future development.</p> <p>This should not be approved without the developer clearly outlining where and how many houses it is planning to build, for which this SANG is proposed for.</p> <p>In the absence of the above clarity, it is not possible to make a sound judgement whether this SANG is the appropriate size or location. Furthermore, the proposed overdevelopment of Redbourn remains an issue, where the appropriate infrastructure (roads, public transport,</p>

	<p>shops, schools and doctors' surgery) has not been addressed to local satisfaction wrt the Gaddesden Lane/Church End Redbourn 300 house building proposal. It remains an ongoing concern, that threatens to change the character of the village, disproportionately increase traffic and local population without the hint of appropriate infrastructure.</p> <p>Though that proposal is currently on hold, this SANG seems to be a sneaky way of seemingly offering green space for an unspecified development in a 5mile radius.</p> <p>In the absence of clarity as to what this SANG is exactly for (what development, where with how many houses), it should not be granted.</p> <p>We object to this proposal.</p>
<p>Green Lane Farm Green Lane Flamstead St Albans Hertfordshire AL3 8BD</p>	<p>We are writing to object to the above application.</p> <p>Highway Factor</p> <p>Gaddesden Lane is a single-track road that already attracts a high level of traffic. Many parents from the local private school, Beechwood Park, use this road as an approach to the school. It is also part of the Chiltern Cycleway, attracting a high volume of cyclists, and is used for certain road bike races. It is also frequented by horse riders. When the M1 or the B487 are busy, it is also used as a 'rat run', leading to total standstill on numerous occasions. The road has some passing places that are in a terrible state of repair, and these conditions would only deteriorate further if the proposed development proceeds, resulting from increased traffic. The number of complaints and claims submitted to the Council, due to damage to cars, would undoubtedly increase as a result.</p> <p>Safety Concern</p> <p>Due to the busyness of the road, there is a significant safety concern if the above planning application were to go ahead. There are already numerous drivers who travel carelessly down Gaddesden Lane. An increased volume of pedestrians and cyclists frequenting the SANG development would exacerbate these dangers, potentially leading to severe safety issues and an increased risk of accidents.</p> <p>Fly-Tipping</p> <p>There is already a considerable amount of fly-tipping along this stretch of road. I am currently awaiting a report from the council regarding this issue. The fly-tipping obstructs the passing places, making the road more difficult to use. This problem would worsen with increased traffic from the planned development. Additionally, there is a concern that further fly-tipping would occur within the car park or at the entrance of the development.</p> <p>Flooding</p> <p>As a local resident, I have firsthand experience of the frequent flooding that occurs on both Green Lane and Gaddesden Lane during</p>

	<p>inclement weather. There is extensive runoff from the fields and down the hill, and I am surprised that the flood report did not adequately reflect the extent of this issue. This flooding would undoubtedly impact the development of the SANG.</p> <p>As a result of the above points, we strongly object to the proposed development.</p> <p>We are writing to object to the above application.</p> <p>Highway Factor</p> <p>Gaddesden Lane is a single-track road that already attracts a high level of traffic. Many parents from the local private school, Beechwood Park, use this road as an approach to the school. It is also part of the Chiltern Cycleway, attracting a high volume of cyclists, and is used for certain road bike races. When the M1 or the B487 are busy, it is also used as a 'rat run', leading to total standstill on numerous occasions. The road has some passing places that are in a terrible state of repair, and these conditions would only deteriorate further if the proposed development proceeds, as a result of increased traffic.</p> <p>Safety Concern</p> <p>Due to the busyness of the road, there is a significant safety concern if the above planning application were to go ahead. There are already numerous drivers who travel carelessly down Gaddesden Lane. An increased volume of pedestrians and cyclists frequenting the SANG development would exacerbate these dangers, potentially leading to severe safety issues and an increased risk of accidents due to the lack of a walkway.</p> <p>Fly-Tipping</p> <p>There is already a considerable amount of fly-tipping along this stretch of road. I am currently awaiting a report from the council regarding this issue. The fly-tipping obstructs the passing places, making the road more difficult to use. This problem would worsen with increased traffic from the planned development. Additionally, there is a concern that further fly-tipping would occur within the car park or at the entrance of the development.</p> <p>Flooding</p> <p>As a local resident, I have firsthand experience of the flooding that occurs on both Green Lane and Gaddesden Lane during inclement weather. There is extensive runoff from the fields and down the hill, and I am surprised that the flood report did not adequately reflect the extent of this issue. This flooding would undoubtedly impact the development of the SANG.</p> <p>As a result of the above points, we strongly object to the proposed development.</p>
Green Lane Stables	We write to strongly object to the above application.

Green Lane
Flamstead
St Albans
Hertfordshire
AL3 8BD

Highways issues

We have local knowledge of these lanes and are amazed that the Highways Authority has approved the new access and additional car trips that this development will bring.

We have made a Freedom of information request for the details of accidents reported in the adjacent Lanes. We request that once this information is available that the Highways Authority are made aware of the figures. At this stage we request that they review their position. The lanes are heavily used by cyclists and we are aware of many accidents. These are single track roads and an increase of usage for the proposed SANG will only increase the incidence of accidents here.

The lanes here unfortunately also attract fly-tipping on a regular basis (again the council should have historic details) this should be considered before a publically accessible SANG with car trips is approved. There will be many days when access is obstructed until the fly tipping is cleared. We have made an information request for full details:

These photos show fly tipping on Green Lane and the Lane is frequently blocked. We have requested a fly tipping report under Freedom of Information from Herts County Council

Flooding

We do not know why the applicants have said that the area is not subject to flooding. The extract below from the EA website shows some areas of flooding around the proposed site. These maps however are not definitive. Locals know this site floods on a regular basis. Please see attached photograph from some recent floods. These occur every time there is more than half a day's rain, winter or summer. The banks on the opposite side of Gaddesden Lane cause waterfalls on to the lane and so it is constantly flooded.

This photo shows the flooding from Green Lane onto the proposed site showing the extent of this:

Additionally the extract below from the submitted Design and Access statement clearly identifies the flood risk whereas on the application form the agent states there is no flood risk?!

The flooding is a significant impediment to the likely success of this land being used as a SANG. We doubt it can be satisfactorily addressed but full flood mitigation measures must be provided. Including affect on the proposed car park, the actual usefulness of the SANG and reflected in the proposed planting types. A sequential test should be provided to show how displaced flood water impacts surrounding areas.

Further the creation of the SANG will increase the impermeability of the land and will cause additional run off to the south of the site during heavy rainfall further increasing flooding risk.

The flood waters will make the car park and access unusable.

Anti- Social Behaviour

	<p>There is considerable evidence that these areas attract anti-social behaviour. What steps will be taken to police this area?</p> <p>We support the objection as already submitted by 1 Saberton Close Redbourn AL37DS (Objects) copied below.</p> <p>This does seem a very strange application. If approved it should be identified as a stand alone application for local SANG and be conditioned that it cannot subsequently be 'allocated' against an as yet unidentified development project.</p> <p>Comment submitted date: Tue 23 Jul 2024</p> <p>This development is speculation - seemingly offering SANG, but for an unclear and unspecified future development.</p> <p>This should not be approved without the developer clearly outlining where and how many houses it is planning to build, for which this SANG is proposed for.</p> <p>In the absence of the above clarity, it is not possible to make a sound judgement whether this SANG is the appropriate size or location.</p> <p>Furthermore, the proposed overdevelopment of Redbourn remains an issue, where the appropriate infrastructure (roads, public transport, shops, schools and doctors' surgery) has not been addressed to local satisfaction wrt the Gaddesden Lane/Church End Redbourn 300 house building proposal. It remains an ongoing concern, that threatens to change the character of the village, disproportionately increase traffic and local population without the hint of appropriate infrastructure.</p> <p>Though that proposal is currently on hold, this SANG seems to be a sneaky way of seemingly offering green space for an unspecified development in a 5mile radius.</p> <p>In the absence of clarity as to what this SANG is exactly for (what development, where with how many houses), it should not be granted.</p> <p>We support the objections as already submitted by Green Lane Farm and Green Barn.</p> <p>These are my neighbours and their comments totally reflect the issues and problems that arise as residents of Green Lane on a continual basis</p>
<p>Green Lane Barn Green Lane Flamstead St Albans Hertfordshire AL3 8BD</p>	<p>Gaddesdon Lane from Redbourn to Gaddesden Row is predominantly a very busy single track road with inadequate passing places, liable to flooding and fly tipping. It is part of the cycle ways network, however incredibly dangerous for cycle, pedestrian or horse riding as the traffic is heavy.</p> <p>We would. Be concerned for the safety of an increased number of cars/cyclists/ pedestrians on this stretch of lane.</p> <p>The recreation area would not be able to be managed adequately to prevent an increase in fly tipping and anti social behaviour. It would not therefore be safe for local residents to park and enjoy the recreation space, being so far from any park management.</p> <p>We would suggest this type of recreation space be situated closer to the proposed housing developments and linked via safe pedestrian/cycle access with robust recreation management systems in place.</p>

	<p>We have contacted the local council under the freedom of information act to divulge the incidents of fly tipping, accidents and incidents as well as flooding. We have photographic evidence of the extreme flooding on this stretch of lane.</p>
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