

East Hemel Hempstead Planning Application

Application Guide

Document to be submitted to SADC/DBC to
guide members of the public through the OPA

November 2025

Guide to the East Hemel Planning Application

This Application Guide provides information and guidance on the Outline Planning Application for **East Hemel Hempstead**.

An **Outline Planning Application** for up to 4,000 new homes, 53 ha of employment land and a range of supporting facilities, services and infrastructure has been submitted to St Albans City and District Council and Dacorum Borough Council for determination.

Although the vast majority of Proposed Development lies within St Albans' District, the Application has been submitted to both authorities because a small amount of the proposed highway works in the western part of the Application area extend into Dacorum Borough.

The development proposed within the Application is in accordance with the draft Local Plans of both local authorities, which have allocated the land for development as part of the wider Hemel Garden Communities Growth Area.

St Albans City and District Local Plan has concluded its Examination in Public and is targeting adoption in Spring 2026. Dacorum Borough Council are part way through their Examination in Public and are targeting adoption in 2026.

The Applicant is The Crown Estate (TCE) who own the land required to deliver the development which is the subject of the Application. The Agent for the Application is David Lock Associates, The Crown Estate's planning consultant.

This Guide explains the different plans and documents which are included with the Outline Planning Application (OPA). It describes what will be permitted at Outline stage, and what the next steps will be should Outline Planning Permission be granted. It also signposts where further information can be found.

Background information on The Crown's Vision for the Proposed Development and details of the consultation which took place prior to the submission of the OPA can be found on The Crown Estate's Website here:

www.easthemel.co.uk

You can view all of the submitted OPA material on the Councils' websites, here:

SADC

www.stalbans.gov.uk/land-east-hemel-hempstead-application-520251964

DBC's

<https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/planning-development/planning-applications/hemel-garden-communities--land-east-of-hemel-hempstead-planning-application>

Please note that the Application has been made 'in duplicate' to both authorities so the material you will be able to view is the same on both the SADC and DBC online systems. However, St Albans District Council has the legal responsibility for deciding whether to approve or refuse the majority of the proposed development as only 1.2% of the application falls within Dacorum Borough Council. Dacorum Borough Council has legal responsibility for approving or refusing only the proposed highway works which lie within its Borough.

Nonetheless, in the engagement which happened before the Application submission, TCE has engaged equally with Officers, stakeholders and residents living in and representing both authorities.

SCAN HERE



The Crown Estate's Website here:
www.easthemel.co.uk

Context

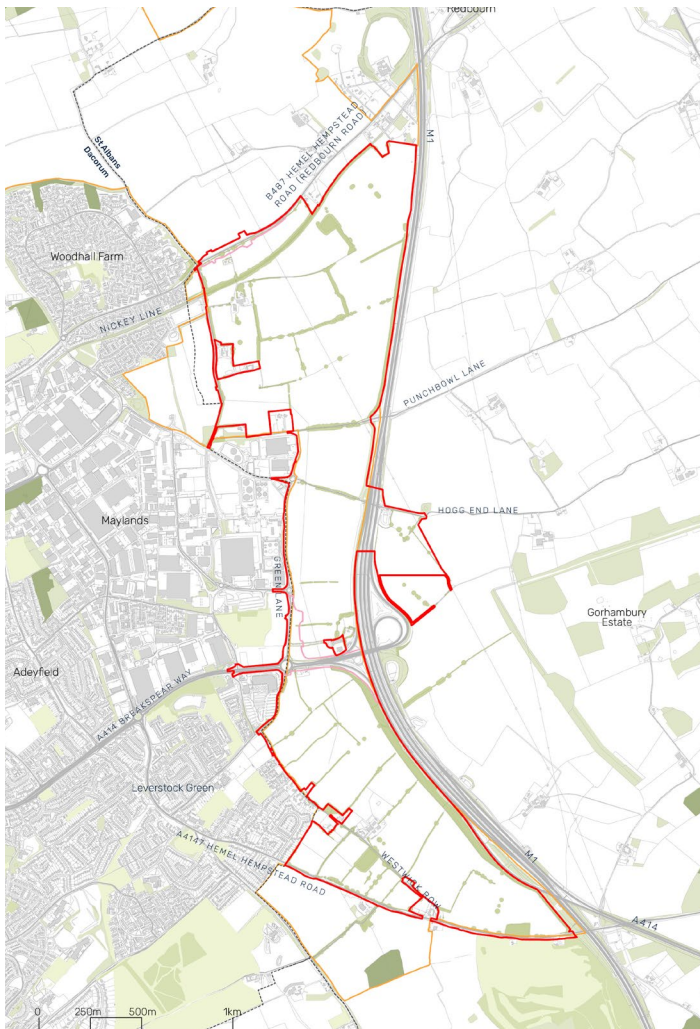
Map 1 shows the location of the Application Site. It lies to the immediate east of Hemel Hempstead on land that is currently in agricultural use, between the M1 motorway and Maylands Industrial Estate, Leverstock Green, and Spencer's Park.

The land which is the subject of this application is allocated for development in the draft St Albans City & District Local Plan. Three site allocations cover the Application Site:

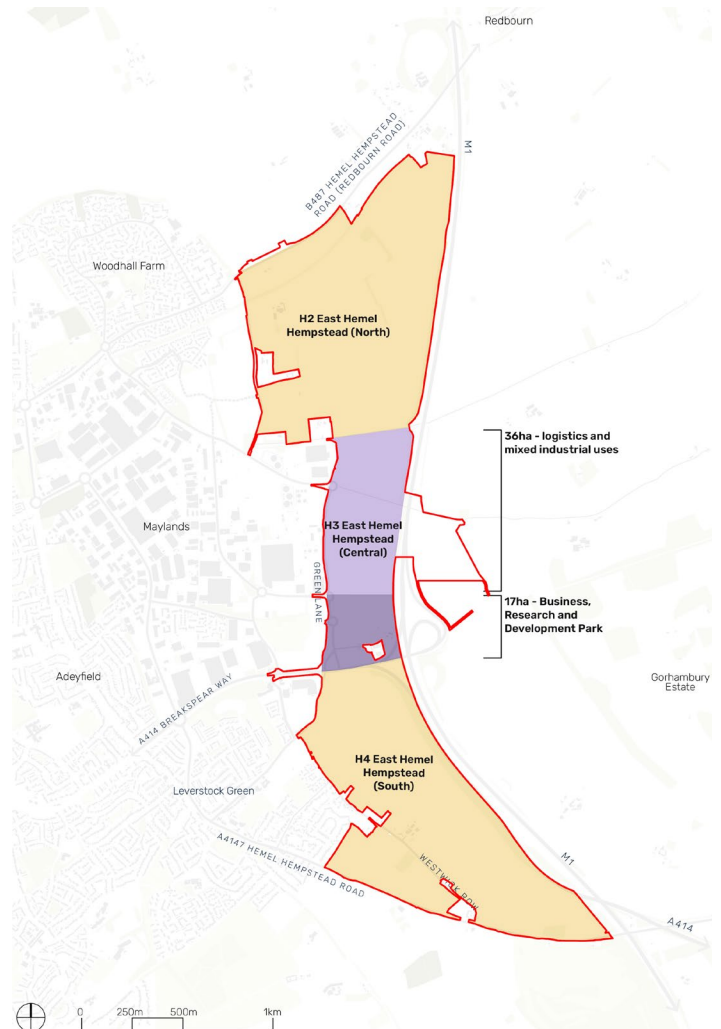
- **H2 East Hemel Hempstead North**, (allocated for 1600 homes and supporting uses).
- **H3 East Hemel Hempstead Central**, (allocated for employment uses).
- **H4 East Hemel Hempstead South** (allocated for 2400 homes and supporting uses).

In addition, the local plan policies of both SADC and DBC relating to Hemel Garden Communities (policies LG1 to LG3) also relate to the Proposed Development.

Outline Application Red Line Boundary



St Albans City & District Local Plan Site Allocations



What is being Proposed?

The Application seeks Outline Planning Permission for a wide range of land uses, open spaces and infrastructure.

Full details of what is being applied for is set out in the 'Description of Development', 'Development Components' and 'Development Specification' submitted with the Application.

Key elements of the development include:



Up to 4,000 new dwellings in two new neighbourhoods, including extra care living and nursing homes



40% affordable housing



Up to 53ha of employment land



Three primary schools



One secondary school



Local centres for local shops, community uses (for example community centres and meeting places, Medical Centre and children's nurseries) and other local services



Recreational and cultural uses (for example gym and indoor sports)



Gypsy and traveller sites



Two Country Parks



Children's play



Sports pitches



Informal greenspace and amenity spaces



Allotments, orchards etc



Green corridors for movement, wildlife and ecology



Sustainable Transport Corridor prioritising bus and active travel modes



Mobility hubs



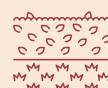
active travel (pedestrian and cycle) bridge over the A414



network of walking and cycling connections



New connectivity to the Nickey Line



Planted noise bunding



Drainage and utilities works

Duplicate Application

The Application has been submitted 'in duplicate' to both SADC and DBC because it includes small amounts of land proposed for highway works within Dacorum borough. The majority of the site lies within St Albans district and SADC will be legally responsible for approving or refusing all proposed development other than the highways works within DBC. DBC will only be responsible for making a planning decision on the highway works within its boundary.

Matters submitted in Detail

Although the majority of the development is submitted in Outline, there are two elements which are submitted in detail and not 'reserved' for subsequent approval:

- A414 Junction Works
- B487 HH Road/Redbourn Road Junction Works

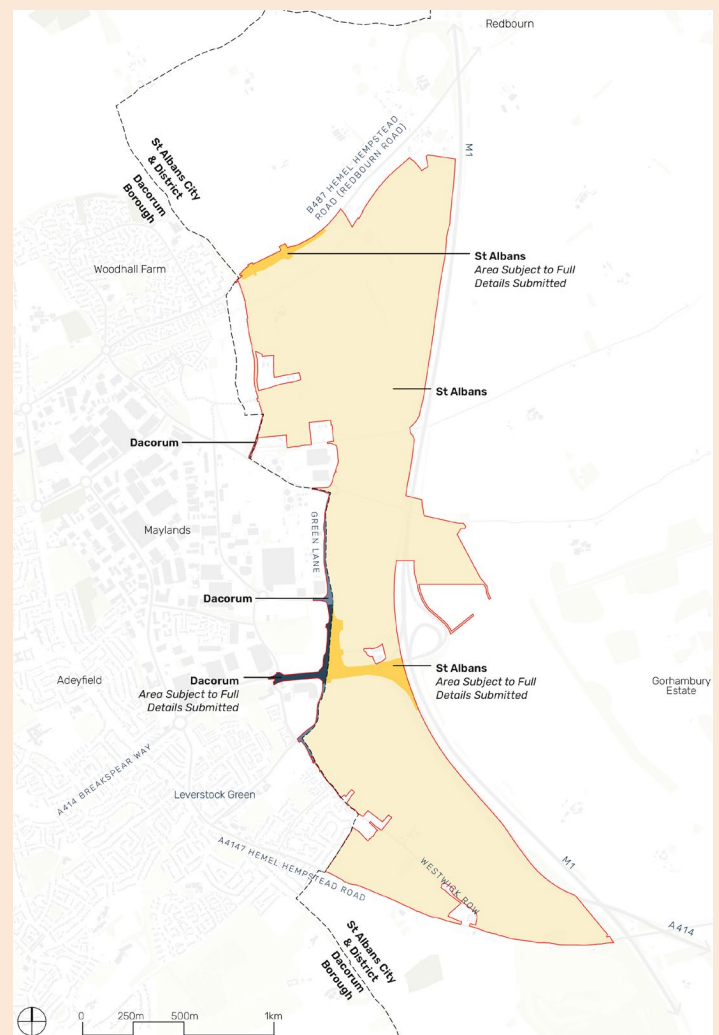
Detailed plans showing the works proposed at these junctions are included for approval. This will confirm the acceptability of the scheme design and will facilitate early delivery of these works to open up each respective part of the site for built development.

The land subject to detailed access proposals from the B487/ Hemel Hempstead Road (Redbourn Road) overlaps with the Planning Application boundary of the North Hemel proposed development, (land controlled by Bloor Homes and Pigeon Investments Ltd and subject to a separate Planning Application). The extent of overlapping boundary and the design details for this highways access are identical in both Planning Applications.

Pre-Application Engagement

Prior to the submission of the OPA, The Crown Estate and its consultants have engaged with the Local Planning Authorities, Statutory Consultees, specialist interest bodies, local residents and community groups to share emerging thinking, discuss the draft proposals and enable feedback from local people to inform the final proposal.

This has been recorded in a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) submitted with the Application.



The Planning Process

The purpose of an Outline Planning Application (OPA) is to establish the 'in principle' acceptability of the development proposed on an Application Site.

Outline Planning Permission

Granting an Outline Planning Permission allows the local authority to fix some of the key 'parameters' (elements) of a proposed development, relating to:

- the amount of development (number of homes, amount of employment floorspace, for example);
- the location of different uses within the site area, including the extent of built development and open space;

It also allows the authority and applicant to fix:

- any limitations on the types of uses permitted;
- what measures are required to 'mitigate' the impacts of the development;
- the timing and type of supporting facilities and services which are required to be built or funded on the site;
- any contributions to be made to wider ('off-site') infrastructure (such as highway improvements).

These are fixed through:

- Approving 'Parameter Plans' and 'Development Specification';
- Attaching 'Conditions' to the Permission;
- A Section 106 (legal) agreement attached to the Permission, which the Applicant and Local Planning Authorities both sign.

Detailed (Reserved Matters) Permission

Before development can begin on site, more details will need to be submitted by the Applicant to the Local Planning Authority for approval.

These are usually made through:

- Material submitted to 'Discharge a Condition' to demonstrate how details of development comply with the Conditions of the Outline Planning Application
- Reserved Matters Applications (RMA) which are detailed layouts, buildings or landscape and open space designs for each part of the site

Statutory consultees, local stakeholders and members of the public will be consulted on reserved matters applications submitted at each stage of the planning process and will have the opportunity to comment.

What Happens to the Outline Application Now

Once the Outline Planning Application has been validated it will be given an Application Reference number and a nominated Case Officer at each Council. It will then be available to view on the Council's online planning application register. For an application of this nature, there will be a lot of technical documents available to review including an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), so we have signposted the key material on pages 9 and 10 of this guide.

Consultation Period

The Outline Application material will be reviewed by Council officers and consultees. During the first 21-day period comments will be sought from statutory bodies including Historic England, National Highways, Natural England, the Environment Agency and the Health and Safety Executive, as well as other public organisations including Hertfordshire County Council (as the education, highways, drainage, community services authority).

Alongside statutory consultees, this is an opportunity for local residents and interest groups to submit responses to the Application proposals. The statutory period within which applications with EIA should be determined is 16 weeks. However, for applications of this scale, there may be additional material submitted in response to consultation responses during the determination period, or more discussions needed before a recommendation can be made, and this 16 week period can be extended if TCE as Applicant and the planning authority both agree to an Extension of Time.

Responses will be considered by the respective Case Officers and will inform the Officer Recommendation on the Application. The Officer Recommendation will be considered at Planning Committee(s) and Members will then determine the Application.

Determinations

The local planning authority are charged with making the formal decision as to whether to grant planning permission. For the East Hemel Outline Application, St Albans District Council has the legal responsibility for deciding whether to approve or refuse the majority of the proposed development. Dacorum Borough Council has the legal responsibility for approving or refusing only the proposed highway works which lie within its Borough.

If the Councils resolve to grant Outline Permission, they will impose Conditions and enter into a s106 legal agreement with The Crown Estate. This will include triggers for when infrastructure is to be provided and ways in which development, open space and facilities will be managed over the long term.

The Outline Planning Application Material

The Application documents include both formal and informal elements to satisfy statutory national and local validation requirements.

The formal material is submitted for approval and will be listed on any Decision Notice when the Application is determined. This will form the fixed elements of the Outline Permission.

The supporting elements explain and justify the Outline Application with reference to relevant contextual information; assess the impact and merit of the proposals; and present strategies and illustrative material to guide design and delivery.

We have made clear which of the material is submitted for Approval and which is Supporting Information below.

Where To Start

In order to get to grips with the Application we would recommend you start with the Planning Statement and the Design and Access Statement.

These documents give an overview of the proposals and explain the policy context for the Application and the design thinking which has shaped and led to the development proposal now submitted.

The Environmental Statement is also a key document. However, as it contains a lot of information, a Non-Technical Summary has been provided as a useful starting point.

The information below describes all of the documents to help you navigate the material. It is divided into the material which is formally submitted for permission, and the material which is submitted in support.

Formal Submission Material

Location Plan	Shows where the site is in relation to Hemel Hempstead and the wider area.
Site Plan	Confirms the boundary of the land which is subject to the planning application.
Land Use Parameter Plan	The plan which fixes the overall distribution of land uses across the site and the extent of built development and open areas.
Green Infrastructure Parameter Plan	Fixes the areas which will form part of the green and blue infrastructure network, the type and nature of their future use.
Access and Movement Parameter Plan	Defines the key access points and connections for a range of users across the site, including the indicative alignment of Sustainable Transport Corridor (STC) through the development areas.
Access Plan[s]	Shows the detailed layout and design of the proposed A414 access and B487 HH/Redbourn Road for which permission is sought as part of the overall Outline Application.
Development Specification	This includes: - A Description of Development which describes the type and Use Classes for the development within in the application to provide certainty about what is being applied for; - A schedule of Development Components which fixes maximum amounts of floorspace and/or areas to be approved; and - A series of Spatial Principles providing an explanation of the key principles which will govern the detailed design and delivery of each of the spatial elements set out in the Parameter Plans.

Supporting Material

Illustrative Master Plan	Illustrates the way in which the development elements shown in the Parameter Plans could come forward at the detailed design stage.
Planning Statement (inc. Affordable Housing Statement)	Evaluates the proposals against national and local planning policy, guidance and other material planning considerations. The Affordable Housing Statement sets out the way in which the provision of 40% affordable housing within the development is envisaged.
Environmental Statement	Identifies and assesses the scale of the impacts of the proposed development on the environment and explains how these impacts can be mitigated in the areas of: Agricultural Land Use, Air Quality, Climate Change and Greenhouse Gases, Ecology and Nature Conservation, Health, Heritage and Archaeology, Landscape and Visual Impact, Noise and Vibration, Landscape and Visual Impact, Socioeconomics, Transport and Access and Water Resources and Flood Risk.
Environmental Statement Non-Technical Summary	A simplified version of the Environmental Statement to summarise key information about environmental impacts and mitigation.
Design & Access Statement (DAS)	Sets out the design thinking which has informed the masterplanning of the site, including the site context, and its constraints and opportunities. It sets out how the proposals have evolved through community engagement and Design Reviews with Design South East. It explains the components of the Parameter Plans including land use and amount, layout, scale, landscape and access arrangements, using the Illustrative Masterplan as an example of how a high quality place can be achieved in line with The Crown Estate's aspirations within the Parameters to be approved at Outline stage.
Statement of Community Involvement	Explains the measures that were taken to engage with key stakeholders, interest groups and the wider public during the period leading up to the submission of the application, and how comments received have influenced the proposals.
Transport Assessment	Assesses the impact of the proposed development on the local and strategic transport network and identifies measures and strategies to mitigate this.
Framework Travel Plan	Sets out a package of measures for sustainable travel which have been included in the proposals or will be made available to occupants of the proposed development in order to discourage journeys by car where appropriate.
Energy and Sustainability Strategy (inc. Climate Change)	Presents a strategy for addressing energy and sustainability through a range of principles that align with The Crown Estate's vision and have influenced the proposals and will be secured at a detailed design stage.
Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment	A mandatory assessment of all existing habitats (including trees, hedgerows and watercourses) within the site, and how the proposed development will deliver a minimum 10% uplift on these habitats once constructed.
Section 106 Draft Heads of Terms	Sets out a list of anticipated obligations which the applicant will be required to deliver, such as schools, highway works and open spaces. This document will form the basis for the final Section 106 Agreement, a legal contract between the applicant, local planning authorities and Hertfordshire County Council.

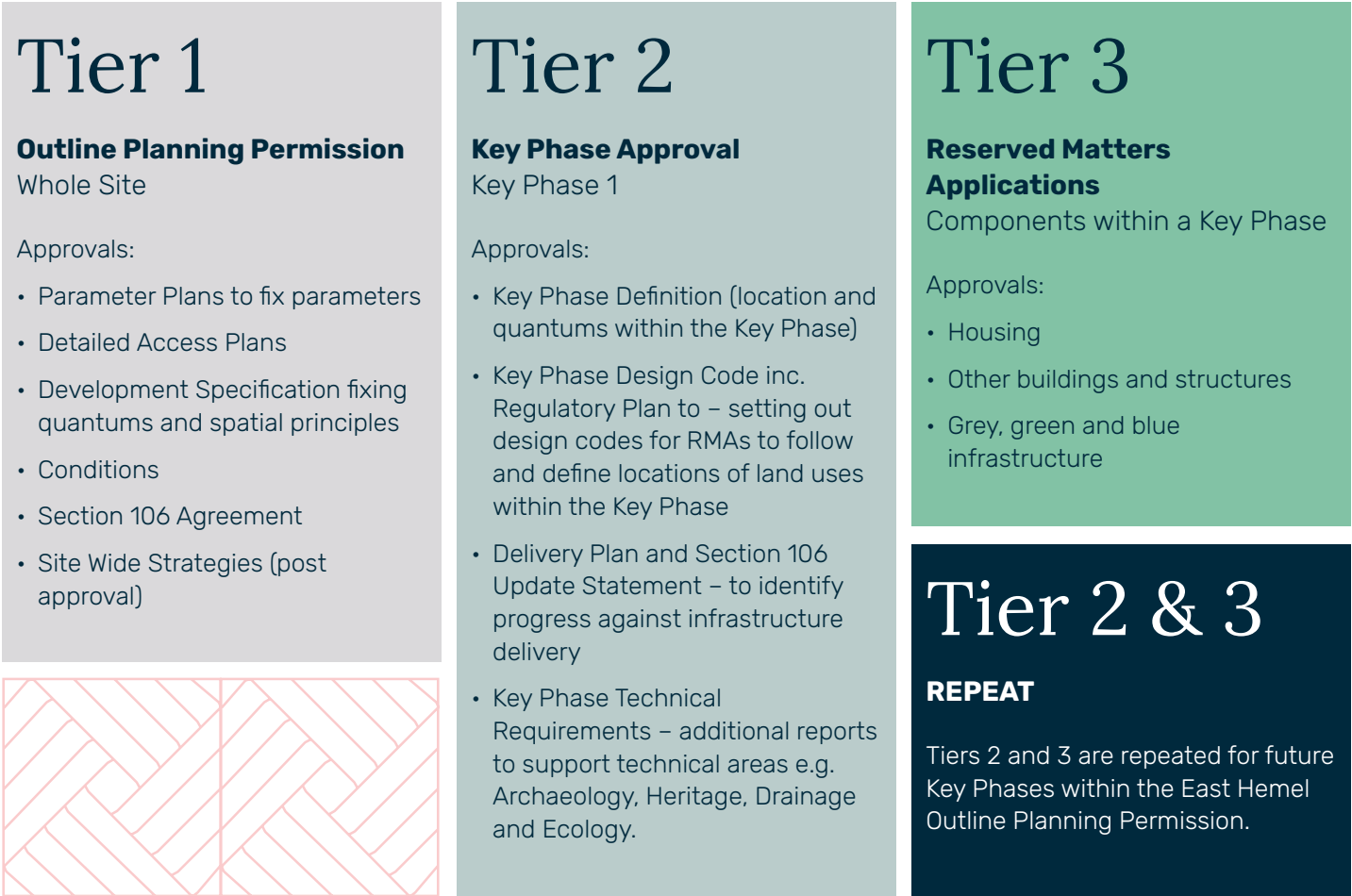
A ‘Tiered Approach’ for East Hemel

An Outline Planning Permission does not mean development can start. Detailed design will follow. For large scale and long term developments such as East Hemel, a three-tiered approval process is helpful in introducing the right level of detail and certainty for manageable phases of development, at the right time.

As most of the application is in Outline, the Council will look to agree a process for the approval of all detailed elements before development within each phase can commence. Matters not approved through the outline application are ‘Reserved’, with ‘Reserved Matters Applications’ required prior to development commencing.

Design codes or design briefs will be required as part of the process beyond the Outline stage.

The following diagram explains the way in which this process is anticipated to be organised for East Hemel.



Tier 1 Outline Approval – includes conditions, legal obligations and deals with site wide issues and requirements.

Tier 2 Key Phase Approval – defines a phase (location, land uses and quantum of development) and provides the next level of detail on matters including: design, transport measures, delivery and affordable housing provision.

Tier 3 Reserved Matters Approval – provides detailed proposals for layout, buildings, landscape, movement and infrastructure.

The Key Phase and Reserved Matters Proposals will need to be in accordance with the parameters fixed at the Outline stage. Other relevant guidance, including Supplementary Planning Documents, will also inform these stages in the process.

This scale of development needs a phased approach. The Council and TCE as Applicant have agreed a way of structuring the next stages of planning to control and facilitate the effective and efficient phased delivery of the scheme. This proposed approval process (which is set up through planning conditions and legal obligations) builds upon good practice elsewhere.

The key features of the approach are:

- Maintain flexibility to ensure the development stays modern as new best practices are found.
- Streamlining decision making across the 3 stages of the planning application reduces the burden on the LPA, with high-level planning issues to be considered on the first submission, and more technical and design detail to follow in the 2nd and 3rd stages.
- Increased stakeholder engagement, with this approach providing 3 opportunities for consultation on proposals as opposed to 1 or 2.

1. Outline Planning Application

The Outline Planning Application is high level; it is one step beyond the Local Plan allocation towards a deliverable scheme. The Parameter Plans, Development Specification and other approved plans provide the fixes and set enforceable limits upon the design of the scheme moving forwards. Enforced through planning conditions and Section 106 Agreement there is sufficient control to ensure the permitted scheme is acceptable in planning terms.

2. Site-wide Strategies and Strategic Phase Planning

Following Outline Planning Permission, a number of site-wide strategies will be agreed to address specific matters such as delivery management strategy and landscape and ecological mitigation, enhancement and management strategy.

A further stage of planning approval is required to precisely define the phases of development and provide the next level of detail. Before building begins in each phase, applications will be made to the Council for phase-specific material including a design code, a delivery plan, a Section 106 update statement and other technical information.

Details of how the community will develop and how the place will look and feel will be shaped at this point including the mix of uses; the type and timing of community facilities; the nature of the townscape and green spaces; the detailed environmental and biodiversity measures; transport improvements; and the type/mix of affordable housing.

3. Reserved Matters

Once the phase-specific material is approved the detailed proposals will be brought forward and consulted upon in the usual way. Conditions, placed upon the Outline Permission, will stipulate that the detailed design must be in accordance with information approved at Outline stage and through the Key Phase planning.

This approach creates a 'cascade' of compliance and gives comfort that what is eventually built has been rigorously planned, designed and consulted on.

Glossary

A - C

BNG – Biodiversity Net Gain
CIL – Community Infrastructure Levy
CEMP – Construction Environmental Management Plan

D - F

DAS – Design and Access Statement
DBC – Dacorum Borough Council
EHH- East Hemel Hempstead
EIA – Environmental Impact Assessment
ES – Environmental Statement
FTP – Framework Travel Plan

G - I

G&T – Gypsy and Traveller
HERT – Hertfordshire Essex Rapid Transit
HIA – Health Impact Assessment
HRA – Habitats Regulations Assessment
HCC – Hertfordshire County Council
HGC – Hemel Garden Communities
HSE – Health and Safety Executive

J - L

LP – Local Plan
LPA – Local Planning Authority
LVIA – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

M - O

MD – Master Developer
NH – National Highways
NL – National Landscape (formerly AONB)
NPPF – National Planning Policy Framework
NPPG – National Planning Practice Guidance
OPA – Outline Planning Application
OPP – Outline Planning Permission

P - R

POS – Public Open Space
PRoW – Public Right of Way
RIA – Retail Impact Assessment
RMA – Reserved Matters (detailed) Application

S - U

SADC – St Albans and City District Council
SANG – Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace
S106 – Section 106 (Legal) Agreement
SCI – Statement of Community Involvement
SPD – Supplementary Planning Document
STC – Sustainable Transport Corridor
SuDS – Sustainable Drainage System
TA – Transport Assessment
TRO – Traffic Regulation Order

V - Z

