

# Oaklands College & Land south of Sandpit Lane, St Albans

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Planning Statement  
(including VSC Case, 5-YHLS, Affordable  
Housing Statement & Heads of Terms)

October 2025



## **Oaklands College & Oaklands Blossom, St Albans**

**Planning Statement (including Affordable Housing Statement &  
Planning Obligations Statement)**

On behalf of **Taylor Wimpey and Oaklands College**

Project Ref: 333101694/A5 | Date: October 2025

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Registered Office: Buckingham Court Kingsmead Business Park, London Road, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, HP11 1JU  
Office Address: 7 Soho Square, London, W1D 3QB  
T: +44 (0)20 7446 6888 E: London.uk@stantec.com

## Document Control Sheet

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	Name	Position	Signature	Date	
<b>Prepared by:</b>	Freya Prigent	Planner	FP	May 2025	
<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Justin Kenworthy	Planning Director	JK	September 2025	
<b>Approved by:</b>	Justin Kenworthy	Planning Director	JK	September 2025	
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## 1 Introduction

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Stantec in support of a Hybrid Planning Application (“the Application”) on behalf of Taylor Wimpey North Thames and Oaklands College (“the Applicants”) to bring forward a new mixed-use development for new education facilities for Oaklands College and new residential dwellings, extra care units, a new local centre, a children’s home, community floorspace and provision of land for a primary school at land located at Oaklands College, accessed off Hatfield Road, Sandpit Lane and Oaklands Lane, St Albans, AL4 0JA (“the Site”).

1.2 The Site falls within St Alban’s City and District Council (“SACDC”), who are the Local Planning Authority (“LPA”). Hertfordshire County Council (“HCC”) are the upper-tier county council for the area (Highways and Education) in which the Development is located and so have also been involved in the pre-application discussions.

### A. SCOPE OF THE PLANNING APPLICATION

1.3 The Hybrid Planning Application relates to the overall area shown on the submitted Site Location Plan (ref D-001). There are two main development parcels that make up the comprehensive masterplan proposals. These comprise:

1. Land referred to by the Council as “Site B4 (East St Albans)” and referred to as “Oaklands Blossom” by the Applicants; and
2. Land at the main Oaklands College campus and its associated facilities and sports pitches, referred to as “Oaklands College”.

1.4 Both areas are combined to create “the Site” to deliver the comprehensive masterplan.

1.5 The Application seeks part Full Detailed Planning Permission (“the Detailed Element”) and part Outline Planning Permission with all matters reserved, except access (“the Outline Element”) for the Proposed Development described in Section 5 of the Statement.

1.6 The purpose of this Planning Statement is to assess the proposals against the relevant policies of the Development Plan and other material considerations. It will also demonstrate that the proposals deliver significant planning and regeneration benefits.

1.7 This Planning Statement provides the background context for the Site, the pre-application discussions completed and describes the Proposed Development. It demonstrates that there is

an over-whelming need for the new education facilities proposed at Oaklands College. These are the subject of confirmed funding sources and will be delivered. It also demonstrates that:

- The comprehensive masterplan for the wider site, working in partnership between Taylor Wimpey and Oaklands College, will deliver fundamental benefits to Oaklands College to ensure it meets the requirements of its students and other groups that use the campus. It will also deliver very substantial benefits to the local community. Most of these benefits will be delivered from funding secured by the land receipt from the residential-led development and other sources of funding without the need to secure funding from Local Government.
- The redevelopment of Oaklands College's St Albans campus represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to transform education and training provision in Hertfordshire. By replacing outdated and inefficient buildings with sustainable, purpose-built facilities, the College will not only meet urgent condition and safeguarding needs but also position itself as a leading provider of further and higher education for decades to come.
- Oaklands College has been at the heart of education in Hertfordshire for over a century. This redevelopment ensures it will continue to inspire, support, and equip learners for the next hundred years and beyond.

1.8 This Planning Statement describes the package benefits being delivered by the Proposed Development, including the delivery of:

- Much needed homes – which should be given very substantial weight
- Much needed affordable homes – which should be given very substantial weight
- Much needed self/custom build homes – which should be given moderate weight
- Much needed college facilities – which should be given very substantial weight
- Much needed SEND facilities – which should be given very substantial weight
- Much needed extra care homes – which should be given substantial weight
- Much needed children's home facilities – which should be given substantial weight
- Public use of college sports facilities – which should be given very substantial weight
- Land for a new primary school – which should be given substantial weight
- Community space and new local centre – which should be given affordable moderate weight
- ATR improvements and new publicly accessible open space – which should be given moderate weight
- Other Local Transport & Connectivity Improvements – which should be given moderate weight
- BNG enhancements – which should be given moderate weight
- Socio-economic benefits – which should be given significant weight

1.9 This Planning Statement demonstrates that:

- The Site and the Proposed Development is Grey Belt under Paragraph 155 and Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It is therefore ‘appropriate development’ within the Green Belt, however it falls narrowly short of meeting all the Golden Rules required for grey belt development, as required by Paragraphs 67 and 155 of the NPPF;
- The Site is not considered to undermine Purposes A, B and D of the Green Belt and all five Purposes (taken together) under Paragraph 143 of the NPPF, however there would be harm to the Green Belt by reason of its ‘inappropriateness’;
- Nonetheless, the harm to the Green Belt and any other harms from the proposal, are clearly outweighed by the significant package of public benefits being delivered by the Proposed Development that should be given very substantial weight. **Therefore, very special circumstances existing in this case to gain SACDC’s support under Paragraph 153 of the NPPF;**
- The Council has a 0.91-year housing land supply and has a Housing Delivery Test (HDT) score of 52%, indicating the Council has an unmet housing need;
- The suitability and sustainability of the location weighs in favour of the Proposed Development and the development of the Site can therefore help reduce pressures on less sustainable locations elsewhere. The Applicants consider that substantial weight should be given to this benefit of the Proposed Development;
- The landscape-led masterplan vision for the Site that has evolved through the pre-application process ensures that Proposed Development will integrate with the existing settlement pattern and landscape in the local area and delivers compensatory measures. This should be given significant weight in favour of the Proposed Development; and
- The Proposed Development will deliver a public benefits package that should be given very substantial weight; and
- The technical reports and assessments that support the planning application demonstrate that no significant adverse effects are predicted to arise from the development that cannot be mitigated. As such, there are no development management related reasons to withhold granting planning permission.

1.10 Accordingly, the principle of the Proposed Development is supported by the objectives of the NPPF, the Council’s adopted and draft Local Plan and the Sandridge Neighbourhood Plan, particularly as the Proposed Development will result in significant benefits package that, collectively, should be given **very substantial** weight. Under paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF, there is a presumption in favour of the Proposed Development. SACDC should grant planning permission without delay.

## B. PLANNING APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

1.11 This Planning Statement forms part of a suite of reports and technical documents which have been prepared in support of the Application. These have been agreed with the LPA during pre-application discussions and are listed in **Table 1.1** below:

<b>TABLE 1: HYBRID PLANNING APPLICATION DELIVERABLES</b>	
Document title	Consultant
Planning Application Form	Stantec
Ownership Certificates & Notices	
CIL Additional Information Form	
Covering Letter	
Existing and Proposed, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site Location Plan</li> <li>• Site plan</li> <li>• Existing and proposed floor plans*</li> <li>• Existing and proposed elevations*</li> <li>• Existing and proposed site sections, including finished floor levels and site levels*</li> <li>• Existing and proposed roof plans*</li> <li>• Parameter Plans**</li> </ul>	BM3, DLA, Julia Goodwin Landscape Architects and Oobe
Design and Access Statement (incl. Design Codes and Landscape Strategy)	
Site-wide Illustrative Masterplan	
Air Quality Impact Assessment	SLR
Agricultural Land Survey and Impact Assessment	Askew
Archaeological Desk Based Assessment	Landgagge
Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment	Ecosa
Climate Change Statement (including Energy & Sustainability Strategy) – Oaklands Blossom	AES Sustainability
Climate Change Statement (including Energy & Sustainability Strategy) – Oaklands College	CPW
Retail Capacity Statement	Stantec
Education Report	EFM
Framework College Travel Plan	Evoke
Framework Education Travel Plan (Primary School)	
Framework Residential Travel Plan	
Flood Risk Assessment & Sustainable Urban Drainage Strategy - Oaklands Blossom	JNP
Flood Risk Assessment & Sustainable Urban Drainage Strategy - Oaklands College	Elliott Wood
Foul Sewage and Utilities Assessment - Oaklands Blossom	JNP
Foul Sewage and Utilities Assessment - Oaklands College	Elliott Wood
Flood Lighting Assessment	Stantec

Financial Viability Assessment	Gerald Eve
Green Belt Assessment	Julie Goodwin Landscape Architects
Heritage Impact Assessment & Archaeological Desk Based Assessment	Landgage
Socio-Economic Statement	Stantec
Health Impact Assessment	
Landscape Strategy - Oaklands Blossom	Julia Goodwin Landscape Architects
Landscape Strategy - Oaklands College	OOBE
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment	Julia Goodwin Landscape Architects
Noise Impact Assessment	Noise
Oaklands College Education Need Statement	Fusion
Phase 1 Desk Based Assessment (Contamination)	JNP
PEA & Ecological Impact Assessment (including Reptile Survey Report & Bat Survey Report)	Ecosa
Planning Statement (including VSC Case, 5-YHLS, Affordable Housing Statement & Heads of Terms)	Stantec
Statement of Community Involvement	Meeting Place
Flood Risk Sequential Test	Stantec
Transport Assessment (including Parking Strategy)	Evoke
Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment	LandArb Solutions
Recycling & Waste Management Strategy - Oaklands Blossom	Taylor Wimpey North Thames
Recycling & Waste Management Strategy - Oaklands College	Scott White Hookins

\* For the detailed elements of the Proposed Development

\*\* For the outline elements of the proposed Development

- 1.12 An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Request was submitted to the LPA on 9 April 2025. A Screening Opinion (ref: 5/2025/0741) was issued by the LPA on 30 April 2025 confirming that the proposals do not fall within Schedule 1 or 2 of The Town and Country Planning (EIA) Regulations 2017 and therefore an Environmental Statement is not required.

## 2 The College and its Estate

2.1 This section provides a background regarding the College's estate, the problems that it is seeking to address and why the College needs to secure funding to redevelopment its estate. This information is extracted from the Oaklands College Education Need Statement submitted in support of the planning application.

### A. OAKLANDS COLLEGE

2.2 For over 100 years, Oaklands College has been a cornerstone of further education in Hertfordshire. Since its establishment in 1921, the College has built a rich history of delivering innovative and transformative education. As a leading provider of further education, Oaklands operates campuses in St Albans and Welwyn Garden City, along with training facilities in Borehamwood. Serving more than 7,000 students, it offers over 300 vocational and academic courses, including apprenticeships and higher education programmes.

2.3 Oaklands College is a cornerstone of education and skills development in Hertfordshire, making it an institution of clear regional importance. It delivers education and training to over 7,000 students annually, directly supports more than 800 jobs, and aligns its curriculum with the Hertfordshire Future Skills Strategy, Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs), and the needs of local employers across key sectors such as creative industries, construction, engineering, health, and land-based studies. Through these activities, the College plays a central role in driving workforce development, economic growth, and social mobility across the region.

2.4 At the same time, Oaklands is also of national significance. It is recognised for its outstanding Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision, shaping national policy and setting a benchmark for inclusive education.

2.5 Oaklands College has achieved sporting success of true national significance through its Athletics Academy, most notably producing Olympian Daryll Neita, who became the first British woman since 2008 to reach an Olympic 100m final and went on to win bronze at the Tokyo 2020 Games. The College has also developed Paralympic medallists including Maria Lyle (T35 100m and 200m bronze) and Olivia Breen (T38 long jump bronze), alongside numerous alumni who have represented Great Britain at World Championships and the Commonwealth Games. Its Oaklands Wolves Sports Academies have trained elite athletes who represent the UK on the world stage, raising the profile of British sport. This consistent record of producing elite sprinters and international athletes underlines Oaklands' role as a nationally significant centre for sporting excellence.

- 2.6 The College also delivers programmes aligned with national priorities in digital innovation, green skills, and sustainability, directly supporting the government's skills, economic, and environmental agendas.
- 2.7 Taken together, Oaklands College's impact extends beyond Hertfordshire. It is both a regional anchor institution and a nationally relevant provider, ensuring that its redevelopment will deliver benefits not only for local learners and communities but also for the wider skills landscape across the country.
- 2.8 Oaklands College is ambitious and continually seeks to expand its reach and reputation, enabling more adults, young people, and apprentices to access outstanding learning opportunities, whether to enter new employment sectors, reskill, or upskill. This ambition underpins the College's commitment to maintaining high standards of education and support, ensuring that every student is well-prepared for success in their chosen field. Recently, the College received two excellent Ofsted Judgements for both its study provision and residential provision.
- 2.9 Notwithstanding the College's success to date, many of the current facilities are outdated, inefficient, and no longer fit for the needs of modern teaching and learning. If investment is not secured, the College faces the risk of entering a downward spiral of decline, with students and staff increasingly drawn to surrounding colleges that can offer newer, higher-quality facilities. This would undermine Oaklands' ability to provide the high-quality, digitally enabled, and inclusive education that learners, employers, and the community both expect and require. We note that other nearby colleges have modern facilities that do allow them to compete for students and ensure their future. Redevelopment is therefore not optional but essential, safeguarding the College's future, protecting its position as a leading regional provider with national significance, and ensuring it continues to deliver the skills, opportunities, and innovation needed for the next generation

## **B. OAKLANDS COLLEGE'S VISION**

- 2.10 Oaklands is now embarking on an exciting journey to redevelop its St Albans campus, replacing outdated facilities, more than 50% of the current estate, with sustainable, state-of-the-art buildings. This redevelopment will enhance learning opportunities and benefit the wider community.

2.11 Oaklands College has a robust Strategic Plan with key aims to deliver outstanding teaching, learning, and assessment, establish beneficial partnerships, develop a sustainable SMART campus, foster an inclusive and thriving community, and ensure financial sustainability.

2.12 The College's Vision is:

*“To be a sustainable educational trailblazer, inspiring learners and the wider community to achieve their potential in a changing world.”*

2.13 Oaklands College nurtures ambition, providing tailored educational programmes and support to enable students of all ages to reach their full potential. By equipping students with the skills and knowledge needed to achieve their personal and career goals, the College positively impacts communities and the economy. Their Mission is:

*“To prepare every learner for work, a rewarding career, and life’s opportunities.”*

2.14 Oaklands College’s ambition is to be a respected and aspirational brand underpinned by its strong values:

- Excellence and Innovation – Delivering outstanding results, sustainable careers, and future leaders.
- Collaborative Learning – Developing knowledge and skills to prepare students for life and work.
- Inclusion and Happiness – Celebrating the achievements and successes of all communities.
- Integrity and Accountability – Striving for excellence in all endeavours.
- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion – Ensuring fairness, accessibility, and an inclusive environment.

2.15 Oaklands College integrates its core themes - Sustainability and the Environment, SMART Digital, Happiness and Wellbeing, and Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion - into all its developments, including new buildings, policies, and strategies. The College remains committed to placing students at the heart of everything it does, working closely with stakeholders, employers, and the community to create a collaborative learning environment.

**C. THE COLLEGE'S FUTURE**

- 2.16 As Oaklands College embarks on its next century, it is ideally positioned to respond to current challenges and opportunities, particularly the need for a high quality, career-focused further education system.
- 2.17 The College is currently recognised at local, regional, and national levels and is strengthening its international links to contribute to an outward looking and globally connected Britain. It is also well aligned with the government's key missions, to grow the economy, have an NHS fit for the future, safer streets, opportunity for all, and making Britain a clean energy superpower.
- 2.18 Oaklands remains forward-thinking, offering a variety of centres of excellence across key areas including nationally recognised outstanding special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) provision, Oaklands Wolves Sports Academies, including the training and development of top tier elite athletes (boasting alumni such as Alex Scott, Daryll Neita and Nick Tompkins), engineering, construction, care, early years education (including teacher training), specialist land based and animal management / equine provision, business, travel and aviation, A/T Levels, and the creative industries. These varied and specialised programmes allow Oaklands to provide tailored education that meets the needs of our diverse student body and provide the skilled workforce required for new and existing industry sectors locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally.
- 2.19 Oaklands College aligns its curriculum strategy with local and national skills and employment priorities, ensuring that it breaks down artificial barriers between academic and vocational learning while promoting parity of esteem across all pathways. Working in partnership with employers and stakeholders, the College remains dedicated to providing high quality education, an innovative curriculum, and industry-relevant training that meets the needs of the workforce.
- 2.20 It also provides enhanced training provision for local people in a wide range of trades and professions, supporting their learning and development and helping to improve the skills base of the local workforce. This is achieved through its Oaklands Training & Development division that supports businesses locally, regionally and nationwide, helping them attract, develop, and retain talent through apprenticeships, bespoke training, and employability schemes. With expert guidance on funding, it ensures companies maximise their Apprenticeship Levy contributions, driving real returns on investment.
- 2.21 Oaklands College carries out a vital economic role that should be fully taken into consideration in determining any planning application for the proposed development. It is a significant employer, employing over 800 people directly.

- 2.22 It actively collaborates with employers, councils, and stakeholders, embedding these relationships into its strategic aims. Employment and Skills Boards have been established in St Albans and Hertsmere, with a new board in development for Welwyn Hatfield. These boards help shape local skills demands, ensuring alignment with the College's curriculum.
- 2.23 Senior leaders play a crucial role in the local skills landscape, representing the College on various regional and national boards and initiatives, including our Principal and CEO representing the college on Hertfordshire Film & TV Board, SEND Partnership & Assurance Board, Skills and Employment Board, Consortium Strategy Group and regularly meeting with the leaders of the councils in St Albans, Welwyn Garden City and Hertfordshire County Council, along with other key stakeholders. The Deputy Principal, Strategy, Partnerships and Business Development co-chairs all the Employment and Skills Boards locally, The Herts Innovation Quarter (IQ) board, The WGC & St Albans Business Improvement District (BID) boards, the St Albans Visitor Partnership and the Hertfordshire Growth Board. The College work very closely with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) on skills initiatives across the county including the introduction of Skills Bootcamps. In addition, Corporation members utilise their networks to ensure visibility of college activities and initiatives throughout the County and beyond.
- 2.24 Many of the Colleges' lands staff are leaders in education or in their respective fields. Senior managers make valuable contributions at local, regional and national levels, advocating for the sector and contributing to national policy. For example, members of the senior team are working with government on SEND issues nationally. Our engagement with employers is extensive, our approach is collaborative, and we develop long lasting relationships with employers who share the same intent for supporting and developing talent.
- 2.25 Oaklands College maintains relationships with over 2,000 employers, ranging from large corporations such as Airbus, Sky, and Fujitsu to SMEs, ensuring that education remains industry-relevant and aligned with workforce demands. Activities include their participation in the #GETCAREEREADY strategy, work experience and industry placement, attendance at industry boards, industry insight events to inspire students and careers events.
- 2.26 Furthermore, the College is a key placeholder in the local and regional business community, hosting several employer networking events, awards events, and sponsorship of local employer events. Oaklands has established several strategic alliances with employers locally and nationally.
- 2.27 It also has strong employer links with many small to medium sized enterprises as well as large employers to enhance the curriculum and ensure that the programmes offered meet their skills

and labour requirements. This means employers are actively engaged with all curriculum areas, developing the curriculum, setting real life projects, offering work experience as part of the College's 'Get Career Ready Strategy' to enhance learners career pathways. The College also has Industry Boards for each Curriculum area that meet regularly to review the specific needs of industry for skills and how to ensure an integrated approach to skills acquisition and the instilling of the appropriate attitudes and aptitudes required for different employment sectors and an extensive programme of industry insight events which have a big impact on raising aspirations through inspiration.

2.28 Oaklands College actively collaborates with local secondary and primary schools, providing students with opportunities to experience vocational education, explore career pathways, and participate in enrichment activities. The redevelopment of the estate will strengthen these partnerships by offering enhanced facilities, such as modern teaching spaces, creative industries workshops, and sports amenities. These improvements will enable more school groups to visit, engage in hands-on learning, and benefit from exposure to cutting-edge industries like film, TV, and engineering. By fostering early engagement, Oaklands aim to inspire young learners and support their transition to further education and rewarding careers.

#### **D. THE EXISTING ESTATE**

2.29 Despite recent investment, including that from the Oaklands Grange development, many of their existing buildings are outdated, with significant maintenance needs and accessibility issues. Redevelopment plans will address these challenges by:

- Upgrading infrastructure to meet modern safety and environmental standards;
- Improving accessibility and ensuring compliance with building regulations; and
- Enhancing sustainability, reducing energy consumption, and creating comfortable learning spaces.

2.30 Like many in the education sector, Oaklands continues to face rising costs alongside a decline in funding over recent years. Sustainability is a key focus for all new buildings and align with cutting-edge environmental standards, reflecting Oaklands commitment to a greener future. A recent example of this is the newly built Construction Centre which surpasses BREAM standards.

## **E. PROPERTY STRATEGY**

2.31 Oaklands College has partnered with Taylor Wimpey to generate further investment in the College while addressing St Albans' housing needs through the residential-led proposals, as described in Section 8 of this Planning Statement.

2.32 As part of the comprehensive masterplan for the wider site, the College is seeking to deliver the following improvements within its own campus:

- Place making: A revitalised campus that serves as a hub for education and creativity at the heart of the St Albans community.
- A Creative Gateway: Facilities to support training for the future talent needed for Hertfordshire's booming film and TV industry.
- Restoration of the Mansion House: Preserving its historic character for future generations.
- Improved Community Spaces: The redevelopment will create accessible, inclusive spaces promoting happiness and wellbeing, including a vibrant College Square for community gatherings, upgraded sports facilities for all, and an improved animal care centre for educational and family activities. These enhancements will strengthen community ties and support physical and mental wellbeing.
- Expanded SEND Provision: A new High Needs Centre to support learners with special educational needs. With growing demand for SEND places in Hertfordshire, the new facilities will address this need, ensuring students receive tailored support, within their local community, to thrive.
- Promoting wellbeing: Updated recreational and sporting facilities for students, local sports clubs and community use.

2.33 The redevelopment will include:

- State-of-the-art teaching facilities to support vocational training and meet local skills demands.
- Enhanced digital learning spaces, including Virtual Reality zones and Artificial Intelligence-powered tools.
- SMART campus technologies to create an innovative and connected learning environment.
- Improved community access to sports, animal care, and creative facilities.

- 2.34 By integrating advanced technology and modernising the campus, Oaklands will equip students with the skills needed for a rapidly evolving digital economy while enhancing health, wellbeing, and prosperity in the community. This long-term investment will ensure Oaklands remains a leading force in education, driving innovation and success for students, businesses, and the wider community.
- 2.35 Alongside the College's core function of delivering education to a range of types of learner, Oaklands have specific sustainability and environment-related goals in their strategic plan. These include:
- Promoting energy efficiency and clean energy sources.
  - Eliminating waste and pollution.
  - Partnering with sustainable companies and organisations.
  - Achieve a carbon neutral estate by 2050, realising a 15% reduction by 2027.
  - Providing the skills and knowledge which a green industrial revolution requires.
  - Creating world class estate facilities which are recognised in terms of their quality, sustainability and their promotion and practice of evolving leading-edge technologies.
- 2.36 All the above goals have influenced the design of the new college buildings and in continuing the capital investment into the campus. The College can move towards achieving its goal of being one of the most sustainable educational institutions in the country.
- 2.37 Globally, as the UK moves into a dynamically emerging 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution, the rapid growth of the digital world brings with it lots of challenges and opportunities for science, the economy, education, and society. Digitalisation and new SMART technologies are everywhere from cloud computing, artificial intelligence, robotics, big data, and the internet, transforming the world we live in.
- 2.38 Oaklands is investing in digitally collaborative learning spaces and virtual rooms that students and employers as well as a SMART Campus that directly links to being an exemplar organisation for sustainability and the environment.
- 2.39 The new development proposals will address several key questions, including how to:
- Have an estate that is an exemplar for SMART digital, which stimulates all students, stakeholders and employers who engage with the facilities.
  - Understand our future technological and connectivity requirements to be sustainable.
  - Achieve consistency in digital standards across all its services.

- Mitigate or remove digital disadvantage and inequality by removing obstacles for students, staff and stakeholders so they can access College services.
- Improve the support and safeguarding for vulnerable students online and around the campus.
- Give staff the skills and technology to be digitally confident in their work areas.
- Ensure the wellness of the College communities and reduce workload through digital solutions.

2.40 A schedule that compares the existing and proposed floorspace (GIA), thereby resulting in a net increase in floorspace at the campus, is contained within Appendix 1 of the Oaklands College Education Need Statement. The increase in floorspace will ensure the necessary flexibility regarding future student and staff numbers, whilst also delivering the type of space needed for the future curriculum. This includes specialist facilities as well as general teaching provision, for example those relating to sports provision.

## **F. FUNDING**

2.41 Appendix 2 of the Oaklands College Education Need Statement lists out the new proposals for the College campus and explains how they are funded. A large proportion of these are:

- Fully funded by the receipt from the disposal of the land that will deliver the residential-led development;
- Partially funded by the disposal of the land and by other sources of funding (for example, GB Basketball); and
- Subject to external funding sources (for example Central Government, British Cycling, Sport England, Lawn Tennis Association, England and Wales Cricket Board, Hertfordshire Cricket or from other contributions secured from local development proposals).

2.42 This source of funding is not available to the College from any other sources. Further Education colleges have not received significant capital funding from the government in recent years. Whilst some condition improvement funding was allocated to colleges back in 2022/23, the amounts fall well short of what is needed to address all the condition issues and allow the transformation that the College aspires to.

2.43 Having explored a range of funding options, the College feel that they have no other choice but to sell more land to secure funding (receipt) via the Oaklands Grange development. The funding received from the disposal of this land to Taylor Wimpey will pay for a significant portion of the College's overall masterplan ambitions. Funding for the remaining areas will be sought from a

range of funding bodies including central government and other supporting bodies with specific interests in the respective components of the development.

2.44 As explained above, the investment from the land sale will be used to fund the major redevelopment of the campus which will bring significant benefits both to the College and the local community. These benefits can be categorised under five areas:

1. Educational need – Evolving the curriculum to meet the skills needs and job requirements of local and regional industry sectors.
2. Improving inadequate estates to enhance learning conditions, Sustainability and Carbon Reduction.
3. Developing the digital infrastructure required within an educational setting.
4. Ensuring safeguarding of students, particularly special needs or those under 16 years of age.
5. Providing major benefits to the local community.

2.45 The Oaklands College Education Need Statement provides further detail on this five areas. The benefits to the local community are summarised below.

## **G. PUBLIC BENEFITS**

2.46 Appendix 2 of the Oaklands College Education Need Statement explains which of the College's new proposals will benefit the local community which will be delivered outside core college hours and subject to a booking system, details of which will be agreed through a Community Use Agreement. These include:

- High Needs Centre:
  - Provide additional areas to the college building stock that can be utilised by the Oaklands Commercial Group outside of term time and contact hours for enrichment, training, and community-based providers.
  - Broaden the range of the existing curriculum offer relating to healthy living, environmental awareness, and sustainability concepts with planned outdoor garden and sensory spaces.
  - Provide a bespoke hub for the high needs cohort that can also serve as a centre of training excellence for other providers in the sector.
  - Improve regional capacity to meet emerging high needs demand, ensuring better provision across the community.

- Animal Management:
  - Enhance commercial activities through zoo days and public events, allowing students to engage in public speaking and customer service.
  - Improve perception and experience during community activity days, fostering stronger local engagement.
  - Meet demands from local employers by providing training with exotic and companion animals.
  - Provide a dedicated hub for domestic/companion species, supporting training needs for local animal welfare employers.
  - Enable expansion into pet industry practices, such as dog grooming and sitting.
  - Strengthen collaboration with the zoological sector, facilitating breeding projects, fundraising, and in-situ conservation efforts
- Creative Gateway:
  - The new Creative Gateway could serve as more than just a teaching space; it could be a cultural centre for the local St Albans community.
  - Hosting public exhibitions, performances, and workshops would strengthen relationships between the college and the wider community.
  - Local businesses, employers and artists could be invited to collaborate, mentor students, or use facilities, enhancing real-world learning opportunities.
- Film & TV:
  - Enhancing Cultural Engagement: Film and TV courses encourage creative storytelling, leading to student-led productions, screenings, and festivals that enrich the local arts scene.
  - Encouraging Community Projects: Students may collaborate with local organisations to produce documentaries, promotional videos, or educational content that supports community initiatives.
  - Providing Accessible Learning Opportunities: Courses can be open to a diverse range of learners, including adults looking to retrain, helping more people enter the creative industries.
- Refectory:
  - Local business engagement: Commercial kitchen provides opportunities for partnerships with hospitality and food service industries.
  - Event hosting and community use: Improved facilities allow for external bookings, supporting local events and initiatives.
  - Public dining and social spaces: External covered dining creates an inviting environment for both students and the local community.
  - Training opportunities: Industry-standard kitchen enhances vocational training, preparing students for employment in local businesses.

- Community enrichment: Social areas can be utilised for workshops, meetings, and local gatherings.
  - Sustainability improvements: Modern dining spaces can incorporate eco-friendly practices, benefiting both the college and community.
- Mansion House:
  - Restoring a local asset to local community to appreciate.
  - Local community tours (booked).
- Sports Hall:
  - Creates opportunities for community engagement, partnerships, and revenue generation.
  - Coaches, officials, and students pursuing careers in sport and physical activity.
  - Regional, national teams and international teams seeking high-performance training environments and match day usage.
  - Governing bodies and talent development initiatives needing dedicated space for events, camps etc.
  - Supports grassroots to elite player development, ensuring long-term participation growth.
  - Governing bodies focused on talent identification and long-term athlete development.
- Construction Zone:
  - Strengthens links with construction firms – Updated facilities make the college a more attractive training provider for industry partnerships.
  - Encourages employer involvement – Companies can engage with students through demonstrations, apprenticeships, and work placements.
  - Boosts employability – Better training spaces prepare students with skills directly applicable to local construction jobs.
- 4G Sport Pitch:
  - Hire opportunities for local clubs and grassroots teams.
  - Increased access to quality facilities for youth development.
  - Opportunity for local leagues and tournaments.
  - Revenue generation from community use.
- Athletics Track & Field:
  - Home base for local athletics clubs and schools.
  - Inclusive access for community health and fitness initiatives.
  - Spectator seating supports event hosting and local pride.
  - Facilitates disability sports and inclusive programming.
- Cycle Track & Pump Track:
  - Accessible space for families, clubs, and schools to promote cycling
  - Hub for local cycling clubs and outreach programs

- Promotes sustainable transport and active lifestyle
- Attracts events, boosting local engagement and visibility
- Skate Park:
  - Safe, supervised space for youth recreation
  - Promotes physical activity in hard-to-reach groups
  - Engages new demographics and reduces anti-social behaviour
  - Potential for local competitions and events
- Tennis, Baseball & Paddle Courts:
  - Access for local clubs, schools, and casual users
  - Diverse offering attracts different age groups and interests
  - Increases female participation in sport
  - Supports community health goals and social cohesion
- Cricket Pitch, Lanes & Pavilion:
  - Supports partnerships with local and national cricket organisations.
  - Supports grassroots to elite player development, ensuring long-term participation growth.
  - Expands access to cricket, increasing participation at all levels.
  - Designed as a multi-use facility, allowing other sports (e.g., baseball, softball, fast bowling, and fielding drills for multiple disciplines) to maximise use.  
Local schools, clubs, and grassroots initiatives needing high-quality training space.
  - Coaches, analysts, and students pursuing careers in cricket and similar sports.
- Sports Pavilion:
  - Supports hosting of community sports festivals and events
  - Available for club hire and weekend sport use
  - Fosters shared ownership and connection between college and community
  - Enhances local infrastructure for physical activity
  - Footpaths and Active Travel Routes:
- Footpaths and Active Travel Routes:
  - Dedicated Equine & Cycling Infrastructure – New bridleways incorporate 3m-wide amenity margins specifically designed for horses, along with separate cycle/footways.
  - Safer, Enjoyable Routes – Improving parts of the existing PRoW and removal of conflicts with college vehicular traffic enhances the experience for riders, walkers, and cyclists.
  - Optimised Trail Design – Paths follow best practices for accessibility, including unsealed surfaces for trotting strips and conservation grass edges for sustainability.

- Reduced Journey Times – Alternative bridleway and footpath connections minimize travel distance while maintaining scenic and efficient routes.

## H. CONCLUSION

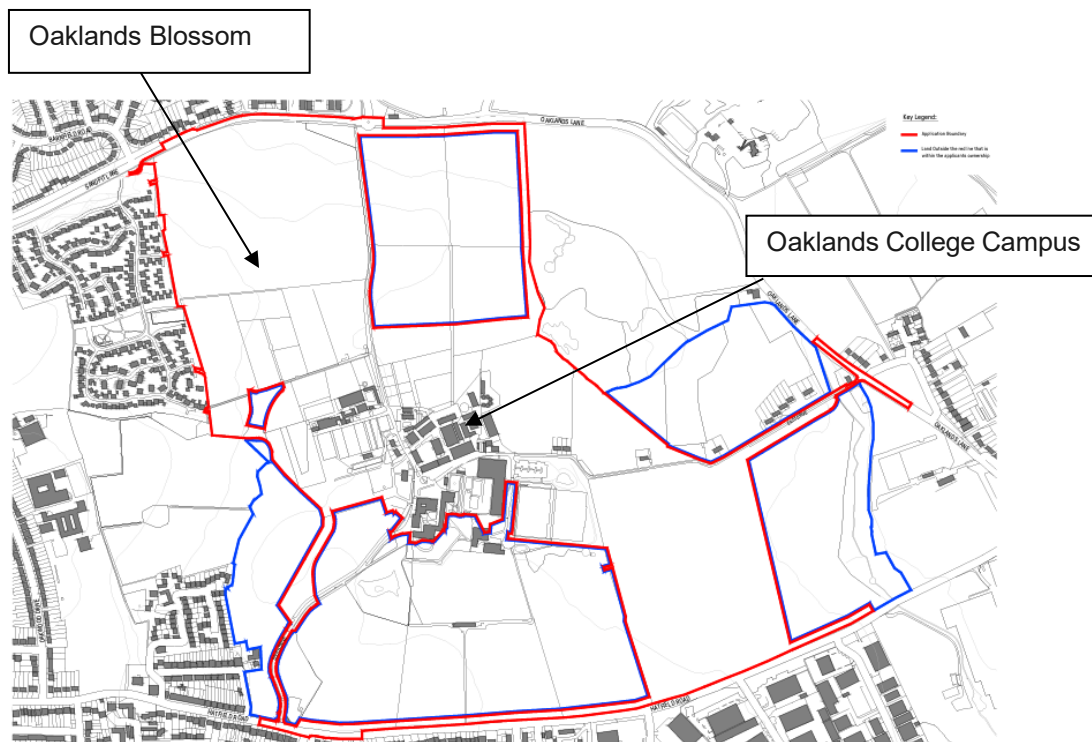
- 2.47 The comprehensive masterplan for the wider site, working in partnership between Taylor Wimpey and Oaklands College, will deliver fundamental benefits to the College to ensure it meets the requirements of its students and other groups that use the campus, it will also deliver very substantial benefits to the local community. Most of these benefits will be delivered from funding secured by the land receipt from the residential-led Blossom development and other sources of funding without the need to secure funding from Local Government.
- 2.48 The redevelopment of Oaklands College's St Albans campus represents a **once-in-a-generation opportunity** to transform education and training provision in Hertfordshire. By replacing outdated and inefficient buildings with sustainable, purpose-built facilities, the College will not only meet urgent condition and safeguarding needs but also position itself as a leading provider of further and higher education for decades to come. If the works are not completed by the College then there is a risk of slow decline as student and staff go to other locations without the challenges that Oaklands College has regarding its estate.
- 2.49 Oaklands College has been at the heart of education in Hertfordshire for over a century. This redevelopment ensures it will continue to inspire, support, and equip learners for the next hundred years and beyond.
- 2.50 The proposals for demolition, renovation and construction of buildings at the existing Oaklands College campus is a key part of the planning application for which there is an overwhelming need. There is clear interdependency between the component parts of the proposals the comprehensive masterplan for the Site will deliver fundamental benefits to the College and deliver very substantial benefits to the local community. The Site is the only site which can deliver 'the proposed development' and the range of interconnected benefits when brought together as a whole. As set out in the submitted Design and Access Statement, the development proposals create a well-designed, mixture of compatible uses in a sustainable form of development which could not be achieved without each component being present.
- 2.51 Therefore, by the description for which permission is sought (see Section 6 of this Planning Statement), there are no alternative reasonably available sites that can deliver the Proposed Development, which will provide the very substantial benefits at the existing Oaklands College campus and for the local community.

### 3 The Site and Surrounding Area

3.1 As explained in Section 1, the Site comprises two main development parcels that are being brought forward as one comprehensive masterplan. The parcels are:

- Land referred to by the Council as “Site B4 East St Albans” and referred to as “Oaklands Blossom” by the Applicants; and
- The Oaklands College and its associated facilities and sports pitches, referred to as “Oaklands College”.

3.2 **Figure 3.1** below identifies the location of the Site and its extent.



**Figure 3.1:** Site location

3.3 The total area of land within the site area amounts to approximately 130.80 hectares. This comprises:

- HCC Highway Land = 1.49 ha (approx.)
  - Oaklands Blossom site = 23.38 ha (approx.)
  - College site = 45.01 ha (approx.)
- = 69.88 ha

- 3.4 The remaining area of land (60.92 ha) within the blue lines are within the ownership of Oaklands College, but do not form part of the Site.
- 3.5 The whole of the Oaklands College site contained within the red and blue line areas in Figure 1 (above) and all buildings are in educational or associated uses, except for an area off North Drive, which is used as a horticultural nursery by a tenant.
- 3.6 The Applicants' Socio Economic Statement explains that the wider Site :
- Within 1km of the wider Site, there are 31 open space areas including playing fields, sports facilities and allotments; and
  - Five of the six GP practices are currently operating over-capacity when compared to the SACDC benchmark. However, one GP of practices is operating with available capacity to accommodate an additional 2,393 patient registrations before reaching the benchmark.
- 3.7 The Tree Survey submitted in support of the planning application identified 222 trees and tree groups within the Site and its periphery. Tree species are varied, but common species include Oak, Field Maple, Sycamore, Ash, Beech, Poplar, Cherry, Lime, Willow, Horse Chestnut, Birch, Hawthorn and Alder; and there are species associated with Mansion House former parkland, such as Sequoia, Eucalyptus and Cypress.
- 3.8 The Preliminary Ecology Assessment (PEA) submitted in support of the planning application explains that the site supports day roosts of common pipistrelle and assemblages of breeding birds and has suitability for a number of other species. The report concludes that appropriate mitigation measures proposed to suitably address any adverse impacts identified. No residual or cumulative impacts are anticipated and the proposals have scope to accord with all relevant national and local planning policy in relation to ecology including Policy 106 of the Local Plan and the NPPF.
- 3.9 The BNG baseline submitted in support of the planning application explains that the current ecology calculation for the Site are 139.67 habitat units and 14.50 hedgerow units.
- 3.10 The Oaklands College grounds are accessible via three roads, South Drive off Hatfield Road, North Drive off Sandpit Lane and East Drive off Oaklands Lane. Only South Drive and East Drive is open to motor vehicular traffic. North and South Drive are bridleways and East Drive forms a Public Right of Way (PRoW), although this is to be upgraded to a bridleway as part of the Oaklands Grange development proposals.

- 3.11 Two non-statutory designated ecological sites fall within the Oaklands College grounds. These are Home Wood which is an Ancient Woodland and is a County Wildlife Site (CWS), comprising semi-natural ancient woodland in the south western part of the Oaklands College grounds and Oaklands Wood CWS which forms old broadleaf woodland located in the eastern part of the Oaklands College grounds. The designations are not within the site area for the proposals re Oaklands Wood LWS, an old broadleaf woodland, lies to the east of the Site and are in separate ownership.
- 3.12 Most of the grounds are located within Flood Zone 1, except for Butterwick Brook (also referred to as Boggymead Spring) in the southeast corner, small parcels of the college campus and East Drive, which fall within Flood Zones 2 and 3. Boggymead forms the boundary between the college grounds and the St Albans RFC and Harvesters FC sports ground. Parts of the wider Site are the subject of drainage flooding.
- 3.13 The entire Oaklands College grounds is subject to a blanket Tree Preservation Order (TPO) which was confirmed in 2008.
- 3.14 The Oaklands College grounds do not contain any conservation areas, listed buildings or scheduled ancient monuments and it is not within a conservation area. Most educational buildings on the Oaklands College grounds date back to the late 1950s. There are a small number of older buildings, including the Mansion House, which is a non-designated heritage asset. This building is a late Georgian House. It was remodelled in the 1840s and has been subsequently altered and extended. This building and the associated former designed landscape are not a Registered Park and Garden.
- 3.15 The nearest railway station to the Oaklands College site is St Albans City Station, approximately 3.1km to the west, with St Albans Abbey Railway Station approximately 3.7km to the southwest. The nearest bus stops are located on Hatfield Road, Sandpit Lane and House Lane. The following bus routes pass along, as illustrated below in **Figure 3.3**:
- Hatfield Road – No's 33, 301, 304, 338, 601, 602, 657, 658 and 724
  - Sandpit Lane & House Lane – No's 653 and S6

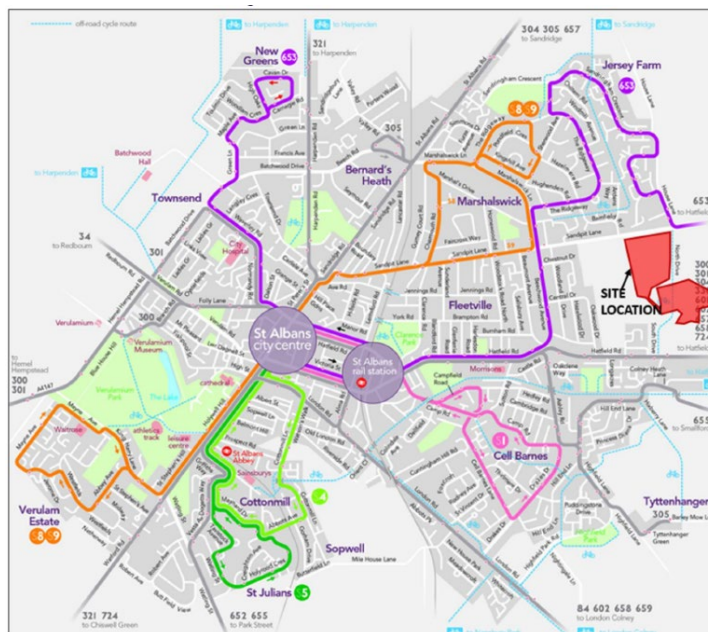


Figure 3.3

3.16 As explained in the Transport Assessment, the leisure routes that connect to and through the Oaklands College grounds comprise:

- Bridleway (North and South Drive) – Sandridge 051 and Colney Heath 003 and 061
- Public Rights of Way (PRoW) (East Drive) – Colney Heath 004
- Connecting to other PRoW - Colney Heath 001, 062, 063, 014, 015; Sandridge 006, 010 048 and 052
- Cycle routes (part of Sandridge 051 and Colney Heath 003) which connect the Oaklands College site to the Alban Way, Jersey Lane and Home Lane

3.17 The Oaklands College grounds is located approximately 3.1km east of the St Albans City Centre which contains an extensive range of services and facilities that typically relate to city centre uses. It is also within vicinity of a variety of open spaces, three churches, two public houses, a library, community hall, various healthcare facilities and playgrounds.

***Oaklands College (as existing)***

3.18 Oaklands College campus is surrounded by:

- Predominantly residential development (including Oaklands Grange) and Beaumont School and Oakwood Primary School playing fields to the west;
- Hatfield Road (A1057) and residential and commercial development and to the south;

- The Oaklands Blossom site, Sandpit Lane and residential development to the north (Jersey Farm / Marshalswick); and
- Open fields, Oaklands Wood, the Butterwick Brook (also referred to as Boggymead Springs), St Albans RFC and Harvesters FC sports ground, and residential development fronting Oaklands Lane to the east.

- 3.19 The existing buildings on the Oaklands College that form part of the Site equate to approximately 36,868 sqm (GIA) of floorspace. A more detailed breakdown of existing floorspace is set out in Appendix 1 of the Oaklands College Education Need Statement. A summary of the current uses of the campus is described in Section 2 of this Planning Statement.
- 3.20 The land to the north and east of the campus is not an area at risk of flooding from coastal or fluvial sources, however, parts of the Oaklands Blossom site are the subject of drainage related flooding.
- 3.21 The college campus site is not located within a conservation area. There are no listed buildings within proximity to the campus site. There are no Ancient Woodlands within the campus site. Home Wood is a semi-natural Ancient Woodland, and Local Wildlife Site (LWS), to the west of the campus (adjacent to North Drive) and is within the ownership of Oaklands College. Oaklands Wood LWS, an old broadleaf woodland, lies to the west of the college campus and in separate ownership.

### ***Oaklands Blossom***

- 3.22 The Oaklands Blossom site is located on the land located in the northeast corner of the Oaklands College grounds. The Oaklands Blossom site is bound by:
- Sandpit Lane to the north;
  - The Oaklands Grange residential development to the west;
  - The remainder of the Oaklands College grounds to the south; and
  - North Drive (Bridleway) and the college's open fields to the east.
- 3.23 The Oaklands Blossom site is closely related to the existing 'tier 1' settlement boundary of St Albans created by the Oaklands Grange development, Beaumont school and Oakwood school (west) and the residential development on the north side of Sandpit Lane (Jersey Farm and Marshalswick).

- 3.24 The Oaklands Blossom site is not an area at risk of flooding from coastal or fluvial sources, however, parts of the Oaklands Blossom site are the subject of drainage related flooding.
- 3.25 The Oaklands Blossom site is not located within a conservation area. There are no listed buildings within proximity to the Oaklands Blossom site. There are no Ancient Woodlands within the Oaklands Blossom site. Home Wood is a semi-natural Ancient Woodland, and Local Wildlife Site (LWS), located the south of the Oaklands Blossom site. Oaklands Wood LWS lies to the east of the Site and is separated by open land.

## 4 Planning History and Other Decisions

### Site Planning History

- 4.1 Most of the historical planning applications relate to small-scale and ancillary development in relation to existing educational uses at Oaklands College.
- 4.2 Notwithstanding this, adjacent to the Site, there was a planning application ref. 5/13/2589 (known as the Oaklands Grange development) for the comprehensive redevelopment to provide new and refurbished college buildings, enabling residential development of 348 dwellings, car parking, associated access and landscaping, including demolition of existing buildings. This was refused by the LPA on 2nd December 2014, however, allowed at Appeal in 2017. This development has been built out and is complete. It was because of the residential development that Oaklands College was able to fund the redevelopment of the college in recent years. Approval was granted on the basis that the significant educational benefits and much needed housing would outweigh the harm to the Green Belt.
- 4.3 There is no other materially relevant planning history associated with the Site.

### Other Decisions

- 4.4 The below table provides an overview of other similar developments on Green Belt land that have been approved within SACDC. The relevant planning applications were supported on the basis that they are regarded to benefit from very special circumstances and will be discussed further in Sections 8, 11 and Appendix 2 of this Planning Statement.

<b>Table 4.1</b>		
<b>Application Ref.</b>	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Decision (Date)</b>
5/2023/2308/SSM  (Grey Belt)	<b>107 Colney Heath Lane, St Albans</b>  Outline application (access) – Construction of up to 26 dwellings including access and associated works.	Resolution to grant 28 <sup>th</sup> April 2025
5/2022/2736/LSM  (Grey Belt)	<b>Land At Round House Farm Roestock Lane Colney Heath</b>  Outline application (access sought) - Erection of up to 155 residential dwellings together with ancillary works	Resolution to grant 19th March 2025

<p>APP/B1930/W/24/3343986  (VCS)</p>	<p><b>Land between Caravan Site and Watling Street, Park Street, St Albans</b></p> <p>Outline application (access south) for erection of up to 95 dwellings, including 40% affordable dwelling and 5% self-build and custom build dwellings, public open space, landscaping and associated infrastructure.</p>	<p>Approved  7<sup>th</sup> November 2024</p>
<p>APP/B1930/W/15/3051164  (VSC)</p>	<p><b>Oaklands Grange at Oaklands College</b></p> <p>Comprehensive redevelopment to provide new and refurbished college buildings, enabling residential development of 348 dwellings, car parking, associated access and landscaping, including the demolition of existing buildings.</p>	<p>1<sup>st</sup> November 2017</p>
<p>APP/B1930/W/22/3313110  (VSC)</p>	<p><b>Land south of Chiswell Green Lane, Chiswell Green</b></p> <p>Outline application for the demolition of existing structures and construction of up to 391 dwellings (Use Class C3); the provision of land for a new school, open space provision and associated landscaping, internal roads, parking, footpaths, cycleways, drainage, utilities and service infrastructure and new access arrangements.</p>	<p>Approved  22<sup>nd</sup> March 2024</p>
<p>5/2023/0327  (VSC)</p>	<p><b>Land at Cooter End Land, in Harpenden</b></p> <p>Outline application (access sought) - Construction of up to 550 dwellings including circa. 130 Class C2 integrated retirement homes, affordable housing, early years setting, public open space, allotments and publicly accessible recreation space.</p>	<p>Resolution to grant  17<sup>th</sup> Feb 2025</p>
<p>5/2021/0423/LSM  (VSC)</p>	<p><b>Sewell Park, Land to Rear of 112-156b Harpenden Road</b></p> <p>Outline application (access sought) - Residential development of up to 150 dwellings together with all associated works (resubmission following invalid application 5/2020/3096).</p>	<p>Not known</p>

5/2020/1992/LSM APP/ B1930/W/20/3265925  (VSC)	<b>Roundhouse Farm, Bullens Green Lane</b>  The development proposed is outline application for the erection of up to 100 dwellings, including 45% affordable and 10% self-build, together with all ancillary works (All matters reserved except access).	Approved 14 <sup>th</sup> June 2021
PP/B1930/W/21/3279463  (VSC)	<b>Burston Garden Centre, North Orbital Road, Chiswell Green</b>  Demolition of all existing buildings, structures and hardstanding and redevelopment of the site to provide a new retirement community comprising assisted living bungalows and apartments, with community facilities together with associated access, bridleway extension, landscaping, amenity space, car parking and associated and ancillary works.	Allowed at Appeal 31 <sup>st</sup> Jan 2022
5/2021/2730/SSM  (VSC)	<b>Land off Orchard Drive, Park Street</b>  Outline application (access only) - Construction of up to 30 dwellings with garages and associated parking, landscaping and access works.	Not known
<b>Other Appeal Decisions outside of the St Albans District</b>		
APP/L3815/W/22/3291160  (VSC)	<b>Land south of Clappers Lane, Earnley, West Sussex</b>  Creation of approximately 100 dwellings, 30% affordable housing, public open space, landscaping and access.	19 <sup>th</sup> Aug 2022
APP/D0121/W/21/3286677  (VSC)	<b>Rectory Farm, Chescombe Road, Yatton, Bristol</b>  The development proposed is outline planning application for a residential development of up to 100no. dwellings and associated infrastructure following demolition of existing buildings on site, with access for approval and all other matters for subsequent approval.	15 <sup>th</sup> June 2022

- 4.5 The decisions are a material consideration in this case because there are similarities between these decisions and the Site's circumstances and Proposed Development. Most of them have all put forward very special circumstances cases which have been supported by SACDC or an Inspector.

## 5 Pre-Application Engagement

- 5.1 This section of the Planning Statement provides an overview of the consultation and stakeholder engagement that has been undertaken as part of the design development.
- 5.2 Paragraph 40 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2025) states that, “*early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better co-ordination between public and private resources, and improved outcomes for the community*”.
- 5.3 In addition, National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) outlines that “*pre-application engagement by prospective applicants offers significant potential to improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system and improve the quality of planning applications and their likelihood of success*”<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, the NPPG goes on to state that “*a planning performance agreement can be a useful tool to focus pre-application discussions on the issues that will need to be addressed throughout the course of preparing and determining a planning application, and the timescales and resources that are likely to be required*”<sup>2</sup>.
- 5.4 The proposals have been developed and shaped following an extensive period of pre-application engagement with the Council and local community, which is summarised below.

### A. THE LPA & HCC

- 5.5 Seven design focussed pre-application meetings were held with the LPA during the months of February and August 2025. The main feedback points received in relation to the design of the proposals and how these have been addressed are summarised in the Design and Access Statement submitted in support of the planning application.
- 5.6 In addition to the formal pre-application and design meetings held with the LPA, various technical workshops were held with SACDC and HCC during February and August 2025, to discuss various technical workstreams such as, Children’s Home, Education, Highways, Minerals & Waste, Landscape Visual Assessment & Green Belt Review Strategy, Transport Strategy, Community Engagement and PRoW.

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<sup>1</sup> NPPG (2019) Paragraph 001

<sup>2</sup> NPPG (2019) Paragraph 006

- 5.7 The feedback received during these meetings and workshops has influenced and shaped the design of the proposals and the scope of the relevant accompanying technical assessments, application plans and documents have been updated as relevant following feedback received through this process.

## **B. EIA SCREENING REQUEST**

- 5.8 In accordance with Regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended), the Applicants submitted a request for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Opinion (ref. 5/2025/0741) from the LPA. The request was submitted to the LPA on 9 April 2025. A response issued by the LPA was received on 30 April 2025 which concluded that the development is not EIA development as defined under the EIA Regulations 2017 (as amended). Therefore, an Environmental Statement (ES) is not required as part of the application.

## **C. OTHER STAKEHOLDERS**

- 5.9 In addition to entering pre-application discussions with SACDC and HCC, engagement has also taken place with Sandridge Parish Council and the other stakeholders and local groups such as the Local Lead Food Agency (LLFA), the Environment Agency (EA), the Ramblers Society, Jersey Farm Residents Association & Marshalswick North Residents Association and St Alban's Civic Society.
- 5.10 The feedback received during these meetings and workshops has influenced and shaped the design of the proposals and application plans and documents have been updated as relevant following feedback received through this process. Further information can be found in the Design & Access Statement and the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) submitted alongside this application.

## **D. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

A Community Engagement Strategy has been developed by Meeting Place in partnership with the Applicant team. The strategy has adopted the following objectives:

- Extensive stakeholder engagement has been a cornerstone of the process, including nine meetings with Councillors, Marshalswick North Residents' Association, Jersey Farm Residents' Association, St Albans Civic Society, Ramblers Association, other community representatives, and Sandridge Parish Council.

- Two rounds of community engagement were held on 10th December 2024 and 24th April 2025, with one month consultation periods for both, providing great opportunity for the community and stakeholders to get involved and have their say. A community newsletter was sent to out in both December 2024 and April 2025. The newsletters invited residents to the consultation events and promoted the dedicated project website<sup>3</sup>.
- A pop-up event took place informing the community about the proposals. This took place at Oaklands College lambing weekend event on Saturday 10th May 2025.
- On 7th and 21st May and 6th August 2025, three stakeholder meetings took place with Marshalswick North residents' association and Sandridge Parish Council.
- A press release advertising the community engagement events was sent to three local media outlets: the Herts Advertiser, The St Albans Times, and the St Albans and Harpenden Review. The St Albans Times ran the story on 17th April 2025, ahead of the community event on 24th April 2025, this outlined the plans coming forward, included links to the website and advertised the second community event.

5.11 In summary our engagement saw:

- 149 visitors had across two community events, and 32 conversations had at a pop-up event during the second round of engagement.
- Ten stakeholder meetings
- 401 surveys completed online across two surveys for both consultation periods.
- 2,628 website views.
- 24 interactive map comments.
- The masterplan map resulted in 68 comments at the second engagement event.
- In total, 554 responses to the proposals, across formal survey responses, emails to the team, post-it note feedback at events, and formal conversations or meetings.

5.12 The main themes that arose from the various public engagement events and online seminars are noted below.

- Concerns about local infrastructure capacity, such as healthcare and education facilities.
- Traffic and road safety, particularly along Sandpit Lane.
- The inclusion and development of the local centre, and potential community space.
- Impact on and improvements to public rights of way routes.

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<sup>3</sup> [www.-stalbansvillageconsultation.co.uk](http://www.-stalbansvillageconsultation.co.uk)

- Support for the College proposals, with concerns about the impacts of associated housing
- 5.13 Full details of the activities, responses received, and design responses can be found in the submitted Statement of Community Involvement prepared by Meeting Place and the Design and Access Statement prepared by BM3 Architects and DLA Architects.

## 6 The Proposed Development

6.1 As explained in Section 1, the Application seeks part Full Detailed Planning Permission (“the Detailed Element”) and part Outline Planning Permission with all matters reserved (“the Outline Element”) for the following:

**i. Detailed element:**

- Oaklands Blossom:
  - Up to 169 homes;
  - Children’s home;
  - New Local Centre (up to 500sqm) comprising:
    - a) Up to 500sqm of commercial floorspace (Use Classes E (a to f));
    - b) Approximately 100sqm of community floorspace (Use Classes F);
  - Provision of open space.
- Oaklands College Campus:
  - Demolition works and renovation of existing buildings;
  - Construction of new buildings education facilities in the following zones; Creative Gateway, Animal Management, High Needs Centre, Propellor Stage (Film) Studio, Sports Hall & Martial Arts Centre, Refectory and Kitchen, Estates and deliveries, improvements to the Mansion house, improvements to the Construction zone, improved pedestrian and vehicular routes, car park, and external learning and recreation landscaping; and

**ii. Outline element:**

- Oaklands Blossom:
  - Up to 70 Extra Care Homes;
  - Up to 303 homes;
  - Land for new primary school; and
  - Provision of open space.
- Oaklands College Campus:
  - Energy Centre
  - Recycling Area
  - External Sports Pitches & Tracks:
    - a) Covered Cricket lanes
    - b) Cricket Pavilion
    - c) Cricket Pitch
    - d) Games courts
    - e) All weather rugby pitch
    - f) Athletics track and field

- g) Cycle centre, pump track, race track and skate park
- h) Hockey/cycle/athletics pavilion
- New active travel route improvements.

6.2 The Applicants' suggested description of development for the above is as follows:

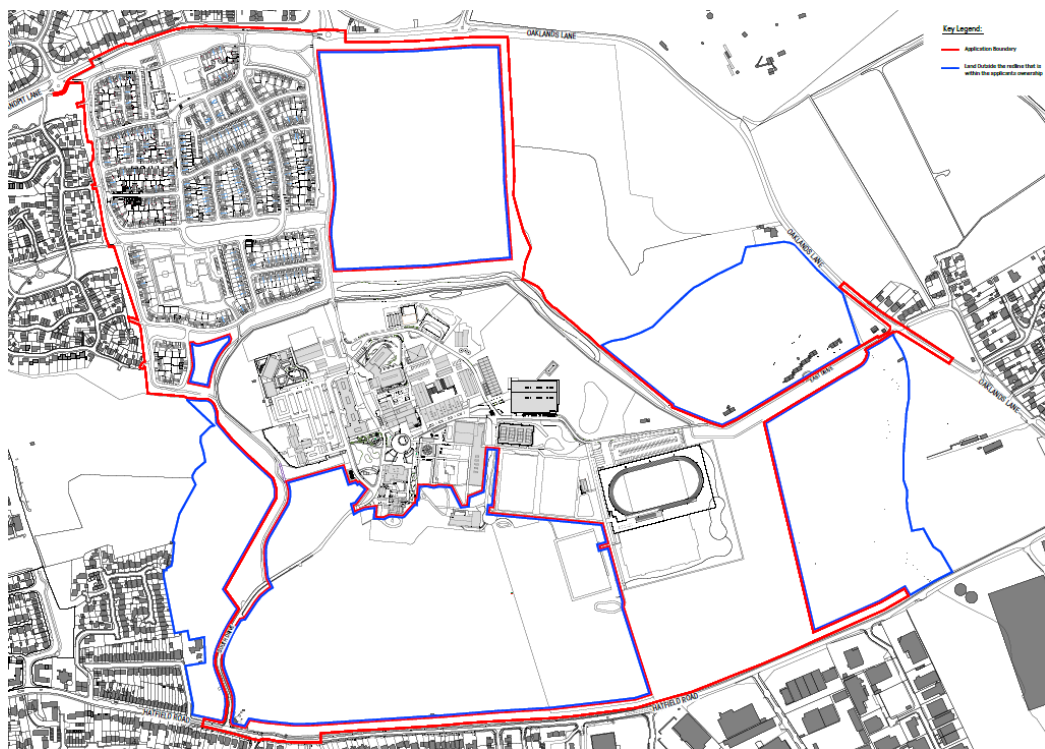
***“A Hybrid planning application for a severable phased development comprising:***

- ***Full detailed planning application for the construction of new homes (use class C3); new local centre and community facility (use classes E(a to f) and F); a children's home (use class C2); demolition and renovation of existing college buildings; construction of new college buildings (use class F1.); the creation of Active Travel Routes including footpaths for walking, cycling and equestrian activities; removal and planting of trees; along with the laying out of green infrastructure (including publicly accessible open space) and habitat creation; drainage infrastructure, earthworks, new means of access and alterations to existing access points.***
- ***Outline planning application (access only, all other matters reserved) for the construction new homes (use class C3); new extra care home dwellings (use class C2); land for the construction of a new primary school (use class F.1); demolition and renovation of existing college buildings; construction of new college buildings (use class F1.); the construction of new sports facilities and pitches; the creation of Active Travel Routes including footpaths for walking, cycling and equestrian activities; removal and planting of trees; new energy centre; new recycling facilities; new car parking facilities; along with the laying out of green infrastructure and habitat creation; drainage infrastructure, earthworks, pedestrian and cycle routes, alterations to existing access points.***
- ***The phasing of the development is indicative allowing different phases to commence at different times and independently (severable) from each other. The outline phases are the subject of parameter plans and design codes”.***

6.3 Further details of the proposals, including the division between the Detailed and Outline Elements of the Application, are set out below and the accompanying Design and Access Statement.

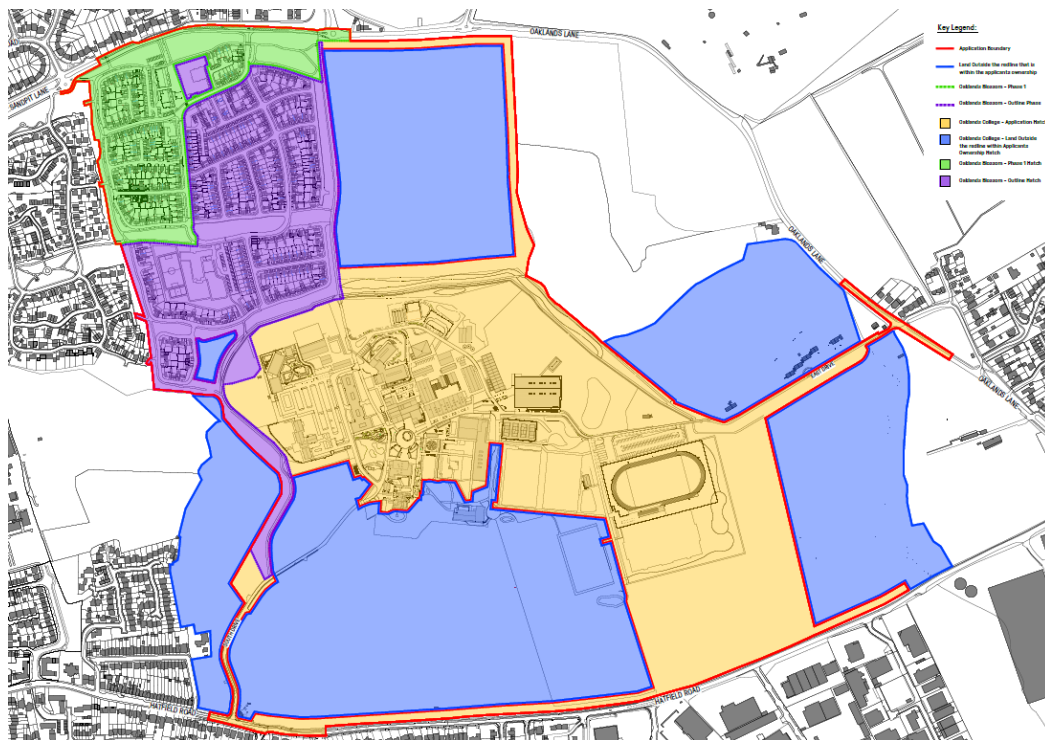
## **A. MASTERPLAN APPROACH - PROPOSALS**

6.4 The masterplan for the Site has been prepared as a comprehensive masterplan considering how each part of the proposals function and fit together as a landscape-led masterplan. The illustrative masterplan is set out below in **Figure 6.1**.



**Figure 6.1**

6.5 The different parts of the masterplan that relate to Oaklands Blossom and Oaklands College sites are illustrated in **Figure 6.2** below.



**Figure 6.2**

6.6 The purple and bright green areas highlighted in **Figure 6.2** is the land for the Oaklands Blossom site (24.21 ha). The detailed phase of the Oaklands Blossom site (167 homes, local centre, community space, children’s home, roads, car parking, SuDS, BNG and open space) is 7.93 ha (bright green) and the outline phases (305 home, roads, car parking, highway land, extra care, primary school, open space, SuDS and ATRs) is 16.28 ha (purple).

6.7 The orange area highlighted in **Figure 6.2** is the Oaklands College site which is 43.74ha in size. However, not all this land will be the subject of the Oaklands College site development proposals. The salmon and soft green areas shown in the plan below, **Figure 6.3**, below illustrates the extent of the Oaklands College site development area which is 29.68 ha (soft green colour). The detailed phase of the Oaklands College site (college facilities, roads, highway land, car parking, BNG, SuDS and ATRs) is 8.93 ha and the outline phases (college facilities, plus land for roads, car parking, BNG, SuDS and ATRs) is 20.75 ha (salmon colour):



**Figure 6.3**

6.8 The masterplan includes shared design principles that apply to the Oaklands Blossom and the Oaklands College parts of the Site, including the provision of Active Travel Routes (ATRs) that permeate through the wider masterplan. These principles are discussed below.

### Active Travel Route Improvements & PRow (inside the Site)

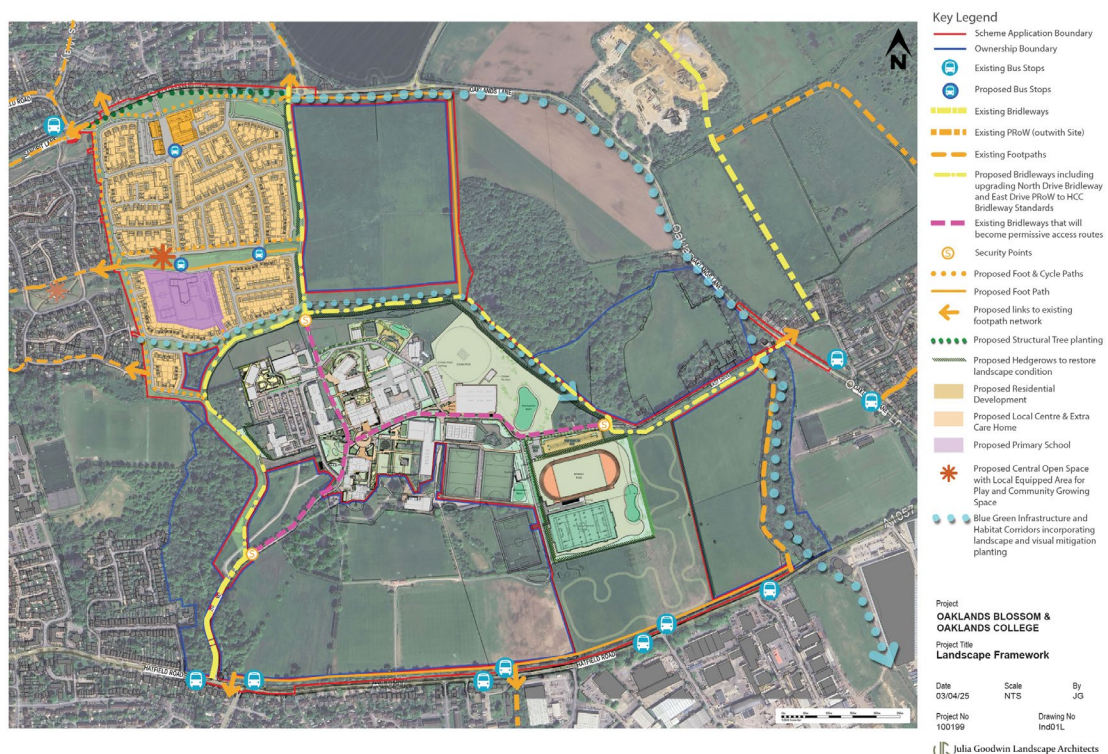
6.9 Within the planning application it is proposed to create new Active Travel Routes (ATRs) for public use on foot, bicycle and on horseback - one ATR will run west of the campus west of The Homestead to connect the North and South Drives, and one ATR will run north of the campus to connect the North and East Drives. The improved ATRs within the Site include:

- Upgrading parts of North Drive, South Drive and East Drive to meet HCC's guidance for Bridleways;
- Creating new 'permissive' ATRs through Oaklands Blossom and the College. These routes will meet HCC's guidance for Bridleways and will provide new access routes around the College campus in perpetuity; and
- Creating new ramble routes along the northern boundary, east boundary and southern boundary of the College's land. These routes will remain as rural land and will not be the subject of hardstanding.

6.10 These ATRs routes are required to:

- Help 'safeguard' the pupils at the College, as explained in the Transport Assessment and is summarised below:
  - Parts of the existing PRow (North, South, and East Drive) will be converted to permissive routes. This allows the College to control access during core hours while maintaining public connectivity at other times;
  - New bridleways and footpaths will be provided around the perimeter of the campus, ensuring continuous public access between Sandpit Lane, Hatfield Road, and Oaklands Lane without traversing the central campus;
  - The college will retain the right to close permissive routes during college hours (typically 10pm–5pm the following day, weekdays during term time) and during events involving young people. Outside these times, the routes will be open to the public; and
  - Signage will be installed to inform the public of opening times and access arrangements.
- Deliver better quality, direct, safe and permeability / access to and through the Site to enhance connectivity for existing and future residents and college pupils to the surrounding residential, service, and employment area.
- Help support health and well-being of the local community and provide convenient access to local facilities.

6.11 Various PRow are recorded on the college campus and are shown within the planning application as retained. It is to be noted, however, the Applicant is mindful that these public paths permit the public unfettered access through the campus which, as the planning application proposes, is to be enlarged and improved to provide for an increased future number of pupils including SEND students. The Applicant has a legal duty to protect pupils and staff whilst on College property and considers the increased numbers of pupils and staff consequently increases the need for enhanced measures to safeguard all from inappropriate and unwanted attentions. This application for planning permission is, therefore, submitted without prejudice to the College seeking to mitigate the safeguarding hazard by means of formal diversion(s) of PRow to the new ATRs and, given the procedure for PRow diversion is separate to that of planning permission, a separate application(s) may be made in due course. **Figure 6.4** below illustrates the location of the ATRs and the parts of the PRow (purple) that will become permissive access routes.



**Figure 6.4**

6.12 The existing routes through the Oaklands College campus will remain in place as a key route of access to College facilities, however the proposal is to re-designate these as Permissive Routes. The College will retain the right to close these permission routes during college opening hours. Typically, these routes will be closed during the following times:

- 10pm until 5pm the following day, during college term time (weekdays).
- During any such time where the College may be holding an event on site, outside of normal college hours, at which young people may be in attendance.

6.13 The permissive routes will be open to use by the public during the evenings and weekends. The ATRs divert around the central campus will remain open to the public at all times, so the connectivity between Hatfield Road, Sandpit Lane and Oaklands Lane will remain and will be enhanced. Rural style gates will be installed at appropriate locations along the three access routes. Security will be based near to the gates and will control access into the College campus. Details of the gates and associated security measures are to be agreed with the Council as part of future reserved matters applications.

6.14 Two new footpaths are also proposed. One will run parallel to Hatfield Road and will connect to East Drive. The other will run parallel with Sandpit Lane and will divert south to connect to East Drive.

6.15 Further details on the ATR and PRoW proposals are set out in the Transport Assessment and Landscape Strategy submitted in support of the planning application. The Transport Assessment explains why the diversions(s) of PRoW will deliver better quality routes and will not disadvantage any existing users of these routes.

#### Active Travel Route Improvements (outside the Site) & Other Transport Measures

6.16 Through extensive discussions with HCC's Highways Team, there will be improvements to existing ATRs, bus stops and bus routes / frequency of bus services located outside the Site. These improvements are current the subject of discussions with HCC and are discussed in further details in the Transport Assessment submitted in support of the planning application.

#### Trees & Ecology

6.17 The Tree Impact Assessment confirms that the comprehensive masterplan plan will be implemented across the Site.

6.18 The BNG Metric submitted in support of the planning application explains that the comprehensive masterplan plan will result in 154.40 habitat units and 18.53 hedgerow units. This results in a 10.5% increase in habitat units and 27.75% increase in hedgerow units, as demonstrated by the BNG Metric.

## **B. OAKLANDS COLLEGE - PROPOSALS**

6.19 The detailed proposals for the Oaklands College site will include demolition works and renovation of existing buildings as well as the construction of new buildings education facilities in the following zones:

- Creative Gateway
- Animal Management
- High Needs Center
- Propellor Stage Studio
- Sports Hall & Martial Arts Center
- Refectory and kitchen
- Estates and deliveries
- Improvements to the Mansion house
- Improvements to the Construction zone
- Improved pedestrian, cycle and vehicular routes and car park; and
- External learning and recreation landscaping

6.20 The Outline proposals for the Oaklands College site will include:

- The construction of a new energy centre
- A new waste and recycling facility; and
- Improvements to parts of the existing PRow and new ATRs;
- New external sports pitches and tracks, including:
  - Covered Cricket lanes
  - Cricket Pavilion
  - Cricket Pitch
  - Games courts
  - All weather Rugby pitch
  - Athletics track and field
  - Cycle center, pump track and skate park; and
  - Hockey/ Cycle/ Athletics Pavilion

6.21 Even though some of the existing building on the Oaklands College that form part of the Site will be demolished (in part or in whole), the new buildings will result in a net increase in

education related floorspace on the Site. This equates to approximately +9,226 sqm (GIA) and is calculated as follows and is estimated to be a 23.8 % increase in floorspace terms:

Existing Campus Area	36,700				
Total New Build		16,805			
Proposed Refurb of Existing			4,644		
Total Demolition				7,579	
Net Change					9,226
Post-project College GIFA	47,926				
Existing Campus Area	36,700				
Net Change	9,226				
Percentage Increase (%)	23.8				

6.22 Although the net additional floorspace within the Oaklands College proposal site, this equates to approximately +9,226 sqm (GIA). There will be existing buildings that will be demolished and replaced which are not taken into account in the above net additional floorspace figure. The total amount of replacement and new building floorspace, which equates to 16,805 sqm (GIA), 1,955sqm will be in the outline phase and 14,850 sqm will be in the detailed phase.

6.23 A more detailed breakdown of existing and proposed floorspace is set out in Appendix 1 of the Oaklands College Education Need Statement.

#### Car Parking, Cycle and Coach Parking

6.24 Set out below is a summary of the increased car parking, cycle parking and coach parking provision proposed within the Oaklands College development:

	<b>Car Parking</b>	<b>Cycle Parking</b>	<b>Coach Parking</b>
Visitors, student & staff (East Drive Car Park)	155	115	6

#### Energy & Sustainability

6.25 The Applicants' Climate Change, Energy and Sustainability Statement (Oaklands College) explains that the new campus buildings will be powered by a centralised Energy Centre to serve both new and refurbished buildings, promoting efficient heating through a high-grade heat

network and future ready infrastructure. A feasibility study of suitable Renewables and Low Carbon Technologies has been undertaken. Viable renewable technologies include solar PVs and air source heat pumps.

#### Drainage

6.26 The Sustainable Urban Drainage Strategy (SuDS) for the College proposals comprise a series of detention basins sub-dividing proposed architectural and landscaping works supported by:

- At-source conveyance SuDS; and
- Permeable paving, swales and rain gardens aimed to provide further enhanced amenity, biodiversity and water quality to the strategy.

6.27 The SuDS has been developed in close collaboration with the design team at an early stage to locate above-ground SuDS and reduce rates as far as feasible.

### **C. OAKLANDS BLOSSOM - PROPOSALS**

6.28 In addition to the delivery of the new homes, a new local centre, open space, college improvements and new college facilities, the Proposals will also deliver new Active Travel Routes (ATRs) and other local infrastructure requested by the local community, SACDC, Sandridge Parish Council and Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) and the Ramblers Association. These are summarised below.

#### Commercial & Community Floorspace

6.29 A new Local Centre will be constructed within the Detailed part of the Oaklands Blossom site. This will include up to 530sqm of commercial floorspace (Use Classes E (a to f)).

6.30 New community floorspace (use Classes F), approx. 100sqm, will be constructed within the new local centre. The expected draft heads of terms of this floorspace are set out below.

<b>Topic:</b>	<b>Information:</b>	<b>Delivery</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Nature of Space	100sqm GIA.	In Phase 1	Taylor Wimpey
Lease	125 Years <sup>4</sup>	In Phase 1, lease agreed prior to hand over	Taylor Wimpey + Sandridge Parish Council
Specification	Shell & Core, plus: structure, electrics, plumbing, plastering, windows and doors, lighting and installation of toilet facilities	In Phase 1, upon hand over	Taylor Wimpey
	External and hard surfaces, plus boundary treatment	In Phase 1, upon hand over	Taylor Wimpey
	Kitchen installation, installation of internal walls and decorating	Upon hand over	Sandridge Parish Council
Management & Maintenance	Responsibility for maintaining and repairing internal space	Through life of the lease	Sandridge Parish Council
	Responsibility for maintaining external buildings and external area	Phase 1 & on-going	Taylor Wimpey
Legals	A lease agreement to be drawn up & agreed	Prior to hand over	Taylor Wimpey + Sandridge Parish Council

### Children's Homes

- 6.31 A 4-bedroom children's home (Use Class C2) will be delivered by Taylor Wimpey in Phase 1. The location and specification of this facility has been discussed with HCC. Although the facility will be constructed by TW, it will be purchased by HCC on a free-hold basis and managed by HCC.

### Extra Care Home

- 6.32 An extra care home containing up to 70 new dwellings (Use Class C2) is proposed within the outline phase of the development. It will fall into the definition of "housing with care" contained within Paragraph 63 the NPPF.
- 6.33 The occupants of these units will have minimum care requirements. The minimum age for the units will be 65yrs+. The units will be designed to ensure the occupants will maintain the ability

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<sup>4</sup> To be confirm by the Parish Council

to have a degree of independence - kitchenette, sitting area, bedroom. The facility will include shared amenities such as a communal sitting area/restaurant.

- 6.34 The extra care home site will not be delivered by TW. It will be disposed of to an extra care operator that is Care Quality Commission (CQC) registered.
- 6.35 The extra care home is unlikely to be delivered as part of the first phase. The proposal is for Outline planning permission (access approved), subject to a future Reserved Matters application (RMA) for all other matters by the intended developer / operator. The aim is to secure agreement with a suitable developer / operator as soon as TW can go to market with enough surety on the hybrid proposals being fixed (and likely to gain consent) and for that developer / operator to deliver the extra care home alongside TW's Phase 1 or towards the latter end of Phase 1 or into phase 2.
- 6.36 Of the up to 70 new extra care homes (Class C2) proposed within the Oaklands Blossom development, 40% of these will be affordable. The proposed indicative dwelling mix (not including tenure) is summarised below, albeit this will be finalised as part of the future reserved matters application:

1-bed (2-person)	38
2-bed (3-person)	13
2-bed (4-person)	19

Market Sale, First Homes & Affordable Housing

- 6.37 Of the 472 new homes (Class C3) proposed within the Oaklands Blossom development, 189 of these will be First Homes and Affordable Homes. The proposed provision for the Detailed part of the site is summarised below on a tenure basis:

	<b>Market Sale</b>	<b>Affordable</b>			
		Social Rent	Affordable Rent	Shared Ownership	First Homes <sup>5</sup>
1-bed (2-person) Flat	-	7	15	-	17
2-bed (2-person) Flat	-	-	-	-	-
2-bed (3-person) Flat	1	-	-	-	-
2-bed (4-person) Flat	8	5	4	-	-

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<sup>5</sup> The Applicant is willing to discuss with SACDC if this tenure is required or should form part of the shared ownership tenure

2-bed (4-person) House	3	6	-	6	-
3-bed (5-person) House	38	2	-	3	-
3-bed (6-person) House	3	-	-	-	-
4-bed (5-person) House	21	-	1	1	-
4-bed (6-person) House	5	-	-	-	-
4-bed (7-person) House	3	-	-	-	-
5-bed (7-person) House	3	-	-	-	-
5-bed (8-person) House	15	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	100	20	20	10	17
		67			
		167			

- 6.38 The proposed indicative provision for the Outline part of the Oaklands Blossom site is summarised below on a tenure basis. The split between the affordable tenures is assumed to be agreed during the determination of the planning application and finalised as part of the future reserved matters application(s).

	<b>Market Sale</b>	<b>First Homes<sup>6</sup> &amp; Affordable</b>
1-bed (2-person) Flat	-	3
2-bed (2-person) Flat	-	27
2-bed (3-person) Flat	-	9
2-bed (4-person) Flat	-	13
2-bed (4-person) House	8	-
3-bed (5-person) House	45	64
3-bed (6-person) House	3	-
4-bed (5-person) House	32	-
4-bed (6-person) House	21	6
4-bed (7-person) House	18	-
4-bed (8-person) House	17	-
5-bed (7-person) House	3	-
5-bed (8-person) House	36	-
TOTAL	183	122
	305	

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<sup>6</sup> The Applicant is willing to discuss with SACDC if this tenure is required or should form part of the shared ownership tenure

6.39 All new homes (Class C3) proposed within the Oaklands Blossom development will meet the nationally described space standards in accordance with Policy D6 of the Sandridge Neighbourhood Plan and Policy DES5 of the Draft Local Plan.

Self/Custom-Build

6.40 Of the 472 new homes proposed within the Oaklands Blossom development, 14 of these (2.97%) will be self or custom-build. These will be delivered in the Outline phases of the development.

6.41 All self/custom build homes (Class C3) proposed within the Oaklands Blossom development will meet the nationally described space standards in accordance with Policy D6 of the Sandridge Neighbourhood Plan and Policy DES5 of the Draft Local Plan.

Car Parking & Cycle Parking

6.42 Set out below is a summary of the car parking and cycle parking provision proposed within the Oaklands Blossom development:

	Car Parking		Cycle Parking	
	Detailed Phase	Outline Phase*	Detailed Phase	Outline Phase*
Residential	384	697	457	1,047
Children's Home	2	-	4	-
Retail	20	-	5	-
Community	11	-	2	-
Extra Care	-	11	-	4
Primary School	-	47	-	42
Visitor	58	120	10	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>475</b>	<b>875</b>	<b>478</b>	<b>1,093</b>

\*The figures for the outline phases are indicative at this stage and subject to final design.

6.43 The Applicants' Socio Economic Statement explains that the Oaklands Blossom site estimated to have a total resident population of 1,278 people.

Open Space & Play Space Provision

6.44 The occupiers of the Oaklands Blossom development will benefit from access to the following open space and play space provision, as illustrated in **Figure 6.5** below:

Open Space Type	Provision (sqm)
Parks and Gardens	8,353
Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace	39,324
Amenity Greenspace	17,692
Provision for Children and Young People	744
LAP (Local Area of Play)	
LEAP (Local Equipped Area of Play)	
NEAP (Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play)	
Allotments	170



**Figure 6.5**

Energy & Sustainability

6.45 The Applicants' Climate Change, Energy and Sustainability Statement (Oaklands Blossom) explains that the market sale and affordable homes on the Oaklands Blossom site will be

powered by electricity only with space heaters provided via electric panel heaters. Hot water demand is to be met by connecting to Hote Water Heat Pumps (HWHP). The commercial areas are served by Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP). Renewables are maximised where practicably feasible, including solar PV to suitable roof space on the private/open market houses where gas heating is proposed.

- 6.46 The Applicants' Climate Change, Energy and Sustainability Statement also explains that the market sale and affordable and on the Oaklands Blossom site, which will be the subject of reserved matters, should achieve a 25.86% reduction and the non-domestic units a 11.33% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions beyond a Part L compliant development through a combination of energy demand reduction, high efficiency air source heat pumps and the inclusion of PV panels to suitable roof space, achieving a total site-wide saving for the reserved matters area of 139,848Kg of CO<sub>2</sub> per year, equating to a 25.57% saving.
- 6.47 Water efficiency measures including the use of dual flush WCs, low flow showers and taps and appropriately sized baths will be encouraged with the aim to limit the use of water during the operation of the development. Each residential unit will minimise water usage to a least 110 litres per person, per day.

#### Drainage

- 6.48 The Sustainable Urban Drainage Strategy (SuDS) for the Oaklands Blossom proposals incorporates climate change allowances and includes attenuation basins, swales, permeable paving, and rain gardens to manage runoff at greenfield rates. Finished floor levels are set at least 300 mm above the 1-in-100-year flood level plus climate change, and resilience measures are proposed for vulnerable areas. The strategy ensures no flooding for events up to 1-in-30 years and no building or plant flooding for events up to 1-in-100 years plus climate change.
- 6.49 The SuDS has been developed in close collaboration with the design team at an early stage to locate above-ground SuDS and reduce rates as far as feasible.

#### **D. DETAILED AND OUTLINE PHASES**

- 6.50 The table, overleaf, sets out a summary of the proposals and indicates whether they are coming forward in the Detailed or Outlined Element.

Nature:	Location:	Development Proposed:	Matters to be approved:	Supported by design material:
Full Detail	Site B4 [Oaklands Blossom]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to 167 homes</li> <li>• A children's home</li> <li>• New Local Centre, comprising:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ up to 530sqm of commercial floorspace (Use Classes E (a to f)); and</li> <li>○ approx. 100sqm of community floorspace (use Classes F)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Children's Home</li> <li>• Provision of open space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Means of access</li> <li>• Layout</li> <li>• Scale</li> <li>• Appearance</li> <li>• Landscape</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site Location Plan</li> <li>• Design &amp; Access Statement – Parts 2 &amp; 3</li> <li>• Proposed block plans</li> <li>• Proposed floors plans</li> <li>• Proposed elevations</li> <li>• Phasing Plan</li> <li>• Landscape layout and strategy</li> </ul>
	Oaklands College Campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demolition works and renovation of existing buildings</li> <li>• Construction of new buildings education facilities in the following zones:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Creative Gateway</li> <li>○ Animal Management</li> <li>○ High Needs Center</li> <li>○ Propellor Stage Studio</li> <li>○ Sports Hall &amp; Martial Arts Center</li> <li>○ Refectory and kitchen</li> <li>○ Estates and deliveries</li> <li>○ Improvements to the Mansion house</li> <li>○ Improvements to the Construction zone</li> <li>○ Improved pedestrian and vehicular routes, car park</li> <li>○ External learning and recreation landscaping</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		

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<b>Outline</b>	Site B4 [Oaklands Blossom]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to 305 homes</li> <li>• Up to 70 Extra Care homes</li> <li>• Land for new primary school</li> <li>• Provision of open space</li> </ul>	<p>All matters reserved, except:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Means of access</li> <li>• Details for each access point</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design &amp; Access Statement – Parts 2 &amp; 3</li> <li>• Parameter Plans (Oaklands Blossom):               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Access &amp; Movement;</li> <li>○ Building Heights;</li> <li>○ Land Uses;</li> <li>○ Character Areas;</li> <li>○ Green and Blue Infrastructure;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Parameter Plans (College)</li> <li>• Design Codes (in DAS)</li> <li>• Illustrative Masterplan</li> <li>• Illustrative layouts for each phase</li> <li>• Illustrative Landscape Masterplan</li> <li>• Other technical documents &amp; S106 / 278 Agreements</li> </ul>
	Oaklands College Campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Energy Centre;</li> <li>• Waste &amp; Recycling Area;</li> <li>• External Sports Pitches &amp; Tracks including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Covered Cricket lanes</li> <li>○ Cricket Pavilion</li> <li>○ Cricket Pitch</li> <li>○ Games courts</li> <li>○ All weather Rugby pitch</li> <li>○ Athletics track and field</li> <li>○ Cycle center, pump track and skate park</li> <li>○ Hockey/ Cycle/ Athletics Pavilion</li> </ul> </li> <li>• New active travel route improvements</li> </ul>		

6.51 Indicative phasing plans prepared by DLA and BM3 confirm the extent of the planning application and the division between the Detailed and Outline Elements.

6.52 The table below provides an estimated delivery programme for the project.

Year:	College expected delivery rate:	TW's expected delivery rate:	HCC's expected delivery
2026/27	Decant and demolition works to commence. Enabling works including new loop road and drainage installations. East Drive upgrades. New car park works (detailed phase) Relocation of Estates barn to create new Estates and Deliveries zone (detailed phase). Commence construction of Energy Centre (outline phase)	0 homes	
2027/28	Construction of the Animal Management Centre (detailed phase) Construction of Waste and Recycling Area (outline phase). Commence Cricket Training Facilities, construction of athletics Track and other playing field improvements (outline phase)	35 homes (detailed phase)	
2028/29	Completion of the Creative Gateway building, College Square and other external landscaping (detailed phase). Construction of new active travel routes (outline phase)	74 homes (detailed phase) 1 children's home (detailed phase)	
2029/30	Construction of the High Needs Centre, conversion of the existing LRC to create the new Student Refectory and kitchen improvements (detailed phase)	59 homes (detailed phase) 16 homes (outline phase)	
2030/31	Construction of the new Sports Hall & Martial Arts Centre (detailed phase) Construction of Games Courts (outline phase).	75 homes (outline phase) 70 care homes units (outline phase)	
2031/32	Refurbishment of the Mansion House (detailed phase) Construction of the All-weather Football/Rugby Pitch (outline phase)	75 homes (outline phase)	2FE Primary School (outline phase) <sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Estimated based upon the need to deliver at least 1FE from the Oaklands Blossom development

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2032/33	Construction of the Film Studio (detailed phase). Construction Zone improvements (detailed phase). Construction of cycling facilities/pump track (outline phase). Construction of Hockey Pavilion (outline phase).	75 homes (outline phase)	
2033/34	Final external works, demolitions and reconfiguration works (detailed phase)	63 homes (outline phase)	

## 7 Planning Policy Context

- 7.1 This section of the Planning Statement summarises the Development Plan Documents and material considerations relevant to the Development.
- 7.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (“PCPA”) requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the provisions of the ‘Development Plan’ unless other ‘material considerations’ indicate otherwise.
- 7.3 Under Section 1 of the Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015, local authorities are required to keep a register of those seeking to acquire serviced plots in their area for their own self-build and custom house building. They are also subject to duties under Sections 2 and 2A of the Act to have regard to this and to give enough suitable development permissions to meet the identified demand. Self and custom-build plots could provide market or affordable housing.

### A. NATIONAL POLICY & GUIDANCE

- 7.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”) (published December 2024), National Planning Practice Guidance (“NPPG”) and National Design Guide (2019) provides the relevant national planning policy framework for the proposals.
- 7.5 The National Design Guide (2021) forms part of the Government’s Planning Practice Guidance and sets out the characteristics of well-designed places and what good design means in practice. The NPPF and NPPG, and the National Design Guide are all material considerations in the determination of planning applications.
- 7.6 At the heart of the NPPF remains a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraphs 10 and 11). The presumption in favour of sustainable development which is set out in the framework indicates at paragraph 11c) that development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan should be approved without delay. Paragraph 11d) states that where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date<sup>8</sup>, granting permission unless the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

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<sup>8</sup> In accordance with the definition set out at Footnote 8 of the NPPF (2024)

- 7.7 The NPPF makes clear that planning applications should only be refused where any adverse impacts 'significantly and demonstrably' outweigh the benefits that arise from the proposals.
- 7.8 The sections of the NPPF that are relevant to the determination of the Proposed Development are discussed in greater detail in sections 7 to 10. The key sections are:
- Section 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development;
  - Section 4 – Decision Making;
  - Section 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
  - Section 8 – Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities;
  - Section 9 – Promoting Sustainable Transport;
  - Section 11 – Making Effective Use of Land;
  - Section 12 – Achieving Well-designed Places;
  - Section 13 – Protecting Green Belt Land.
  - Section 14 - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change;
  - Section 15 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment;
  - Section 16 - Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment;
  - Annex 1: Implementation; and
  - Annex 2: Glossary.
- 7.9 The NPPF makes clear that planning applications should only be refused where any adverse impacts 'significantly and demonstrably' outweigh the benefits that arise from the proposals. Paragraph 39 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities are to approach decisions in a positive and creative way; to work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area; and approve applications for sustainable development where possible.
- 7.10 Chapter 13 of the NPPF relates to protecting Green Belt Land. Paragraph 143 of the NPPF states that the Green Belt serves 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.

7.11 Paragraph 153 of the NPPF states that when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness [other than in the case of development on previously developed land or grey belt land, where development is not inappropriate]. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. '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.

7.12 The term 'Grey Belt' was introduced in Annex 2 of the latest version of the NPPF, which is defined as follows:

*"land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143."*

7.13 Paragraph 155 and Footnote 55 in the NPPF states that development in the Green Belt should not be regarded as inappropriate where:

- a) The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan;
- b) There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed;
- c) The development would be in a sustainable location, with reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of this Framework; and
- d) Where applicable the development proposed meets the 'Golden Rules' requirements set out in paragraphs 156-157.

7.14 Paragraphs 110 and 115 of the NPPF require new development sites to be in accessible and sustainable locations. Paragraphs 156 and 157 in the NPPF has introduced the following golden rules for Grey Belt development:

- a) Affordable housing which reflects either: (i) development plan policies produced in accordance with paragraphs 67-68 of this Framework; or (ii) until such policies are in place, the policy set out in paragraph 157;
- b) Necessary improvements to local or national infrastructure; and
- c) The provision of new, or improvements to existing, green spaces that are accessible to the public. New residents should be able to access good quality green spaces within a short walk of their home, whether through onsite provision or through access to offsite spaces.

- 7.15 Paragraphs 67, 68 and 157 of the NPPF seek to deliver a percentage of affordable homes that is 15% above the SACDC's policy position (which is 35%). To meet the Golden Rules in SACDC under paragraphs 155 and 157 of the NPPF, the minimum affordable housing requirement for proposals within SACDC is 50% affordable housing.
- 7.16 Paragraph 158 of the NPPF sets out that a development which complies with the Golden Rules should be given significant weight in favour of the grant of permission.
- 7.17 Paragraphs 138 and refer to the use of National Model Design Codes and the Building for a Healthy Life as guidance for assessing and improving design of new development.
- 7.18 In addition to the NPPF, the NPPG provides further detailed technical guidance, with reference to relevant legislation and other guidance. The NPPG is a "living document" with regular updates/reviews published.
- 7.19 As well as providing technical guidance the NPPG sets out the importance of good design, it advocates the need for quality design which it considers is an integral part of achieving the fundamental objective of sustainable development. The relevant most relevant topics contained within the NPPG relevant to the determination of the outline planning application are:
- Green Belt - Assessing the impact of a proposal on the openness of the Green Belt;
  - Local Housing Need – The NPPG sets out the Government's standardised methodology for calculating housing needs; and
  - Design – The NPPG sets out the importance of good design.
- 7.20 Chapter 12 Achieving well-designed spaces sets out criteria for well-designed spaces, including that they are visually attractive with effective landscaping; and are sympathetic to local character and history; and have a strong sense of place. The importance of trees is also highlighted.

## **B. THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

- 7.21 The relevant Development Plan Documents are as follows:
- The saved policies of SACDC's District Local Plan Review 1994 (including its associated adopted Proposals Maps) (hereafter referred to as the "Local Plan");
  - Sandridge Neighbourhood Plan (2021);
  - HCC's Waste Core Strategy & Development Management Policies DPD (2012); and

- HCC's Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan 2007.

7.22 The Development Plan policies which are considered of relevance to the proposals are listed in this section of the Planning Statement. They have been taken into consideration in the design evolution of the Proposed Development and are considered in greater detail in the technical reports that support the Application.

### Planning Designations

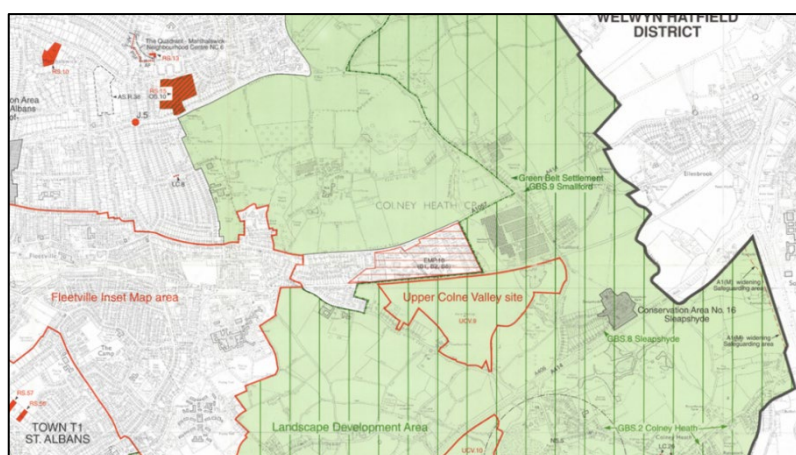
7.23 The Site is subject to the following planning designations, as illustrated on SACDC's Policy Map 4:

- Metropolitan Green Belt

7.24 The Policy Map was produced in 1994, and does not reflect the current baseline position, which includes Orchards Grange to the immediate west of the Oaklands Blossom site.

7.25 The below designations, also shown in **Figure 7.1**, below, are within proximity of the Site and should therefore be taken into consideration:

- Landscape Development Area (Green hatching) – outside the Site area
- Employment Area (Red hatching) – outside the Site area
- Land use proposals within the Upper Colne Valley (red outline) – outside the Site area
- Public open space provision in new residential areas (red fill with green hatching) – outside the Site area



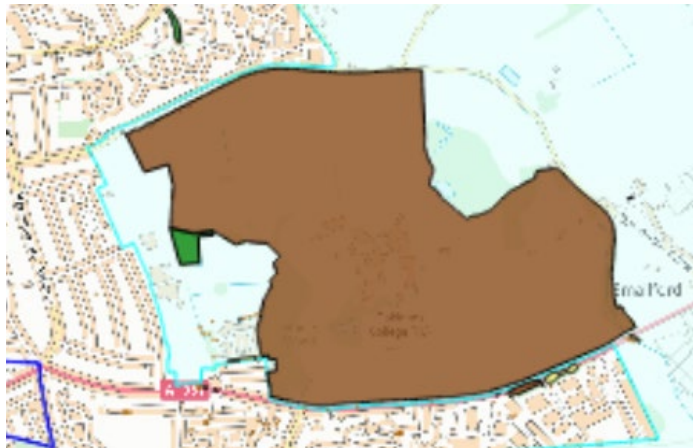
**Figure 7.1:** Policy designations in proximity to the Site<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> [Policy Map 4.pdf](#)

7.26 The designations below, as set out in **Figure 7.2**, are within the Site's boundary and should therefore be taken into consideration:

- Blanket TPO (Ref: 1474) (brown)
- Area of Special Control for Advertisements (light blue)
- Parking Zone 1



**Figure 7.2: Designations**<sup>10</sup>

7.27 The below designations are adjacent to the Site's west boundary and should therefore be taken into consideration:

- Ancient Woodlands – outside the Site area (see **Figure 7.3** below)
- Woodland - outside the Site area (green in **Figure 7.2** above)



**Figure 7.3: Designations**<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> [Cadcorp SIS WebMap 9](#)

<sup>11</sup> [Magic Map Application](#)

- 7.28 The Site is not located within a conservation area and there are no statutory listed buildings present on the Site. The Site does not contain any locally listed buildings, however the Manson House is likely to be regarded as a heritage asset of merit by SACDC.
- 7.29 The Site is not located within an area defined as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Local Green Space, National Landscape, National Park, Heritage Coast, nor does it contain any irreplaceable habitats.
- 7.30 Parts of the Site are at risk of drainage-related flooding, but not fluvial flooding nor coastal flooding / change.

### **St Albans Local Plan**

- 7.31 As mentioned above, the Site is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt on the LPA's Proposals Map (see Figure 2 above).
- 7.32 The project team should be mindful of the adopted Saved Policies of the St Albans District Local Plan Review 1994 as noted below when preparing technical assessments:
- Policy 1 (Metropolitan Green Belt)
  - Policy 2 (Settlement Strategy)
  - Policy 8 (Affordable Housing in the Metropolitan Green Belt)
  - Policy 34 (Highway Considerations in Development Control)
  - Policy 35 (Highway Improvements in Association with Development)
  - Policy 37 (Commercial Services)
  - Policy 39 (Parking Standards, General Requirements)
  - Policy 40 (Residential Development Parking Standards)
  - Policy 43 (Elderly Persons Dwellings and Residential Homes/Hostels, Parking Standards)
  - Policy 47 (Food and Drink Establishments Parking Standards)
  - Policy 51 (Shopping and Service Uses, Overall Strategy)
  - Policy 55 (Local Shopping Facilities)
  - Policy 57 (Service Uses)
  - Policy 65 (Education Facilities)
  - Policy 69 (General Design and Layout)
  - Policy 70 (Design and Layout of New Housing)
  - Policy 74 (Landscaping and Tree Preservation)

- Policy 80 (Floodlighting)
- Policy 84 (Flooding and River Catchment Management)
- Policy 84a (Drainage Infrastructure)
- Policy 86 (Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Merit)
- Policy 91 (Location of Leisure Facilities)
- Policy 92 (New Indoor Sports Facilities)
- Policy 93 (New Areas of Public Open Space)
- Policy 95 (Allotments)
- Policy 96 (Medium Intensity Leisure Uses in the Green Belt)
- Policy 97 (Existing Footpaths, Bridleways and Cycleways)
- Policy 102 (Loss of Agricultural Land)
- Policy 104 (Landscape Character)
- Policy 106 (Nature Conservation)
- Policy 143B (Implementation)

7.33 In respect of the affordable homes policy, SACDC's Affordable Housing SPG seeks to secure 35% of all new homes as affordable. Policy HOU2 of the Draft Local Plan seeks to secure 40% of all new homes as affordable.

#### **Sandridge Neighbourhood Plan**

7.34 The Site falls within the Sandridge Neighbourhood Plan boundary which formally designated the whole of the Parish of Sandridge as the relevant Neighbourhood Area in 2014. The Neighbourhood Plan (made in July 2021) supports the delivery of strategic policies contained in the Saved Policies of the St Albans District Local Plan Review 1994. The Plan covers the period 2019-2036, which aligned with the end of the plan period for the withdrawn St Albans City and District Local Plan. The proposed residential part of the Site is allocated under Policy D7: East St Albans Broad Location (and Appendix 5) in the emerging Local Plan and has the below design requirements.

**Policy D7 East St. Albans Broad Location**

In addition to the conditions set out in any future Local Plan policies, SADC Toolkit dated March 2020, (as amended) and relevant policies in this plan, all of the criteria set out below should be addressed as part of the master planning process. Sandridge Parish Council must be a major collaborator in the master planning process.

Development proposals should:

1. Demonstrate good quality design and respect the character and appearance of the surrounding area, as set out in a design brief, which the local community should be consulted on.
2. Use existing green hedging and/or trees to define current and future residential boundaries.
3. Provide a mix of house types and tenures, including the requirement for at least 40% affordable housing to meet the needs of current and future residents, including staff at local educational establishments.
4. Make plots available for self-build development and release areas for development in small phases to enable local small and medium-sized builders to participate in construction, in keeping with current Government guidelines.
5. Provide safe access for pedestrians, cyclists and road users, especially for students attending local schools and Oaklands College and users of the community facilities, including drop off and pick up provision.
6. Provide multiple access points to the development for motor vehicles to ensure traffic is dispersed proportionately across surrounding roads and neighbourhoods and in accordance with local traffic surveys carried out during the master planning process and the Hertfordshire Highways Design Guide and Policy.
7. Include road layouts that protect and mitigate against the impact of through traffic within residential areas (in accordance with the measures set out in the tables of Highway Improvements below).
  - a) Provide public transport enhancements in accordance with the
  - b) Sustainable transport enhancements to promote community health and wellbeing (in accordance with the measures set out in the table of Walking, Cycling and Recreational Travel improvements below).
8. All roads within the development shall be built to adoptable standard and the developer shall provide every assistance to facilitate the adoption of the roads by Hertfordshire County Council.
9. Provide fully operational electric vehicle charging points for each new home either individually or communally.
10. Within the master planning process, provide a Parking Strategy for the development considering the needs of residents, their visitors, staff and students of education establishments, taking into account the Parish Council's Transport and Parking Plan in the 5 Year Forward Action Plan Appendix 2, Annex A.
11. Ensure effective measures for the management of surface water arising from the development are put in place prior to the occupation of the first home.
12. Include provision of community facilities to serve new residents without increasing demand on already overstretched adjacent neighbouring facilities, including:
  - a) Provision of pre-schools, primary and secondary schools to meet the needs of the new community.
  - b) Healthcare provision within or close to the site.
  - c) Provision of community facilities, including a hall for community use and interdenominational use, public open space, including a children's play area.
  - d) Land for local retail outlet(s) to be classified as a 'local centre' within this Neighbourhood Plan.
13. Provide high quality (superfast) communications infrastructure.
14. Use and promote low carbon and renewable energy, including the consideration of district heating and/or local power generation.

This Policy shall be applicable to any Broad Location for development within the Parish.

7.35 The project team should be mindful of the adopted policies of the Sandridge Neighbourhood Plan as noted below when preparing technical assessments:

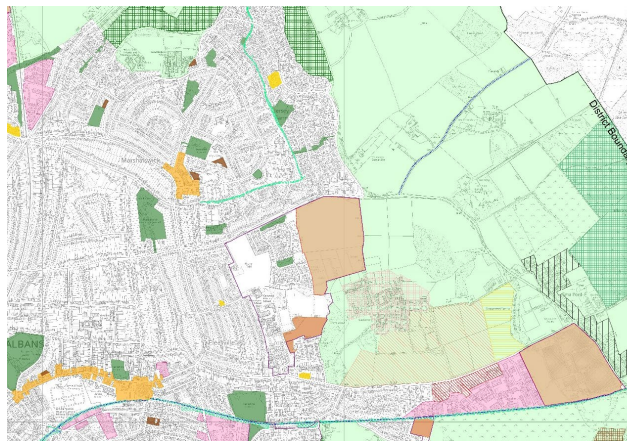
- D1 – Settlement Boundary
- D2 – Potential Development Land
- D3 – Provision of Affordable Housing for Local People in Perpetuity

- D4 – Housing development and building guidelines
- D5 – Housing Development and Building Guidelines (10 or More Dwellings)
- D6 - Sustainable Future Housing Design
- D7 – East St Albans Broad Location
- T1 - Traffic Congestion and Road Safety
- T2 - Public Transport (Buses)
- T3 - Walking, Cycling and Recreational Travel (Active Travel)
- C3 – Homeworkers
- C4 - Sustainable Community Leisure and Sports Facilities.
- C5 - Promotion of Visitor Attractions
- E1 – Natural Environment, Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure
- E2 - Landscapes, Views and Gaps
- E5 – Heritage Assets
- E6 – Health Needs

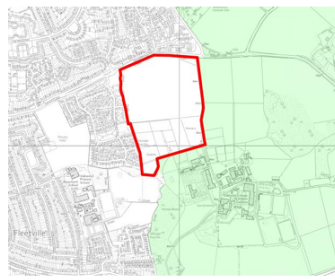

### **C. MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

#### **St Albans Draft New Local Plan**

- 7.36 The Council are currently in the process of producing a New Local Plan which establishes the Council's long term spatial planning strategy for delivering and managing development and infrastructure, and for environmental protection and enhancement to 2041. The draft Local Plan has finished the Regulation 19 consultation process, and the draft Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination in December 2024 under Regulation 22. The target adoption date of the New Local Plan is circa. March 2026.
- 7.37 The Site is allocated in the Regulation 19 Local Plan. The residential aspect is allocated under B4 – East St Albans, AL4 9JJ for a primarily residential led development for around 472 homes and up to 80 extra care homes. An extract from the draft Policies Map and full draft site allocation are included below.



**Figure 7.4:** Extract of Draft Policies Map (no.4)

B4 - East St Albans, AL4 9JJ		
Parish / Ward	Sandridge	Allocated site boundary
Hectares	21.69	
Proposed use	Primarily residential 472 units (indicative) (additional to adjoining permission)	
Proforma Ref	M-026	
HELAA Ref	SAN-06-21	
Green Belt Sub Area Ref	SA-77b / SA-77c / SA-78a / Not recommended	
		
Key development requirements		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Extra-care facilities comprising of 70-80 self-contained units (these units are included within the indicative dwellings figure).</li> <li>2. A 2FE primary school, including Early Years provision, to serve the new and wider community.</li> <li>3. A site for, and appropriate contributions towards, an 8FE secondary school site within nearby Oaklands land ownership fronting onto Hatfield Road.</li> <li>4. Investment / reinvestment in improved education and training provision and facilities at Oaklands College. A College Development Zone and a Sports and Community Zone have been identified on the policies map and are supported in principle. Community use of sports facilities and playing pitches should be secured by an appropriate mechanism such as a S106 agreement.</li> <li>5. A new local centre to provide local services, including commercial development opportunities.</li> <li>6. Contributions / enhancements to support relevant schemes in the LCWIP and GTPs as indicated in the TIA.</li> <li>7. Support for measures to ensure high quality access and connectivity to St Albans centre, station and education, aligned to schemes in the GTPs and LCWIP are required. In particular, measures to access the Alban Way route to the south will be required.</li> <li>8. Particular focus on the existing Rights of Way within and surrounding the site will be required, also including a link to Jersey Lane.</li> <li>9. Support for footpath 004 Colney Heath (East Drive) to be upgraded to bridleway status and improved to enable active travel to Hatfield, the University of Hertfordshire and Ellenbrook Fields.</li> <li>10. Support for a link for active travel from upgraded Footpath 004 to the Hatfield Road (Boggymead Springs).</li> <li>11. Support for provision of an E/W route for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders between BR 051 Sandridge and Central Drive, St Albans.</li> <li>12. Contributions towards the Ellenbrook Fields country park.</li> <li>13. Undertake opportunistic extraction of any suitable sand and gravel deposits for use on-site wherever possible, where such deposits are uncovered during construction / excavation works.</li> </ol>		

**Figure 7.5:** Draft site allocation

- |  |
|--|
| <p>14. The site is within Flood Zone 1 but at risk from surface water flooding. The Exception Test is not required. However, it must be shown that the development will be safe for its lifetime and the risk can be managed through a sequential approach to design.</p> <p>15. Development proposals must take appropriate account of all trees protected by Tree Preservation Order.</p> <p>16. Take appropriate account of these Environmental Constraints: Source Protection Zone (SPZ) 3; Bedrock Aquifer.</p> |
|--|

**Figure 7.5:** Draft site allocation (continued)

7.38 The Oaklands College aspect is to be designated as a ‘College Development Zone’ and part of the campus is to be designated as a ‘Sports and Community Zone’. This has the below requirements (see **Figure 7.6**) as set out in Policy COM1: Oaklands College Development Zone & Sports and Community Development Zone.

- |  |
|--|
| <p><b>COM1 – Education</b></p> <p>a) Major residential development will be required to make appropriate provision for new schools and early years facilities (nursery 3–4-year-olds and childcare 0-2-year-olds) either on-site or by making a suitable contribution towards the improvement or expansion of nearby existing facilities.</p> <p>b) Requirements for schools within Broad Locations are set out in the Site Allocations (Part B). The associated indoor and outdoors sports facilities should serve a community joint use function. Access must be secured through community use agreements. The provision of playing pitches for community use will be required at new primary and secondary schools.</p> <p>c) Allocated school sites identified in the Plan are reserved for state funded education purposes.</p> <p>d) Proposals for the expansion of existing schools and new detached school playing fields will be assessed against the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Expansion of existing schools must provide evidence of education need;</li> <li>ii. New building(s) within Green Belt locations should integrate with the existing landscape and be sited as unobtrusively as possible while providing a good relationship with any existing buildings;</li> <li>iii. Proposals for detached school playing fields in Green Belt locations must preserve the openness of the Green Belt and must not conflict with the Green Belt purposes;</li> <li>iv. Design, external appearance and new landscaping must be to a high standard;</li> <li>v. Effects on the amenity of the surrounding area in terms of visual impact, lighting, noise, disturbance, road access and traffic generation must be acceptable;</li> <li>vi. Sufficient onsite servicing must be provided;</li> <li>vii. Appropriate local infrastructure must be in place, or provided, to encourage cycling and walking, and a Travel Plan will be required to demonstrate a reduction in car based journeys;</li> <li>viii. It is generally expected that provision of the new facilities for wider community uses will be secured through community use agreements.</li> </ul> <p>e) St Albans is an area of high primary school need and with growth there will likely be a long term need for the provision of a new primary school. A site has been identified at the former Ariston site. St Albans has an identified need for a new secondary school in the long term. A site has been identified at East St Albans near Oaklands College.</p> <p>f) New secondary schools are proposed at Broad Locations including: East Hemel Hempstead North, East St Albans and West of London Colney. The sites are identified on the Policies Map. In addition, Hemel Hempstead is expected to have a need for a new secondary school; a site has been identified and is shown on the Policies Map.</p> <p>g) Oaklands College St Albans proposes to deliver expanded education, sports and community facilities. A College Development Zone and Sports and Community Zone are identified on the Policies Map and are supported in principle. Community use of sports facilities and playing pitches should be secured by an appropriate mechanism such as a S106 agreement.</p> |
|--|

**Figure 7.6:**

7.39 The draft policies in the New Local Plan currently attract little weight in planning decisions, however, will start to be given more weight as the New Local Plan progresses. Therefore, the project team should be mindful of the emerging policies as noted below when preparing technical assessments:

- Policy SP1 - A Spatial Strategy for St Albans District
- Policy SP2 - Responding to the Climate Emergency
- Policy CE1 – Promoting Sustainable Design, Construction and Building Efficiency
- Policy CE2 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy
- Policy SP3 – Land and the Green Belt
- Policy LG1 – Broad Locations
- Policy LG5 – Green Belt
- Policy LG6 – Green Belt Compensatory Improvements
- Policy SP4 – Housing
- Policy HOU1 – Housing Mix
- Policy HOU2 – Affordable Housing
- Policy HOU3 – Specialist Housing
- Policy HOU4 – Accessible and Adaptable Housing
- Policy HOU5 – Self-build and Custom Housebuilding
- Policy SP6 – City, Town and Village Centres and Retail
- Policy SP7 – Community Infrastructure
- Policy COM1 – Education
- Policy COM3 – Community, Leisure and Sports Facilities
- Policy SP8 – Transport Strategy
- Policy TRA1 – Transport Considerations for New Development
- Policy TRA4 – Parking
- Policy SP9 – Utilities Infrastructure
- Policy UIN1 – Broadband
- Policy SP10 – Natural Environment, Biodiversity and Green and Blue Infrastructure
- Policy NEB1 – Woodlands, Trees and Landscape Features
- Policy NEB6 – Biodiversity and Biodiversity Net Gain
- Policy NEB7 – Biodiversity Provision in the Design of New Buildings and Open Spaces
- Policy NEB8 – Managing Flood Risk
- Policy NEB10 – Landscape and Design
- Policy NEB12 – Green Space Standards and New Green Space Provision
- Policy SP12 – High Quality Design

- Policy DES1 – Design of New Development
- Policy DES2 – Public Space
- Policy DES3 – Efficient Use of Land
- Policy DES5 – Residential Amenity Standards
- Policy DES6 – Building Heights
- Policy DES7 – Servicing of Development
- Policy SP13 – Health and Wellbeing
- Policy HW1 – Air and Noise Pollution
- Policy HW2 – Light Pollution
- Policy HW3 – Contaminated Land
- Policy HW5 – Health Impact Assessments
- Policy SP14 – Delivery of Infrastructure
- Policy IMP1 – Additional Infrastructure Requirements for Strategic Scale Development

#### **Guidance Documents**

7.40 In addition, the SACDC and HCC have the following adopted supplementary design guidance:

- Design Advice Leaflet No.1: Design and Layout of New Housing (1998);
- Affordable Housing SPG 2004;
- Revised Parking Policies and Standards (January 2002);
- National Design Guide;
- St Albans Strategic Sites Design Guidance, which consists of the Design Principles:
  - Design Toolkit;
  - Masterplan Toolkit; and
  - Employment Toolkit;
- Hertfordshire District Council Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan (PRoWIP)

#### **D. TITLED BALANCE CONTEXT**

7.41 The Local Plan was adopted in November 1994. The Local Plan policies were reviewed by the Secretary of State and a Direction under Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 made on the 14 September 2007 saving the policies. Since then, Central Government planning policy and guidance has evolved notably with the publication of the NPPF. This has led to questions of consistency of the saved Local Plan policies with national planning guidance as expressed in paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF reads as follows:

*“d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*

- i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
- ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.”*

7.42 The degree of consistency of Local Plan policies with the Framework, and their subsequent weight, is referenced in Sections 7 to 10 of this Planning Statement. However, it is important to point out that the Local Plan is regarded to be out-of-date with reference to paragraph 11 (and footnote 8) of the NPPF in an authority where one or more of the following scenarios occur:

- There exists a current policy vacuum (and where the production of a new and sound local plan to meet up to date identified needs has been severely delayed); or
- The LPA does not benefit from a 5-year housing land supply; or
- The LPA has failed to meet its last 3-year Housing Delivery Test (HDT) requirement

7.43 In the context of paragraph 11 of the NPPF, as discussed above, the policies that are most important for determining planning applications in SACDC are out-of-date. This is because all three of the above scenarios have been met in the authority<sup>12</sup>. Therefore, planning permission should be granted unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

## **E. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY**

7.44 SACDC has not adopted a Community Infrastructure Levy.

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<sup>12</sup> 0.9 YHLS, 52% HDT and the adoption of a new local plan have been severely delayed

## 8 Planning Considerations – Part 1 (Principle of Development)

### INTRODUCTION

- 8.1 This section of the Planning Statement assesses the key planning considerations relating to the Site and the ‘principle’ of the Proposed Development against the relevant abovementioned policies. Where relevant, it draws upon the wider suite of supporting technical reports. The key planning considerations are:
- A. The Appropriateness of Development in the Green Belt (as a Grey Belt proposal) & Very Special Circumstances, including:
    - i) The need for more homes
    - ii) The need for more affordable homes
    - iii) The need for more self/custom build homes
    - iv) The need for new college facilities
    - v) The need for SEND facilities
    - vi) The need for extra care homes
    - vii) The need for children’s home facilities
    - viii) Public use of college facilities
    - ix) Delivery of land for a new primary school
    - x) Delivery of community space and new local centre
    - xi) Delivery of SEND facilities
    - xii) Delivery of ATR improvements and new publicly accessible open space
    - xiii) Delivery of BNG enhancements
    - xiv) Delivery of Socio-economic benefits
  - D. Meeting the site allocation objectives
  - E. The Site is in a suitable and sustainable location for development
  - F. The Proposed Development will integrate into the settlement and landscape
  - G. The Proposed Development delivers Green Belt compensatory measures
- 8.2 A summary of the analysis and conclusions associated with each matter, along with an assessment of the compliance with the policies of the adopted Development Plan and other relevant material considerations, is set out below.

**A. THE APPROPRIATENESS OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE GREEN BELT & VERY SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES (VSC)**

8.3 The main consideration in the context of the principle of the development in the Green Belt.

Policy Context

8.4 Under both SACDC's adopted Local Plan Review and the Draft Local Plan, the Site is allocated within the Green Belt. The NPPF attaches great importance to the Green Belt. Paragraph 142 of the NPPF states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The essential characteristics of Green Belt are its openness and permanence as well as its five purposes as defined by Paragraph 143 of the NPPF, which comprise:

- 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.

8.5 The Local Plan Policy 1 (Metropolitan Green Belt) states that within the Green Belt, except for development in Green Belt settlements referred to in Policy 2, or in very special circumstances, permission will not be given for development for purposes other than that required for:

- a) mineral extraction;
- b) agriculture;
- c) small scale facilities for participatory sport and recreation;
- d) other uses appropriate to a rural area;
- e) conversion of existing buildings to appropriate new uses, where this can be achieved without substantial rebuilding works or harm to the character and appearance of the countryside.

8.6 The above is like the guidance contained within Policy LG5 of the Draft Local Plan, Policy D1 of the SNP and Paragraphs 153 and 154 of the NPPF. Paragraph 153 specifically states:

*"When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness.*

*Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. ‘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”*

- 8.7 Paragraph 155, Footnote 55 and Annex 2 of the NPPF also introduces an additional classification of development in the Green Belt which is not considered inappropriate development. This is referred to as “Grey Belt”. This type of development is regarded to deliver substantial benefits, as defined by the Golden Rules set out in Paragraphs 156 of the NPPF, that substantially outweigh the loss of Green Belt land. This is discussed in greater detail below.
- 8.8 Policy 1 of the Local Plan goes on to say that new development within the Green Belt shall integrate with the existing landscape. Siting, design and external appearance are particularly important and additional landscaping will normally be required. Significant harm to the ecological value of the countryside must be avoided. Policy LG6 of the Draft Local Plan also requires development in the Green Belt to deliver compensatory measures.

#### Assessment

- 8.9 The Site is wholly situated within the Metropolitan Green Belt, where local and national policy only allows for certain forms of development, unless there are very special circumstances. The Proposed Development would not fall within any of the exceptions to ‘inappropriate development’ set-out in Paragraph 154 of the NPPF.
- 8.10 As mentioned in Section 7 of this Planning Statement, the NPPF introduced the concept of ‘grey belt’ and outlines conditions whereby development of grey belt land should not be regarded as inappropriate. Paragraph 155 states:

*“The development of homes, commercial and other development in the Green Belt should also not be regarded as inappropriate where all of the following apply: a. The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan; b. There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed; c. The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of this Framework; and d. Where applicable the development proposed meets the ‘Golden Rules’ requirements set out in paragraphs 156-157 below.”*

- 8.11 The Site and Proposed Development easily falls with the definition of Grey Belt under Paragraph 155 and Annex 2 of the NPPF. Annex 2 of the NPPF defines Grey Belt as follows:

*“..as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143. ‘Grey belt’ excludes land where the application of the policies relating to the areas or assets in footnote 7 (other than Green Belt) would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development”*

- 8.12 Purposes (a), (b) and (d) in paragraph 143 of the NPPF are:

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another; and*
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.*

- 8.13 The areas and assets referred to in Footnote 7 of the NPPF are a SSSI, Local Green Spaces, Green Belt, National Landscape areas, National Parks, Heritage Coast, areas containing any irreplaceable habitats, designated heritage assets, and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.

- 8.14 The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and Green Belt Assessment submitted in support of the planning application demonstrates that the Site does not ‘strongly contribute’ to any of purposes (a), (b) or (d) in Paragraph 143 of the NPPF and therefore would not fundamentally undermine these purposes. It explains that the Site performance in this regard is as follows:

- Purpose a) – Moderate to weak
- Purpose b) – Moderate
- Purpose d) – None

- 8.15 The Green Belt Assessment submitted in support of the planning application also demonstrates that the Site does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), (c), (d) and (e) taken together of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan, in accordance with in accordance with Paragraph 155(a) of the NPPF. It explains that the Site performance in this regard is as follows:

- Purpose a) – Moderate to weak
- Purpose b) – Moderate
- Purpose c) - Moderate to weak

- Purpose d) – None
- Purpose (e) – N/A

8.16 The conclusions of the LVIA and Green Belt Assessment and this Planning Statement demonstrate that despite the Site falling within the Green Belt included in Footnote 7, there is not strong reason for refusing or restricting development. As such, the Site and Proposed Development would not cause fundamental harm to the purpose of the Green Belt and should be regarded by SACDC to fall squarely within the definition of ‘Grey Belt’. However, the Oaklands Blossom proposal falls narrowly short of meeting the Golden Rules (Criteria A) set out in Paragraphs 67, 155 (d), 156 and 157 of the NPPF by virtue of providing 40% affordable housing rather than 50% affordable housing. It will meet the other parts of the grey belt test, including:

- The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan (para 155). In this case:
  - The Site only comprises small proportion of the Green Belt within the District and is surrounded by roads and/or built form on two sides, while most of the boundaries are enclosed by large hedges and tree, helping to contain the site. As such, the Proposed Development would have a relatively localised impact on the Green Belt. The proposed development would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across all the area of the plan, and would not affect the ability of all of the remaining Green Belt across the plan area from serving all 5 of the remaining purposes. Therefore, the proposal complies with this criterion.
- There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed (para 155):
  - The Council’s Housing Delivery Test is currently 52% of the housing requirement and the Council currently has a housing land supply of 0.9 years from a base date of 1 April 2023. Therefore, the proposal would comply with this criterion
- The development would be in a sustainable (and accessible) location (para’s 155, 110 and 115):
  - The future residents at the Site and the students at the College would be able to access services and facilities using a range of sustainable transport modes. The proposal also includes sustainable transport improvements that would support and encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport. As such, the location of the Proposed Development is and can be made more sustainable.

- Necessary improvements (or contributions) to local or national infrastructure are delivered (para 156, Golden Rules):
  - The Proposed Development will deliver improvements to local infrastructure. The proposal therefore complies with 'Golden Rule' B.
- The provision of new, or improvements to existing, green spaces that are accessible to the public (para 156, Golden Rules):
  - The Proposed Development includes the provision of at least 6.59.ha of public open space within the Site and 744sqm of children's play space.
  - The new public green spaces contribute positively to the landscape setting of the development and support nature recovery, through the provision of a structural landscape buffers and wildlife habitats. The proposal therefore complies with 'Golden Rule' C.

8.17 The Site and Proposed Development would meet the definition of Grey Belt, and would not cause fundamental harm to the purposes of the Green Belt. However, the Oaklands Blossom proposal falls narrowly short of meeting the Golden Rules (Criteria A) set out in Paragraphs 67, 155 (d), 156 and 157 of the NPPF by virtue of providing 40% affordable housing rather than 50% affordable housing. Nonetheless, in accordance with the guidance contained within the NPPF, **substantial weight** must be given to any harm to the purposes of the Green Belt.

8.18 The Proposed Development will deliver a significant number of benefits that, cumulatively, should be given **very substantial weight**. In accordance with Paragraph 153 of the NPPF, Policy 1 of the adopted Local Plan, Policy LG5 of the Draft Local Plan and Policy D1 of the SNP, this package of benefits are the material considerations that provide the very special circumstances (VSC) to enable SACDC to support the Proposed Development. **In essence, the harm to the Green Belt (by reason of its inappropriateness), which is given substantial weight in the planning balance, and any other harms from the proposal (including harm to the character of countryside), are clearly outweighed by the very substantial benefits package being delivered by the Proposed Development.** The VSC case is discussed in greater detail below.

### ***THE VSC CASE***

8.19 There is no statutory definition of what constitutes VSC, nor is there a default list set out in national or local policy. VSC is matter of planning judgement and each case is taken on its own site-specific circumstances and merits.

8.20 The VSC case is multi-layered, but is combined to create a compelling case in support of the Proposed Development. These layers are discussed below.

**i. The Need for More Homes**

- 8.21 There is a housing delivery crisis in England. Chapter 5 of the NPPF (Delivering a sufficient supply of homes) sets out the approach to delivering a sufficient supply of homes. Paragraph 61 states that to support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay. The overall aim should be to meet an area's identified housing need, including with an appropriate mix of housing types for the local community.
- 8.22 Policy 1 of the Local Plan states that the entire St. Albans District is within the Green Belt, except for areas already defined within the settlement boundaries of St. Albans, Harpenden, and a few other specified locations. As a result, there is very limited potential to meet housing needs within existing settlements or on land outside the Green Belt.
- 8.23 Draft Policy SP4 of SACDC'S Draft Local Plan states that following the Government's required 'Standard Method' for calculating local housing need, the SACDC will identify and allocate land for the delivery of at least 14,603 net additional new houses, or 885 per annum in the period 1 October 2024 to 31 March 2041. However, this 885 per annum figure is somewhat redundant, when considered in the context of Government's new Standard Methodology, introduced in December 2024, wherein the Council's annual housing delivery target increases to 1,660 per annum. It was then adjusted in June 2025 to 1,659 to take account of affordability.
- 8.24 SACDC currently have only 0.9 years' (or less) worth of deliverable housing land supply and the latest HDT results (52%) demonstrates the critical need to deliver more homes to meet SACDC's demonstrable need. Even if the draft Local Plan is adopted, SACDC would benefit from a 5-year housing land supply, however:
- Its housing target is out-of-date and SACDC will need to update / amend the draft Local Plan to reflect the new housing target 1,659dpa;
  - This still doesn't stop the application of Grey Belt in the St Albans District, as it is underpinned by the NPPF which is not currently considered by the draft Local Plan; and
  - Even if the draft Local Plan is adopted, SACDC is unlikely improve its HDT score because:
    - It would still not benefit from at HDT score over 75% using its current trajectory - See **Table 8.1** below; and

- It would still not benefit from at HDT score over 75% using a trajectory based on the latest HDT requirements which is not currently considered by the draft Local Plan - See **Table 8.2** below.

<b>Table 8.1</b>			
Year:	SACDC's Target:	Completions <sup>13</sup>	Shortfall
2020-2021 to 2022-2023 <sup>14</sup>	493	399	-94
2023-24	443	365	-78
2024-25 <sup>15</sup>	443	432 (estimated)	-11
2025-2026	885	365 (estimated)	-520
Sub-Total	2,640	1,561	-703 [59% delivery]
2026-2027 (post draft LP adoption)	885	274 (estimated)	-611
2027-2028	885	285 (estimated)	-600
2028-2029	885	171 (estimated)	-714
2029-2030	885	813 (estimated)	-72
2030-2031	885	1,024 (estimated)	+139
Sub-Total	4,425	2,567	-1,858 [58% delivery]
Total	7,065	4,128	-2,937 [58% delivery]

<b>Table 8.2</b>			
Year:	SACDC's Target:	Completions <sup>16</sup>	Shortfall
2020-2021 to 2022-2023 <sup>17</sup>	493	399	-94
2023-24	443	365	-78
2024-25 <sup>18</sup>	443	432 (estimated)	-11
2025-2026	885	365 (estimated)	-520
Sub-Total	2,640	1,561	-703 [59% delivery]
2026-2027 (post draft LP adoption)	1,659	274 (estimated)	-1,385
2027-2028	1,659	285 (estimated)	-1,374
2028-2029	1,659	171 (estimated)	-1,488
2029-2030	1,659	813 (estimated)	-846
2030-2031	1,659	1,024 (estimated)	-635
Sub-Total	8,295	2,567	-5,728 [31% delivery]
Total	10,935	4,128	-6,807 [38% delivery]

8.25 The provision of approximately 283 new market sale homes as part of the Proposed Development, would make a significant contribution to SACDC's demonstrable undersupply of homes. In view of the Council's continuing failure to deliver its chronic level of housing shortage, the delivery of 283 market sale homes on the Site accords with the abovementioned policies

<sup>13</sup> Source: Regulation 19 Consultation Draft Local Plan Housing Trajectory, page 26

<sup>14</sup> Source: Housing Delivery Test (2023)

<sup>15</sup> New HDT targets apply from July 2024

<sup>16</sup> Source: Regulation 19 Consultation Draft Local Plan Housing Trajectory, page 26

<sup>17</sup> Source: Housing Delivery Test (2023)

<sup>18</sup> New HDT targets apply from July 2024

and national guidance and must be given **very substantial weight** in favour of the Proposed Development. This level of weight was applied by SACDC in the determination of the outline planning application by Legal and General at Land at Cooter End Land in Harpenden (ref: 5/2023/0327) and the outline planning application at land at Roundhouse Farm, Roestock Lane, London Colney (5/2022/2736/LSM).

- 8.26 As such, the Site provides a key opportunity to help meet SACDC's housing needs, on suitable Grey Belt land that is located within a sustainable location, in accordance with the objectives of the abovementioned NPPF guidance and adopted / emerging Development Plan policy and guidance.

**ii. The Need for More Affordable Homes**

- 8.27 Paragraphs 63 and 66 of the NPPF, Policies SP4 and HOU2 of the Draft Local Plan and Policies D3 and D7 of the SNP seek to deliver new affordable homes to meet identified needs.
- 8.28 Table 7.11 of the South West Hertfordshire Local Housing Need Assessment Update 2024 identifies that there is a need for 353 net affordable home ownership dwellings per annum over the period. This results in an objectively assessed need for 802 affordable dwellings per annum for the period of up to 2041 in the District.
- 8.29 SACDC's Affordable Housing SPG seeks to secure 35% of all new homes as affordable. Policy HOU2 of the Draft Local Plan and Policies D3 and D7 of the SNP seek to secure 40% of all new homes as affordable. In line with section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations (including the NPPF) indicate otherwise.
- 8.30 As demonstrated in Sections 6, 8 and 9 of this Planning Statement, the Proposed Development will deliver 40% affordable homes which will be secured by way of a legal agreement. This provision exceeds the SACDC's adopted policy position (35%) and will meet SACDC's emerging new target (40%) and Policy D7 of the SNP. As such, it is supported by the objectives of paragraphs 63 and 66 of the NPPF, Policies SP4 and HOU2 of the Draft Local Plan and Policies D3 and D7 of the SNP. Whilst the Proposed Development would be in line with the adopted and Draft Local Plan policies, it would fall short of the 50% requirement in the NPPF 'Golden Rules'. This is a material consideration that is weighed in the planning balance, but should only be afforded **neutral weight** because the affordable housing provision will accord with adopted and Draft Local Plan policy.

- 8.31 In their determination of the planning application (SACDC Ref: 5/2021/0423/LSM) for the Sewell Park, SACDC confirms in paragraphs 8.7.2 of the Planning Referrals Committee report that “...*there is also a clear and pressing need for affordable housing within the District*”. This clear and pressing need is also discussed by the Inspector in the Colney Heath Appeal Decision in June 2021 – see extracts below:

*“...a clear and pressing need for affordable housing within the District” (para 8.7.2)*

- 8.32 This clear and pressing need is also discussed by the Inspector in the Roundhouse Farm decision in 2021 (5/2020/1992) (APP/ B1930/W/20/3265925) – see extracts below:

*“54. The persistent under delivery of affordable housing in both local authority areas presents a critical situation. Taking into account the extremely acute affordable housing position in both SADC and WHBC, I attach very substantial weight to the delivery of up to 45 affordable homes in this location in favour of the proposals.”*

- 8.33 The continued undersupply affordable homes (and market sale homes) in the District has remained the same and has ultimately exacerbate affordability for most families and conceivably an exodus of the younger generation. The table set out on page 135 of SACDC’s Monitoring Report (March 2024) includes the number of affordable homes that have been completed since 1994/95. It confirms that between 1994/95 and 2023/24, SACDC has only delivered an average of 396 homes and an average of 19% affordable housing per annum.

- 8.34 The Proposed Development will help to abate this issue. When this is combined with the critical need for affordable homes in the District, the delivery of 40% affordable homes and the mix of tenures proposed should be given **very substantial weight** in favour of the Proposed Development despite falling short of the golden rules, which is a material consideration. A similar level of weight was applied by SACDC in the determination of the outline planning application by Legal and General at Land at Cooter End Land in Harpenden (ref: 5/2023/0327) and the Burston Garden Centre appeal decision (PP/B1930/W/21/3279463).

### **iii. The Need for More Self/Custom Build Homes**

- 8.35 Under Section 1 of the Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015, local authorities are required to keep a register of those seeking to acquire serviced plots in their area for their own self-build and custom house building. They are also subject to duties under Sections 2 and 2A of the Act to have regard to this and to give enough suitable development permissions to meet the identified demand. Self and custom-build plots could provide market or affordable housing.

- 8.36 Paragraph 63 of the NPPF and Policies SP4 and HOU5 of the Draft Local Plan seek to secure new homes for difference groups, including those wishing to experience self / custom build projects. Policy HOU5 seeks to ensure that 3% of all new homes constructed on Broad Location sites meet the self / custom build definition.
- 8.37 Sections 6 and 8 of this Planning Statement explains that 3% of the of all new homes to be constructed on the Oaklands Blossom site will meet the self / custom build definition. This will be secured by way of condition or legal agreement.
- 8.38 The delivery of self/custom build homes on the Site is supported by the objectives of Paragraph 63 of the NPPF and Policies SP4 and HOU5 of the Draft Local Plan. Due to the critical need for this types of homes, this should be given **moderate weight** in favour of the Proposed Development. This level of weight was applied by SACDC in the determination of the outline planning application by Legal and General at Land at Cooter End Land in Harpenden (ref: 5/2023/0327). Stantec notes that ‘substantial’ weight was applied in decisions relating to Sewell Park (5/2021/0423/LSM), Orchard Drive (5/2021/2730/SSM) and Roundhouse Farm decisions. The planning committee report prepared in relation to the Sewell Park application confirms that “...the Council is currently failing to meet its statutory duty for the provision of plots for self-build housing” (para 8.7.1). This situation is discussed in further detail in the in the Roundhouse Farm appeal decision:

*“51. In the case of these appeals, there are no development plan policies which relate specifically to the provision or delivery of self-building housing in either authority... Furthermore, neither authority has an up-to-date assessment of likely future demand for this type of housing in line with the Planning Practice Guidance. The appellant provided detailed evidence in relation to the Custom Build Register, none of which was disputed. Evidence also presented demonstrated that the statutory duty to provide for base period plot provision has also not been met in either authority, in some periods by a significant margin. Taking into account other secondary data sources, these shortfalls may well be on the conservative side.*

*52. In common with both market housing and affordable housing, the situation in the context of provision of sites and past completions is a particularly poor one. To conclude, I am of the view that the provision of 10 self-build service plots at the appeal site will make a positive contribution to the supply of self-build plots in both local planning authority areas. I am attaching substantial weight to this element of housing supply. “*

**iv. The Need for College Facilities**

8.39 Paragraphs 96c and 103 of the NPPF, Policies 65, 91, 92 and 96 of the Local Plan, Policy C4 of the SNP and Policies SP7, COM1 and COM3 of the Draft Local Plan support the expansion of education and sports facilities. The Oaklands College aspect of the Site is to be designated as a 'College Development Zone' and part of the campus is to be designated as a 'Sports and Community Zone' in Policy COM 1 (Oaklands College Development Zone & Sports and Community Development Zone) of the Draft Local Plan.

8.40 Sections 6 and 8 of this Planning Statement explains that the following education and sport facility enhancements will be delivered by the Proposed Development:

Detailed element:

- Demolition works and renovation of existing buildings;
- Construction of new buildings education facilities in the following zones:
  - Creative Gateway
  - Animal Management
  - High Needs Centre (SEND)
  - Propellor Stage Studio (TV & Film)
  - Sports Hall & Martial Arts Centre
  - Refectory and Kitchen
  - Estates and deliveries
  - Improvements to the Mansion house
  - Improvements to the Construction zone
  - improved pedestrian and vehicular routes, car park, and external learning and recreation landscaping

Outline element:

- Energy Centre
- Recycling Area
- External Sports Pitches & Tracks:
  - Covered Cricket lanes
  - Cricket Pavilion
  - Cricket Pitch & Lanes
  - Games courts
  - All weather 4G pitch
  - Athletics track and field
  - Cycle centre, pump track and skate park
  - Hockey/cycle/athletics pavilion
- New ATR improvements

- 8.41 A large proportion of these improvement will be completed on PDL land within the campus. This should be given substantial weight in accordance with Paragraph 125(c) of the NPPF. The openair facilities and sports pitches will be predominantly located on the greenfield parts of the Campus.
- 8.42 Section 2 of this Planning Statement and the Oaklands College Education Need Statement explains that the comprehensive masterplan for the wider site, working in partnership between Taylor Wimpey and Oaklands College, will deliver fundamental benefits to the College to ensure it meets the requirements of its students and other groups that use the campus,
- 8.43 The delivery of these education facilities on the Site is supported by the objectives of Paragraphs 96c and 103 of the NPPF and Policies 65, 91, 92 and 96 of the Local Plan, Policy C4 of the SNP and Policies SP7, COM1 and COM3 of the Draft Local Plan. The delivery of these facilities should be given **very substantial weight** in favour of the Proposed Development.
- 8.44 In relation to the appeal decision relating the Oaklands Grange at Oaklands College (APP/B1930/W/15/3051164), the Inspector concluded in that case as follows:
- “Paragraph 201. The delivery of significant improvements to the College weighs heavily in favour of the proposals.”*
- 8.45 As highlighted above and in Sections 6 and 8 of this Planning Statement, the Proposed Development includes a new SEND facility with the Oaklands College campus. This will be constructed and operated by Oaklands College and will accommodate SEND students from within the District.
- 8.46 The delivery of the SEND facility will accord with Policy 65 (Education Facilities) of the Local Plan and draft Policy COM1 (Education). Considering the critical need for SEND facilities within the District, this provision should also be given **very substantial** weight, in favour of the Proposed Development.

**v. The Need for Needed Extra Care Homes**

- 8.47 Paragraph 63 of the NPPF seeks to secure homes for different groups, including older people. Policy 43 of the Local Plan and Policies SP4 and HOU3 of the Draft Local Plan support development proposals for specialist housing to meet the needs of older people and people with

disabilities. The draft allocation B4 for the Oaklands Blossom site seeks to secure up to 80 self-contained extra care units.

8.48 Sections 6 and 8 of this Planning Statement explains that an extra care home containing up to 70 new dwellings (Use Class C2) is proposed within the outline phase of the Oaklands Blossom site. 40% of these units will be affordable. It will fall into the definition of “housing with care” contained within Paragraph 63 the NPPF. The extra care home site will not be delivered by TW. It will be disposed of to an extra care operator that is Care Quality Commission (CQC) registered.

8.49 The delivery of Extra Care homes on the Site is supported by the objectives of Paragraph 63 of the NPPF, Policy 43 of the Local Plan, Policies SP4 and HOU3 of the Draft Local Plan and site allocation B4 of the Draft Local Plan. Due to the critical need for such facilities, this should be given **substantial weight** in favour of the Proposed Development. This level of weight was applied by SACDC in the determination of the outline planning application by Legal and General at Land at Cooter End Land in Harpenden (ref: 5/2023/0327).

**vi. The Need for Children’s Home Facilities**

8.50 Paragraph 63 of the NPPF seeks to secure homes for different groups, including children. During pre-application discussions with HCC it has been explained that:

- A large proportion of the children from the District that require homes are being settled in homes outside the District due to a critical shortage of Children’s Home facilities; and
- HCC is unable to deliver children’s home facilities within the District and that it is reliant on new development proposals to help deliver these facilities.

8.51 Sections 6 and 8 of this Planning Statement explains that a 4-bedroom home (Class C2 use) will be made available to HCC<sup>19</sup> in Phase 1 of the Oaklands Blossom site. The location, design and internal layout for the home has been discussed and agreed with HCC.

8.52 The delivery of a children’s home on the Site is supported by the objectives of Paragraphs 63 of the NPPF. In view of the critical need for this type of this type of facility in the District, this should be given **substantial weight** in favour of the Proposed Development.

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<sup>19</sup> Subject to agreeing terms

8.53 The abovementioned benefits (i. to vi) would be sufficient to meet the VSC test under Paragraph 153 of the NPPF. However, the Proposed Development will deliver other benefits, which are summarised below.

**vii. Public use of College Facilities**

8.54 Paragraphs 96c and 103 of the NPPF, Policies 91 and 96 of the Local Plan, Policy COM3 of the Draft Local Plan and Policies C4 and E6 of the SNP seek to secure improved local facilities such as access to education / sports college facilities that will benefit the needs, health and well-being of the wider commuting.

8.55 Section 2 of this Planning Statement and the Oaklands College Education Need Statement explains that the comprehensive masterplan for the wider site, working in partnership between Taylor Wimpey and Oaklands College, deliver substantial benefits to the local community.

8.56 Allowing the public to use college facilities on the Site is supported by the objectives of Paragraphs 96c and 103 of the NPPF, Policies 91 and 96 of the Local Plan, Policy COM 3 of the Draft Local Plan and Policy C4 and E6 of the SNP. This should be given **very substantial** weight in favour of the Proposed Development.

**viii. Delivery of Land for a new Primary School**

8.57 Policy 65 (Education Facilities) of the Local Plan and draft Policy COM1 (Education) explain that St Albans is an area of high primary school need and with growth there will likely be a long term need for the provision of a new primary school. In this context:

- The Draft Local Plan, and its site allocation B4 (East St Albans) for the Oaklands Blossom site seeks the provision of land for a 2FE primary school (including Early Years provision) to serve the new and wider community as part of the development proposals for the Site; and
- HCC have indicated that they support the provision of a 2FE primary school on the Site as part of the Proposed Development as this will respond to a precautionary / preliminary need of the District, it would add to the choice of provision in St Albans would ensure that the Proposed Development is fully mitigating its own impact.

8.58 The Applicants' Education Report concludes that HCC have confirmed their preference to see a Primary School reserved on the Oaklands Blossom site. This is on the basis that schools within a safe, statutory walking distance of the proposed new dwellings are unlikely to be able to accommodate the full child yield of the Oaklands Blossom development.

- 8.59 The Proposed Development includes land for a 2FE primary school within Oaklands Blossom and a monetary contribution towards constructing the school will be provided to mitigate the impact of the Proposed Development on primary school places. The early years contribution would be provided through the provision of nursery places at the new primary school. The capacity of the Primary School will be larger than is required to accommodate the pupils from the Oaklands Blossom development, which means that additional capacity would be available to accommodate other pupils within the relevant statutory walking distance catchment area.
- 8.60 The secondary school would be a monetary contribution towards expanded provision if a deficit in places is demonstrated by HCC.
- 8.61 The provision of land for a new primary school will accord with the NPPF, Policy 65 of the Local Plan and site allocation B4 (East St Albans) of the Draft Local Plan. The provision of land for education facilities should be given **substantial** weight in favour of the Proposed Development.
- 8.62 SACDC was aware of the rare opportunity of delivering a new primary school in the District when preparing paragraph 8.7.9 of the Committee Report for the development at land south of Chiswell Green Lane (APP/B1930/W/22/3313110) which explains that:

*“... the provision of land for a new 2FE primary school is a benefit of the application...  
The provision of land for a new 2FE primary school is therefore afforded substantial positive weight.*

**ix. Delivery of Community Floorspace & Local Centre**

- 8.63 Paragraphs 96c, 98 and 103 of the NPPF, Policies 55 of the Local Plan, Policies SP1, SP3, SP6, SP7 and COM3 of the Draft Local Plan and Policy C4 of the SNP seek to secure improved community and local shopping facilities to meet local demand. Site allocation B4 (East St Albans) of the Draft Local Plan also seeks the delivery of a new local centre to provide local services, including commercial development opportunities.
- 8.64 Policy S6 (City Town and Village Centres and Retail) of the Draft Local Plan also seeks to maintain and enhance a hierarchy of retail centres based on the town centre first principle and develop new local centres within the Broad Locations to serve the day-to-day needs of the relevant wider resident catchment population.

8.65 The Proposed Development will deliver a new local centre in Oaklands Blossom and includes:

- Up to 530 sqm (approx.) of retail floorspace (Use Class E (a to f)) contained within flexible commercial units; and
- Up to 100sqm (approx.) of community floorspace (Use Class F) contained within a self-contained unit which will potentially be operated and managed by Sandridge Parish Council and

8.66 The retail units will have access to 20 visitor car parking spaces and 5 visitor cycle parking spaces. The community floorspace will have access to 11 visitor car parking spaces and 2 visitor cycle parking spaces.

8.67 The Applicants' Retail Capacity Statement concludes that:

- There is scope for a proposed local centre to support around 750 sqm GIA of Class E (retail and leisure) floorspace on the Oaklands Blossom site to support the new community and the existing surrounding community.
- This could be split to include a local convenience store of c330 sqm and a small newsagents (in total to provide c400 sqm gross of convenience goods floorspace) and/or c350 sqm of smaller local stores/facilities to cater for hair salons or beauty uses; a café/restaurant; dry cleaning or other specific comparison retailing.
- The proposed centre should not aim to attract an unrealistic rate of retention for comparison goods expenditure to limit competition with other centres such as The Quadrant, which should continue to be a focus for this type of shopping within the area to maintain its vitality and viability.

8.68 The Proposed Development would be in accordance with Paragraphs 96c, 98 and 103 of the NPPF, Policies 55 of the Local Plan, Policies SP1, SP3, SP6, SP7 and COM3 of the Draft Local Plan and Policy C4 of the SNP and site allocation B4 (East St Albans) of the Draft Local Plan. This provision should be given **moderate** weight in favour of the Proposed Development.

**x. Provision of New ATRs & Publicly Accessible Open Space**

8.69 Paragraphs 96a, 103, 105 and 151 of the NPPF, Policy 97 of the Local Plan, Policy NEB12 of the Draft Local Plan and D7 of the SNP seek to encourage social interaction and the delivering new open publicly accessible open space, play space, new bridle paths, improved footpaths and to provide access to the Green Belt.

8.70 Section 2 of this Planning Statement explains that the Proposed Development will:

- Provide generous areas of open space across the Site that will be publicly accessible in the heart of the development with green corridors, new tree lined routes;
- Provide play space facilities for different age groups which will be accessible to the local community; and
- Secure pedestrian and cycle routes, including permeable new ATRs and rambler's routes through the Site with connections to and from existing PRow into the Green Belt, Sandpit Lane, House Lane, Barnfield Road, Jersey Lane (north), Oaklands Lane (east), Hatfield Road, Colney Health Lane, Abbey Line (south) and Oaklands Grange (west).

8.71 The Proposed Development will therefore create further recreational and exercise opportunities that will contribute to the health and wellbeing of the existing and proposed community. It will also make a significant contribution to increasing the quality of the environment, providing a range of social and recreational experiences.

8.72 Although the finer details of the landscaping will form part of the subsequent Reserved Matters submissions, it is considered that the Proposed Development will be in accordance with the objectives of Paragraphs 96a, 103, 105 and 151 of the NPPF, Policy 97 of the Local Plan, Policy NEB12 of the Draft Local Plan and D7 of the SNP. This should be given **moderate** weight in favour of the Proposed Development. This level of weight was applied by SACDC in the determination of the outline planning application by Legal and General at Land at Cooter End Land in Harpenden (ref: 5/2023/0327).

#### **xi. Other Local Transport & Connectivity Improvements**

8.73 Section 9 in the NPPF sets out the importance of developments encouraging and facilitating an increase in the use of and access to sustainable transport methods. Paragraph 109 of the NPPF seeks to limit car parking levels and to promote walking, cycling and the use of public transport when designing new proposals.

8.74 Paragraph 115 of the NPPF sets out that it should be ensured that suitable transport modes are prioritised taking account of the vision for the site, the type of development and its location; safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users; the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance; and any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.

- 8.75 Paragraph 116 of the NPPF 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 following mitigation, would be severe, considering all reasonable future scenarios.
- 8.76 Policy 34 of the Local Plan sets out a number of highway considerations in which Developments should be assessed against which are generally consistent with those of Section 9 of the NPPF.
- 8.77 Policy 35 of the Local Plan sets out that to mitigate the highway effects of development proposals, the District Council, in conjunction with the County Council where appropriate, will seek highway improvements or contributions to highway improvements and/or improvements to the public transport system from developers whose proposals would otherwise result in detrimental highway conditions.
- 8.78 Draft Strategic Policy SP8 of the emerging Local Plan states that the Council will prioritise the use of active and sustainable transport modes and deliver accessibility improvements to the transport and highways network.
- 8.79 Draft Policy TRA1 of the emerging Local Plan sets out that proposals must demonstrate: i) that safe and suitable access can be provided for walking, cycling and vehicles, accommodating equestrians where appropriate; ii) that development would not lead to highway safety problems or cause unacceptable impacts upon the transport network; and iii) suitable evidence in relation to i. and ii, including the provision of suitable Transport Statements or Transport Assessments along with other appropriate evidence where required.
- 8.80 The Proposed Development will deliver bus route improvements and off-site bus shelter improvements and local road /cycle network improvement thereby contributing to the strategic transport initiatives set out in the LCWIP and HCC South West Growth and Transport Plan. Considering the range of transport improvements that would be delivered through S106 planning obligations and Section 278 off-site works, **moderate weight** is afforded to the locational and transport sustainability benefits of the proposal. This level of weight was applied by SACDC in the determination of the outline planning application by Legal and General at Land at Cooter End Land in Harpenden (ref: 5/2023/0327) and the outline planning application at land at Roundhouse Farm, Roestock Lane, London Colney (5/2022/2736/LSM).

## xii. BNG Enhancements

- 8.81 The Environment Act 2021, Policy 106 of the Local Plan and Policies NEB6 and NEB7 of the Draft Local Plan require development proposals to have regard to the biodiversity already

present within a development site. From November 2023 the Act and Policies NEB6 and NEB7 also seek to secure a minimum of 10% net gain in biodiversity through on-site and off-site provisions.

- 8.82 Section 6 of this Planning Statement and the BNG Metric submitted by the Applicants demonstrate that the Proposed Development will deliver a 10% bio-diversity net gain. The long-term management and maintenance for the existing and new biodiversity will be secured via a legal agreement. This will meet the requires of the Environment Act 2021. This should be given **limited** weight in favour of the Proposed Development. This level of weight was applied by SACDC in the determination of the outline planning application by Legal and General at Land at Cooter End Land in Harpenden (ref: 5/2023/0327).

### **xiii. Socio-economic benefits**

- 8.83 Paragraphs 39 and 85 of the NPPF explains requires planning authorities to work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity. Policies EMP5 and SP5 of the Draft Local Plan supports proposals that result in economic growth and jobs in the District.
- 8.84 The Applicants' Socio-Economic Statement considers the existing socio-economic conditions of the Site and surrounding area and provides an assessment of the social and economic benefits associated with the Proposed Development.

### Construction Phase

- 8.85 It is estimated that the Oaklands Blossom and Oaklands College proposals (combined) will support 158 direct construction jobs each month over the proposed 8-year construction period (starting 2026/2027). Employment will be created across all construction disciplines from ground workers to construction management. It is also estimated that a further 63 indirect jobs will be created because of construction of the Oaklands Blossom site.
- 8.86 Gross Value Added (GVA) will be created via the direct and indirect construction jobs. Oxford Economics estimate that the average GVA per construction worker in the SACDC area is £89,488 per annum. Applied to the 158 direct construction jobs supported by the Proposed Development, this would generate approximately £113.4m of GVA over the 8-year construction period. Applying the national average GVA per worker (across all sectors) of £60,234 to the 63 indirect construction jobs supported by the Proposed Development, this would generate approximately £30.5m of GVA over the 8-year construction period. This would provide a

combined GVA from direct and indirect construction employment of £143.9m over the construction period. This does not consider the GVA generated through the construction-related jobs as a result of expanding Oaklands Colleges facilities.

#### Operational Phase

- 8.87 It is estimated that the local centre (approx. 530sqm commercial floorspace) and the community space on the Oaklands Blossom site will support 29 FTE jobs. The children's home will secure 1 FTE job, the extract care facility will secure 42 FTE jobs and the College proposals will secure 59 FTE jobs. The equates to 131 FTE jobs, but does not consider the additional FTE jobs generated by the primary school.
- 8.88 Gross Value Added (GVA) will be created via the FTE jobs. Using the Oxford Economics estimate that the average GVA per FTE worker in the SACDC area is £54,341 per annum to the 131 FTE jobs estimated to be delivered by the Oaklands Blossom development, this would generate approximately £7.1m of GVA during the operational phase.
- 8.89 Based on the average of Council Tax bands (groups A and H) for 2025/2026, relating specifically to SACDC, the Oaklands Blossom site's 472 homes could generate around £1.3m in Council Tax payments per annum. This additional revenue can be used by SACDC towards local services such as education, libraries, social care, emergency services, maintaining parks and recreation facilities, street lighting and transport.
- 8.90 Based on the average of Council Tax bands (groups A and H) for 2025/2026, relating specifically to SACDC, the Oaklands Blossom site's 472 homes and 70 Extra care homes could generate around £920,287 in Council Tax payments per annum. This additional revenue can be used by SACDC towards local services such as education, libraries, social care, emergency services, maintaining parks and recreation facilities, street lighting and transport.
- 8.91 The 472 homes and 70 Extra care homes households created by the Proposed Development could generate an additional £17.9m in commercial expenditure (convenience, comparison and leisure) per annum.
- 8.92 In term of impact on existing local health and open space facilities, the Socio Economic Statement explains that:
- On the basis that the number of available GP places within the Study Area (2,393 places) is more than the additional demand for GP places created by the Proposed Development (1,278 places), it is considered that the Proposed Development will have

little impact on the existing GP provision, as all demand for GP places created by the Proposed Development can be accommodated within the existing GP provision; and

- The Oaklands Blossom development will benefit from a range of open space which is intended to be multifunctional. The proposals comprise a park and garden spanning the central area of the Site and incorporates a LEAP. A community growing area and orchard is also proposed. Semi-natural greenspace surrounds the whole Site and amenity space is interwoven within the Site. This is in addition to the provision of amenity greenspace and play space being delivered on-site, as set out the table below:

<b>Open Space Type</b>	<b>Proposed Development's Requirement (sqm)</b>	<b>Proposed Development's Provision (sqm)</b>
Parks and Gardens	9,072	10,082
Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace	44,212	38,820
Amenity Greenspace	19,550	23,502
Provision for Children and Young People		
LAP (Local Area of Play)		
LEAP (Local Equipped Area of Play)	767	744
NEAP (Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play)		
Allotments	5,750	470

8.93 In term of impact on existing primary and secondary education facilities, the Education Report explains that:

Primary School Education:

- Working on a worst-case scenario basis of 0.525 Primary School aged pupils per dwelling (excluding extra care), the child yield of 472 dwellings is 248 pupils (1.2 FE equivalent). Once the development mix for the goes through the demographic model, a more likely child yield will be in the region of 0.43 for Primary, which would equate to 203 Primary School aged pupils (circa 1FE);
- There are currently 18 state funded schools accommodating primary school aged children within a two-mile radius of the Oaklands Blossom site. When looking across the nine schools (a combined capacity of 2,625 pupil places) that are within statutory walking distance of the proposed new dwellings, they collectively currently have 208 spare places (1FE), with the highest proportion of spare places in Reception Year, indicating that rolls may be falling. However,
  - HCC is forecasting that the roll numbers at these schools will fall significantly in the coming years, so that by the 2028/29 academic year they will have a

- collective spare capacity of 433 spaces, which is over 2FE's worth of spare capacity;
- The number of spare Reception Year places is expected to rise from 57 (2FE) in 2025/26 to 80 in 2029/30, according to the latest projections by HCC.
- This is over 22% surplus capacity, and suggests that the pupils from the Oaklands Development will be able to be comfortably accommodated within the existing education landscape.
- Notwithstanding the above, HCC have confirmed in pre-application discussions their preference to see a primary school site reserved on this development, which has been agreed by the Applicants, based on safeguarding future provision, and prioritising placemaking, HCC state that this is the preferred form of mitigation to reserve this space to allow for this option to come forward if it is required. Accordingly, the primary school site is included in the description of the development, and discussions will be ongoing with HCC regarding the need for this provision at appropriate junctures;

#### Secondary School Education:

- Working on a worst-case scenario basis of 0.36 Secondary School aged pupils per dwelling (excluding extra care), the child yield of 472 dwellings is 170 pupils (1.1 FE equivalent);
- There are 11 state funded schools accommodating secondary school aged children (a combined capacity of 9,275 pupil places in years 7-11) within a three-mile radius of the proposed new dwellings. Of these schools, at least six are within three-miles walking distance of the Oaklands Blossom site.
- There were (2024/25 academic year) 84 spare places in the six closest schools to the proposed new dwellings. This is likely less than the total child yield from the Oaklands Blossom development. On that basis, there is the potential to require either expansions or new provision to serve the area based on the current demand.
- However, in the 2024/25 academic year, the other nine schools (a combined roll of 8,866 pupils) had 409 spare places (5% surplus capacity). HCC is also forecasting a fall in pupil numbers in the coming years, so that by:
  - The 2030/31 academic year, the nine schools will have a 671 spare places (4.5FE, or over 7% surplus capacity).
  - The 2031/32 academic year, the nine schools is expected to have spare capacity of 255 pupils in Year 7, which is 8.5FE, or over 14% surplus capacity. This is due to the forecast smaller numbers of pupils working their way through the primary phase into secondary school education.
- HCC has confirmed through pre-app consultation in relation to this project that although St Albans Secondary Schools are popular, and draw from a wide geographical area, there is not a significant amount of provision available outside of St Albans, which may

necessitate new provision. However, the requirement for a new secondary school will not be required within the Proposed Development boundary, nor included within any Section 106 agreement. If land is secured by HCC, it will be dealt with separately by HCC directly.

8.94 Early Years and Special Education Need and Disability (SEND) provision will be included in ongoing discussions with HCC as the planning application is determined. That said, it is expected that the early years provision (0.07 pupil per dwelling) will form part of the primary school provision provided by HCC on the Oaklands Blossom site. A new SEND facilities forms part of the Oaklands College proposal.

8.95 The Proposed Development would generate several socio-economic benefits in accordance with the objectives of Paragraphs 39 and 85 of the NPPF and Policies EMP5 and SP5 of the Draft Local Plan. This should be given **significant** weight in favour of the Proposed Development. This level of weight was applied by SACDC in the determination of the outline planning application by Legal and General at Land at Cooter End Land in Harpenden (ref: 5/2023/0327

8.96 Stantec notes that in relation to the Clappers Lane appeal decision (APP/L3815/W/3291160), the Inspector concluded in that case as follows:

*“The appellant has given an indication of the significant input into the local economy that the development would make. Therefore, even though the economic benefits associated with the construction would only be short term and most residential development would result in additional expenditure in the local area, I have given significant weight to the resulting support to economic growth and productivity from the development.”* (Paragraph 95)

8.97 In relation to the Rectory Farm appeal decision (APP/D0121/W/21/3286677), the Inspector concluded in that case as follows:

*“The proposal would also deliver significant economic benefits both during construction and as a result of increased spending from new residents, which should be given significant weight.”* (Paragraph 149)

## **B. MEETING SITE ALLOCATION OBJECTIVES**

8.98 Section 7 of this Statement explains that the Site is the subject of two site-specific allocations. These are referred to a B4 (East St Albans) in the Draft Local Plan and D7 (East St Albans) in the SNP and set out minimum quantum of development requirements and design requirements.

8.99 **Appendix 1** of this Planning Statement summarises the development and design requirements and explains how the Proposed Development meets these requirements or justifies non-compliance where appropriate. Taken as a whole, this Appendix demonstrates that the objectives of these Site allocations are being delivered. This should be given **substantial weight** in the planning balance and determination in the planning application.

## C. SUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE LOCATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

### Sequential Test

8.100 Paragraph 170 of the NPPF sets out that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk (whether existing or future). Where development is necessary in such areas, the development should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere. Paragraph 173 of the NPPF states that a sequential risk-based approach should also be taken to individual applications in areas known to be at risk now or in future from any form of flooding, by following the steps set out below.

8.101 Paragraphs 174, 175 and 177 explain that:

- Within this context the aim of the sequential test is to steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding from any source. Development should not be allocated or permitted if there are reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower risk of flooding. The strategic flood risk assessment will provide the basis for applying this test.
- The sequential test should be used in areas known to be at risk now or in the future from any form of flooding except in situations where a site-specific flood risk assessment demonstrates that no built development within the site boundary, including access or escape routes, land raising or other potentially vulnerable elements, would be located on an area that would be at risk of flooding from any source, now and in the future (having regard to potential changes in flood risk).
- Having applied the sequential test, if it is not possible for development to be in areas with a lower risk of flooding (considering wider sustainable development objectives), the exception test may have to be applied. The need for the exception test will depend on the potential vulnerability of the site and of the development proposed, in line with the Flood Vulnerability Classification set out in Annex 3 of the NPPF. Residential development, residential institutions such as care homes, hospitals and non-residential

uses for health services are all classified as 'more vulnerable' development in Annex 3 of the NPPF.

8.102 In this case, the section 7 of the Applicants' Flood Risk Sequential Test (FRST) explains that both elements of the 'exception test' should be satisfied for the Proposed Development to be permitted.

8.103 Paragraph 181 states that when determining any planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere and where appropriate, applications should be supported by flood risk assessments. It states that development should only be allowed in areas at risk of flooding where, considering the FRA (and the sequential and exception test, as applicable), it can be demonstrated that:

- a) within the site, the most vulnerable development is in areas of lowest flood risk, unless there are overriding reasons to prefer a different location;
- b) the development is appropriately flood resistant and resilient such that, in the event of a flood, it could be quickly brought back into use without significant refurbishment;
- c) it incorporates sustainable drainage systems, unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate;
- d) any residual risk can be safely managed; and
- e) safe access and escape routes are included where appropriate, as part of an agreed emergency plan.

8.104 The NPPG was updated on 25th August 2022 to bring it in line with the changes introduced to the NPPF in 2021. There are now clearer requirements for multifunctional SUDS; the Sequential and Exception Tests have been updated to consider surface water; the definition of functional floodplain (Flood Zone 3b) has been changed; and there is increased promotion of Natural Flood Management (NFM) in new developments.

8.105 Policy 84 of the Local Plan explains that SACDC will consult with the National Rivers Authority on all matters likely to affect the water environment to reduce the risk of flooding and to ensure proper management of the river catchment. It also explains that in areas liable to flood, development, or the intensification of existing development, will not normally be permitted. Appropriate flood protection will generally be required where the redevelopment of existing developed areas is permitted in areas at risk from flooding.

8.106 Policy NEB8 of the Draft Local Plan requires proposals located within flood zones (i.e. Flood Zones 2 or 3, or sites within Flood Zone 1 where there is an identified flood risk) need to meet the requirements of the sequential and exception tests, in accordance with national policy. The

Policy also sets out when proposals will not be permitted once the sequential and exceptions test have been applied.

- 8.107 The Applicants' Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) demonstrates that majority of the Site is located within Flood Zone 1 according to the Environment Agency (EA) Flood Zone maps, indicating a low probability of flooding from fluvial and/or tidal sources. However, a small area in the southeast is designated to be within Flood Zones 2 or 3, indicating a medium to high risk of fluvial and/or tidal flooding. The two areas of the Site within which built form development is proposed are both located within Flood Zone 1. However, the entrance to the Site from Sandpit Lane and internal vehicular routes / open space provision will crossover areas known to be at risk of 'any form of flooding', thereby requiring a Sequential Test to be undertaken in accordance with the guidelines set out in Paragraph 175 of the NPPF and SACDC's Level 2 FRA (2024).
- 8.108 As explained in Section 2 of this Planning Statement the proposals for demolition, renovation and construction of buildings at the existing Oaklands College campus is a key part of the planning application. The Site is the only site which can deliver 'the proposed development' and the range of interconnected benefits, for which there is demonstrable need. Therefore, by the description for which permission is sought (see Section 6 of this Planning Statement), there are no alternative reasonably available sites that can deliver the Proposed Development, which will provide the very substantial benefits at the existing Oaklands College campus and for the local community.
- 8.109 The Applicants' FRST and FRA demonstrate and concludes that:
- A comprehensive assessment of sites has taken place across St Albans City and District Council area. Having considered all the sites and series of sites that could accommodate the development, regarding the flexibility afforded in terms of site area and capacity requirements, there are not any other reasonably available sites for the proposed development for which permission is sought;
  - The Site is therefore the sequentially preferable site for the Proposed Development and passes the Flood Risk Sequential Test;
  - The habitable, commercial or education-related buildings within the Proposed Development will be in areas of lowest risk of flooding; and
  - The surface water runoff from the Proposed Development can be managed sustainably to ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere.
- 8.110 The Proposed Development will accord with the objectives of Paragraphs 170, 174, 175, 177 and 181 of the NPPF, the NPPG guidance, Policy 84 of the Local Plan and Policy NEB8 of the Draft Local Plan.

### Sustainable and Accessible Location

8.111 Paragraphs 11, 77, 109, 111 and 155 of the NPPF, Policy 2 of the adopted Local Plan and Policy SP1 of the Draft Local Plan seek to ensure that new development is in suitable and sustainable locations that are well connected and supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities, including limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes.

8.112 The evidence base produced by SACDC has consistently shown the Site to be an appropriate location for new housing and expanded education provision. For example:

- SACDC agreed in its SHLAA (May 2018) that the Site should be further considered for potential housing development;
- SACDC's HELAA (2021) which confirms that the Site (SAN-06-21: East St Albans) has been identified as a 'potential site for housing';
- SACDC' Green Belt Recommended Broad Location Proformas (2024) which confirms that the Site (East St Albans) is recommended to progress as a Broad Location site;
- The Site is identified as a Broad Location B4 (East St Albans), for a minimum of 472 new homes in the Draft Local Plan; and
- The Site is identified within the Oaklands College Development Zone & Sports and Community Development Zone (COM1) in the Draft Local Plan.

8.113 In addition to the above:

- The Site is located adjacent (within 400m buffer) to a Tier 1 settlement (St Albans City) and in a highly accessible location (as demonstrated by the Applicants' Transport Assessment);
- The Site has access to all the shops and socio-economic services provided by the settlement and in the local area (as demonstrated in the Applicants' Socio-Economic Statement);
- The Site is highly accessible by various modes of transport (as demonstrated in Applicants' Transport Assessment). By introducing a new local centre, new facilities within Oaklands College and new ATR improvements to encourage travel by foot and cycling and proposing enhancements to public transport modes, the Proposed Development has sought to minimise the number and length of journeys need to employment, leisure, education and other activities in accordance with Paragraphs 109 and 111 of the NPPF;
- There will be no unacceptable impact on highway safety and, following mitigation, the impact of the Proposed Development on the local road network will not be sever in

accordance with Paragraph 116 of the NPPF;

- There are no significant environmental, physical, or other technical constraints that should prevent the redevelopment of the Site, as discussed in Section 10 and Appendix 2; and
- The Proposed Development would three overarching objectives (economic, social and environmental) as set out in Paragraph 8 of the NPPF for which there is a 'presumption in favour'.

8.114 SACDC recognised that the District is heavily constrained by the Green Belt and other designations, and that SACDC is failing in its obligations and has adopted a more positive approach (a presumption) towards proposals that would boost housing supply. The Site represents a deliverable source of housing land in a sustainable location devoid of any constraints.

8.115 In accordance with Paragraphs 11, 77, 109, 111 and 155 of the NPPF, Policy 2 of the adopted Local Plan and Policy SP1 of the Draft Local Plan the Site is in a suitable and sustainable location. This weighs in favour of the Proposed Development and the development of the Site can therefore help reduce pressures on less sustainable locations elsewhere. The Applicants consider that **substantial weight** should be given to this benefit of the Proposed Development.

#### **D. INTEGRATED INTO THE SETTLEMENT AND LANDSCAPE**

8.116 Chapter 12 of the NPPF, Policy 1 of the adopted Local Plan, Policy D7 of the SNP and Policy B4 (East St Albans) and COM1 of the Draft Local Plan seek to ensure that new development in the Green Belt integrates with the existing settlement pattern and landscape. Siting, design and external appearance are particularly important and additional landscaping will normally be required. Accordingly, the landscape-led vision for the Site is defined by the following key elements:

- Integration with the existing settlement – The character and design of the Proposed Development is in-keeping with that of the adjacent settlement to which it abuts, particularly in relation to its layout, grain, street pattern, landscape and spaces, movement network and arrangement of development to create a coherent identity for new residents and the existing community to identify with;
- Integration with the existing landscape – The combination of retaining the existing boundary trees and hedges and intruding landscape bunds/buffers on the adjacent land will help screen and integrate the Proposed Development into the Green Belt;
- Green Feel - Incorporating retained trees and hedgerows and introducing new planting will create a green character across the Site. New landscaping features will define

streets and space, frame attractive views and help to define the different characteristics of the Site;

- Views to the woodland and the Green Core - The gentle level change provides an opportunity to positively respond to the topography and provide visual green connections throughout the Site; and
- Connected Communities - The Site's location and offsite connections offers the potential to bring together the new residents with existing communities of adjoining residential areas around a green core and new local centre. A network of ATRs and off street green routes with foot and cycle connections through the Site will provide access for the enlarged community for recreation and play, whilst offering links to the wider network.

8.117 The Applicants' LVIA and Green Belt Assessment and Design and Access Statement demonstrate that the Proposed Development will be read as a logical extension (integration) to the existing settlement pattern, will be visually attractive and reflect the character of the area and will be softened to integrated within the landscape through the establishment of substantial areas of new tree planting, ecology enhancements and landscape bunding.

8.118 As mentioned in Section 5 of this Planning Statement the comprehensive masterplan has been the subject of extension scrutiny by the SACDC's officers and HCC officers through pre-application design-focused discussions. The process has assessed how the Proposed Development meet with the design objectives of the NPPF, the SNP, the National Design Guide and SACDC's Strategic Sites Design Guidance. This pre-application process has also followed the guidance contained within the National Model Design Codes and Building for a Healthy Life which seeks to improve the design of new development, and is referred to in Paragraph 138 of the NPPF.

8.119 The landscape-led masterplan vision for the Site that has evolved through the pre-application process ensures that Proposed Development will integrate with the existing settlement pattern and landscape in the local area, in accordance with the objectives of Chapter 12 of the NPPF, Policy 1 of the adopted Local Plan, Policy D7 of the SNP and Policy B4 of the Draft Local Plan. This should be given **significant** weight in favour of the Proposed Development, in accordance with the guidance set out in Paragraph 130 of the NPPF.

## **E. GREEN BELT COMPENSATORY MEASURES**

8.120 Policies LG5 and LG6 of the Draft Local Plan also requires development in the Green Belt to:

- a) Look for opportunities that arise through development to proactively manage Green Belt land and should include infrastructure provision identified in this Plan that is essential to ensure sustainable development across the District and beyond, that demonstrates ‘very special circumstances’;
- b) Include compensatory measures to align with nation policy, such as
  - New or enhanced green infrastructure;
  - Woodland planting;
  - Landscape and visual enhancements (beyond those needed to mitigate the immediate impacts of the proposal);
  - Improvements to biodiversity, habitat connectivity and natural capital;
  - New or enhanced walking cycling or equestrian routes; or
  - Improved access to new, enhanced or existing recreational and playing field provision.
- c) Retain existing hedgerows and trees and other areas of biodiversity value such as ponds;
- d) Enhance existing green and blue infrastructure links within their sites, and connect any fragmented links, to provide biodiversity corridors (also known as wildlife corridors). Development must also take account of green and blue infrastructure links beyond their sites and try to integrate their designs with them and not create severance through poor design;
- e) Maintain any Public Rights of Way (PRoW) across / through the Site, ensuring provision of a route that is safe and overlooked, is sufficient in width to easily allow the passing of two people, and is carefully designed to become a positive landscape feature. the PROW routes will be provided to the satisfaction of the Council and the relevant highway authority;
- f) Ensure access to adjacent PRoW are facilitated in a safe and direct manner and maintain linkages that provide for appropriate utility and recreational use, and ensure that improvements are enabled to mitigate for the increased user impact of the development on the fabric of the network, including through good design; and
- g) Provide woodland buffer planting when adjacent to established urban areas overlooking what was once open countryside.

8.121 This Planning Statement describes the infrastructure provision that ensures that a sustainable form of development is delivered which supports a VSC case. The landscape strategy submitted in support of the planning application explains how the remaining green belt land will be pro-

actively managed and that the Proposed Development includes compensatory measures such as new or enhanced green infrastructure, new tree planting, improvements to biodiversity, habitat connectivity and natural capital, new and enhanced walking cycling or equestrian routes, improved access to new recreational and playing field provision, retains existing hedgerows and trees (unless removal is unavailable), enhanced green and blue infrastructure links, and maintains existing and creates new safe and accessible ATRs. The Proposed Development also is set back from the existing woodlands to ensure these existing buffers maintain the open countryside character. As such, the Proposed Development will accord with the objectives of Policy LG6 of the Draft Local Plan.

## F. CONCLUSION

8.122 This section of the Planning Statement robustly demonstrates that:

- The Site and the Proposed Development is Grey Belt development, however it falls narrowly short of meeting the Golden Rules required for grey belt development. As such, it is regarded to be inappropriate development within the Green Belt that should be given **substantial weight**;
- Nonetheless, the harm to the Green Belt (by reason of its inappropriateness) and any other harms from the proposal, are clearly outweighed by the significant package of benefits being delivered by the Proposed Development that should be given **very substantial weight**. Therefore, very special circumstances existing in this case to gain SACDC support under Paragraph 153 of the NPPF;
- The Proposed Development will deliver the development and design requirements of two site-specific allocations (B4 (East St Albans) and COM1 (Oaklands College Development Zone & Sports and Community Development Zone)) in the Draft Local Plan and D7 (East St Albans) in the SNP;
- The Site is in an accessible and sustainable location in accordance with Paragraphs 110 and 115 of the NPPF; and
- As a result of pre-application design-focused discussions with SACDC and HCC, the Site and the Proposed Development successfully integrates with the existing settlement pattern and surrounding landscape and delivers Green Belt compensatory measures.

8.123 Accordingly, the principle of the Proposed Development is supported by community infrastructure, as sought by Policy SP3 and SP7 of the Draft Local Plan and is supported by the objectives of the NPPF and the Council's adopted and emerging policies, particularly as the Proposed Development will result in significant benefits that collectively should be given **very substantial weight**.

8.124 This planning case is very similar to the cases that were supported by SACDC and Inspectors when determining the planning applications referred to in Table 4.1 in Section 4 of this Planning Statement.

## **9 Planning Considerations – Part 2 (Affordable Housing Statement & Heads of Terms)**

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

9.1 This section of the Planning Statement sets out the consideration of the Proposed Development against relevant planning policy and guidance relating to:

- Affordable housing delivery; and
- Heads of Terms.

### **B. AFFORDABLE HOUSING STATEMENT**

9.2 Paragraph 64 of the NPPF states that ‘where a need for affordable housing is identified, planning policies should specify the type of affordable housing required (including the minimum proportion of Social Rent homes required), and expect it to be met on-site unless: a) off-site provision or an appropriate financial contribution in lieu can be robustly justified; and b) the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities’.

9.3 Paragraph 66 of the NPPF states that where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed, planning policies and decisions should expect that the mix of affordable housing required meets identified local needs, across Social Rent, other affordable housing for rent and affordable home ownership tenures’

9.4 First Homes (discounted by 30% against market value) are Central Government’s preferred choice of discounted market tenure and should account for at least 25% of all affordable housing delivered by developers. This is explained in a Ministerial Statement published on 24th May 2021.

9.5 Policy 7A of the Local Plan explains that SACDC seeks to provide 200 affordable houses per annum. Affordable housing will be negotiated on sites of over 0.4 hectares or 15 or more dwellings.

9.6 SACDC’s Affordable Housing SPG (2004) sets a site size threshold above which SACDC seeks an element of affordable housing of 25 dwellings or 1 hectare. The percentage of affordable housing required will normally be 35%.

9.7 Draft Policy HOU2 of the emerging Local Plan states that the Council will require residential development proposals (Use Class C3) with a gain of 10 or more homes, or where the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more, to provide:

- 40% of homes as on-site affordable housing;
- A tenure mix of 30% social rented, 30% affordable rented and 40% affordable home ownership, which includes 25% of all affordable housing for any nationally-mandated First Homes requirement, with shared ownership preferred for the remainder;
- A design approach where affordable housing is indistinguishable in appearance from market housing on site and distributed across the site with affordable housing dwellings to be clustered in groups;
- Affordable housing to meet required standards and be of a size and type which meets the requirements of those in housing need.

9.8 The Proposed Development will deliver 40% of the new homes as affordable homes, in the form of social rent, affordable rent, first homes and shared ownership tenures. Set out in **Table 9.1** below is an indicative affordable housing mix for the Proposed Development:

<b>Table 9.1</b>					
	<b>Outline</b>	<b>Detailed</b>			
		Social Rent	Affordable Rent	Shared Ownership	First Homes <sup>20</sup>
1-bed (2-person) Flat	3	7	15	-	17
2-bed (2-person) Flat	27	-	-	-	-
2-bed (3-person) Flat	9	-	-	-	-
2-bed (4-person) Flat	13	5	4	-	-
2-bed (4-person) House	-	6	-	6	-
3-bed (5-person) House	64	2	-	3	-
3-bed (6-person) House	-	-	-	-	-
4-bed (5-person) House	-	-	1	1	-
4-bed (6-person) House	6	-	-	-	-

<sup>20</sup> The Applicant is willing to discuss with SACDC if this tenure is required or should form part of an alternative affordable tenure

4-bed (7-person) House	-	-	-	-	-
4-bed (8-person) House	-	-	-	-	-
5-bed (7-person) House	-	-	-	-	-
5-bed (8-person) House	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	122	20 (30%)	20 (30%)	10 (15%)	17 (25%)
		67			

- 9.9 The precise unit /tenure mix for the outline phase(s) will be determined at a later stage through a subsequent Reserved Matters application(s). The provision of first homes in the Proposed development may not be required by SACDC. As such, this is a point of discussions with SACDC during the determination process.
- 9.10 Section 6 of this Planning Statement explains that an extra care home containing up to 70 new dwellings (Use Class C2) is proposed within the outline phase of the Oaklands Blossom site. 40% of these units will be affordable.
- 9.11 The Oaklands Blossom proposals have been designed to ensure that the affordable housing is indistinguishable in appearance from market housing on site and distributed across the site with affordable housing dwellings to be clustered in groups.
- 9.12 The Proposed Development would be in accordance with Policy 7A, as the affordable housing would meet local needs, and this need cannot be met in a non-Green Belt location. The Proposed Development would also exceed the 35% requirement in SACDC's Affordable Housing SPG by providing 40% affordable housing (on a unit basis). The 40% provision will also accord with the requirements of Policy HOU2 of the Draft Local Plan.
- 9.13 As explained in Section 8 of this Planning Statement, The Proposed Development will help to abate this issue. When this is combined with the critical need for affordable and extra care homes in the District, the delivery of 40% affordable homes should be given **very substantial weight** in favour of the Proposed Development.
- 9.14 In terms of tenure, neither Policy 7A or the SPG set any specific requirements on tenure split or mix but states that SACDC will negotiate a range of tenures for the affordable housing provision,

but 60% of the provision is expected to be available for rented tenures. However, Policies HOU1 and HOU2 of the Draft Local Plan does require:

- A preferred tenure mix (30% social rented; 30% affordable rented; and 40% affordable home ownership, split 25% as First Homes requirement with shared ownership preferred for the remainder); and
- A preferred dwelling mix per tenure, as set out below.

Tenure	Home Size			
	1-Bed	2-Bed	3-Bed	4+ Beds
Market Housing	5%	20%	45%	30%
Affordable Housing (Home Ownership)	20%	50%	30%	
Affordable Housing (Rent)	20%	30%	45%	5%
Acceptable Size in persons for affordable homes	2p	4p		

9.15 As demonstrated in **Table 9.2** below, the detailed phase of the Proposed Development will deliver the affordable tenure range aspirations of Policy HOU2 of the Draft Local Plan within the detailed part of the Oaklands Blossom site. The precise tenure range for the outline phase(s) will be determined at a later stage through a subsequent Reserved Matters application(s) and will be agreed in the legal agreement.

	Market Sale	Affordable			
		Social Rent	Affordable Rent	Shared Ownership	First Homes <sup>21</sup>
1-bed (2p)	-	7 (35%)	15 (75%)	-	17 (100%)
2-bed (4p)	12 (12%)	11 (55%)	4 (20%)	6 (60%)	0
3-bed	41 (41%)	2 (10%)	0	3 (30%)	0
4-bed	29 (29%)	0	1 (5%)	1 (10%)	0
5-bed	18 (18%)	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	100	20 (30%)	20 (30%)	10	17
				67	
				167	

9.16 As demonstrated in Table 9.2 above, the detailed phase of the Proposed Development will focus on delivering larger homes for the market sale units and the meeting or exceeding SACDC's

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<sup>21</sup> The Applicant is willing to discuss with SACDC if this tenure is required or should form part of an alternative affordable tenure

guidelines in 2-bed (4 person) homes in the affordable rent category and the 2-bed (4 person) and 3-bed (4 person) category in the shared ownership category. It will also deliver first homes to help people secure a place on the housing ladder. The precise tenure and dwelling mix for the outline phase(s) will be determined at a later stage through a subsequent Reserved Matters application(s).

- 9.17 The provision of extra care homes as part of the Proposed Development, which is focused on 1-bedroom (2 person), 2-bedroom (3 person) and 2-bedroom (4 person) homes, will enable older people to down-size from existing larger homes, releasing these for occupation by families that require as larger homes.

### **C. HEADS OF TERMS**

- 9.18 The Planning Act 2008 (as amended) and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2010 (as amended) sets out the legal tests on the use of S106 planning obligations. Paragraph 157 of the NPPF requires Grey Belt development to make the necessary improvements to local or national infrastructure.

- 9.19 As per paragraph 015 (Reference ID: 23b-015-20190315) of national NPPG, local planning authorities are encouraged to work with relevant local (and national where appropriate) infrastructure providers and operators at an early stage of the planning process when planning obligations are being discussed to prevent delays to the agreement of planning obligations.

- 9.20 In accordance with NPPG paragraph 002 (Reference ID: 23b-002-20190901), planning obligations assist in mitigating the impact of unacceptable development to make it acceptable in planning terms. Planning obligations may only constitute a reason for granting planning permission if they meet the tests that they are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms. They must be:

- Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- Directly related to the development; and
- Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

- 9.21 Policy 143B (Implementation) of the Local Plan and Policy SP14 of the Draft Local Plan expect applications for the development of sites to include within them mitigation provisions to overcome their infrastructure consequences. These provisions may include on-site and / or off-site facilities necessary as a result of the Proposed Development, to avoid placing a burden on the existing community.

9.22 Through the determination of the planning application, the Applicants will engage further in negotiations with SACDC and HCC to mitigate the impacts of the Proposed Development and secure the above benefits through legal obligations. This will ensure that the Development would include appropriate and adequate on-site and off-site provision for its' impacts on infrastructure, in accordance with the Planning Act / CIL Regulations, Paragraph 159 of the NPPF, the NPPG, Policy 143B of the Local Plan, Policy SP14 of the Draft Local Plan and site allocation B4 of the Draft Local Plan.

9.23 In relation to the potential heads of terms, the Applicants expect these to relate the following:

- Reserve land on-site for the provision of a 2FE Primary School;
- Delivering on-site affordable homes
- Delivering self/custom-build homes;
- Delivering a children's home;
- Delivering a new community floorspace;
- Delivering new publicly accessible open space and ATRs;
- Delivering biodiversity enhancements; and
- Deliver off-site highways contributions (secured via S278 Agreements);
- Securing financial contributions towards other community infrastructure enhancements which pass the above tests; and
- Any other obligations to secure 'key development requirement' listed in the site allocation (B4 East St Albans) of the Draft Local Pla which pass the above tests.

## 10 Planning Considerations – Part 3 (Technical Assessment)

10.1 A suite of technical reports accompanies the Application to assess the environmental and social impacts of the Proposed Development which have not already been considered in the preceding Sections of the Planning Statement. The analysis and conclusions of these reports is summarised below under the following headings:

- A. Impact on the Green Belt and Countryside
- B. Place-making, Massing, Appearance and Materiality
- C. Amenity, Playspace and Open Space
- D. Transport and Access
- E. Energy and Sustainability
- F. Ecology, Biodiversity and Trees
- G. Air Quality
- H. Noise
- I. Flood Risk and Surface Water Drainage
- J. Land Contamination
- K. Agricultural Land
- L. Heritage and Archaeology
- M. Recycling and Waste Management
- N. Health and Wellbeing

10.2 A summary of the analysis and conclusions associated with each matter, along with an assessment of the compliance with the policies of the adopted Development Plan and other relevant material considerations, is set out in **Appendix 2**.

10.3 The technical reports and assessments that support the planning application demonstrate that no significant adverse effects are predicted to arise from the development that cannot be mitigated. As such, there are no development management related reasons to withhold granting planning permission.

## 11 Planning Considerations – Part 4 (Planning Balance)

- 11.1 This section of the Planning Statement summarises the ‘planning balance’ that will be considered by SACDC when determining the planning application.
- 11.2 The Site is in an accessible, sustainable and suitable location for the sustainable form of development proposed. Sections 2 and 8 of this Planning Statement demonstrate that there is a clear need for the Proposed Development and the public benefits it will deliver.
- 11.3 The harm to the openness of the Green Belt, countryside and any other harms are clearly and demonstrably outweighed by the very substantial benefits, including infrastructure provision and improvements, being delivered by the Development, as described in Sections 8, 10 and Appendix 2 of this Planning Statement.
- 11.4 At the heart of the NPPF remains a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraphs 10 and 11). In the context of Paragraph 11d) of the NPPF, as discussed above, the policies that are most important for determining planning applications in SACDC are out-of-date. This is because SACDC cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites and failing to meet its HDT requirements. As such, under paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF, there is a presumption in favour of the Proposed Development, which should be given **very substantial weight**.
- 11.5 Notwithstanding this, the Proposed Development accords with all other objectives of the NPPF and SACDC’s adopted and draft Local Plans and Sandridge Parish Council’s Neighbourhood Plan.
- 11.6 Stantec notes that when reaching a decision on the Oaklands Grange proposals at Oaklands (PINS Ref: APP/B1930/W/15/3051164) (CD 3.8), the SOS considered the Inspector’s reasoning and agreed with his overall conclusions that the titled balance contained within the 2019 NPPF was engaged:

*“Paragraph 114: Given that the Council cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing, and the contribution the proposal would make to meeting the significant shortfall, he considered that Local Plan Policies 1 and 2 that directly related to the supply of housing must be deemed as out of date. In accordance with Framework, he therefore considered that paragraph 14 of the Framework [2019] was engaged even if local plan policies were discounted.”*

- 11.7 Stantec also notes that when SACDC determined the outline planning application by Legal and General at Land at Cooter End Land in Harpenden (ref: 5/2023/0327), the titled balance was also engaged.
- 11.8 The same set of circumstances exist in the District today. The ‘titled balance’ in favour or granting planning permission for proposals is engaged in relation to the current NPPF (2024). SACDC should grant planning permission unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of granting planning permission. In this case, there are no adverse impacts that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of granting planning permission.

## 12 Summary & Conclusion

- 12.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Stantec in support of a Hybrid Planning Application to St Albans City and District Council (SACDC) in respect of Oaklands College and Land located south of Sandpit Lane, St Albans.
- 12.2 Sections 2 and 8 of the Planning Statement explains demonstrates that that there is an overwhelming need for the new education facilities proposed at Oaklands College. These are the subject of confirmed funding sources and will be delivered. It also demonstrates that:
- The comprehensive masterplan for the wider site, working in partnership between Taylor Wimpey and Oaklands College, will deliver fundamental benefits to Oaklands College to ensure it meets the requirements of its students and other groups that use the campus, it will also deliver very substantial benefits to the local community. Most of these benefits will be delivered from funding secured by the land receipt from the residential-led development and other sources of funding without the need to secure funding from Local Government.
  - The redevelopment of Oaklands College's St Albans campus represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to transform education and training provision in Hertfordshire. By replacing outdated and inefficient buildings with sustainable, purpose-built facilities, the College will not only meet urgent condition and safeguarding needs but also position itself as a leading provider of further and higher education for decades to come.
  - Oaklands College has been at the heart of education in Hertfordshire for over a century. This redevelopment ensures it will continue to inspire, support, and equip learners for the next hundred years and beyond.
- 12.3 Sections 3 to 8 of this Planning Statement provides the background context for the Site, the pre-application discussions completed and describes the Proposed Development, including its package benefits, including the delivery of:
- Much needed homes – which should be given very substantial weight
  - Much needed affordable homes – which should be given very substantial weight
  - Much needed self/custom build homes – which should be given moderate weight
  - Much needed college facilities – which should be given very substantial weight
  - Much needed SEND facilities – which should be given very substantial weight
  - Much needed extra care homes – which should be given substantial weight
  - Much needed children's home facilities – which should be given substantial weight
  - Public use of college facilities – which should be given very substantial weight

- Land for a new primary school – which should be given substantial weight
- Community space and new local centre – which should be afforded moderate weight
- ATR improvements and new publicly accessible open space – which should be given moderate weight
- Other Local Transport & Connectivity Improvements – which should be given moderate weight
- BNG enhancements – which should be given moderate weight
- Socio-economic benefits – which should be given significant weight

12.4 Section 8 of the Planning Statement demonstrates that:

- The Site and Proposed Development is Grey Belt, however it falls narrowly short of meeting the Golden Rules required for grey belt development. It is therefore ‘appropriate development’ within the Green Belt;
- Nonetheless, the harm to the Green Belt (by reason of its inappropriateness) and any other harms from the proposal, are clearly outweighed by the significant package of benefits and infrastructure provisions / improvements being delivered by the Proposed Development that should be given very substantial weight. **Therefore, very special circumstances existing in this case to gain SACDC support under Paragraph 153 of the NPPF;**
- The Site is in an accessible and sustainable location in accordance with Paragraphs 110 and 115 of the NPPF;
- Proposed Development will deliver the development and design requirements of site-specific allocations B4 (East St Albans) and D7 (East St Albans) in the Draft Local Plan and D7 (East St Albans) in the SNP. This should be given **substantial weight** in the planning balance and determination in the planning application;
- The suitability and sustainability of the location weighs in favour of the Proposed Development and the development of the Site can therefore help reduce pressures on less sustainable locations elsewhere. The Applicants consider that **very substantial weight** should be given to this benefit of the Proposed Development; and
- The landscape-led masterplan vision for the Site that has evolved through the pre-application process ensures that Proposed Development will integrate with the existing settlement pattern and landscape in the local area and delivers compensatory measures. This should be given **significant** weight in favour of the Proposed Development.

12.5 Sections 9 to 11 of the Planning Statement also demonstrate that:

- The Proposed Development will exceed the 35% requirements in SACDC's adopted policy and Affordable Housing SPG by providing 40% affordable housing (on a unit basis) and will deliver the percentage of affordable required by SACDC's Draft Local Plan. The delivery of 189 affordable homes carries **very substantial weight** in the determination of the planning application<sup>22</sup>;
- The technical reports and assessments that support the planning application demonstrate that no significant adverse effects are predicted to arise from the development that cannot be mitigated. As such, there are no development management related reasons to withhold granting planning permission; and
- Under paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF, there is a presumption in favour of the Proposed Development, which should be given very substantial weight.

12.6 Accordingly, the principle of the Proposed Development is supported by the objectives of the NPPF and the Council's adopted and emerging policies, particularly as the Proposed Development will result in significant benefits package that, collectively, should be given **very substantial weight**.

12.7 This Planning Statement demonstrates that the Proposed Development will be in material conformity with planning policy and guidance set out in the NPPF, the adopted and emerging Development Plan documents and other material considerations. Accordingly, SACDC should grant planning permission without delay in accordance with Paragraph 11d) of the NPPF

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<sup>22</sup> Whilst the Proposed Development would be in line with the adopted and Draft Local Plan policies, it would fall short of the 50% requirement in the NPPF 'Golden Rules'. This is a material consideration that is weighed in the planning balance, but should only be afforded neutral weight because the affordable housing provision will accord with adopted and Draft Local Plan policy

## **Appendix 1 – Site Allocation Design Requirements**

**Oaklands College & Oaklands Blossom - Site Allocation B4 and Policy D7 - Design Requirement Tracker**

Date of issue: 10th October 2025

Oaklands College - Site allocation requirements		
Item	Design Requirement	Applicant response
<b>St Albans - Draft Local Plan (Reg. 20) Site Allocation for B4 (Residential)</b>		
1	Extra-care facilities comprising of 70-80 self-contained units	Being delivered (up to 70 self-contained extra care units adjacent to the new local centre)
2	A 2FE primary school, including Early Years provision, to serve the new and wider community.	Being delivered (land only + S106 contribution)
3	A site for, and appropriate contributions towards, an 8FE secondary school site within nearby Oaklands land ownership fronting onto Hatfield Road.	Being delivered (land is available + S106 contribution)
4	Investment / reinvestment in improved education and training provision and facilities at Oaklands College. A College Development Zone and a Sports and Community Zone have been identified on the policies map and are supported in principle. Community use of sports facilities and playing pitches should be secured by an appropriate mechanism such as a S106 agreement.	Being delivered (Investment to be secured via S106 Agreement)
5	A new local centre to provide local services, including commercial development opportunities.	Being delivered (3 x commercial units - land use parameter plan)
6	Contributions / enhancements to support relevant schemes in the LCWIP and GTPs as indicated in the TIA.	New ATRs and improvements to existing ATRs are being delivered on site as part of the Proposed Development. Other off-site improvements have been submitted to HCC for agreement at the pre-application stage. HCC to respond during the determination process.
7	Support for measures to ensure high quality access and connectivity to St Albans centre, station and education, aligned to schemes in the GTPs and LCWIP are required. In particular, measures to access the Alban Way route to the south will be required.	Being delivered (land is available + S106 contribution)
8	Particular focus on the existing Rights of Way within and surrounding the site will be required, also including a link to Jersey Lane.	Being delivered (Included in TA and access parameter plan)
9	Support for footpath 004 Colney Heath (East Drive) to be upgraded to bridleway status and improved to enable active travel to Hatfield, the University of Hertfordshire and Ellenbrook Fields.	Being delivered (Secured via S106 Agreement + access parameter plan)
10	Support for a link for active travel from upgraded Footpath 004 to the Hatfield Road (Boggymead Springs).	Being delivered (Secured via S106 Agreement + access parameter plan)
11	Support for provision of an EIW route for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders between BR 051 Sandridge and Central Drive, St Albans.	Being delivered (Secured via S106 Agreement + access parameter plan)
12	Contributions towards the Ellenbrook Fields country park.	The Applicants will consider any requests that meet the relevant tests during the determination of the planning application.
13	Undertake opportunistic extraction of any suitable sand and gravel deposits for use on-site wherever possible, where such deposits are uncovered during construction / excavation works.	Being delivered (Secured via Condition)
14	The site is within Flood Zone 1 but at risk from surface water flooding. The Exception Test is not required. However, it must be shown that the development will be safe for its lifetime and the risk can be managed through a sequential approach to design.	Being delivered (Sequential Test is being completed)
15	Development proposals must take appropriate account of all trees protected by Tree Preservation Order.	The Proposed Development has taken appropriate account of all trees protected by Tree Preservation Order. Further details are set out in the Tree Survey and Tree Impact Assessment submitted in support of the planning application.
16	Take appropriate account of these Environmental Constraints: Source Protection Zone (SPZ) 3, Bedrock Aquifer.	Being delivered (Surface water will not discharge via infiltration and will instead discharge to adjacent watercourses. Surface water runoff will be treated via a network of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS))
<b>St Albans - Draft Local Plan (Reg. 20) Site Allocation for Oaklands College (Policy COM1: Oaklands College Development Zone &amp; Sports and Community Development Zone)</b>		
1	Major residential development will be required to make appropriate provision for new schools and early years facilities (nursery 3-4-year-olds and childcare 0-2-year-olds) either on-site or by making a suitable contribution towards the improvement or expansion of nearby existing facilities.	Being delivered (land only secured in S106 + S106 financial contribution)
2	Requirements for schools within Broad Locations are set out in the Site Allocations (Part B). The associated indoor and outdoor sports facilities should serve a community joint use function. Access must be secured through community use agreements. The provision of playing pitches for community use will be required at new primary and secondary schools.	Be delivered in the future (Subject of RMA applications prepared by HCC)
3	Allocated school sites identified in the Plan are reserved for state funded education purposes.	Being delivered (land only + S106 Agreement + HCC agreement)
4	Proposals for the expansion of existing schools and new detached school playing fields will be assessed against the following criteria: i. Expansion of existing schools must provide evidence of education need; ii. New building(s) within Green Belt locations should integrate with the existing landscape and be sited as unobtrusively as possible while providing a good relationship with any existing buildings; iii. Proposals for detached school playing fields in Green Belt locations must preserve the openness of the Green Belt and must not conflict with the Green Belt purposes; iv. Design, external appearance and new landscaping must be to a high standard; v. Effects on the amenity of the surrounding area in terms of visual impact, lighting, noise, disturbance, road access and traffic generation must be acceptable; vi. Sufficient onsite servicing must be provided; vii. Appropriate local infrastructure must be in place, or provided, to encourage cycling and walking, and a Travel Plan will be required to demonstrate a reduction in car based journeys; viii. It is generally expected that provision of the new facilities for wider community uses will be secured through community use agreements.	Be delivered in the future (Subject of RMA applications prepared by HCC)
5	St Albans is an area of high primary school need and with growth there will likely be a long term need for the provision of a new primary school. A site has been identified at the former Arston site. St Albans has an identified need for a new secondary school in the long term. A site has been identified at East St Albans near Oaklands College.	Being delivered (land is available + S106 Agreement for primary school land only). HCC has advised that the secondary school site is not currently needed. However, Oaklands College is not proposing do anything with the identified land at East St Albans that would hinder this secondary school being brought forward at a later point in time.
6	New secondary schools are proposed at Broad Locations including: East Hemel Hempstead North, East St Albans and West of London Colney. The sites are identified on the Policies Map. In addition, Hemel Hempstead is expected to have a need for a new secondary school; a site has been identified and is shown on the Policies Map.	No action required
7	Oaklands College St Albans proposes to deliver expanded education, sports and community facilities. A College Development Zone and Sports and Community Zone are identified on the Policies Map and are supported in principle. Community use of sports facilities and playing pitches should be secured by an appropriate mechanism such as a S106 agreement.	Being delivered (S106 Agreement + land use parameter plan). Also see the Oaklands College Education Needs Statement to understand the public benefits being delivered by the Proposed Development.
<b>Sandridge Neighbourhood Plan Site Allocation</b>		
1	Demonstrate good quality design and respect the character and appearance of the surrounding area, as set out in a design brief, which the local community should be consulted on.	Being delivered (Site Allocation + design brief + SACDC's pre-app process+ DAS + Design Codes + Parameter Plans)  The new architectural proposals for the college continue the redevelopment of the campus which the planning and design officers have noted as "good quality design".  The design character references a contextual architectural language, both from the older rural building types with black cladding and pitches roofs and the Mansion house materiality and form. The height and massing are appropriate to the different college zones which vary from one to four storeys. The proposals respect the surrounding area while offering a contemporary vision for the future generations of the college and wider community. The design approach is to create a connected architectural language across the new campus, which is respectful to its rural environment, inspiring for learners and provides an exemplar teaching environment that supports the best outcomes for students. Each department is given its own character but within a design code that links them all together.  Further details of how the Proposed Development will respect the character and appearance of the surrounding area can be found in the Design and Access Statement (DAS).
2	Use existing green hedging and/or trees to define current and future residential boundaries.	Being delivered (including enhancement and planting of hedgerows and trees). Further details of how the Proposed Development will achieve this can be found in the landscape sections of the Design and Access Statement (DAS).
3	Provide a mix of house types and tenures, including the requirement for at least 40% affordable housing to meet the needs of current and future residents, including staff at local educational establishments.	Being delivered (including children's home). 40% affordable homes which meet the Council's tenure split requirements are proposed. Further details of how the Proposed Development will achieve this can be found in the Planning Statement.
4	Make plots available for self-build development and release areas for development in small phases to enable local small and medium-sized builders to participate in construction, in keeping with current Government guidelines.	Being delivered (The draft local plan policy is for 3% of new homes in broad location proposals are to be custom/self-build. The proposal will include 3% custom/self-build plots). Further details of how the Proposed Development will achieve this can be found in the Planning Statement.

Key	Progress
	Unable to comply with requirement
	Working on complying with requirement
	Complying with requirement

5	Provide safe access for pedestrians, cyclists and road users, especially for students attending local schools and Oaklands College and users of the community facilities, including drop off and pick up provision.	Being delivered (included in DAS, TA and access-related parameter plan)  The main access to Oaklands college for staff, students and visitors is via South Drive, which has separation of pedestrian and road users. There is allowance for drop off within the college car park. The landscape architects are working closely with the rest of the design team so that the masterplan includes for pedestrian routes which are logical and safe with vehicular routes are designed to slow traffic so that interaction between pedestrians and vehicles and the experience of travelling through the campus is easy to navigate. The design of College Square is seen as a key benefit for the college community and wider community and will create an exciting new external space with a focus for activity and meeting places. Further details of how the Proposed Development will achieve these requirements can be found in the Design and Access Statement and the Transport Assessment (TA).
6	Provide multiple access points to the development for motor vehicles to ensure traffic is dispersed proportionately across surrounding roads and neighbourhoods and in accordance with local traffic surveys carried out during the master planning process and the Hertfordshire Highways Design Guide and Policy.	Being delivered (Included in TA and access parameter plan)  In addition to the main access via South Drive, the college proposals include a new car park on East Drive for car and coaches, positioned with good access to the sports facilities. The proposals include new ATRs and other pedestrian route into the sports zone and main campus. Further details of how the Proposed Development will achieve these requirements can be found in the Design and Access Statement and the Transport Assessment (TA).
7	Include road layouts that protect and mitigate against the impact of through traffic within residential areas (in accordance with the measures set out in the tables of Highway Improvements below). a) Provide public transport enhancements in accordance with the measures set out in the table of Public Transport improvements below. b) Sustainable transport enhancements to promote community health and wellbeing (in accordance with the measures set out in the table of Walking, Cycling and Recreational Travel improvements below).	See below
8	All roads within the development shall be built to adoptable standard and the developer shall provide every assistance to facilitate the adoption of the roads by Hertfordshire County Council.	Being delivered (Included in TA and access parameter plan)
9	Provide fully operational electric vehicle charging points for each new home either individually or communally.	Being Delivered (subject to condition)
10	Within the master planning process, provide a Parking Strategy for the development considering the needs of residents, their visitors, staff and students of education establishments, taking into account the Parish Council's Transport and Parking Plan in the 5 Year Forward Action Plan Appendix 2, Annex A.	Being Delivered (subject to condition). Further details of the parking strategy can be found in the Design and Access Statement and the Transport Assessment (TA).
11	Ensure effective measures for the management of surface water arising from the development are put in place prior to the occupation of the first home.	Being Delivered (subject to condition). In the meantime, further details of the drainage strategy can be found in the Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy.
12	Include provision of community facilities to serve new residents without increasing demand on already overstretched adjacent neighbouring facilities, including: a) Provision of pre-schools, primary and secondary schools to meet the needs of the new community. b) Healthcare provision within or close to the site. c) Provision of community facilities, including a hall for community use and interdenominational use, public open space, including a children's play area. d) Land for local retail outlet(s) to be classified as a 'local centre' within this Neighbourhood Plan.	a) Education - Being delivered: -The Primary School will form part of the planning application (an outline element), but remains with HCC in terms of delivery timescales and process. -The Secondary School is seen by HCC as a separate, longer term potential need, which has not yet been firmed up. As with the primary school, it remains with HCC in terms of delivery timescales and process b) Healthcare - No need for new facility (confirmed by SACDC /ICB) + S106 Contribution c) Community Hall - The Applicants are offering the provision of a community space in the local centre, public open space and play space provision is included within the masterplan - Being Delivered d) Local centre - Being delivered
13	Provide high quality (superfast) communications infrastructure.	Being Delivered (subject to condition)
14	Use and promote low carbon and renewable energy, including the consideration of district heating and/or local power generation.	Being delivered (partially) - low carbon (ASHP) and renewable energy technologies (PV) are proposed as part of the Oaklands Blossom site. A district heating / local power generation has been considered and discounted. Although an Energy Strategy has been discounted for the Oaklands Blossom site, it is proposed as part of the Oaklands College proposal.

SNP - Highway Improvements		
1	Improve junction at Sandpit Lane/Beechwood Avenue/Marshalswick Lane (possible re-design of junction corners and tree removal).	HCC and SACDC to confirm if works are required / necessary. Any necessary improvements to this junction will be discussed with HCC during the determination of the planning application.
2	Off-site improvements to junction of Hatfield Road/Beechwood Avenue/Ashley Road.	Off-site improvements have been submitted to HCC for agreement at the pre-application stage. HCC to respond during the determination process.
3	Intersections of residential roads with Sandpit Lane to be reviewed and adapted as necessary e.g. installation of mini roundabouts and adjustment to speed limit.	HCC and SACDC to confirm if works are required / necessary. Any necessary improvements to this junction will be discussed with HCC during the determination of the planning application.
4	At least three pedestrian/cycle crossing points to be provided on Sandpit Lane between House Lane and Marshalswick Lane.	Being delivered (partially) - The development proposes a new crossing over Sandpit Lane, upgrades to improve to the crossing on House Lane / Sandpit Lane and improvements, and improvements to enable crossing on Oaklands Lane.
5	Traffic calming measures to be installed on Barnfield Road, Sandringham Crescent and other roads affected by increased traffic.	HCC and SACDC to confirm if works are required / necessary. Any necessary measures will be discussed with HCC during the determination of the planning application.
6	Improve pedestrian/cyclist crossing point between the verge on the north side of Sandpit Lane (adjacent to the entrance to House Lane) and North Drive.	Off-site improvements have been submitted to HCC for agreement at the pre-application stage. HCC to respond during the determination process.
7	Install additional street lighting along the service road on north side of Sandpit Lane (opposite the development site).	HCC and SACDC to confirm if works are required / necessary. Any necessary improvements will be discussed with HCC during the determination of the planning application.
8	With the development of the full Broad Location, a new through route to be designed through the development between Hatfield Road and Sandpit Lane in such a way as to discourage use as a cut through and minimise risks for students using the college campus.	Being delivered - A new pedestrian and cycle through routes will be provided which will benefit from natural surveillance and lighting. Further details of the parking strategy can be found in the Design and Access Statement and the Transport Assessment (TA)
9	Construction traffic for the Broad Location development to be routed via Oaklands Lane and, initially, follow the line of the current East Drive (while providing a bridleway segregated from the carriageway).	HCC and SACDC to confirm (subject to a condition - Construction Management Plan) - It is likely that the construction traffic for the College proposals will use East Drive. The construction traffic for Oaklands Blossom will use Sandpit Lane.
10	If a new school is part of the Broad Location development, ample drop off/pick up parking facilities and secure cycle storage areas must be provided on-site as an integral part of the scheme.	Be delivered in the future - Subject of RMA applications prepared by HCC
SNP - Public Transport Improvement		
1	A bus service running along Sandpit Lane at least half hourly during the day with services extending through the evening and at weekends to connect residents directly to/from St Albans City railway station, city centre and hospital.	Off-site bus service improvement proposals have been submitted to HCC for agreement at the pre-application stage. HCC to respond during the determination process.
2	All weather shelters at bus stops along this route as it fronts a busy road.	
3	At least one bus stop along Sandpit Lane fitted with a display of real-time information to promote the convenient use of bus transport.	Being delivered - Any new bus stops will provide enhanced waiting facilities
4	A bus service running through the development between Hatfield Road and Sandpit Lane at least every 20 minutes during the day, with services extending throughout the evening and at weekends to connect residents via Sandpit Lane directly to/from St Albans City railway station, city centre and hospital.	A through route will not be provided through the Site for student safeguarding reasons. Discussions are underway with HCC regarding a potential bus loop that within the Oaklands Blossom site to improve access to the for existing residents, new residents and college students, and an enhanced bus stop facility for the college on Hatfield Road.
SNP - Walking, Cycling, Recreational Travel Improvements		
1	A bridleway, of a suitable width and surface for cycle and pedestrian access, all along the northerly edge of the development parallel to Sandpit Lane, with an appropriate crossing facility at the site exit and continuing at least as far as the existing footway by the entrance to Verulam School playing fields as part of a planned route in line with the HCC Rights of Way Improvement Plan.	Being delivered (Included in TA and access parameter plan). Further details of these routes can be found in the Design and Access Statement and the Transport Assessment (TA).
2	A dedicated public right of way (bridleway) access at the south westerly point of the residential development extending to the boundary. This is to enable a connecting bridleway route of at least 3m width to schools situated in Oakwood Road/Central Drive.	Being delivered (partially) within the Oaklands Blossom site. The remaining element will need to be delivered by HCC as the land owner. Continuing discussions are taking place with HCC.
3	A direct multi-user route, suitably surfaced for cycles and mobility scooters, across Oaklands College land between Sandpit Lane and Hatfield Road.	Being delivered (Included in TA and access parameter plan). Further details of these routes can be found in the Design and Access Statement and the Transport Assessment (TA).
4	A direct multi-user route from the development with a suitable road crossing of Sandpit Lane adjacent to the path through to Wheatleys to access The Quadrant facilities.	Already been delivered (Crossing points have already been put in place as part of Oaklands Grange development)
5	A link for cyclists and pedestrians with appropriate road crossing points to provide a convenient linkage between Jersey Lane and the Alban Way (See Policy T3). Part of this could be incorporated into the design of the proposed road linking Sandpit Lane and Hatfield Road through the site.	Already delivered as part of the Oaklands Grange development.
6	Bridleways/footways of a suitable width for multi-user access from the westerly and easterly developments to the College facilities, shop, health and other facilities.	Being delivered (Included in TA and access parameter plan). Further details of these routes can be found in the Design and Access Statement and the Transport Assessment (TA).
7	There should be segregated non-motorised bridleways alongside all public highways running through or serving the site. Additionally, there should be rural bridleway routes with greater amenity value through the College site for non-motorised users, building upon the current ROW/IP provision.	Being delivered (Included in TA and access parameter plan). Further details of these routes can be found in the Design and Access Statement and the Transport Assessment (TA).

## Appendix 2 – Development Management Policy Assessment

1 As explained in Section 10 of the Planning Statement, a suite of technical reports accompanies the Application to assess the environmental and social impacts of the Proposed Development. The analysis and conclusions of these reports is summarised below under the following headings:

- A. Impact on the Green Belt and Countryside
- B. Place-making, Massing, Appearance and Materiality
- C. Amenity, Playspace and Open Space
- D. Transport and Access
- E. Energy and Sustainability
- F. Ecology, Biodiversity and Trees
- G. Air Quality
- H. Noise
- I. Flood Risk and Surface Water Drainage
- J. Land Contamination
- K. Agricultural Land
- L. Heritage and Archaeology
- M. Recycling and Waste Management
- N. Health and Wellbeing

2 A summary of the analysis and conclusions associated with each matter, along with an assessment of the compliance with the policies of the adopted Development Plan and other relevant material considerations, is set out below.

### **A. LANDSCAPE & VISUAL IMPACT & COUNTRYSIDE**

3 The policy context relating the Green Belt and countryside is set out in Section 7 of this Planning Statement. In addition, the guidance contained within the NPPF is to seek to protect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside (para 187b). Policy E2 of the SNP seeks to ensure that new development protects significant views of important landscape features and heritage assets into and out of Sandridge village, unless appropriate mitigation takes place.

### Assessment

- 4 The LIVA and Green Belt Assessment submitted in support of the planning application demonstrates that the Site makes a weak contribution purposes (c) of the Green Belt – to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. It also explains that the Site:
- Sits between the urban fringe and a natural landscape. Green buffers around the edges and retention of existing vegetation provide visual screening, noise reduction and habitat continuity; and
  - Is undeveloped but has a high level of visual enclosure and is separated from the wider countryside by existing built form and infrastructure (roads and rail). It has a semi-urban character, being used formally and informally for recreation.
- 5 The Proposed Development would not result in loss of any countryside that is designated for its beauty or special character within the Site's boundary nor would it result in an urbanising influence over the wider landscape or affect the openness of the wider countryside. It is however, located within the Northern Thames Basin National Character Area (NCA).
- 6 The LVIA has assessed 10 representative Viewpoints for assessment purposes which relate to sensitive nearby receptors. It explains that:
- The development represents infilling of the existing settlement edge and is in keeping with the urban context. No significant effects on landscape character are identified due to the low sensitivity of the area and existing urban influences;
  - Visual effects are very localised. Significant short-term effects are anticipated for residents fronting Sandpit Lane due to vegetation removal, but new planting will restore the treed character in the medium to long term; and
  - Users of public rights of way (especially North Drive bridleway) will experience a distinct change, with both adverse and beneficial aspects. Effects on Oaklands College users are considered beneficial due to improved campus quality.
- 7 Any permanent, significant effects resulting from the development are limited, largely to North Drive and Sandpit Lane, the effects of which will reduce over time as planting matures. Neither the countryside nor any protects significant views of important landscape features and heritage assets into and out of Sandridge village are harmed. This limited level of harm to the countryside carries **moderate weight** in the planning balance. However, Section 7 of this Planning Statement explains that the Proposed Development will deliver a significant number of benefits that, cumulatively, should be given **very substantial weight**. This package of benefits are the material considerations that enable SACDC to support the Proposed Development.

**B. PLACE-MAKING, MASSING, APPEARANCE AND MATERIALITY**Policy Context

- 8 Paragraph 131(b) of the NPPF details that significant weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability.
- 9 Section 12 of the NPPF provides overarching advice in terms of achieving well designed places. Paragraph 131 sets out that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.
- 10 Paragraph 135 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:
- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
  - b) are visually attractive because of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
  - c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
  - d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
  - e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
  - f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.
- 11 The NPPF makes clear that creating high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. The National Design Guide illustrates how well-designed places that are beautiful, enduring and successful can be achieved in

practice. The long-standing, fundamental principles for good design are that it is: fit for purpose; durable; and brings delight.

12 The National Design Guide addresses the question of how we recognise well designed places, by outlining and illustrating the Government's priorities for well-designed places in the form of ten characteristics, which are:

- Context – enhances the surroundings.
- Identity – attractive and distinctive.
- Built form – a coherent pattern of development.
- Movement – accessible and easy to move around.
- Nature – enhanced and optimised.
- Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive.
- Uses – mixed and integrated.
- Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable.
- Resources – efficient and resilient.
- Lifespan – made to last.

13 It is noted that paragraph 130(a) of the NPPF states that where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs, it is especially important that planning decisions avoid homes being built at low densities and ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site. In this case, the massing of the proposed development (4-storeys) is marginally smaller than the neighbouring residential development (converted warehousing) and results in a density that is appropriate for this sustainable / accessible location.

14 Policy 69 of the Local Plan and Policy D7 of the SNP state that all development shall have an adequately high standard of design considering context, materials and other policies. Policy 70 of the Local Plan and E5 of the SNP state that design of new housing development should have regard to its setting and the character of its surroundings, significant views and meet the objectives set out in criteria relating to amenity.

15 Draft Policy LG1 (Broad Locations) sets out the requirements for proposals within the defined Broad Locations, including demonstrate a coordinated, Masterplanned approach to development with appropriate input from the District and County Council, statutory consultees, local communities, landowners and other stakeholders. The approach should be in accordance with SACDC's Strategic Sites Design Guidance; including:

- j) Make efficient and effective use of the site, with a minimum overall net density of 40 dwellings per hectare; utilising a range of densities that take account of adjacent character, uses and identity;...
- l) Demonstrate how the proposal integrates with and where appropriate seeks to improve the existing transport network with reference to the LCWIP. Proposals should include excellent walking and cycling links, including accessible routes and public transport services upgrades / improvements;
- m) Normally retain significant healthy trees and other important landscape features;
- n) Plant at least 1 semi-mature tree for each dwelling; for C2 accommodation plant 1 semimature tree for every 2.5 dwelling equivalent bed spaces;
- o) Provide new or provide contributions to enhance existing strategic, sports facilities, local and recreational public open space, including managed woodland and ecological network links;
- p) Positively relate and integrate the development to the surrounding buildings and landscape, and be informed by a comprehensive Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment which addresses the recommendations of the Council's Landscape and Visual Appraisal 2024;...
- r) Ensure that land use, density, landscaping and form have regard to the topography of the site and identified landscape impacts;
- s) Establish an appropriate Community Stewardship and Legacy body with sufficient assets to provide long term sustainable management of community facilities and / or open spaces;
- t) Have due regard to any relevant Neighbourhood plan(s);
- u) Demonstrate the co-location of community facilities (such as schools, shops, community centres, strategic public open space) to reduce the number of trips that residents must make and encourage the use of active travel modes..."

16 Policy SP12 of the Draft Local Plan states that high quality design is an important component of sustainable development across the District and new development should:

- a) Respond positively to its context;
- b) Be of high quality architecture;
- c) Enhance public space;
- d) Make efficient use of land; and
- e) Provide for a high standard of amenity.

- 17 Policy DES1 of the Draft Local Plan states that new development should:
- i. Be of a layout that takes account of the character and pattern of development in the locality and avoids prejudicing the future development potential of adjacent sites;
  - ii. Respond positively to its context, taking into account the local distinctiveness of an area, in relation to its scale, form, massing, setting, height, character and building line;
  - iii. Demonstrate an inclusive approach that provides for a diverse community including people with disabilities, and be adaptable for changing needs over time;
  - iv. Be designed to minimise the likelihood of crime and antisocial behaviour;
  - v. Use high quality materials with good long-term weathering characteristics;
  - vi. Provide high quality detailing that adds to the visual interest and distinctiveness of the building;
  - vii. Provide active frontages to the ground floor of buildings where appropriate, which interact with and animate the surrounding areas and are visually interesting;
  - viii. Be designed to provide opportunities for encouraging physical activity where appropriate; and
  - ix. Be set a minimum of 1m from the property / party boundary above ground floor level, where it would otherwise result in an undesirable terracing effect.
- 18 Policy DES6 of the Draft Local Plan states that proposals for buildings which are significantly taller than the surrounding built form must be sufficiently supported including by accurate visual representations and any relevant technical assessments, to enable proper assessment.

#### Assessment

- 19 The Proposed Development has evolved through extensive pre-application discussions and design development, as set out in the submitted Design and Access Statement prepared by BM3 and DLA.
- 20 The illustrative masterplan for the Proposed Development has been informed by a series of site considerations including: the Green Belt; site constraints such as topography, flooding/drainage, ecology and heritage; the existing pattern of development and adjacent uses; and site connections.
- 21 When the Reserved Matters application is to be submitted for the Proposed Development, the application will be guided by the principles set out in the parameter plans. The proposed illustrative masterplan comprises the following:

- **Block Structure:** A perimeter block structure to make efficient use of land and to create a strong street layout with well-defined public and private spaces.
- **Good Frontages:** Frontages are integrated with high-quality landscape treatments and greening. The indicative layout and built form demonstrate that the street spaces would not be car-dominated.
- **Views and Vistas:** Consideration has been taken into the location of views and vistas so that there is a link between places and the surrounding spaces and landscape.
- **Density:** The overall density of development reflects the surrounding pattern and grain. Variation in built form creates pockets of interest, such as the local centre, a main vehicular route, a visual connection between the local centre and the primary school, central space with green corridors running around the boundaries.
- **Scale:** The scale of development, typically two and 2.5-storey homes with three and four-storey flats focused around the local centre.

22 The character of the Proposed Development draws upon the local context, including built form principles; variation in building height; building setback; landscape treatments; architectural detailing; and materials.

23 In line with policy requirements, the Proposed Development has been sensitively designed with consideration to the surrounding area and site constraints, delivering a comprehensive masterplanned approach and high-quality buildings. It will deliver a high-quality place, whilst ensuring that no detrimental impacts are generated for the wider area. The massing and scale of the Proposed Development reflects a considered and commensurate and high-quality design and is therefore supported by the abovementioned NPPF, adopted and draft local plan policy, the SNP and SACDC's Strategic Sites Design Guidance.

### **C. AMENITY, PLAYSPACE AND OPEN SPACE**

24 Paragraphs 156 and 159 of the NPPF require the provision of new or improved green open space that is accessible to the public and should contribute positively to the landscape setting of the development, support nature recovery and meet local standards for green space provision where these exist in the development plan.

25 Policy 70 of the Local Plan states that developments with more than 30 dwellings each with two or more bedrooms shall normally be provided with toddlers play areas based on 3sqm for every 5 dwellings. Additionally, developments of more than 100 dwellings would need to provide children's playground(s) based on 1.2ha per 1,000 persons.

26 Policy 74 of the Local Plan sets out that the Council will consider retention of existing landscaping and provision of new landscaping when considering planning applications.

27 Policy NEB12 of the Draft Local Plan sets out in Table 10.1 (below) the quantity of new green space provision required for new housing developments.

Type of green space		Quantity standard (sqm per person)
Multi-functional green space	Amenity green space (including use as multi-functional space)	15.3
	Natural and semi-natural green spaces	34.6
	Parks and gardens (including use as multi-functional space)	7.1
Playing pitch provision & / or financial contributions		To accord with Sport England Playing Pitch Calculator
Total multi-functional green space standard		57
Allotments		4.5
Children's play areas		0.6

28 Table 10.2 of Draft Policy NEB12 states that for developments of 250+dwelling must provide the full provision, as set out above.

29 Policies C4 and D7 of the SNP states that applications to extend or enhance existing community, leisure or sports facilities will be supported, provided there is not an unacceptable impact on adjoining residential areas.

### Assessment

30 The illustrative masterplan outlines a cohesive network of public open spaces that provides opportunities for movement, play, and social interaction. Formal and informal play areas are provided throughout the Site and is complemented by the ATR improvements, offering options for both structured and informal activities.

31 The development includes the following provisions:

- 3.95ha of natural and semi-natural green space;
- 1.81ha of amenity greenspace;
- 0.83ha of parks and gardens; and
- 0.7ha of Locally Equipped Area for Play.

- 32 In addition to private rear gardens, balconies and communal amenity spaces integrated throughout the layout, ensure accessible private and semi-private spaces are available for each homes.
- 33 Some sections of existing Public Rights of Way have been enhanced to accommodate pedestrian and cycle connections, improving permeability and linking the development to the wider movement network.
- 34 The public realm has been designed with a balanced approach to hard and soft landscaping, featuring street trees, hedgerows, and a mix of ornamental and native plants. This design creates safe, attractive, and multifunctional spaces that positively contribute to the character of the local area.
- 35 As such, the Proposed Development delivers on-site high-quality outdoor amenity space that is suitable for the future occupiers of the Proposed Development and the public, in line with local and local and national policy and Policies and Policies C4 and D7 of the Sandridge Neighbourhood Plan.

#### **D. TRANSPORT AND ACCESS**

- 36 The NPPF promotes better integration between planning and transport and promotes accessibility by public transport, walking and cycling. The Development and mitigation measures have been designed to maximise the potential for sustainable travel and minimise any impacts on the local transport network.
- 37 Local Plan Policy 34 (Highways Considerations in Development Control) states that development likely to generate a significant amount of traffic, or which involves the creation or improvement of an access onto the public highway, will not normally be permitted unless acceptable in terms of the following highway considerations, namely road safety, environmental impact of traffic, road capacity, road hierarchy, and car parking provision. In assessing applications, SACDC will consider the advice contained in current documents prepared by Department of the Environment, Department of Transport, Hertfordshire County Council and SACDC.
- 38 Local Plan Policy 35 (Highway Improvements in Association with Development), in conjunction with HCC's highways aspirations, will seek to mitigate the highway effects of development proposals through highway improvements and/or improvements to the public transport system paid for by developers.

- 39 Local Plan Policy 36A (Location of New Development in Relation to Public Transport Network) states that SACDC will generally encourage the use of public transport. In considering the impact of new development, account will be taken of its proximity to the public transport network and whether facilities will be provided within the development to cater for use of the network.
- 40 Policy T1 of the SNP (Traffic Congestion and Road Safety) requires that locations for development must provide sustainable travel opportunities in line with Hertfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan 4 (as amended). The Parish will not support development where private car use is the only realistic choice for residents. All major development proposals (of 10 dwellings or more) must provide a traffic assessment or transport statement, proportional to the scale of the development proposed, which assesses the potential impact of increased traffic on residential roads, along with walking and cycling routes appropriate to the size of the scheme.
- 41 Policy T2 of the SNP (Public Transport/Buses) requires that wherever possible, major new developments of 10 dwellings or more should be served by a regular bus service to St Albans City railway station and city centre. For larger developments, this will form part of an enforceable Travel Plan, in line with Hertfordshire County Council's current guidance and Bus Strategy.
- 42 Policy T3 of the SNP (Walking, Cycling and Recreational Travel) promotes 'walkable' communities through housing developments, setting guidance for maximum walking distances between housing and new and/or existing facilities. Annex A of the SNP seeks to secure traffic calming measures where appropriate to improve safety for residents through those areas used by drivers.
- 43 Draft Strategic Policy SP8 of the emerging Local Plan states that the Council will prioritise the use of active and sustainable transport modes and deliver accessibility improvements to the transport and highways network.
- 44 Draft Policy TRA1 goes on to say that major developments must show how they Major development proposals must show how they support sustainable transport by reducing reliance on private cars, ensuring access to public transport without negative impacts, and providing safe, direct routes for walking and cycling. They must integrate well with existing transport networks, cater to people with disabilities, include facilities for low-emission vehicles, and deliver effective travel plans. Active and sustainable connections to key destinations must also be deliverable at an early stage of development.

45 Draft Policy TRA4 of the emerging Local Plan sets out that Proposals should align with the Cycle and Car Parking Guidance and Standards set out in Appendix 1, as follows:

**Cycle Parking Standards<sup>46</sup>**

Land use type	Sub-category	Short stay requirement (obvious, easily accessed and close to destination)	Long stay requirement (secure and ideally covered)
<b>All</b>	Parking for adapted cycles for disabled people	5% of total capacity co-located with disabled car parking.	5% of total capacity co-located with disabled car parking.
<b>Retail</b>	Small (<200m <sup>2</sup> )	1 per 100m <sup>2</sup>	1 per 100m <sup>2</sup>
	Medium (200-1,000m <sup>2</sup> )	1 per 200m <sup>2</sup>	1 per 200m <sup>2</sup>
	>1,000m <sup>2</sup>	1 per 250m <sup>2</sup>	1 per 500m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Employment</b>	Office / Finance	1 per 1000m <sup>2</sup>	1 per 200m <sup>2</sup>
	Industrial / Warehousing	1 per 1,000m <sup>2</sup>	1 per 500m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Leisure and Institutions</b>	Leisure centres, assembly halls, hospitals and healthcare	Greatest of: 1 per 50m <sup>2</sup> or 1 per 30 seats / capacity	1 per 5 employees
	Educational Institutions	-	Separate provision for staff and students. Based on Travel Plan mode share targets, minimum: Staff: 1 per 20 staff Students: 1 per 10 students
<b>Residential</b>	All except sheltered / elderly housing or nursing homes	-	1 per bedroom
	Sheltered / elderly housing / nursing homes	0.05 per residential unit	0.05 per bedroom
<b>Public Transport Interchange</b>	Standard stop	Upon own merit	-
	Major interchange	1 per 200 daily users	-

**Residential Car Parking Standards**

Use	Description	Car parking standards
Residential Within Use Class C3	a) General housing (including retirement and sheltered elderly persons accommodation, and similar non-C2 uses)	1 bedroom dwellings (including studios): 1.5 spaces (either 1.5 unallocated, or 1 allocated and 0.5 unallocated)  2 bedroom dwellings: either 2 spaces (either 2 unallocated or 1 allocated and 1 unallocated) or 2.5 spaces (2 allocated and 0.5 unallocated)  3+ bedroom dwellings 2.5 spaces (2 allocated and 0.5 unallocated)
	b) Not more than six residents living together as a single household	0.5 spaces per tenancy unit
Houses in multiple occupation Within Use Class C4	Small shared houses or flats occupied by between 3 and 6 unrelated individuals who share basic amenities	0.5 spaces per tenancy unit
Car parking for disabled motorists, to be included in the overall parking provision	(i) General	1 space for every dwelling built to mobility standards
	(ii) Elderly persons dwellings	3 spaces
	Up to 10 spaces (demand-based as calculated from above standards)  More than 10 spaces (demand-based as calculated from above standards)	1 space per 4 spaces  Consideration should also be given to the provision of space and charging points for mobility scooters

46 Draft Policy TRA4 also states that where parking is provided, it must be of a design and layout that will function satisfactorily and safely, as set out in up-to-date guidance from the Local Highway Authority.

- 47 A Transport Assessment (incl. parking strategy) has been prepared by Evoke and is submitted in support of this Application.
- 48 The supporting Transport Assessment, prepared by Evoke, outlines a comprehensive and sustainable approach to mobility and access. Vehicular access is provided via improved junctions and new priority access points, while the internal layout adheres to Hertfordshire County Council's Place & Movement guidance, featuring dedicated bus routes, shared cycle/footways, and pedestrian-friendly surfaces.
- 49 Active travel is prioritised through upgraded bridleways, new toucan crossings, and enhanced links to existing cycle routes such as Jersey Lane and Alban Way. Public transport improvements include new bus stops within 400m of all homes and contributions towards route enhancements. A car club is proposed to reduce private car dependency, supported by incentives for residents and businesses.
- 50 Trip generation modelling demonstrates that the development will not result in 'severe' or unacceptable highway impacts as set out in NPPF,. Where junction capacity issues are identified mitigation measures including junction redesigns, traffic calming, and active travel infrastructure measures are implemented. Road safety analysis shows no existing concerns, and construction traffic will be managed via a Traffic Management Plan.
- 51 The Transport Assessment concludes that the proposals align with national and local transport policies, including the NPPF, HCC LTP4, and the Sandridge Neighbourhood Plan. Overall, the assessment concludes that the development is vision-led, accessible, and environmentally sustainable, with robust mitigation strategies ensuring no unacceptable transport impacts and full policy compliance.

**i. Parking Strategy**

- 52 A Parking Strategy is included in the Transport Assessment and sets out how car and cycle parking provision associated with the Development shall be managed, operated and enforced to ensure effective operation, avoid undue parking street, and encourage sustainable modes of travel.
- 53 Local Plan Policy 39 (Parking Standards, General Requirements) requires development proposals to include off-street parking provision and for parking standards to be complied with, including parking for disabled people. Parking provision is also required for bicycles and motorcycles. Local Plan Policy 40 (Residential Development Parking Standards) details the parking standards required for different residential dwelling sizes, and states that a lower parking

requirement will be applied to affordable housing schemes if secure arrangements are made to ensure that the housing will remain “affordable” in perpetuity.

54 SACDC’s Revised Parking Policies and Standards (2002) did not include new residential parking standards but proposed a zonal approach, with a greater degree of parking restraint in the more accessible areas. It notes that applications will be encouraged to meet existing Local Plan standards, but schemes slightly below the standards may be accepted.

55 For Oaklands Blossom, 442 car parking spaces are provided in total, with 384 allocated to dwellings and 58 for visitors. This exceeds draft standards due to inclusion of garages. All dwellings are to be EV-ready. 3 disabled parking spaces are provided for the local centre and 2 for the children’s home.

56 The cycle parking provision exceeds standards and provides secure/sheltered communal stores for flats and sheds/garages for houses and includes 5% of spaces for adapted cycles. The Local Centre also exceeds standards, with 14 long stay spaces and 5 short stay spaces.

57 For Oaklands College, 153 new spaces are provided in a dedicated car park. This includes 8 disabled bays, 31 EV charging points, 7 coach bays and 6 minibus bays. A total of 164 new cycle parking spaces (108 secure/sheltered long-stay and 56 short-stay Sheffield stands) are also provided for Oaklands College.

## ii. Framework Travel Plans

58 A Framework Travel Plan has been prepared for the College, for the Oaklands Blossom site and for the Primary School. These Travel Plans collectively demonstrate a robust, policy-compliant approach to promoting sustainable travel and reducing reliance on private car use. Each plan sets out clear objectives, SMART targets, and a comprehensive package of hard and soft measures, including the delivery of new and improved pedestrian and cycle routes, enhanced public transport access, and high-quality cycle parking and EV charging infrastructure. The strategies prioritise active travel and public transport, with measures such as new toucan crossings, improved bus stops, and the introduction of a car club and mobility hub.

59 Management and monitoring are central to all three travel plans, with a dedicated Travel Plan Coordinator (TPC) appointed for each use. The TPCs are responsible for implementing measures, conducting regular travel surveys, and reporting progress to Hertfordshire County Council, with monitoring periods of five years for the residential element and seven years for the school and college. Annual surveys and reviews will ensure that targets are refined and measures adapted as necessary, with results uploaded to Modeshift STARS and shared with

the local authority. The plans also include actions to support car sharing, flexible working, and last-mile delivery solutions, embedding sustainable travel behaviour into the daily life of the development and ensuring long-term compliance with both local and national travel plan guidance.

### **iii. Conclusion**

60 The Development is therefore considered to be in accordance with the objectives of the NPPF, Policies 34, 35, 36A, 39 and 40 of the Local Plan, Policy T1, T2, T3 and Annex A of the Sandridge Neighbourhood Plan and policies SP8, TRA1, TRA4 of the new draft local plan and SACDC Revised Parking Policies and Standards (2002).

## **E. ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY**

61 The application proposals have been prepared in conjunction with a robust sustainability strategy which is the driving force behind the design of the buildings and their surroundings. This includes a fabric first approach and an assessment of a range of potentially appropriate technologies to deliver further reductions on CO2 emissions.

62 Sustainable development is the core principle underlying the spatial planning system and is promoted in the NPPF. Paragraph 7 states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, and there is focus on the environmental objective including mitigating and adapting to climate change, under Paragraph 8(c). Paragraph 131(b) details that significant weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability. Paragraph 164 explains that development should be planned in ways that avoid increased vulnerability to climate change and should help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

63 In July 2019 St Albans City and District Council declared a Climate Change Emergency, with the aspiration of achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2030.

64 Policies D6 and D7 of SNP support the principles of promoting low carbon and renewable energy technologies, sustainability and adaptability and aim to encourage future proofing new development where possible, whilst retaining the special character of the areas. The Policy sets out that applications meeting some of the environmental design and lifetime design standards set out within the policy, will be viewed more favourably, in ensuring the health & wellbeing of residents as recommended in the Hertfordshire Health and Wellbeing Guidance and Public Health England's Spatial Planning for Health.

- 65 Policy SP2 of the Draft Local Plan (Responding to the Climate Emergency) recognises the urgent need to respond to Climate Change through mitigation and adaptation and pledges support to proposals that help combat Climate Change.
- 66 Draft Policy CE1 of the Draft Local Plan (Promoting Sustainable Design, Construction and Building Efficiency) states that new buildings should be designed and constructed to ensure efficient use of energy, water and materials.
- 67 Policy CE2 of the Draft Local Plan (Renewable and Low Carbon Energy) details the Council's strategy to increase the use of renewable and low carbon energy in the District. The SACDC's Strategic Sites Design Guide SPD focuses on following the energy hierarchy set out in the National Design Guide (R1) which follows the fabric first approach and securing opportunities for carbon-free energy production and maximising water efficiency.
- 68 The Applicants' Climate Change, Energy and Sustainability Statement (Oaklands Blossom) explains that:
- The market sale and affordable homes on the Oaklands Blossom site, which will be the subject of reserved matters, should achieve a 25.86% and 36.84% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions beyond a Part L compliant development through a combination of energy demand reduction, high efficiency air source heat pumps and the inclusion of PV panels to suitable roof space. This should achieve an estimated total of 184,267 kgCO<sub>2</sub>/year and 297,578 kgCO<sub>2</sub>/year for the detailed and outline elements of the Oaklands Blossom development, respectively.
  - The non-residential floorspace calculation is estimated to be 11.3% above Part L 2021 baseline.
  - Water efficiency measures including the use of dual flush WCs, low flow showers and taps and appropriately sized baths will be encouraged with the aim to limit the use of water during the operation of the development. Each residential unit will minimise water usage to a least 110 litres per person, per day.
- 69 The Applicants' Climate Change, Energy and Sustainability Statement (Oaklands College) explains that:
- The proposals adopt a fabric-first approach and prioritises passive design and high thermal performance to minimise energy demand before relying on active systems or renewables
  - Enhanced insulation standards (U-values for roofs, walls, floors, glazing) significantly exceed Building Regulations Part L 2021, reducing heat loss and operational energy

use. Use of improved U-values, selective solar control, and solar shading devices to balance daylight and reduce overheating. Minimised thermal bridging: Careful detailing to reduce heat loss at junctions and penetrations, improving insulation performance and minimising thermal bridging.

- The scheme is targeting an Air quality standard of 1.0–3.0 m<sup>3</sup>/h·m<sup>2</sup> at 50 Pa, well below regulatory requirements, to improve energy efficiency and comfort.
- The scheme utilises sustainable construction measures, including:
  - use of recycled bricks (Kenoteq K-Briq) made from 96% recycled materials, cured at room temperature, cutting carbon emissions by up to 90%
  - Exploration of timber as a primary structural material for carbon sequestration and reduced embodied carbon.
  - Lighter superstructure design to minimise concrete use in foundations. Where possible existing structures are retained to reduce demolition waste and embodied carbon.
- On-site renewable energy: Incorporation of solar PV panels and air-source heat pumps serving a centralised energy network; PV areas specified for each new building.
- A centralised network using low-grade heat from air-source heat pumps, with future-proofing for expansion and hybrid systems
- Sustainable drainage is utilised throughout the scheme.
- Biodiversity net gain requirements are met, including installation of bat and bird boxes, 10% net gain in biodiversity units, and 30-year habitat management plan.

70 The scheme is therefore considered to accord with the relevant national and local planning policy requirements.

## **F. ECOLOGY, BIODIVERSITY AND TREES**

71 An Ecological Impact Assessment of the Site has been undertaken by ECOSA to assess, characterise and quantify the effects on the Site's ecological features and to set out measures to avoid, mitigate and compensate for significant ecological effects in accordance with the 'mitigation hierarchy' and to achieve a net gain for Biodiversity.

72 Policy 74 of the Local Plan (Landscaping and Tree Preservation) states that significant healthy trees and other important landscape features shall normally be retained unless it can be shown that retention is incompatible with the overall design quality and/or economic use of the site. The Policy further states that developments should not place undue post development pressure to prune or remove trees.

- 73 Policy 106 of the Local Plan (Nature Conservation) is generally consistent with the aims of section 15 of the NPPF, and notes that the Council will take account of ecological factors when considering planning applications.
- 74 Policies D7 and E1 of SNP (Natural Environment, Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure) state that positive improvements to green infrastructure and a measurable net gain in biodiversity, by reference to DEFRA biodiversity metric, shall be achieved as a result of all development proposals. And requires a minimum of 10% improvement in the biodiversity. Mitigation and compensation measures can be located either on or off site.
- 75 Policy SP10 of new Draft Local Plan (Natural Environment, Biodiversity and Green and Blue Infrastructure) seeks to protect and enhance green and blue infrastructure for its role in combating Climate Change and supporting biodiversity, along with its value for recreation, health and wellbeing, and landscape value. The Council will support the overall aims and objectives of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and consider tree planting and tree care a priority as part of new developments. The Council will support proposals that ensure the protection and improvement of the District's green infrastructure and the wider natural environment.
- 76 Policy NEB1 of new Draft Local Plan (Woodlands, Trees and Landscape Features) seeks to enhance tree cover in the District and protect existing woodlands, 94 trees and landscape features.
- 77 Policy NEB6 of new Draft Local Plan Biodiversity and Biodiversity Net Gain states that proposals that are likely to impact on protected designated areas and species of national and local importance for biodiversity must undertake an ecological assessment, apply the mitigation hierarchy and Biodiversity Net Gain, meet a minimum 10% net gain.
- 78 Policy NEB7 of new Draft Local Plan (Biodiversity Provision in the Design of New Buildings and Open Spaces) requires that development proposals have regard to the biodiversity already present within the site and identify opportunities to maximise the provision for biodiversity on the design of new buildings. All new housing developments provide at least one swift brick per dwelling and at least one integrated bat box and one integrated insect box per dwelling. All new proposals for suitable non-residential buildings must include groups of integrated swift bricks in numbers appropriate to the scale of development.
- 79 Policy NEB10 (Landscape and Design) of the Draft Local Plan states that SACDC considers that the landscaping elements of development area essential to creating sustainable and attractive places.

- 80 As of 12th February 2024, all new major development is mandated to achieve a minimum 10% BNG, as set out within the Environment Act 2021 and Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 81 The accompanying Ecological Impact Assessment identifies the adverse impacts on these ecological features resulting from the proposals and sets out appropriate measures with which to mitigate these. At the time of preparing this report, surveys are ongoing to determine the presence of roosting bats, hazel dormouse, breeding birds and reptiles on site and further mitigation measures will be provided once the surveys are completed.
- 82 At present, no residual or cumulative impacts are anticipated. The Site will be enhanced for bats, hazel dormouse, birds and invertebrates through the installation of roosting and nesting features and provision of new planting creating breeding spaces and foraging and commuting opportunities. As such it is considered that the proposals have scope to accord with all relevant national and local planning policy in relation to ecology.

## **G. AIR QUALITY**

- 83 Paragraph 199 of the NPPF outlines that planning decisions should sustain and contribute towards compliance with relevant limit values or national objectives for pollutants, considering the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and Clean Air Zones, and the cumulative impacts from individual sites in local areas. Opportunities to improve air quality or mitigate impacts should be identified, such as through traffic and travel management, and green infrastructure provision and enhancement. So far as possible these opportunities should be considered at the plan-making stage, to ensure a strategic approach and limit the need for issues to be reconsidered when determining individual applications. Planning decisions should ensure that any new development in Air Quality Management Areas and Clean Air Zones is consistent with the local air quality action plan.
- 84 Strategic Policy SP8 (Transport Strategy) requires new development to assess future air quality impacts from transport, where necessary, including funding contributions to wider schemes that will mitigate the impact of the scheme being proposed where appropriate. Strategic Policy SP13 (Health and Wellbeing) sets out the Council's objectives for health and wellbeing and includes requirement for considering the impacts of pollution and microclimates, and designing schemes to reduce any potential negative outcomes.
- 85 Policy HW1 of the Draft Local Plan (Air and Noise Pollution) states that development proposals which are pollution sensitive must carry out suitable assessments for air pollution. Proposals

which are found to be affected by air pollution must demonstrate suitable mitigation and proposals that would generate new air pollution in proximity to residential must demonstrate and put in place measures to avoid or mitigate any such impacts.

- 86 An Air Quality Assessment, prepared by SLR, has been submitted as part of this application. The assessment was undertaken to determine baseline conditions and assess potential impacts as a result of the Proposed Development. The report concludes that both the construction and operational phases will not result in significant adverse impacts on local air quality. During construction, the site is assessed as medium risk for dust soiling and human health, and low risk for ecological impacts. However, with the implementation of best practice mitigation measures—such as those outlined in the IAQM Construction Dust guidance and secured through a Dust Management Plan—residual effects are considered ‘not significant’. Construction-generated road traffic emissions are also predicted to have an ‘insignificant’ effect on air quality due to the short-term nature and low volume of vehicle movements.
- 87 For the operational phase, detailed dispersion modelling shows that predicted concentrations of NO<sub>2</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub>, and PM<sub>2.5</sub> at all existing and proposed receptor locations are well within the relevant Air Quality Assessment Levels (AQALs), with impacts considered ‘negligible’. The site is therefore suitable for its proposed uses, and future occupants will not be exposed to unacceptable pollutant levels. Road traffic impacts on nearby ecological designations are also within screening criteria, resulting in ‘no likely significant effect’ on habitats. Overall, the assessment concludes that the development will not cause significant air quality effects and incorporates robust mitigation and design measures to safeguard both human health and the environment.
- 88 Accordingly the development is in line with the objective of Strategic Policy SP8, SP13 and emerging policy HW1.

## **H. NOISE**

- 89 Paragraph 198 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should ensure new development is appropriate for its location considering the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health and living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should: a) mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development – and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life.

- 90 Policy HW1 of the new Draft Local Plan (Air and Noise Pollution) development proposals, including those for new residential dwellings, schools, nurseries and care homes and other uses which are air pollution sensitive, in areas which may exceed national legislative air quality pollution limits, must carry out suitable assessments for air pollution. Proposals which are found to be affected by air pollution must demonstrate suitable mitigation. Development proposals that would generate new air pollution in proximity to residential and other noise-sensitive uses must demonstrate and put in place measures to avoid or mitigate any such impacts.
- 91 A Noise Assessment, prepared by Noise, has been submitted as part of this application. The assessment was undertaken to determine baseline conditions and assess potential impacts because of the Proposed Development. The report concludes that the site is suitable for residential and educational development. Recommendations following the principles of good acoustic design have been made which include setting dwellings back from the road; placing habitable rooms on quiet facades where possible; and using buildings to provide screening for associated external amenity areas.

#### **I. FLOOD RISK, SURFACE WATER DRAINAGE & UTILITIES**

- 92 Local Plan Policy 84 (Flooding & River Catchment Management) seeks to reduce the risk of flooding and ensure proper management of the river catchment through not allowing development in areas liable to flooding and requiring appropriate flood protection where the redevelopment of existing areas is at risk of flooding. The Policy also requires the inclusion of appropriate surface water runoff control measures if development is permitted.
- 93 Local Plan policy 84A (Drainage Infrastructure) and Policy D4 of the SNP will not normally grant planning permission for new development in areas which are at risk of sewerage flooding, or where development would result in an unacceptable increase in sewerage flood risk elsewhere. Policy 84A requires a detailed drainage impact study at planning application stage, and if planning permission is granted, it may be subject to a condition or agreement relating to the approval of a drainage strategy.
- 94 Draft Policy NEB8 of the Draft Local Plan (Managing Flood Risk) states that proposals located within flood zones need to meet the requirements of the sequential and exception tests, in accordance with national policy. Any Flood Risk Assessment must be undertaken in accordance with advice from the Environment Agency (if applicable) or Lead Local Flood Authority.
- 95 Draft Policy NEB8 goes on to say that all major developments should incorporate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) into proposals and manage surface water run-off to achieve

- greenfield run-off rates where feasible. SuDS should be green, provide multiple benefits, such as biodiversity and integrate into the green infrastructure network.
- 96 Policy SP9 of the Draft Local Plan and D4 of the SNP requires new development to consider its impact on existing utilities infrastructure and, where necessary, planning permission will be the subject of a condition(s) that restricts occupation until the necessary utilities infrastructure is provided.
- 97 A site wide Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been prepared for the Oaklands Blossom and Oaklands College sites by JNP. This incorporates a Sustainable Urban Drainage Strategy (SuDS) for the Oaklands Blossom site, whilst a separate SUDS report has been prepared by Elliott Wood for the Oaklands College site. The FRA and both SuDS strategies refer to the pre-application advice received from SACDC and HCC, as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA).
- 98 The FRA demonstrates that the buildings within the Proposed Development entirely within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore at low risk of fluvial and coastal flooding. Surface water risk is generally low, with three overland flow paths identified. This has been mitigated through the introduction of formalised blue/green corridors and site-specific modelling to ensure flood risk is not increased elsewhere. Groundwater flood risk is low, with no flood risk is anticipated from infrastructure failure. Overall, the FRA concludes that the development is safe from flooding and will not increase flood risk elsewhere.
- 99 The SuDS prepared by JNP for the Oaklands Blossom proposals incorporates climate change allowances and includes attenuation basins, swales, permeable paving, and rain gardens to manage runoff at greenfield rates. Finished floor levels are set at least 300 mm above the 1-in-100-year flood level plus climate change, and resilience measures are proposed for vulnerable areas. The strategy ensures no flooding for events up to 1-in-30 years and no building or plant flooding for events up to 1-in-100 years plus climate change.
- 100 The SuDS prepared by Elliot Wood for the Oaklands College proposals explains that the total peak discharge from this part of the Site considers the 1 in 100 year plus climate change event, which equates to 25.9 l/s. This provides a 99% betterment to existing unrestricted rates and is within Greenfield QBar rates. All surface water drainage serving the proposals are to be drained by gravity to proposed SuDS and the existing surface water drainage network, with separate foul and surface water networks to be provided, in accordance with Part H of the Building Regulations.
- 101 Where existing surface water connections are shown connected to foul water drainage within portions of major development, these have been re-routed to the proposed drainage network.

Where minor works are proposed or areas to remain as existing, the drainage arrangement is to remain as existing. As connection of surface water flows is proposed to connect to existing surface water drainage. However, as a new connection to watercourse is envisaged required, a Land Drainage Consent application will be required in consultation with the Lead Local Flood Authority. Considering the significant rate betterment achieved as part of the proposed works, the College site's impact to the existing watercourse profile is envisaged to be improved.

102 The Applicants' Utilities Appraisal explains that:

Gas:

- Gas: Asset location plans indicate the following Cadent infrastructure passes through the Site:
  - 125mm PE medium pressure gas pipe from the south west to the college Campus.
  - Numerous smaller diameter low pressure distribution pipes within the college Campus.
- Gas: Asset location plans indicate that the following Cadent infrastructure passes within proximity of the Site:
  - 250mm PE medium pressure gas pipe in Sandpit Lane bordering the north west of the site.
  - Smaller diameter low pressure distribution pipes in the housing estate to the north west.
  - Medium pressure mains in Hatfield Road to the south.
  - Medium pressure main from Hatfield Road to the south west of the site towards the Campus site.
  - Numerous low pressure distribution pipes along Hatfield Road and in the housing estate to the south.
- None of the services are in the Oaklands Blossom area.
- There are assets in the Oaklands Campus area some of which may clash with the proposed new buildings in this area, particularly those in the centre of the Site. Confirmation of the need for gas for the Proposed Developments is required and then further enquiries with the operators will be used to confirm locations and potential clashes.

Electricity:

- The asset plans provided by UK Power Network show three types of line:
  - High voltage.

- 300mm<sup>2</sup> Aluminium Waveform cable used for low voltage distribution (e.g. Street lighting, power distribution from substations, panel boards and service connection).
  - Underground electricity cables (likely LV distribution, though could be HV depending on context).
- Asset location plans indicate the following infrastructure passes through the site:
  - There are high voltage and low voltage electricity cables within the Oaklands College Campus along with several electricity sub-stations. It is unclear how these connect as data is missing from the southern part of the site.
  - There are no cables noted passing through the Oaklands Blossom part of the site.
  - There is a high voltage cable running from the midpoint of Sandpit Lane (with respect to the red line boundary) due south stopping just north of the college Campus.
  - High voltage underground cables to the north and south of East Drive to the east of the site. These connect to a substation to the east of the Campus site. It is not clear how the different systems connect within the college Campus.
- Asset location plans indicate that the following UK Power infrastructure passes within proximity of the site:
  - Underground cables in both the north and south sides of Sandpit Lane to the north of the site.
  - It is anticipated that cables will also be present in Hadley Road but maps have not been provided for this area to date.
  - Eastern Electricity information does not indicate the route of any power cables.
- None of the services are in the Oaklands Blossom area.
- The high voltage running from the midpoint of Sandpit Lane running due south finishes very close to the Proposed Development within the Campus. The precise location of this, and any subsequent connections will need to be determined to determine if diversions are required.
- The other cables shown within the Campus area do not appear to be impacted by proposed new development, however, as not all the connections are shown and details for the southern part of the Campus have been omitted, further information is required to confirm this is the case.

#### Water Supply:

- Affinity Water is the potable water supplier for the local area.
- Asset location plans do not indicate any Affinity Water infrastructure passing through the site.

- Asset location plans indicate that the following Affinity Water infrastructure passes within proximity of the site:
  - 90mm and 125mm potable water pipes in the housing estate to the west.
  - 6 inch (150mm) potable water pipes in the centre of Sandpit Lane.
- Note that the plans provided do not cover any other areas around the site and it is assumed that water will also be provided to the housing estate to the north and other properties around the site. It is also assumed that Affinity Water also provide water to the college Campus although from the map provided, the potable water pipes within the Campus are not owned by Affinity Water.
- None of the services are in the Oaklands Blossom or Oaklands Campus areas.

Foul Drainage:

- Thames Water is the foul drainage undertaker for the local area.
- Asset location plans indicate that public foul water sewers do not pass through the site.
- Asset location plans indicate that the following infrastructure passes within proximity of the site:
  - 300mm foul sewer in Sandpit Lane to the north of the site.
  - Parallel 457mm and 525mm trunk foul sewers flowing east in Sandpit Lane and just within the site boundary at the eastern end of the northern boundary.
  - 300mm surface water sewer in Sandpit Lane to the north of the site.
  - 150mm other sewers in the housing estate to the west.
- None of the services are in the Oaklands Blossom or Oaklands Campus areas.

103 The Applicants expect that, in accordance with Policy SP9 of the Draft Local Plan and D4 of the SNP, planning permission will be the subject of a condition(s) that restricts occupation until the necessary utilities infrastructure is provided. The Proposed Development includes flood and drainage-related measure to ensure that there is no increase in the risk of localised flooding, in accordance with Policies 84 and 84A of the Local Plan, NEB8 of the Draft Local Plan and Policy D4 of the SNP.

**J. LAND CONTAMINATION**

104 Paragraph 196 of the NPPF seeks to ensure that a Site is suitable for its proposed use taking account of ground conditions and any risks arising from land instability and contamination and requires adequate site investigation information is made available.

105 Draft Policy HW3 of the emerging Local Plan (Land Contamination) states that any development proposals which would cause harm to the environment or neighbouring land or properties from a significant increase in pollution into the air, soil or any water body by virtue of the emissions

- of fumes, particles, effluent, radiation, smell, heat, light, noise or noxious substances, will not be permitted.
- 106 A Phase 1 Desk Based Assessment has been prepared by RSK and submitted in support of this Application.
- 107 The geo-environmental and geotechnical assessment confirms that the Oaklands Blossom site is generally suitable for residential development. No significant contamination was found across the Site, except for a single localised lead exceedance in shallow soils, which can be managed by targeted excavation or capping. No asbestos was detected, and risks to water supply pipes are low. The Oaklands Blossom site is therefore suitable for residential use without the need for widespread remediation, though vigilance for unexpected contamination during groundworks is advised.
- 108 Geotechnically, the ground conditions are appropriate for traditional spread foundations, with additional probing and reinforcement recommended in the northern part of the site due to potential chalk dissolution features. Foundations may need to be deepened near trees, and piled foundations are also feasible. The site is not suitable for pit soakaways due to low permeability and dissolution risk; infiltration features should be kept at least 10m from foundations. Overall, with these standard mitigation measures, the site is considered appropriate for the proposed development.
- 109 A Phase 1 Desk Study has been undertaken by RSK Environment Limited to assess geo-environmental constraints. The assessment follows current best practice, including Land Contamination Risk Management (LCRM) and relevant British Standards, and is intended to inform planning and building control requirements.
- 110 The Phase 1 Desk Study has identified potential geo-environmental constraints and recommends further intrusive investigation to confirm ground conditions and contamination status. This includes recommendations for:
- A Phase 2 intrusive ground investigation is recommended, including trial pits and shallow boreholes with installation of ground gas and groundwater monitoring wells.
  - Soil samples should be collected for laboratory chemical testing to assist in land contamination assessment, and gas monitoring should be undertaken to determine potential gas risk.

- 111 The findings and recommendations will be applied in the Reserved Matters design and implementation of the proposed development to ensure the site is suitable for its intended use and to support the discharge of planning conditions.

## **K. AGRICULTURAL LAND**

- 112 Paragraph 174 of the NPPF seeks to protect land of geological or soil value. Local Plan Policy 102 (Loss of Agricultural Land), NEB9 of the Draft Local Plan and Policy E2 of the SNP explain that development resulting in the loss of high-quality agricultural land (Grade 1, 2 or 3a) will normally be refused. An exception to the policy may be made if there is an overriding need for the development and there is no alternative land of a lower quality which could reasonably be used.
- 113 Policy 102 of the adopted Local Plan (Loss of Agricultural Land) development which would result in the loss of agricultural land will be assessed against the land quality and integrity and viability of the farm housing and must be accompanied by an assessment of the agricultural gradings of the land.
- 114 The Agricultural Land Classification Report (ALCR) was undertaken in accordance with the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food Agricultural Land Classification (MAFF ALC) of England and Wales Revised guidelines and criteria for grading the quality of agricultural land 1988. The ALCR found that the Site comprises approximately 54% of the Study Area comprises non-BMV (i.e., Subgrade 3b) and non-agricultural land (i.e., approximately 24.6% of Subgrade 3b, and approximately 29.3ha of 'other/non-agricultural land'). Of the remainder, the Grade 2 (i.e., 23%) and Subgrade 3a (i.e., 23.2%) in the Study Area is enclosed by roads, urban development, and woodland.
- 115 The report concludes that the proposed residential development in the Study Area, comprising approximately 54% of non-BMV (i.e., Subgrade 3b) and non-agricultural land would not significantly harm national interests in agricultural land quality terms regarding Paragraphs 187 and 188 (and Footnote 65) of the NPPF. The Proposed Development will accord with the objectives of Paragraph 17, Policy 102 of the Local Plan, NEB9 of the Draft Local Plan and Policy E2 of the SNP.

## **L. HERITAGE AND ARCHAEOLOGY**

- 116 The NPPF sets out Government planning policy with Chapter 16 providing policy guidance for conserving and enhancing the historic environment. The guidance recognises the importance

- of preserving assets in a manner appropriate to their significance and guides that any harm or loss to significance should require clear and convincing justification.
- 117 Paragraph 207 of the NPPF requires Applicants to describe the significance of those [heritage] assets potentially affected by proposed development. This assessment should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposed development on that significance.
- 118 Policy 86 (Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest) of the Local Plan and Policy E5 of the SNP require development which affects archaeological remains or a listed building (and its setting) to have special regard to the desirability of preserving remains and listed building or its setting.
- 119 Policy HE1 of new Draft Local Plan (Designated Heritage Assets) states that the Council will pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Conservation Areas and will have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings and Registered Parks and Gardens or their settings or any features of architectural or historic interest which they possess.
- 120 HE2 of new Draft Local Plan (Non-designated Heritage Assets) explains that proposals affecting non-designated heritage assets should ensure they respond appropriately to their significance. Any special features which contribute to a non-designated heritage asset's significance should be retained and, where possible and well evidenced, reinstated. Demolition of buildings identified on the local list of buildings shall only be supported where there are acceptable and detailed proposals for any redevelopment which show what is proposed and how it will affect the street scene and local character
- 121 HE3 of new Draft Local Plan (Archaeology) seeks to ensure that the damage to archaeological remains caused by development is minimised; that well preserved remains of national significance are preserved in situ; and that development in St Albans protects and enhances the city's unique archaeological and historic character.
- 122 A Historic Environment Desk Based Assessment has been prepared by Landgage and submitted in support of this Application. Local Plan Policies 109 (Scheduled Ancient Monuments), 110 (Archaeological Sites for Local Preservation) and 111 (Archaeological Sites Where Planning Permissions May Be Subject to a Recording Condition) are not relevant to the Proposed Development as the Site is not an archaeological site listed within these policies. Nonetheless, an Archaeology Desktop Based Assessment has been prepared which explains

that no further archaeological mitigation is required to minimise and compensate for the anticipated impacts of the proposed development.

- 123 The Historic Environment Desk Based Assessment concludes that impact of the proposed development on the archaeological potential of the study site will be minimal, and the development made acceptable in terms of archaeological impacts. With regard to heritage impact, the report concludes that the impact of the proposed development on the setting and significance of heritage assets would be acceptable. It therefore accords with the requirements in Paragraphs 207 and 212 - 218 of the NPPF and Policies 86, 110 and 111 of the Local Plan, Policy E5 of the SNP and Policies HE1, HE2, HE3 and HE6 of the emerging Local Plan.

#### **M. RECYCLING AND WASTE MANAGEMENT**

- 124 The NPPF seeks to minimise waste and pollution as part of the environmental objective of sustainable development.
- 125 The Hertfordshire Waste Development Framework Core Strategy (2012) sets out the vision, objectives and spatial strategy for waste planning in Hertfordshire up to 2026. Policy 1 of the Core Strategy states that any proposed new development within the county will be required to make appropriate provision for managing the waste arising from the development. Policy 2 relates to waste prevention and reduction, while Policy 12 requires consideration of sustainable design, construction and demolition.
- 126 Policies CS12 and CS29 of the Core Strategy require development to provide sufficient space for servicing and on-site recycling facilities for waste.
- 127 Policies CS12 and CS29 of the Core Strategy and Policy D6 of the SNP supports the principles of using renewable technologies, water saving measures, sustainability and adaptability so aims to encourage future proofing new development, where possible.
- 128 A Waste & Recycling Management Strategy has been prepared with regard to both the Oaklands Blossom and Oaklands College elements of the proposals. Each strategy sets out a comprehensive approach to minimising, managing, and responsibly disposing of waste during both the construction and operational phases and aligns with St Albans City and District Council policy, Hertfordshire County Council guidance, and best practice in sustainable development, and supports the project's commitment to sustainability, circular economy principles, and net-zero ambitions.

## **N. HEALTH & WELLBEING**

- 129 Policy SP13 of new Draft Local Plan (Health and Wellbeing) aims to improve people's health and wellbeing and encourage them to adopt a healthy lifestyle through non-clinical initiatives and seeks to ensure that development contributes to the improvement of physical and mental health and wellbeing, and the reduction of inequalities.
- 130 Policies D6 and E6 of the Sandridge Neighbourhood Plan (Health Needs) requires that major development proposals should contribute to the provision of additional facilities, proportional to the size of the development. Policy D6 of the SNP seeks that the design of future developments should consider the recommendations set out in Hertfordshire Health and Wellbeing Guidance and Public Health England's Spatial Planning for Health.
- 131 A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) has been undertaken by Stantec. The assessment follows national and local policy requirements, using the Healthy Urban Development Unit (HUDU) Rapid HIA Tool, and considers the full range of wider determinants of health, including housing, access to services, open space, air quality, active travel, safety, food access, employment, social cohesion, resource use, and climate change.
- 132 The HIA concludes that the proposed development will have an overall positive or neutral effect on the wider determinants of health, with the majority of impacts assessed as positive. The scheme demonstrates a strong commitment to health equity, sustainability, and community wellbeing, with recommended mitigations in place to address any identified neutral or potential adverse effects. Ongoing stakeholder engagement and monitoring are advised to ensure that health and wellbeing benefits are fully realised throughout the delivery of the development.

## **CONCLUSION**

- 133 The technical reports and assessments that support the planning application demonstrate that no significant adverse effects are predicted to arise from the development that cannot be mitigated. As such, there are no development management related reasons to withhold granting planning permission.