

PART A	
Report of: Head of Development Management	
Date of committee:	8th March 2017
Site address:	37, Bucks Avenue, Watford
Reference Number :	Hertsmere Borough Council ref.16/2272/FUL
Description of Development:	Consultation from Hertsmere Borough Council on development adjoining the Borough: Demolition of 37 Bucks Avenue and equestrian facility, removal of hardstanding, ménages, buildings and structures and the redevelopment of the site to include 24 dwellings (including 8 affordable dwellings) comprising 2 x 1 bed and 2 x 2 bed apartments, 16 x 3 bed houses and 4 x 4 bed houses with associated parking, informal play area and open space, all to be served by modifying the existing access from Bucks Avenue/Sherwoods Road (amended scheme).
Applicant:	Clovercourt Fusion
Date Received:	Consultation on amended scheme received 6th February 2017
21 day response date:	27th February 2017
Ward:	Oxhey

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report relates to a consultation received from Hertsmere Borough Council on an amended planning application for the redevelopment of the Bucks Meadow Riding School at 37, Bucks Avenue, located within their borough. Watford Council has also received a duplicate amended planning application for the same development although only the access to the site is located within Watford Borough and therefore falls under the Council's jurisdiction as the local planning authority. All of the proposed dwellings and associated development (roads, car parking, open space, etc.) are located within Hertsmere Borough and they will determine the application for this development.
- 1.2 This consultation from Hertsmere is to seek the Council's views on their application.

In respect of the planning application submitted to Watford, this will be the subject of a separate report to the committee and will relate only to the proposed access arrangements and associated traffic impacts arising from the proposal. As such, this report does not consider these issues and the Committee should make no reference to these matters in their response to Hertsmere.

- 1.3 This consultation follows a previous consultation in November 2015 in relation to a scheme for the development of the site for 34 dwellings. This is referenced in Section 4.0 of this report.

2.0 Site and surroundings

- 2.1 The site is located almost entirely within Hertsmere Borough with its access off Bucks Avenue, at the junction with Sherwoods Road, within Watford Borough. The overall area of the site is approximately 13 hectares and comprises a dwelling, the Bucks Meadow Riding School, outdoor maneges, paddocks and extensive grazing fields extending from the site entrance to the east. The site itself is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt. The riding school closed in September 2015.

- 2.2 The site comprises a large number of existing buildings in various states of repair. The largest building on the site is an indoor manege (2 storey) with a number of other single storey buildings including stables, store buildings and other ancillary buildings. Various areas of parking and hardstanding also exist.

- 2.3 The site is adjoined to the north, west and south by the residential areas of Oxhey, with Talbot Avenue to the north, Bucks Avenue to the west and Sherwoods Road, Lawson Grove and Elm Avenue to the south. These roads are characterised by detached and semi-detached houses with detached bungalows on Lawson Grove on Elm Grove. Most of the dwellings were developed in the 1920s and 1930s as individual plots and are typical of their era. Consequently, designs and materials are very varied and include a number of mock-Tudor designs. Only those properties on Wilcot Avenue and Talbot Avenue are more uniform in their appearance. To the north-east, the site adjoins the Paddock Road Allotments site.

3.0 Proposed development

- 3.1 The amended proposal involves the demolition of all existing buildings on the site and the erection of 24 dwellings, comprising 4 flats (1 and 2 bed) and 20 houses (3 and 4 bed). The flats are provided in a single block and the houses provided as detached and semi-detached houses. The block of flats is sited at the entrance to the site with the houses and their associated parking arranged in an open horseshoe shape on the outside of the internal access road, with the central area

occupied by landscaped open space. This development is located in the western corner of the overall site, adjacent to the access from Bucks Avenue and in the area of the existing buildings on the site.

- 3.2 All of the proposed buildings are two storey, with accommodation in the roofspace of some of the houses. The design approach is of suburban housing drawing on the Edwardian vernacular that is seen within the surrounding area.
- 3.3 The single access from Bucks Avenue splits into 2 spurs and serves the various parking areas serving the dwellings. Parking is provided in the form of frontage parking to the houses and small parking courts. Visitor parking is shown on the 2 spurs of the internal road.
- 3.4 The application as originally submitted in November 2016 was for 27 dwellings comprising 5 flats and 22 houses.

4.0 Relevant planning history

- 4.1 The riding school has been established on the site since the 1950s (albeit with a break in use in the 1980s, recommencing in 1991) with the indoor menage built in 1992. The existing house was built in the 1960s. The use as a riding school ceased in early 2016.
- 4.2 Hertsmere Borough Council consulted the Council on a previous application for the development of the site in November 2015:

15/1895/FUL - Demolition of 37 Bucks Avenue and equestrian facility, removal of hardstanding, ménages, buildings and structures and the redevelopment of the site to include 34 dwellings (including 12 affordable dwellings) comprising 12 x 1 bed apartments, 4 x 2 bed apartments, 10 x 3 bed houses and 8 x 4 bed houses, parking, village green with pond and play area served by modifying existing access from Bucks Avenue/Sherwoods Road. Provision of public footpaths & cycleways connecting Bucks Avenue to footpath no. 17 and ecological enhancement of land to South East of dwellings to include biodiversity enhancement, landscaping, wildflower meadows, formation of ponds and communal orchard.

- 4.3 This was considered by the Committee on 19th November 2015 and the following comments were made to Hertsmere Council:

“The Committee resolved to object to the application for the following reasons:

- 1. Across the site, the buildings extend beyond the footprint of the existing

buildings, particularly so for Plots 23-26 and 27-30. There is also a narrowing of the gaps between buildings, especially in the aforementioned plots and Plots 15-22 where the development is closest to the open area of the Green Belt. As such, the proposal compromises the openness of the Green Belt, contrary to the provisions of Section 9, paragraph 89 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy GI2 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.

2. Notwithstanding the similarity in volume of space in the new development compared to existing buildings, the layout, scale, height and bulk of the buildings compromises the openness of the Green Belt, contrary to the provisions of Section 9, paragraph 89 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy GI2 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.
3. The terraced effect of many of the buildings means that they are of a size and scale that conflicts with the character of the adjacent residential streets, consisting as it does of mainly detached and semi-detached houses. As such, the proposal is contrary to Policy UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31 and the Watford Character of Area Study 2011.

“In the event that Hertsmere Borough Council is minded to grant planning permission for the application, Watford Borough Council would request that the following conditions are imposed:

1. That no part of the development shall be occupied until the existing access to Bucks Avenue has been modified and constructed in full, as shown in principle on drawing no. 150318-2D.

Reason: To ensure safe access to the site in the interests of vehicular and pedestrian users of the highway.

2. That the trees along the south-western boundary and along the north-western boundary are retained and measures installed to protect the trees during demolition and construction works.

Reason: These are an important visual amenity to adjoining residential occupiers and will help to mitigate the visual impact of the development.

3. That the first floor window in the south elevation of Unit 15 shall be obscure glazed and non-opening.

Reason: To prevent overlooking and a loss of privacy to the adjoining

property at 3, Lawson Grove.

4. The development shall provide at least 67 car parking spaces.

Reason: To prevent overspill parking on the adjoining highway on Bucks Avenue and Sherwoods Road.

“Watford Borough Council would also request that the remaining Green Belt land within the application site is secured for public access in perpetuity and that the restoration and enhancement of the land is undertaken before commencement of any development, by means of an appropriate condition or s.106 planning obligation.”

- 4.4 Hertsmere Council formally considered this application on 15 June 2016 and refused planning permission for the following reason:

The proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, for which the harm to its openness would be from its larger scale and greater height, than the existing low key equestrian buildings, that would be unsympathetic and incompatible to its landscape setting and inhibiting views across the site to more open land to the east. The development would consequently be contrary to policies CS22 of the Core Strategy 2013, H8 (i) of the Local Plan 2003, SADM12 and SADM 27(iv) of the draft Site Allocations and Development Management Strategy 2015.

- 4.5 This refusal was appealed and a decision on the appeal is still pending.

5.0 Planning policies

Although the Committee is not determining the planning application, which Hertsmere must determine against their own Development Plan policies, the following policies of the Development Plan for Watford are relevant in the consideration of the proposal.

5.1 Development plan

In accordance with s.38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Development Plan for Watford comprises:

- (a) *Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31;*
- (b) *the continuing “saved” policies of the Watford District Plan 2000;*
- (c) *the Hertfordshire Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document 2011-2026; and*
- (d) *the Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan Review 2002-2016.*

5.2 The *Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31* was adopted in January 2013. The *Core Strategy* policies, together with the “saved policies” of the *Watford District Plan 2000* (adopted December 2003), constitute the “development plan” policies which, together with any relevant policies from the County Council’s *Waste Core Strategy* and the *Minerals Local Plan*, must be afforded considerable weight in decision making on planning applications. The following policies are relevant to this application.

5.3 **Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31**

WBC1	Presumption in favour of sustainable development
SS1	Spatial Strategy
SD1	Sustainable Design
SD2	Water and Wastewater
SD3	Climate Change
SD4	Waste
HS1	Housing Supply and Residential Site Selection
HS2	Housing Mix
HS3	Affordable Housing
T2	Location of New Development
T3	Improving Accessibility
T4	Transport Assessments
INF1	Infrastructure Delivery and Planning Obligations
UD1	Delivering High Quality Design
GI1	Green Infrastructure
GI2	Green Belt
GI3	Biodiversity
GI4	Sport and Recreation

5.4 **Watford District Plan 2000**

SE7	Waste Storage, Recovery and Recycling in New Development
SE27	Flood Prevention
SE36	Replacement Trees and Hedgerows
SE37	Protection of Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows
SE39	Tree and Hedgerow Provision in New Development
SE40	Landscape Character Assessment
T10	Cycle Parking Standards
T21	Access and Servicing
T22	Car Parking Standards
T24	Residential Development
L8	Open Space Provision in Housing Development
L9	Children’s Play Space

CS3 Loss of Community Facilities

5.5 Hertfordshire Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document 2011-2026

- 1A Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- 2 Waste Prevention and Reduction
- 12 Sustainable Design, Construction and Demolition

5.6 Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan Review 2002-2016

No relevant policies.

5.7 Supplementary Planning Documents

The following Supplementary Planning Documents are relevant to the determination of this application, and must be taken into account as a material planning consideration.

5.8 *Residential Design Guide*

The Residential Design Guide was adopted in July 2014. It provides a robust set of design principles to assist in the creation and preservation of high quality residential environments in the Borough which will apply to proposals ranging from new individual dwellings to large-scale, mixed-use, town centre redevelopment schemes. The guide is a material consideration in the determination of relevant planning applications.

5.9 *Watford Character of Area Study*

The Watford Character of area Study was adopted in December 2011. It is a spatial study of the Borough based on broad historical character types. The study sets out the characteristics of each individual character area in the Borough, including green spaces. It is capable of constituting a material consideration in the determination of relevant planning applications.

5.10 *SPG10 Open Space Provision*

This guidance sets out the standards of open space provision required per thousand population as part of new developments. The guidance was adopted in October 2001 and is a material consideration in the determination of relevant planning applications.

5.11 National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England. The following provisions are relevant to the determination of this application, and must be taken into account as a material planning consideration:

Achieving sustainable development

The presumption in favour of sustainable development

Core planning principles

Section 1 Building a strong, competitive economy

Section 4 Promoting sustainable transport

Section 6 Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes

Section 7 Requiring good design

Section 8 Promoting healthy communities

Section 9 Protecting Green Belt land

Section 10 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Section 11 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Decision taking

6.0 Consultations

6.1 No neighbour notifications or technical consultations have been undertaken in respect of this consultation. All notifications, consultations and publicity relating to the application have been undertaken by Hertsmere.

6.2 For members information, in respect of the application submitted to this Council (which will be considered at a later meeting), the Council has received 59 letters of objection (47 from the immediate area and 12 from elsewhere in Watford) and 27 letters of support (7 from Watford and 20 from outside Watford).

7.0 Appraisal

7.1 Main issues

The main issues to be considered in respect of this proposal are:

- (a) Impacts on the Green Belt
- (b) Loss of the existing riding school as a community facility
- (c) General housing policies
- (d) Design, scale and appearance
- (e) Character of the area
- (f) Impacts on adjoining properties
- (g) Car parking provision

7.2 (a) Impacts on the Green Belt

The Council's first 2 objections to the previous scheme related to the Green Belt and the impact of the proposed scheme on the openness of the Green Belt:

1. *Across the site, the buildings extend beyond the footprint of the existing buildings, particularly so for Plots 23-26 and 27-30. There is also a narrowing*

of the gaps between buildings, especially in the aforementioned plots and Plots 15-22 where the development is closest to the open area of the Green Belt. As such, the proposal compromises the openness of the Green Belt, contrary to the provisions of Section 9, paragraph 89 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy GI2 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.

2. *Notwithstanding the similarity in volume of space in the new development compared to existing buildings, the layout, scale, height and bulk of the buildings compromises the openness of the Green Belt, contrary to the provisions of Section 9, paragraph 89 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy GI2 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.*

- 7.2.1 The new scheme will need to be considered against national policy and these previous objections and a judgement made as to whether the revised scheme overcomes these objections.
- 7.2.2 National policy relating to development in the Green Belt is set out in paragraphs 87-89 of the NPPF. This states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances (para 87). When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight be given to any harm to the Green Belt. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm is clearly outweighed by other considerations (para 88).
- 7.2.3 New buildings in Green Belt should be considered as inappropriate in the Green Belt unless the development complies with one of 6 exceptions (para 89). The only exception relevant to this application is the following:

“Limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land) which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development”.
- 7.2.4 The NPPF also gives a definition of previously developed land which includes land which is occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. Various exclusions from this definition are given, including agricultural and forestry buildings and residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments.

- 7.2.5 The existing dwelling and the various buildings and areas of hardstanding and car parking associated with the riding school constitute previously developed land (brownfield land). These are clustered in the eastern corner of the site close to the existing access and occupy an area of approximately 0.7 hectare. The 3 existing outdoor ménages adjoining the buildings to the east are not considered brownfield land and are excluded from this area. The proposal is for the redevelopment of the site under the exception set out in paragraph 89 of the NPPF.
- 7.2.6 In this respect, the layout of the houses is more open than the previous scheme, which was clustered tightly within the brownfield land. This led to the objections regarding the impact on the openness of the Green Belt. In the new scheme, the western spur (backing on to Lawson Grove) is within the existing footprint of the buildings and parking areas. However, the eastern spur, which extends towards the boundary with the adjoining allotments, is partially outside of the previously developed land, and extends onto one of the grassed ménages. Eight of the proposed houses are sited outside of the brownfield land. As such, the proposal does not fall wholly within the brownfield land exception in the NPPF.
- 7.2.7 In mitigation of this, much of the existing brownfield land where the existing buildings are sited, including the large indoor riding school building, is not developed with buildings and comprises part of the access road, some car parking, landscaping and an area of landscaped open space. Whereas the existing buildings and the proposed buildings of the previous scheme are tightly clustered together, preventing views through to the Green Belt beyond, the revised scheme is very open in its layout, allowing the open nature of the Green Belt to penetrate deep into the site.
- 7.2.8 Overall, the proposal is therefore considered acceptable in principle, subject to a more detailed assessment of the impact of the development on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it compared to the existing development on the site.
- 7.2.9 In order to aid this assessment, the applicant has provided existing and proposed figures for building footprints and hardstanding areas and building volumes for comparison.

	Existing	
	Footprint/area (m ²)	Volume (m ³)
Buildings	2999	11510
Hardstanding/parking	5001	
Total	8000	11510

	Proposed	
	Footprint/area (m ²)	Volume (m ³)
Buildings	1795	11338
Roadway/parking	3272	
Total	5067	11338

	Comparisons		
	Existing	Proposed	Difference
Footprint/areas (m ²)	8000	5067	-2933 (-36.7%)
Volume (m ³)	11510	11338	-172 (-1.5%)

7.2.10 It can be seen from these figures that the volume of buildings proposed is very similar to that of the existing buildings. The area of hardstanding, car parking, roadway and footpaths is also significantly less than the existing. The form and typology of the proposed houses is different to that of the existing buildings, with the site currently dominated by the indoor riding school building. The proposed houses are more in keeping with the scale of the surrounding houses and have been designed to have a more suburban appearance, to complement the existing residential area. The layout of the site has also been designed to allow wide views across the site out into the Green Belt.

7.2.11 In conclusion on this matter, the extent of new development is not wholly confined to the agreed area of previously developed land, with some encroachment into greenfield land. However, the benefit of this is that a much more open, and less clustered, layout is achieved which results in a significant improvement in the openness of the site. The volume of new buildings is very similar to that of the existing buildings and this volume has been broken down into smaller buildings. It is not, therefore, considered that the proposed development will have any greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt, or any other purpose for including land within the Green Belt than the existing development, and consequently, will not cause harm to the Green Belt.

7.2.12 In considering the previous objections of the Committee, it is considered that the revised scheme overcomes the 2 objections relating to the openness of the Green Belt and the harm caused to it by the previous scheme.

7.3 (b) Loss of the existing riding school as a community facility

The application is accompanied by a Needs Assessment of the existing equestrian facility by a Sport England Framework Partner Company. Within Hertsmere Borough, 3 other equestrian centres are also the subject of planning applications for residential development, with one of these, in addition to the current site, having recently closed. As a result, Hertsmere and Sport England have requested the needs assessment in order to determine any impact from the closure and any perceived loss of a community facility.

7.3.1 Following consultation with various national equestrian organisations, the County Council, Hertsmere Borough Council and Sport England, it is agreed that the riding school at the site is not of strategic or regional significance (unlike other equestrian facilities in Hertsmere).

7.3.2 The report reviews the low levels of usage at the riding school in tandem with declining demand for equestrian sport, competition from and the capacity of other facilities, changes in the market and the financial circumstances of the riding school (the business has incurred significant losses in the past 5 years), and concluded that the riding school is no longer a viable business. Since the report was commenced, the riding school has closed. Although this is regrettable, the report concludes that the closure will have a minimal negative impact on the provision and delivery of equestrian sport in the local area.

7.3.3 With reference to paragraph 74 of the NPPF, this states that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- i) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
- ii) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
- iii) the development is for alternative sports and recreation provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.

7.3.4 In this case, the report concludes that there are numerous equestrian facilities, with a comparable service offer, within a short distance from the site. There are 5 other facilities within 5 miles (2 with capacity for new users) and a further 19 within 5-12 miles of the site (9 with capacity). Given the low level of use at the time of closure (32 people per week), there is sufficient capacity locally to meet this demand. There is also no ignoring the fact that the current facility has closed after making significant losses over the past 5 years.

7.4 (c) General housing policies

Policy HS1 gives criteria for the selection of new housing sites and the consideration of windfall housing sites, such as this one. In this respect, the use of the site for residential development is broadly consistent with this policy in that the majority of the site to be developed is previously developed land, the land is not at risk of flooding (Flood Zone 1), the site has reasonably good access to passenger transport (Bushey Station is 720m to the north) and the provision of the majority of the dwellings as houses (22 of the 27 units) is in general accordance with the Council's spatial strategy.

- 7.4.1 The applicant is proposing 8 units as affordable housing (33%) with a mix of 4 flats and 4 houses, which accords with Hertsmere's requirement for 35% affordable housing. The internal floorareas for the proposed dwellings meet or exceed the nationally described space standards. Overall, the proposal is considered acceptable in principle.

7.5 (d) Design, scale and appearance

The design of the buildings in the previous scheme could be described loosely as a rural farmstead typology, reflecting the general design of brick and timber clad farmhouses and barns. The style drew on the precedent of the award winning development at Wall Hall near Aldenham. The scale of the buildings was single and two storey with low eaves, deep roofs and Dutch hipped, gables. The main materials proposed were a red brick and dark stained timber cladding with red multi roof tiles. The blocks of flats also incorporated large, picture windows often seen in modern barn conversions.

- 7.5.1 All of the proposed dwellings were provided as blocks of flats or terraces of 4 houses, with the exception of one pair of semi-detached houses. This led partly to the third objection of the Committee:

The terraced effect of many of the buildings means that they are of a size and scale that conflicts with the character of the adjacent residential streets, consisting as it does of mainly detached and semi-detached houses. As such, the proposal is contrary to Policy UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31 and the Watford Character of Area Study 2011.

- 7.5.2 The revised scheme proposes a single block of 4 flats towards the entrance of the site, designed to have the appearance of a pair of semi-detached houses, 6 pairs of semi-detached houses and 8 detached houses. The design style draws heavily upon the suburban, Edwardian vernacular that is seen within the surrounding area. Materials proposed include buff London Stock brick, brown and red brick, reconstituted Portland stone, smooth render, clay roof tiles and artificial slate tiles.

7.5.3 Overall, the proposed houses are of a typology, scale and design that complement and reinforce the character and appearance of the surrounding residential area. As such, it is considered that the third objection is overcome.

7.6 (e) Character of the area

The character of the previous development and its perceived contrast with the character of the surrounding residential area also contributed to the third objection.

7.6.1 The general character of the area is of detached and semi-detached houses and bungalows, with the bungalows predominantly located on Elm Grove and Lawson Grove. With the exception of the houses on Wilcot Avenue and Talbot Avenue, which are more uniform in their style and materials, the remaining houses and bungalows are very varied in their design and materials, with an eclectic mix ranging from brown, pebbledash rendered semi-detached houses to large mock-Tudor houses.

7.6.2 The previous scheme, comprising blocks of flats and terraces of houses of a rural farmstead typology, was not considered to reflect the character of the surrounding residential area. The revised design, comprising predominantly detached and semi-detached houses is considered to complement and reinforce the character and appearance of the surrounding residential area and overcome the third objection.

7.7 (f) Impacts on adjoining properties

Several properties in Watford Borough directly adjoin the site and the potential impact on these properties needs to be assessed.

7.7.1 *1, Sherwoods Road* – This property adjoins the entrance to the site on its southern side and its side garden boundary is shared with the application site. The nearest proposed building to this property is a pair of semi-detached houses (Plots 23-24) sited in line with the rear boundary of the property. The back-to-back facing distance, albeit off-set, is 41.5m which is significantly in excess of the Council's minimum of 27.5m. Furthermore, there are only 2 windows at first floor level closest to the boundary and these are to a bedroom and a bathroom, limiting further any opportunities for overlooking. Retained trees along the boundary will also help to mitigate any oblique overlooking of the garden area. The siting of the proposed building will have no adverse impact on the outlook and natural light to no.1.

7.7.2 *35, Bucks Avenue* – This property is sited on the northern side of the site entrance and also shares its side garden boundary with the application site. A row of trees is

sited along this boundary and is to be retained. The nearest proposed building is the block of 4 flats (Plots 1-4), which is a 2 storey building. The building is sited to the south-east of the south-east facing flank elevation of no.35 which contains no windows. The rear elevation of the building is sited at an angle to the side boundary of no.35, set back 10-16m from the boundary. This set back is, for the most part, in excess of the Council's minimum guideline of 11m and any overlooking will be further mitigated by the retained row of trees. The siting of the proposed building will have no significant adverse impact on the outlook and natural light to no.35.

7.7.3 Adjacent to Plots 1-4 to the north is a pair of semi-detached houses (Plots 5-6). One of these houses faces toward the end of the garden of no.35. This is set back 12m from the boundary and also exceeds the minimum guideline distance of 11m. The siting of this building will have no significant adverse impact on the outlook and natural light to no.35.

7.7.4 *22-30, Talbot Avenue* – These properties back onto the northern boundary of the site. The nearest proposed buildings are Plots 6-10, all semi-detached houses. These houses are sited 37-47m from the rear elevations of the houses in Talbot Road. The nearest first floor windows in the proposed buildings are 12m from the boundary and existing trees will also be retained along this boundary. As such, these buildings will have no significant adverse impacts on the amenities of the houses in Talbot Avenue.

7.7.5 *1a-6, Lawson Grove* – These properties all share a rear boundary with the site and have relatively short garden depths of 5-12m. Plots 17-22 are sited adjacent to this boundary and comprise 4 detached houses (Plots 17, 18, 19 and 22) and a pair of semi-detached houses (Plots 20-21). These houses are set back 14-22m from the boundary, in excess of the Council's minimum 11m guideline. The distances between the rear elevations of these proposed houses and the existing bungalows in Lawson Grove is 28.1-29.7m. All therefore meet the minimum back-to-back distance of 27.5m in the Residential Design Guide. Any potential overlooking and loss of privacy will be largely mitigated through the retention of existing trees along the boundary, supplemented with some new tree planting. This will ensure these units will have no significant adverse impact on the amenities of these properties.

7.8 (g) Car parking provision

The proposal provides 63 parking spaces for the proposed 24 dwellings, including 12 visitor spaces, a ratio of 2.62 spaces per dwelling. This provision is broken down as follows: 1 bed flats – 1.5 spaces per unit, 2 bed flats – 2 spaces per unit, 3 bed houses – 2 spaces per unit, 4 bed houses – 3 spaces per unit, and visitors – 12 spaces. This level of provision exceeds the Council's maximum standard of 53.5 spaces for the proposed development. The allocated number of spaces, 51, accords

with the Council's maximum standards. The additional provision over the maximum is in the 12 visitor spaces. However, this level of provision is considered acceptable in order to ensure no overspill parking will occur on Bucks Avenue and Sherwoods Road.

8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 This is a consultation from Hertsmere Borough Council on a revised application for the redevelopment of the existing Bucks Meadow Riding School. The proposal is for the redevelopment of the riding school with 24 dwellings following a previous scheme for 34 dwellings. The Committee objected to this previous scheme for 3 reasons and the application was subsequently refused by Hertsmere for 1 reason.
- 8.2 The revised scheme has been considered against national policy relating to Green Belt land, the Council's development plan policies and the objections raised against the previous scheme. It is considered that the revised scheme is in accordance with Green Belt policy and has overcome the previous objections.
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9.0 RECOMMENDATION

That Hertsmere Borough Council be advised that Watford Borough Council has no objection to the application but would wish to see conditions imposed on any grant of permission to cover the following matters:

1. That no part of the development shall be occupied until the existing access to Bucks Avenue has been modified and constructed in full, as shown in principle on drawing no. 16-P1329-11B (Ascot Design).

Reason: To ensure safe access to the site in the interests of vehicular and pedestrian users of the highway.

2. That the trees along the south-western boundary and along the north-western boundary are retained and measures installed to protect the trees during demolition and construction works.

Reason: These are an important visual amenity to adjoining residential occupiers and will help to mitigate the visual impact of the development.

3. The development shall provide at least 60 car parking spaces.

Reason: To prevent overspill parking on the adjoining highway on Bucks Avenue and Sherwoods Road.

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