

<b>Committee date</b>	Tuesday, 14 May 2024
<b>Application reference</b> <b>Site address</b>	23/01023/VARM - Warner Bros. Studios Leavesden, Warner Drive, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD25 7LP
<b>Proposal</b>	Variation of Condition 2 (Approved Plans), Condition 4 (Vehicular Access Completion), Condition 10 (Highways Improvements - Local Cycle Network Improvements) and Condition 17 (Noise) of planning permission 22/00322/FULM for the provision of new sound stages, workshops, production and post-production offices, Studio support facilities (including new welfare and café building) and new roundabout to provide vehicular access to the Studios and Island Site; the construction of decked car parking and a pedestrian footbridge (Island Site); the use of land to the west of the Studios for film production and associated activities (Backlot 2); ecological improvements to existing field (Lower Field) together with site-wide landscape and necessary utilities and infrastructure works, bund construction, and ground re-profiling. Details also submitted pursuant to Conditions 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 18 (in part), 19, 20 (in part), 22, 24 and 25. (Duplicate application to Three Rivers District Council).
<b>Applicant</b>	Warner Bros Studios Leavesden
<b>Agent</b>	Tor and Co Limited
<b>Type of Application</b>	S73 Variation of condition to Major Application
<b>Reason for committee Item</b>	S73 Application to a Major Application
<b>Target decision date</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
<b>Statutory publicity</b>	Watford Observer, Site Notice and Neighbour Letters
<b>Case officer</b>	Alice Reade, <a href="mailto:alice.reamde@watford.gov.uk">alice.reamde@watford.gov.uk</a>
<b>Ward</b>	Woodside

## 1. Recommendation

The application be referred to the Secretary of State for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2021.

Provided the Secretary of State does not call in the application for his/her own determination, the application be delegated to the Associate Director of Planning, Infrastructure and Economy to grant planning permission subject to the conditions detailed in section 8 of this report.

## **2. Site and surroundings**

- 2.1 The 51.78 hectare application site lies to the north of Watford just within the M25 and north of Hunton Bridge M25 spur roundabout. The residential area of Leavesden is to the east including properties at Ashfields. Abbots Langley is to the north and Watford to the south. To the west of the site are open fields with some residential roads and individual properties.
- 2.2 Leavesden Studios has been used for film making since the mid 1990s and from 2000 by Warner Bros, becoming Warner Bros Studios Leavesden (WBSL). The Studios comprise the main part of the original Leavesden Aerodrome dating back to the 1930s and operated from 1967 to 1994 when the site was occupied by Rolls Royce for aero engine manufacture. The site has seen additions of further sound stages, production areas and the Harry Potter Studio Tour following planning permissions granted between 2010 and 2018.
- 2.3 The majority of the site lies within Three Rivers District. Only approximately 10% of the site is within the Watford Borough to the south of the application site.
- 2.4 The site within Watford Borough is not within a Conservation Area or other designation and has no policy designations under the Watford Local Plan 2021-2038. The application site outside of the Watford Borough boundary within Three Rivers District is within the Metropolitan Green Belt.

## **3. Summary of the proposal**

### **3.1 Proposal**

Full planning permission (reference 22/00322/FULM) was granted by WBC on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2023 for the provision of new sound stages, workshops, production and post-production offices, Studio support facilities (including new welfare and café building) and new roundabout to provide vehicular access to the Studios and Island Site; the construction of decked car parking and a pedestrian footbridge (Island Site); the use of land to the west of the Studios for film production and associated activities (Backlot 2); ecological improvements to existing field (Lower Field) together with site-wide landscape and necessary utilities and infrastructure works, bund construction, and ground re-profiling.

- 3.2 This application now submitted is a Section 73 Minor Material Amendment Application which seeks to vary conditions of the approved development reference 22/00322/FULM as follows:
  - Variation to condition 2 (approved drawings)

- Variations to conditions 4 and 10 (Highways matters) to vary the triggers for the delivery of these conditions
- Minor amendment to condition 17 (Noise).

Additional details have also been provided with the current application to address the requirements pursuant to Conditions 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 18 (in part), 19, 20 (in part), 22, 24 and 25.

### 3.3 ***Amendments to Condition 2 (Approved drawings)***

The amendment to condition 2 (approved drawings) would facilitate amendments to the approved scheme as follows:

- Amendments to the design, layout and elevations of building 72, including the loss of the top floor and an overall reduction in height of 3.9 metres to 10.5 metres (previously 14.4 metres), with a resultant increase in total area to the ground floor and mezzanine levels by creation of a 'L' shaped plan form.
- Road layout amendments to the proposed new southern entrance, including the addition of new security buildings around the vehicular access (building 41), and various new landscaped bunds.
- Amendments to the design and elevations, including height and width of building 77 (0.65m increase in height and 34sqm increase in area).
- Alterations to the approved security fencing by building 77, and the alteration of the landscape planting in this location.
- Amendments to the design, layout and elevations of building 80 (Multi Storey Car Park), (0.4m increase in height) including the provision of lighting columns for highway safety, and the addition of new 'cores' to facilitate improved vehicular access / egress.
- Alteration of the location / orientation of temporary buildings 50 and 51 (subject to previous Three Rivers temporary planning permissions)
- Alteration of the layout and positioning of buildings 60, 61 and 62 (Stages 2E, 2F and 2G) in order to better suit studio operations.
- Amendments to the landscaped earth bunds along Gadeside in order to screen buildings 63 and 64 more effectively. The bunds alignment has been altered so as to avoid the underlying gas main. The existing security fence now sits behind the bund. No change in height to the bunds is proposed.
- Amendments to car parking arrangements at key locations across the site, including the removal of the Large Goods Vehicle (LGV) parking adjacent to building 80 on the Island Site and the replacement of a portion of the buggy parking with car parking around building 56 (amenity).
- Provision of a temporary, security gated foot/cycle access for WBSL Staff in the north of the site. This is in response to comments from Hertfordshire Highways in relation to securing foot/cycle access ahead of the completion of the S278 works.

- Revision of the proposed ground levels in Backlot 2 and the Lower Field in order to retain the 'as existing' levels.
- Further amendments to the layout of the internal (non-adopted) roads and foot/cycleways across the site, including alterations to the road layout at the entrance to Backlot 2.
- Reprofiting of the levels and bund in Base Camp 4, adjacent to building 73.
- 3.15.17 Additional tree planting across the site, including along the key access road running into the site from the revised southern entrance.
- Various associated site wide landscape amendments.

### 3.4 ***Amendments to conditions 4 (Vehicular Access Completion) and 10 (Highways Improvements- Local Cycle network)***

The submitted Supporting Statement sets out that there is an existing shortage of production space in the UK. In order to alleviate some of this demand, Warner Bros. Discovery are seeking to expediate the delivery of 4 of the 11 Sound Stages approved via 22/00322/FULM. This would involve the delivery of Buildings 58 and 59 (Stages 2A, 2B, 2C and 2D) for direct use for filming, as well as production offices Buildings 29 and 30, and workshop Building 73 (to support the filming use) ahead of the rest of the built development on site. This equates to the early provision of some 22,558sqm of built development on site.

Conditions 4 and 10 relate to highway improvements required. The application seeks to vary conditions 4 and 10 to allow for the earlier delivery of the first buildings of the development. Specifically, the alter conditions 4 and 10 so that they are triggered when more than 22,558sqm of new buildings are occupied or within 2 years.

### 3.5 ***Amendments to condition 17 (Noise)***

It is proposed to vary the wording of condition 17 in order to bring the requirements of the condition in line with those set out in the previously approved Noise Assessment.

### 3.6 ***Additional information to satisfy conditions:***

Additional information has been submitted with the current application to address previously applied planning conditions attached to 22/00322/FULM. The conditions for which additional information has been provided in respect of:

Condition 3 (Highways Details);  
Condition 6 (EV Charging);

Condition 7 (Cycle Parking);  
Condition 8 (CMP);  
Condition 9 (Source of Illumination);  
Condition 18 (Remediation Strategy);  
Condition 19 (Verification Report);  
Condition 20 (Long Term Monitoring);  
Condition 22 (Infiltration of Surface Water to Ground);  
Condition 24 (Decommissioning of Investigative Boreholes); and  
Condition 25 (Infiltration).

### 3.7 **Procedural Matters**

#### *Environmental Impact Assessment*

The approved development (22/00322/FULM) was found to fall within schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended). An EIA was undertaken and the application was submitted with an Environmental Statement dated March 2022 and an Addendum, dated July 2022. These considered the potential impacts of the development in respect of effects to landscaping and visual amenity, traffic, air quality and in respect of ecological assets.

This application is accompanied by an Additional Environmental Assessment dated 6<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

All relevant notifications and consultations under the aforementioned EIA Regulations have been undertaken in respect of the EIA application for the variations as now proposed.

### 3.8 *Referral to Secretary of State*

As set out under the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2021, where a Local Planning Authority proposes to approve inappropriate development within the Green Belt of 1000m<sup>2</sup> or more, the application must be referred to the Secretary of State for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities before any planning permission can be issued. The Secretary of State has the power to call-in the application for his/her own determination. As the proposed development falls within this criteria, the application will need to be referred to the Secretary of State under this Direction. This report details the consideration in respect of proposed approval and section 8 of the report details the officer's recommendation for members' consideration.

### 3.9 *Three Rivers District Council Application*

The majority of the application site (approx. 90%) lies within the neighbouring borough of Three Rivers District Councils. The applicant is therefore required

to make applications to both Councils. The original lead application with Three Rivers (Ref 22/0491/FUL) was granted planning permission subject to conditions and a S106 agreement on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2023. The subsequent application to Three Rivers (Ref 23/1897/FUL) relates to the variations now proposed. This application was considered at their Planning Committee of 19<sup>th</sup> April 2024 which agreed to referral of the recommendation to approve to the Secretary of State for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2024.

The Secretary of State for the Department for LUHC has since responded to Three Rivers to confirm that they do not intend to call in the application and the application has been approved by Three Rivers Council by decision of 1<sup>st</sup> May 2024.

### **3.10 Planning balance and conclusion**

The area of land of the application site that is within Watford Borough is not designated Green Belt following the adoption of the Local Plan 2021-2038. The remainder of the application site, within Three Rivers District, is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt. In accordance with the policy considerations of the National Planning Policy Framework, the proposed development in the Green Belt would be inappropriate development which, by definition, would be harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

- 3.11 The assessment of the application reference 22/00322/FULM (Report at Appendix 2) found that the significant economic and social benefits, collectively combine to constitute material considerations of sufficient weight to provide 'very special circumstances' that clearly outweigh the identified harm. Specifically, the expansion of the Studio production and related facilities at Warner Brothers Studios Leavesden would result in a multi-million pound investment in the nationally significant WBSL facility. This has been shown in the applicant submission to have substantial positive direct and indirect beneficial contributions to the local, regional and national economy. The development also offers a significant opportunity for the expansion of the film industry within Hertfordshire and many related other skills and opportunities arising from this industry.
- 3.12 The development also offers notable other benefits including the provision of Lower Field which will be maintained in perpetuity as an accessible green space for ecological and environmental benefits. The proposed development will deliver a significant landscaping scheme including trees, woodland

planting and new wetland habitable offering a Biodiversity Net Gain of 12.65% (habitat units) and 51.90% (hedgerow units) which would be in accordance with the forthcoming Environment Act when it becomes law.

- 3.13 For Watford, the development includes some key transport benefits including the Hempstead Road improvements and improved cycle routes to arrange by the Highway Authority with developer funding. It is noted that these works would align with the strategies of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and Transforming Travel in Watford (TTIW)
- 3.14 Other benefits include the proposed solar PV will generate over 1,600,000kWh per year. Whilst the primary purpose is to power the Studios, any surplus will be exported to the wider electricity network for public use. This is afforded some weight in the planning balance. As a result of the extent of PV proposed, all electricity used on application site will come from 100% renewable energy. The development is estimated to demonstrate an 86% reduction in overall regulated carbon emissions which is significantly above the Local Plan requirement of 16%. The Development is also to achieve BREEAM 'Excellent' in accordance the Local Plan.
- 3.15 Following the grant of planning permission, further detailed design development by Warner Bros and the continued pressing demand for film/production space, has determined that further amendments are required in order to meet the operational needs. These changes, as summarised in paras 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 of this report would maintain the 'very special circumstances' of the development and would not create new or increased adverse harm in respect of amenity or environmental matters.
- 3.16 The additional technical information submitted with the application provide compliance with the requirements of conditions which secure the details required to ensure that the development would not result in adverse impacts to the highway network, groundwater safety and air quality.
- 3.17 It is therefore recommended that the application for the variations of conditions pursuant to application 22/00322/FULM be granted subject to varied conditions, and subject to referral to the Secretary of State.

#### **4. Relevant policies**

- 4.1 Members should refer to the background papers attached to the agenda. These highlight the policy framework under which this application is determined. Specific policy considerations with regard to this particular application are detailed in section 6 below.

## **5. Relevant site history/background information**

- 5.1 The site has been subject to numerous planning permissions over the past 30 years in relation to its temporary and permanent use as film studios. Many of these permissions relate only to Three Rivers District. The main planning permissions covering the permanent use of the site for film studios and the Harry Potter Studio Tour are:
- 5.2 10/00051/FUL (TRDC ref. 10/0080/FUL) - Continued use of land and buildings for film production and associated activities including retention and refurbishment of existing studios to accommodate stages, backlot, workshops, offices, production facilities, canteen /commissary and ancillary studio facilities and services, replacement and extended workshops, stage and offices. Two new stages (approx. 13,000 sqm floorspace) for the storage and public exhibition of film sets and artefacts (including cafe and gift shop), new accesses from Aerodrome Way, revised internal road layout and parking, extended backlot, landscaping and associated works. Approved with a S106 Agreement. This consent has been implemented
- 5.3 The various consents granted by Watford Council and Three Rivers District Council covering the whole site permit the following development and uses:
- i) The continued use of the land and buildings for film production and associated activities including the retention and refurbishment of existing studio buildings.
  - ii) Erection of a replacement 'Mill' building and new workshop building to the northern part of the site.
  - iii) Erection of two new stages (J and K) for the storage and public exhibition of film sets and artefacts, including cafe and gift shop, located between the main studio complex and Aerodrome Way. These new stages house the 'Warner Bros. Studio Tour London: The Making of Harry Potter', and have since been extended.
  - iv) Two new accesses from Aerodrome Way, with cessation of the previous access onto South Way.
  - v) Revised internal road layout and parking, new gatehouses, extended backlot, landscaping including new bunding and associated works.
  - vi) Consent for an external water tank used to film water based scenes.
  - vii) Construction of additional workshops, two new sound stages and production offices (M, N and O).
  - viii) Additional Studio Tour and Studio parking.
  - ix) Studio Tour hospitality events.
- 5.4 15/01300/OUTM (TRDC ref. 15/1852/FUL)



Hybrid Application to include full planning permission for sound stages, workshops, post production facility and extension to the Studio Tour car park together with outline planning permission (matters reserved: appearance and landscaping) for extension to the Studio Tour, workshops, production support building, Studio parking deck, Studio cafe extension, Studio support facilities and associated works. Approved with a S106 Agreement and included the following:

Detailed elements:

- i) L Stage Workshop located adjacent to existing L Stage to the south of the Studios site to replace existing temporary workshop structures at the backlot.
- ii) P Stage located on the northern part of the Studios site, opposite N & O and M Stages to be a new permanent sound stage.
- iii) Q and R Stages and ancillary production offices within a new permanent sound stage with three storey offices attached to the northern elevation to the west of C Stage.
- iv) Post production facility to the south of the main Studio buildings to include re-recording stages, cutting rooms and a preview theatre.

Outline elements:

- v) Studio Tour Extension - new stage to extend from the southern elevations of J & K Stages onto part of the existing visitor car park including additional single storey staff accommodation located around K Stage, with a maximum height of 10m.
- vi) Workshop on an existing hardstanding area to the north of the site, known as Car Park 5 (CP5).
- vii) Studio Café Extension to meet enhanced catering needs.
- viii) Production Support Building adjacent to the backlot and proposed Q & R Stages, to be used for a range of support activities including workshop, wardrobe, make-up and special effects.
- ix) Island Site development - accommodation for a range of Studio support facilities such as workshops and production services together with supporting office accommodation with access via a new arm on the existing Aerodrome Way/High Road/Ashfields Way signalised junction.

#### 5.5 22/00322/FULM (TRDC reference 22/0491/FUL)

Full planning permission for the provision of new sound stages, workshops, production and post-production offices, Studio support facilities (including new welfare and café building) and new roundabout to provide vehicular access to the Studios and Island Site; the construction of decked car parking and a pedestrian footbridge (Island Site); the use of land to the west of the

Studios for film production and associated activities (Backlot 2); ecological improvements to existing field (Lower Field) together with site-wide landscape and necessary utilities and infrastructure works, bund construction, and ground re-profiling.

Watford Development Management Committed of 10<sup>th</sup> January 2023 determined to approved subject to conditions and subject to referral to the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State determined not to call in the application and full planning permission was granted by WBC on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

The approved development constituted works over the site summarised as follows:

1) Central Site

- i) 11 new sound stages totalling 28,614sqm, up to 18m-21m maximum heights
- ii) 4 ancillary production offices, up 3 storey/12m totalling 9,040sqm
- iii) 3 workshops, 14.5m in height at eaves level
- iv) Amenity building, single storey of 660sqm
- v) Security gate to studio south gate

2) Island Site

- vi) Studio parking deck will comprise a total of 2,500 parking spaces over ground, first, second, third floors and roof deck. Part 11m and part 15m in height. Accessed from Gadeside via the proposed South Gate roundabout.
- vii) Studio support light facility comprising 4,856sqm over two floors and up to 11m height.

3) Western Site

- viii) Backlot 2 for outside film production
- ix) Lower Field to include a new 12 acre area that is accessible for public use via Gypsy Lane and Old Mill Road. Planting will include: 40 new trees including an orchard and semi-mature oak trees, 4,857sqm of new woodland planting, 429sqm of coppice planting and 1,565sqm of native scrub planting. A naturalised floodwater basin will also be created enabling a wetland habitat whilst providing for surface water attenuation.

4) Triangle Site

- x) Southern access roundabout on Gadeside serving studios and studio parking deck
- xi) Pedestrian access bridge from studio parking deck to the studios

## 5) Northern Access

xii) Works to the Studio North Gate Warner Drive/Aerodrome Way roundabout include widening the access road.

5.6 Further to the approved permission, the subsequent detailed matters and non-material amendments have been secured:

- 23/00330/DISCON - Details submitted for Condition 30 (Landscaping) pursuant to planning permission 22/00322/FULM
- 23/00530/FUL - The provision of two temporary site construction access points and associated works on the Northbound and Southbound sections of Gadeside (North of the A41), in order to facilitate development approved under planning application ref. 22/00322/FULM.
- 23/00689/NONMAT - Non-material amendment to planning permission 22/00322/FULM for internal and external amendments to building 75, changes to layout and positioning of buildings 52, 53, 63 and 64, new transformer and alterations to internal road layout and associated landscaping - (Please see covering letter)

## 6. Planning consideration

6.1 The main issues to be considered in the determination of the application are as follows:

- (a) Principle of development
- (b) Economic impacts
- (c) Green Belt consideration
- (d) Character and appearance
- (e) Impact on neighbouring properties
- (f) Highways, access and parking
- (g) Environmental matters
- (h) CIL and S106

6.2 Full consideration of these matters remains as set out in the report to the original application reference 22/00322/FULM which is provided as Appendix 2 to this report. This report considered any changes to these matters arising from the changes proposed under this S73 application.

6.3 (a) Principle of development

As set out for application 22/00322/FULM, it is considered that the principle of the proposed expansion of the studios and associated employment opportunities would be in accordance with the Spatial Strategy set out in Strategic Policy ST1.1 of the Local Plan.

6.4 (b) Economic Impacts

The full consideration of the economic matters remains as considered in the report for application 22/00322/FULM. In summary, WBSL have demonstrated that the development offers significant local and national economic value and that the economic benefits of the proposed development would be consistent with the aims of Hertfordshire LEP's Strategic Economic Plan to promote and develop film/TV in south west Hertfordshire as part of a wider cluster with a footprint that includes London and Buckinghamshire.

6.5 The changes proposed further support the delivery of these benefits in terms of the maximised quality and facilitate partially escalated timescales.

6.6 (c) Green Belt considerations

The small area of land of the application site that is within Watford Borough is not designated Green Belt following the adoption of the Local Plan 2021-2038. The remainder of the application site, within Three Rivers District, is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt. The full consideration of the Green Belt matters is as considered within the report for 22/00322/FULM.

6.7 In summary, it remains that, based on the policy considerations of the National Planning Policy Framework, the proposed development in the Green Belt would be inappropriate development which, by definition, would be harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

6.8 The assessment of the application reference 22/00322/FULM found that the significant economic and social benefits, collectively combine to constitute material considerations of sufficient weight to provide 'very special circumstances' that clearly outweigh the identified harm. Specifically, the expansion of the Studio production and related facilities at Warner Brothers Studios Leavesden would result in a multi-million pound investment in the nationally significant WBSL facility. This has been shown in the applicant submission to have substantial positive direct and indirect beneficial contributions to the local, regional and national economy. The development also offers a significant opportunity for the expansion of the film industry within Hertfordshire and many related other skills and opportunities arising from this industry. Other benefits in respect of landscaping, biodiversity and

energy generation were also noted as contributing to the very special circumstances.

- 6.9 The proposed changes under this application would not change this assessment and the development remains to be considered acceptable for 'very special circumstances' in accordance with the NPPF and subject to referral to the Secretary of State for DLUC
- 6.10 (d) Visual impacts  
Although the original application proposed a significant degree of development across the site, it was found that the scale, layout and design of the proposed development would be acceptable and would not have demonstrably harmful impacts on the character and appearance of the public realm, the general locality or the wider landscape.
- 6.11 The changes proposed under the variation to Condition 2 (Approved drawings) include non-material changes to the layout and scaling of the approved buildings as detailed in full in section 3.3 of this report. Within the Watford Borough Council element of the application site, there are design changes proposed to the Multi storey Car Park including an additional 0.4m height. It is considered that this building would remain acceptable in visual terms due to its siting, set in from boundaries and the extensive landscaping.
- 6.12 Across the site it is considered that the amendments to the layout and scaling of some buildings remain in being of good design with no new visual harm. The proposed development would represent the quality of design sought by the NPPF and QD6.2 Design Principles, QD6.3 Public Realm and QD6.4 Building Design. Local Plan and would be acceptable in this regard.
- 6.13 (e) Impact on neighbouring properties  
The report for 22/00322/FULM made consideration for the potential impact of the development on neighbouring properties. One key point of consideration was the potential impact of the MSCP on neighbouring properties to the east of the Island Site and the houses of Ashfields which are within Watford Borough.
- 6.14 This car park was proposed as being 15m in height adjacent to Gadeside, with a lower height of 11m to the east closest to Ashfields. In the original application, it was found that the car park building was of a height, position and design that would mitigate potential noise and light pollution impacts. It was also noted that the 15m maximum height was within the parameters for

height for development on this area of the site as previously approved under planning application 15/01300/OUTM

- 6.15 This application proposes to increase the height of the MSCP by 0.4m. This is considered to be a marginal increase in height and would create no new or increased impacts to neighbours.
- 6.16 It is again noted that the proposed buildings on the Island Site would also maintain generous distances to the nearest properties. The buildings are centrally positioned to provide space to the site boundaries. The south-east corner of the car park would be over 80 metres from the closest property in Ashfields. It is also noted that a detailed landscape strategy has been submitted with the application and includes extensive landscape planting around the Island Site, particularly the eastern boundary, and includes a planted earth mound to act as both a visual and acoustic barrier. It is therefore found that the proposed variations would not create new or increased harm to the amenities of neighboring properties.
- 6.17 (f) Highways, access and parking  
The consideration of all transport matters in the report for 22/00322/FULM found that the development would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety and it would make satisfactory provision for necessary enhancements to pedestrian, cycling and passenger transport infrastructure. The proposal therefore accords with Policies SS1.1, ST11.4 and ST11.5 of the Local Plan.
- 6.18 The changes proposed with the amended drawings (pursuant to condition 2) would not create new or increased highway impacts.
- 6.19 As set out in para 3.3 of this report, WBSL are seeking to expediate the delivery of 4 of the 11 Sound Stages approved via 22/00322/FULM. This would involve the delivery of Buildings 58 and 59 (Stages 2A, 2B, 2C and 2D) for direct use for filming, as well as production offices Buildings 29 and 30, and workshop Building 73 (to support the filming use) ahead of the rest of the built development on site. This equates to the early provision of some 22,558sqm of built development on site.
- 6.20 Conditions 4 and 10 relate to highway improvements required and were requested by HCC as the Highway Authority. The application seeks to vary conditions 4 (Vehicular Access Completion) and 10 (Highways Improvements-Local Cycle network) to allow for the earlier delivery of the first buildings of the development. Specifically, the alter conditions 4 and 10 so that they are

triggered when more than 22,558sqm of new buildings are occupied or within 2 years.

6.21 HCC have been consulted and have no objection to the proposed variations.

6.22 The technical matters pursuant to the following highway conditions have also been submitted within this application

- Condition 3 (Highways Details);
- Condition 6 (EV Charging);
- Condition 7 (Cycle Parking);
- Condition 8 (CMP);
- Condition 9 (Source of Illumination);

6.23 HCC have been consulted and have agreed the details proposed pursuant to their highways conditions and these conditions are proposed to be amended to secure the agreed details.

6.24 (g) Environmental matters

The report for 22/00322/FULM considered all environmental matters within the Environment Statement for the EIA development and other matters including:

- i) Energy and Sustainability strategy*
- ii) Trees and landscaping*
- iii) Wildlife and Biodiversity*
- iv) Biodiversity Net Gain*
- v) Flooding and surface water drainage*
- vi) Ground water and contamination*
- vii) Air Pollution*
- viii) Noise*
- ix) Light pollution*

6.25 This application seeks to make variation to the wording of condition 17 in order to bring the requirements of the condition in line with those set out in the previously approved Noise Assessment and is considered to be acceptable.

6.26 The application also seeks to provide additional detail pursuant to the following conditions requested by the Environment Agency and Affinity Water:

- Condition 18 (Remediation Strategy);
- Condition 19 (Verification Report);
- Condition 20 (Long Term Monitoring);
- Condition 22 (Infiltration of Surface Water to Ground);

Condition 24 (Decommissioning of Investigative Boreholes); and Condition 25 (Infiltration).

- 6.27 The EA responded with no objection to the details of Conditions 18 (in part, 19, 20 (in part) and 24. The details for Condition 22 were not originally agreed however an alternative condition 22 has been proposed by the applicant and agreed by the EA.
- 6.28 Affinity Water requested further information pursuant to the agreement of Conditions 22 and 25. This was provided by the applicant and agreed by Affinity Water.
- 6.29 The development therefore remains acceptable in environmental terms, as set out in the assessment of 22/00322/FULM. This application satisfies the details pursuant to original conditions 19, 22 and 25 which are now removed, and secures additional technical details pursuant to the original conditions 18, 20, and 24. Due to deletions, the numbering of conditions has been amended.
- 6.30 (h) CIL and S106  
The Council introduced the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) with effect from 1 April 2015. CIL is chargeable on the relevant net additional floorspace created by the development. The charge is non-negotiable and is calculated at the time that planning permission is granted. Liability to CIL only arises for certain uses, specifically residential (general market and specialist), hotel and retail uses (Classes A1-A5). In this case, the proposed uses within Watford Borough are either ancillary to the main studio use or will constitute office or other uses. As such, the proposal will not be liable for CIL in this case.
- 6.31 The existing main studio use and Studio Tour is the subject of a number of planning obligations with Three Rivers District Council relating to the operation of the Studio Tour and the use of the site for hospitality events as approved and secured in the 2015 applications. These would be unchanged.
- 6.32 In respect of the new proposals subject to this application, Three Rivers District Council have set out heads of terms for a new s.106 agreement is to be completed between the applicant and Three Rivers District Council as part of their duplicate application ref. 22/0491/FUL. Contributions secured for highway and transport improvements are on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council which is the Highway Authority for both Three Rivers District and Watford Borough and relate to works relevant to both districts. The other planning obligations do not relate directly to development within Watford Borough and, as such, no planning obligations are required in respect of the application being considered by Watford Council.



## 7. Consultation responses received

### 7.1 Statutory consultees and other organisations

Consultee	Comments	Officer response
Environment agency	No objection to proposed variations following an amendment to C22.	Noted
HCC Highway Authority	No objection subject to conditions and S106 to be secured with Three Rivers	Noted
HCC Lead Local Flood Authority	No objection to the proposed changes	
HCC Growth and Infrastructure	Does not include residential development so no obligation sought	Noted
HCC Waste	No comment received	Noted
Herts Ecology	No comment received	Noted
Affinity water	No objection following additional details	Noted
Thames Water	No objection	Noted

### 7.2 Internal Consultees

Consultee	Comments	Officer response
Environmental Protection Officer	No objection	Noted
Waste and recycling officer	Not applicable to residential waste needs	Noted

### 7.3 Interested parties

Letters were sent to 172 properties in the surrounding area. Responses have been received from 2 properties comprising 1 in objection and 1 support. The main comments are summarised below, the full letters are available to view online.

Comments	Officer response
Development should not be carried out on Green Belt	It is considered that there are very special circumstances in respect of the economic, social and other benefits of the proposed development that outweigh the harm to the

	Green Belt. This is considered in sections 6.13 to 6.24 of this report.
The existing studio production creates noise and light pollution which would worsen.	The potential for noise and light pollution are considered in technical documents submitted with this application and would be managed by conditions recommended.
The development of the island site would remove the wildlife and habitat of that area.	Looking at the application site overall, the development would include significant landscaping improvements with a net gain in biodiversity.

## 8 Recommendation

The application be referred to the Secretary of State for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2021.

Provided the Secretary of State does not call in the application for his/her own determination, the application be delegated to the Associate Director of Planning, Infrastructure and Economy to grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:

### Conditions

#### 1. Time Limit

The development to which this permission relates shall be begun before 28<sup>th</sup> February 2026.

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

#### 2. Approved Drawings and Documents

The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings and documents:

- MERLIN-DNA-ZZ-00-DR-A-00001
- MERLIN-DNA-ZZ-00-DR-A-00002 – P10
- MERLIN-DNA-ZZ-00-DR-A-00003 – P7
- MERLIN-DNA-ZZ-SX-DR-A-00005 – P4
- MERLIN-DNA-ZZ-SX-DR-A-00007 – P2
- MERLIN-DNA-ZZ-SX-DR-A-00009 – P1

MERLIN-DNA-ZZZ-00-DR-A-1030

MERLIN-DNA-ZZ-00-DR-A-10000 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-ZZ-01-DR-A-10001 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-ZZ-02-DR-A-10002 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-ZZ-03-DR-A-10003 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-ZZ-R1-DR-A-10004 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-ZZ-EL-DR-A-20000 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-ZZ-SX-DR-A-30000 – P1

MERLIN-DNA-2E-00-DR-A-10100 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-2E-01-DR-A-10101 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-2E-02-DR-A-10102 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-2E-R1-DR-A-10103 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-2E-EL-DR-A-20100 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-2E-SX-DR-A-30100 – P1

MERLIN-DNA-2F-00-DR-A-10200 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-2F-01-DR-A-10201 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-2F-02-DR-A-10202 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-2F-R1-DR-A-10203 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-2F-EL-DR-A-20200 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-2F-SX-DR-A-30200 – P1

MERLIN-DNA-2G-00-DR-A-10206  
MERLIN-DNA-2G-01-DR-A-10207  
MERLIN-DNA-2G-02-DR-A-10208  
MERLIN-DNA-2G-R1-DR-A-10209  
MERLIN-DNA-2G-EL-DR-A-20210  
MERLIN-DNA-2G-SX-DR-A-30210

MERLIN-DNA-ZZ-00-DR-A-10300 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-ZZ-01-DR-A-10301 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-ZZ-02-DR-A-10302 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-ZZ-03-DR-A-10303 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-ZZ-R1-DR-A-10304 – P3  
MERLIN-DNA-ZZ-EL-DR-A-20300 – P3  
MERLIN-DNA-ZZ-SX-DR-A-30300 – P3

MERLIN-DNA-73-00-DR-A-10400 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-73-M1-DR-A-10401 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-73-R1-DR-A-10403 – P1

MERLIN-DNA-73-EL-DR-A-20400 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-73-SX-DR-A-30400 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-74-EL-DR-A-20401

MERLIN-DNA-72-00-DR-A-10400 – P2  
MERLIN-DNA-72-M1-DR-A-10401 – P2  
MERLIN-DNA-72-R1-DR-A-10403 – P2  
MERLIN-DNA-72-EL-DR-A-20400 – P2  
MERLIN-DNA-72-SX-DR-A-30400 – P2

MERLIN-DNA-18-00-DR-A-01400  
MERLIN-DNA-18-01-DR-A-01401  
MERLIN-DNA-18-R1-DR-A-01402  
MERLIN-DNA-18-EL-DR-A-01403  
MERLIN-DNA-18-SX-DR-A-01404  
MERLIN-DNA-18-00-DR-A-10400  
MERLIN-DNA-18-M1-DR-A-10401  
MERLIN-DNA-18-01-DR-A-10402  
MERLIN-DNA-18-R1-DR-A-10403  
MERLIN-DNA-18-EL-DR-A-20400  
MERLIN-DNA-18-SX-DR-A-30400

MERLIN-DNA-56-00-DR-A-10500 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-56-R1-DR-A-10501 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-56-01-DR-A-10502  
MERLIN-DNA-56-EL-DR-A-20500 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-56-SX-DR-A-30500 – P1

MERLIN-DNA-80-00-DR-A-10600 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-80-01-DR-A-10601 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-80-02-DR-A-10602 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-80-03-DR-A-10603 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-80-04-DR-A-10604 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-80-R1-DR-A-10605 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-80-EL-DR-A-20600 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-80-SX-DR-A-30600 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-80-SX-DR-A-30602 – P1

MERLIN-DNA-76-00-DR-A-10700 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-76-01-DR-A-10701 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-76-R1-DR-A-10702 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-76-EL-DR-A-20700 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-76-SX-DR-A-30700 – P1

MERLIN-DNA-75-00-DR-A-10900 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-75-M1-DR-A-10901 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-75-R1-DR-A-10902 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-75-EL-DR-A-20900 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-75-SX-DR-A-30900 – P1

MERLIN-DNA-41-00-DR-A-10800 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-41-01-DR-A-10801 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-41-R1-DR-A-10802 – P1  
MERLIN-DNA-41-EL-DR-A-20800 – P1

MERLIN-DNA-145-00-DR-A-0001  
MERLIN-DNA-145-00-DR-A-1000  
MERLIN-DNA-145-00-DR-A-1002  
MERLIN-DNA-145-EL-DR-A-2000  
MERLIN-DNA-145-EL-DR-A-2001  
MERLIN-DNA-145-SX-DR-A-3000

MERLIN-QCL-ZZ-XX-DR-C-0030-P01  
MERLIN-QCL-ZZ-XX-DR-C-0031-P01  
WBLM02-QCL-ZZZ-XX-DR-C-5200-P05  
WBLM02-QCL-ZZZ-XX-DR-C-5201-P04  
WBLM02-QCL-ZZZ-XX-DR-C-5203-P04  
WBLM02-QCL-ZZZ-XX-DR-C-5210-P01  
MERLIN-QCL-ZZ-XX-DR-C-0002-P08  
MERLIN-QCL-ZZZ-XX-DR-C-0006-P03  
MERLIN-QCL-ZZZ-XX-DR-C-0007-P04  
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1366-SC-201-P5  
1366-SC-202-P4  
1366-SC-203-P4

1366-SC-375  
1366-SC-380  
1366-SC-381

1366-SC-385  
1366-SC-386  
1366-SC-388  
1366-SC-389  
WBLM02-QCL-ZZZ-XX-DR-C-5230-P03

WBLM02-QCL-ZZZ-XX-DR-C-5220-P03  
WBLM02-QCL-ZZZ-XX-DR-C-5221-P02  
WBLM02-QCL-ZZZ-XX-DR-C-9401-P03  
WBLM02-QCL-ZZZ-XX-DR-C-9402-P03  
WBLM02-QCL-ZZZ-XX-DR-C-9403-P03  
WBLM02-QCL-ZZZ-XX-DR-C-9404-P03  
WBLM02-QCL-ZZZ-XX-DR-C-9405-P03  
WBLM02-QCL-ZZZ-XX-DR-C-9406-P03  
WBLM02-QCL-ZZZ-XX-DR-C-9407-P03  
WBLM02-QCL-ZZZ-XX-DR-C-9408-P03  
WBLM02-QCL-ZZZ-XX-DR-C-9409-P03  
WBLM02-QCL-ZZZ-XX-DR-C-9410-P03  
WBLM02-QCL-ZZZ-XX-DR-C-9412-P03  
WBLM02-QCL-ZZZ-XX-DR-C-9414-P02  
WBLM02-QCL-ZZZ-XX-DR-C-9425-P01

MERLIN-TOR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-L-90-0001 Rev N  
MERLIN-TOR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-L-90-0002 Rev G  
MERLIN-TOR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-L-90-0003 Rev F  
MERLIN-TOR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-L-90-0004 Rev H  
MERLIN-TOR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-L-90-0005 Rev G  
MERLIN-TOR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-L-90-0006 Rev F  
MERLIN-TOR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-L-90-0007 Rev E  
MERLIN-TOR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-L-90-0008 Rev G  
MERLIN-TOR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-L-90-0009 Rev D  
MERLIN-TOR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-L-90-0010 Rev E  
MERLIN-TOR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-L-90-0011 Rev H  
MERLIN-TOR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-L-90-0012 Rev K  
MERLIN-TOR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-L-90-0013 Rev E  
MERLIN-TOR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-L-90-0014 Rev E  
MERLIN-TOR-ZZ-ZZ-SH-L-90-0001 Rev F  
MERLIN-TOR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-L-90-0016 Rev B  
MERLIN-TOR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-L-90-0018

21011-3

21134-MA-XX-XX-DR-C-0002 P03  
21134-MA-XX-XX-DR-C-0003 P01

21134-MA-XX-XX-DR-C-0001 P02  
21134-MA-XX-XX-DR-C-1100 P02  
21134-MA-XX-XX-DR-C-1101 P02  
21134-MA-XX-XX-DR-C-1102 P04

21134-MA-XX-XX-DR-C-1103 P02  
21134-MA-XX-XX-DR-C-1104 P02  
21134-MA-XX-XX-DR-C-1105 P02  
21134-MA-XX-XX-DR-C-1106 P02  
21134-MA-XX-XX-DR-C-1107 P02  
21134-MA-XX-XX-DR-C-1108 P01

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

### 3. Highway Details

Roads, footways; Cycleways; Foul and surface water drainage; Visibility splays; Access arrangements; Parking provision in accordance with adopted standard; Loading areas; and Turning areas shall be delivered as set out on the following approved plans.

- 1366-SC-385 (Footpaths and Cycleways)
- 1366-SC-386 (Roads and Parking)
- 1366-SC-388 (Kerbs)
- 1366-SC-389 (Kerbs Island Site)
- WBLM02-QCL-ZZZ-XX-DR-C-5230-P03 (Proposed Drainage)
- WBLM02-QCL-ZZZ-XX-DR-C-5220-P03 (Island Site Proposed Drainage Carpark Building 80)
- WBLM02-QCL-ZZZ-XX-DR-C-5221-P02 (Island Site Proposed Drainage Lighting Building 75)
- WBLM02-QCL-ZZZ-XX-DR-C-9401-P03 (tracking refuse1)
- WBLM02-QCL-ZZZ-XX-DR-C-9402-P03 (tracking refuse2)
- WBLM02-QCL-ZZZ-XX-DR-C-9403-P03 (tracking refuse3)
- WBLM02-QCL-ZZZ-XX-DR-C-9404-P03 (tracking refuse4)
- WBLM02-QCL-ZZZ-XX-DR-C-9405-P03 (tracking refuse5)
- WBLM02-QCL-ZZZ-XX-DR-C-9406-P03 (tracking fire1)
- WBLM02-QCL-ZZZ-XX-DR-C-9407-P03 (tracking fire2)
- WBLM02-QCL-ZZZ-XX-DR-C-9408-P03 (tracking fire3)
- WBLM02-QCL-ZZZ-XX-DR-C-9409-P03 (tracking fire4)
- WBLM02-QCL-ZZZ-XX-DR-C-9410-P03 (tracking fire5)
- WBLM02-QCL-ZZZ-XX-DR-C-9412-P03 (tracking pantec)
- WBLM02-QCL-ZZZ-XX-DR-C-9414-P02 (Tracking junction HGV)
- WBLM02-QCL-ZZZ-XX-DR-C-9425-P01 (Typical visibility Splays)

Reason: To ensure suitable, safe and satisfactory planning and development of the site in accordance with Policy 5 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018) and Policies ST11.4 and ST11.5 of the Watford Local Plan 2021-2038.

### 4. Access Completion

No more than 22,558sqm of new buildings shall be occupied until the vehicular access for that building has been completed and thereafter retained as shown on drawing number (21134-MA-XX-XX-DR-C-1102 P04) in accordance with details/specifications to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the highway authority. Prior to use appropriate arrangements shall be made for surface water to be intercepted and disposed of separately so that it does not discharge from or onto the highway carriageway.

Reason: To ensure satisfactory access into the site and avoid carriage of extraneous material or surface water from or onto the highway in accordance with policies ST11.4 and ST11.5 of the Watford Local Plan 2021-2038.

5. Surface Water

No new buildings shall be occupied until arrangement has been made for surface water from each phase of the proposed development to be intercepted and disposed of separately so that it does not discharge onto the highway carriageway.

Reason: To avoid the carriage of extraneous material or surface water from or onto the highway in accordance with policies ST11.4 and ST11.5 of the Watford Local Plan 2021-2038.

6. Electric Vehicles

EV charging in the proposed Multi Storey Decked Car Park shall be provided in accordance with the following approved plans before first use of the Car Park and shall be maintained as such thereafter.

- MERLIN-DNA-80-00-DR-A-10600-P1
- MERLIN-DNA-80-00-DR-A-10601-P1
- MERLIN-DNA-80-00-DR-A-10602-P1
- MERLIN-DNA-80-00-DR-A-10603-P1
- MERLIN-DNA-80-00-DR-A-10604-P1
- MERLIN-DNA-80-00-DR-A-10605-P1

Reason: To ensure construction of a satisfactory development and to promote sustainable development in accordance with Policy ST11.5 of the Watford Local Plan 2021-2038.

7. Cycle Parking

No new building shall be occupied until the cycle parking for that building (as shown on approved plans: 1366-SC-375 Proposed Site Plan (Cycle Storage); 1366-SC-380 Cycle Storage (Type A); and 1366-SC-381 Cycle Storage (Type B)); is fully implemented and thereafter retained for this purpose.



Reason: To ensure the provision of cycle parking that meets the needs of occupiers of the proposed development and in the interests of encouraging the use of sustainable modes of transport in accordance with Policy ST11.5 of the Watford Local Plan 2021-2038.

8. Construction Management Plan

The construction of the development shall only be carried out in accordance with the Masterplan 2022 Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) Rev 6 (November 2022), and the Highways Construction Management Plan Rev 1 (HCMP) (Updated December 2023).

Reason: In order to protect highway safety and the amenity of other users of the public highway and rights of way in accordance with Policies ST11.4, ST11.5 and ST11.6 of the Watford Local Plan 2021-2038.

9. Source of Illumination

External lighting shall be provided in accordance with the approved external Lighting Strategy and impact assessment (November 2023 Update) and Masterplan 2022: Technical Note to Discharge Condition 9.

Reason: To ensure construction of a satisfactory development and in the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policy ST11.6 of the Watford Local Plan 2021-2038.

10. Highway Improvements – Cycle Network

A) Design Approval:

Notwithstanding the details indicated on the submitted drawings, no on-site works above slab level for the new buildings shall commence until a detailed scheme for the offsite highway improvement works as indicated on drawing numbers (21134-MA-XX-XX-DR-C-0001 P02, 21134-MA-XXXX-DR-C-1100 P02, 21134-MA-XX-XX-DR-C-1101 P02, 21134-MA-XX-XX-DR-C-1102 P04, 21134-MA-XX-XX-DR-C-1103 P02, 21134-MA-XX-XX-DR-C-1104 P02, 21134-MA-XX-XX-DR-C-1105 P02, 21134-MA-XX-XX-DR-C-1106 P02, 21134-MA-XX-XX-DR-C-1107 P02 and 21134-MA-XX-XX-DR-C-1108 P01) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority.

B) S278 Agreement:

No new building shall be occupied until S278 Agreements are in place covering the improvement works referred to in Part A of this condition.

C) Implementation/Construction:

Up to 22,558sqm of floor space may be occupied subject to the prior provision of a temporary pedestrian / cycle access from the site onto Gypsy Lane and the following elements of the S278 works are completed:

- The provision of a new crossing over the A41 Watford Road near Gypsy Lane to enable connection from the development to the route under the Hunton Bridge Roundabout; and
- Capacity improvements to the existing site access roundabout at Aerodrome Way / Warner Drive Roundabout.

Prior to the occupation of any additional floorspace beyond 22,558sqm or within 2 years from the date of first occupation, the remainder of the S278 works shall be completed and temporary pedestrian /cycle access onto Gypsy Lane shall be closed.

Reason: To ensure construction of a satisfactory development and that the highway improvement works are designed to an appropriate standard in the interest of highway safety and amenity and in accordance with Policies ST11.1, ST11.3, ST11.4 and ST11.6 of the Watford Local Plan 2021-2038.

11. Highway Improvements – A41 Toucan to the Hempstead Road underpass

A) Design Approval

No on-site works above slab level for the new buildings shall commence until a detailed scheme for the provision of a toucan crossing of the A41 connecting the local cycle network improvements shown in the drawing 21134-MA-XX-XX-DR-C-1100 P02 to the A41 pedestrian/ cycle subway below the A41/ Hempstead Road roundabout have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority.

B) Implementation / Construction

No new buildings shall be occupied until the improvement works referred to in part A of this condition have been completed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure construction of a satisfactory development and that the highway improvement works are designed to an appropriate standard in the interest of highway safety and amenity and in accordance with Policies ST11.1, ST11.3, ST11.4 and ST11.6 of the Watford Local Plan 2021-2038.

12. Travel Plan

At least 3 months prior to the first occupation of the new buildings hereby permitted a detailed Travel Plan for the Studio Site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved Travel Plan shall be implemented in accordance with the timetable and target contained therein and shall continue to be implemented as long as any part of the development is occupied, subject to approved modifications agreed by the Local Planning Authority as part of the annual review.

Reason: To ensure that sustainable travel options associated with the development are promoted and maximised to be in accordance with Policies ST11.1, ST11.3, ST11.4 and ST11.6 of the Watford Local Plan 2021-2038.

13. Materials

The buildings shall not be erected other than in the materials as have been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority as stated on the application form and shown on the approved plans and no external materials shall be used other than those approved.

Reason: To prevent the development being constructed in inappropriate materials in accordance with Policies QD6.2 and QD6.4 of the Watford Local Plan 2021-2038.

14. Energy Statement

The new sound stages hereby permitted shall not be first occupied until the energy saving and renewable energy measures detailed within the approved Energy Statement (March 2022) prepared by Ramboll are incorporated into the approved development.

Reason: To achieve the energy and sustainability measures pursuant to Policies CC8.1 and CC8.2 of the Watford Local Plan 2021-2038.

15. Operational Management Plan

The use of the Replacement Backlot and Support Facilities (Backlot 2) as shown on drawing number MERLIN-DNA-ZZ-00-DR-A-00002-P10 shall at all times be carried out in accordance with the approved Operational Management Plan (March 2022).

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenity of the area and residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers and ecology and pursuant to Policy NE9.8 of the Watford Local Plan 2021-2038.

16. Boundary treatment

All boundary treatments shall be maintained in accordance with the details shown on the approved plans.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and security in accordance with Policies QD6.1 and QD6.2 of the Watford Local Plan 2021-2038.

17. Noise

All permanent plant, machinery and equipment installed or operated in connection with the development shall be so enclosed and/or attenuated so that noise levels at noise sensitive receptors do not exceed the noise limits as set out in table T1 of RSK Acoustics report 206-0600 R02 (revision 1 dated 8<sup>th</sup> March 2022); or otherwise a level of 5 dBA below the existing representative background noise level during the relevant period of operation, as assessed in accordance with BS4142:2014+A1:2019.

Reason: To ensure that the nearby residential properties are not subjected to excessive noise and disturbance pursuant to Policy CC8.5 of the Watford Local Plan 2021-2038.

18. Remediation Strategy

Prior to the commencement of Phase 8 (Amenity Building) (As per Appendix A HCMP rev 1, Updated December 2023) approved by this planning permission a remediation strategy to deal with the risks associated with contamination of that phase in respect of the development hereby permitted, must be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. This strategy will include the following components:

1. A site investigation scheme to provide information for a detailed assessment of the risk to all receptors that may be affected, including those off-site.
2. The results of the site investigation and the detailed risk assessment referred to in (1) and, based on these, an options appraisal and remediation strategy giving full details of the remediation measures required and how they are to be undertaken.
3. A verification plan providing details of the data that will be collected in order to demonstrate that the works set out in the remediation strategy in (2) are complete and identifying any requirements for longer-term monitoring of pollutant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action.

Reason: To ensure that the development does not contribute to and is not put at unacceptable risk from or adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of land contamination or water pollution in line with NPPF paragraph 174 and Policy CC8.5 of the Watford Local Plan 2021-2038.

19. Long term monitoring

If identified in respect of Condition 20 (Remediation Strategy), Phase 8 (Building 56) (As per Appendix A HCMP rev 1, Updated December 2023) shall not commence until a long-term monitoring and maintenance plan in respect of contamination, including a timetable of monitoring and submission of reports to the local planning authority, has been submitted to, and approved in writing

by, the Local Planning Authority. Reports as specified in the approved plan, including details of any necessary contingency action arising from the monitoring, shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. Alternatively, if a long-term monitoring and maintenance plan is not deemed necessary for a given phase of the development, a written statement based on prior contamination assessment shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority, confirming that long term monitoring and maintenance measures are not required and the reasons why the measures are not required.

Reason: To ensure that the site does not pose any further risk to the water environment by managing any ongoing contamination issues and completing all necessary long-term remediation measures. This is in line with paragraph 174 of the NPPF and Policy CC8.5 of the Watford Local Plan 2021-2038.

20. Previously unidentified contamination

If, during development, contamination not previously identified is found to be present at the site then no further development (unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority) shall be carried out until a remediation strategy detailing how this contamination will be dealt with has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The remediation strategy shall be implemented as approved.

Reason: To ensure that the development does not contribute to, and is not put at unacceptable risk from or adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of water pollution from previously unidentified contamination sources at the development site. This is in line with paragraph 174 of the NPPF and Policy CC8.5 of the Watford Local Plan 2021-2038.

21. Piling

Piling/other foundation designs using penetrative methods shall not be carried out other than with the written consent of the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed development does not harm groundwater resources in line with paragraph 174 of the NPPF and Policy CC8.5 of the Watford Local Plan 2021-2038.

22. Decommissioning of boreholes

The scheme as approved, as set out at section 10.2.5 of the Ramboll Additional Environmental Site Assessment (November 2023), shall be implemented prior to the occupation of that phase of the permitted development where boreholes are to be located.

Reason: To ensure that redundant boreholes are safe and secure, and do not cause groundwater pollution or loss of water supplies. This is in line with paragraph 174 of the NPPF and Policy CC8.5 of the Watford Local Plan 2021-2038.

### 23. Surface Water Drainage

Upon completion of the drainage works for each phase of development including all SuDS drainage features in accordance with the timing / phasing, a management and maintenance plan for the SuDS features and drainage network must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The management and maintenance plan shall include;

1. Provision of complete set of built drawings for site drainage.
2. Maintenance provisions and operational requirements for the installed drainage system.
3. Arrangements for adoption and any other measures to secure the operation of the scheme throughout its lifetime.

Reason: To reduce the risk of flooding by ensuring the satisfactory disposal and storage of surface water from the site pursuant to Policy NE9.5 of the Watford Local Plan 2021-2038.

### 24. Lighting

External lighting shall be erected only in accordance with the External Lighting Strategy and Impact Assessment (03/08/2022) prepared by Ramboll unless details have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and biodiversity and to meet the requirements of Policies NE9.8 and CC8.5 of the Watford Local Plan 2021-2038.

### 25. Construction Environmental Management Plan

The development shall be carried out in full accordance with the approved Construction Environmental Management Plan Rev 6, dated 30/11/22.

Reason: In the interests of the environment, landscape and ecology pursuant to Policies NE9.8 and CC8.5 of the Watford Local Plan 2021-2038.

### 26. Mechanical Ventilation Strategy

The development shall be carried out in full accordance with the approved Ventilation and Extraction Statement prepared by Ramboll March 2022 (Rev 04, dated 08/03/22).

Reason: In the interests of the environment and amenity of neighbouring residents and pursuant to Policy CC8.5 of the Watford Local Plan 2021-2038.

27. Landscaping as approved

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved drawings:

MERLIN-TOR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-L-90-0001 Rev N  
MERLIN-TOR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-L-90-0002 Rev G  
MERLIN-TOR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-L-90-0003 Rev F  
MERLIN-TOR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-L-90-0004 Rev H  
MERLIN-TOR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-L-90-0005 Rev G  
MERLIN-TOR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-L-90-0006 Rev F  
MERLIN-TOR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-L-90-0007 Rev E  
MERLIN-TOR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-L-90-0008 Rev G  
MERLIN-TOR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-L-90-0009 Rev D  
MERLIN-TOR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-L-90-0010 Rev E  
MERLIN-TOR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-L-90-0011 Rev H  
MERLIN-TOR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-L-90-0012 Rev K  
MERLIN-TOR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-L-90-0013 Rev E  
MERLIN-TOR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-L-90-0014 Rev E  
MERLIN-TOR-ZZ-ZZ-SH-L-90-0001 Rev F  
MERLIN-TOR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-L-90-0016 Rev B  
MERLIN-TOR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-L-90-0018  
MERLIN-TOR-ZZ-ZZ-SH-L-90-0001 Rev F

and the Landscape Management Specification (Rev A, dated 01.06.2023) approved pursuant to condition 30 of 22/00322/FULM, LPA ref. 23/00330/DISCON dated 6 June 2023.

Reason: To ensure that the approved landscaping is satisfactorily implemented and maintained, in accordance with Policies NE9.1, NE9.2 and NE9.5 of the Watford Local Plan 2021-2038.