

Planning Statement



Project:	Electric Vehicle Charging Station
Site name:	Land to the west of Dunkirk Roundabout, Dunkirk, Chester CHI 6LX
On behalf of:	Leap24 UK
Date:	November 2023

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A. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

1. This Planning Statement accompanies an application for full planning permission to Cheshire West and Chester Council (“the Council”) for the following: *“Construction of electric vehicle charging station including charging upstands and associated equipment and boundary treatment”* (“the development”), at the land to the west of Dunkirk Roundabout, Dunkirk, Chester (“the site”).
2. The charging station will meet an identified national need for new electric vehicle charging infrastructure. In March 2022, the Government published the ‘Taking Charge: The Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy’. This strategy sets out the Government’s vision and action plan for the rollout of electric vehicle charging infrastructure in the UK. This sets out a goal of providing around 300,000 public charging points as a minimum by 2030 and seeks to ensure these are installed ahead of demand, inspiring confidence in drivers who have not yet made the switch.
3. The roll of electric vehicle charging stations is needed to enable the UK to facilitate the transition to a low carbon economy and ultimately to meet its commitments to reach net zero by 2050.
4. The site is a suitable location for a new electric vehicle charging station as:
 - the site is previously developed and the Framework seeks to promote the efficient use of brownfield land;
 - the Cheshire West and Chester Council Local Plan supports the provision of new electric vehicle charging infrastructure;
 - the site is located on a major A-road in a location that is supported by the Government for ‘on-route’ charging stations in principle;
 - it will not affect the openness of the Green Belt nor will it have a greater impact on its openness than the existing site;
 - it will have no adverse impact on the character of the countryside and wider area;
 - it can be accessed safely and will not result in an adverse impact on the local highway network; and
 - there will be no other impacts with respect to ecology, flood risk, heritage or any other planning matters.
5. The proposed development will be wholly in accordance with the development plan and national planning policy, and there are no material planning considerations that would indicate that planning permission should not be granted. Rather, there are other material planning considerations that add further weight to the planning balance in favour of granting planning permission.

B. THE SITE

6. The site is located to the west of Dunkirk roundabout where the A5117 intersects with the M56.
7. The site comprises tarmac road surfacing and a small brick building.
8. The site was formerly used by the Driver Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) as an enforcement site and its primary activities were to undertake roadside checks on commercial vehicles. The construction of the weighbridge and weigh house was granted full planning permission (reference 6/14047) on 7 November 1985.
9. The site is located:
 - in the Green Belt;
 - in the countryside;
 - in a designated Restoration Area;
 - adjacent to a 'Corridor and Stepping Stone';
 - in the Hawarden Airport Safeguarding Zone;
 - in the Liverpool John Lennon Airport Safeguarding Zone;
 - in the Hooton to Great Budworth Recreational Routeway; and
 - flood zone 1 (low risk).
10. The site is not in a Conservation Area nor is it within the curtilage or setting of any listed buildings.
11. There are no Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) within or adjacent to the site.
12. Figures 1 and 2 show images of the site.



Figure 2: View of west end of site from A5117)



Figure 2: View of the site from Dunkirk roundabout

C. THE PROPOSAL AND THE APPLICANT

The proposal

13. This application proposes to create a new high-quality electric vehicle charging station, comprising nine charging units which will serve a total of 20 charging bays. A further two bays without charging facilities are also proposed to accommodate servicing and delivery vehicles.
14. The charging points are proposed along the rear boundary of the site along with a new substation and Feeder pillar. Access will be taken via the existing access points from the A5117 (entry) and Dunkirk roundabout (exit). The proposal seeks to retain the existing one storey brick building on the site. This will provide a dual purpose of providing an area for some modest facilities for the users of the charging facilities such as vending machines, and a compound for any onsite storage for maintenance and safety equipment (such as, for example, high visibility jackets).
15. The proposal also includes light poles and CCTV around the perimeter of the site and associated landscaping and site fencing.
16. Figures 3 and 4 show images of the proposed charging upstands.



Figure 3. Photo of upstand



Figure 4. Photo of upstand

The applicant

17. The applicant is Leap24 UK, who is a leading provider of sustainable transport infrastructure across North-West Europe, having considerable success in making the transition to clean mobility in Germany and the Netherlands.

18. Leap24 UK is continuously growing and developing to expand its delivery of electric vehicle charging stations whilst ensuring the provision of market-leading efficient, sustainable and user-friendly charging stations.
19. The Government's commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions has provided an opportunity for Leap24 UK to expand their success in Germany and the Netherlands to the UK, where they have begun acquiring sites to contribute towards the national requirement for easily accessible and spacious electric vehicle charging stations in the urban realm.
20. The innovative technology developed by Leap24 UK and delivered in each of its charging stations is suitable for a variety of electric vehicles. The fast-charging units have been designed in a modular and sustainable approach to enable the minimisation of waste in the construction and longer-term management processes, and each of the stations provide a comfortable and green environment to further encourage the shift to electric vehicles.

D. TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE NEED TO PROMOTE THE USE OF ELECTRIC VEHICLES

21. In November 2020, the UK government announced as part of 'The Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution' Policy Paper, a commitment to end the sale of all new petrol and diesel vehicles by 2030, and that all new cars and vans will be required to be fully zero emission at the tailpipe by 2035. The Automated and Electric Vehicles Act 2018 seeks to improve the network of charging points for electric vehicles to help deliver this objective.
22. A declaration was made as part of the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) to accelerate the transition to 100% zero emission cars and vans. This sets out the government's commitment to working towards all sales of new cars and vans being zero emission by 2040 or earlier, or by no later than 2035 in leading markets. This declaration represents a landmark global agreement launched by the UK COP presidency to signal the end of polluting vehicles and will help to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement (COP21).
23. In March 2022, the Government published the Taking Charge: The Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy. This strategy sets out the government's vision and action plan for the rollout of electric vehicle charging infrastructure in the UK. This sets out a goal of providing around 300,000 public charging points as a minimum by 2030 and seeks to ensure these are installed ahead of demand, inspiring confidence in drivers who have not yet made the switch.
24. Based on the Government's latest data (online 'electric vehicle charging device statistics: July 2023'), as of July 2023, there were just 44,020 public electric vehicle charging devices installed in the UK; this is just 14.6% of the target. Of these, just 8,461 were rated as rapid devices or above, meaning 80% of the existing public chargepoints available are ones where charging takes 3 hours or more. At the regional level, Cheshire West and Chester Council is ranked among the bottom 40% of local authorities across the UK for the number of public electric vehicle charging devices per 100,000 population.
25. The foreword from the Secretary of State for Transport to the strategy sets out that the government's key points of the strategy, including that:
 - *Our plans will get more chargepoints in the ground, quicker. They will strengthen the business case for chargepoint operators to invest now at this early stage of the transition, and the speed at which they are connected to the electricity system will accelerate.*
 - *The private sector has a critical role to play in providing convenient, affordable and reliable charging for all. We are already seeing a proliferation of public chargepoints at supermarkets, gyms and tourist attractions, installed without Government support.*
 - *Ultimately, charging your EV should be easier, cheaper and more convenient than refuelling a petrol or diesel car, wherever you live. At the same time, we must make sure that this revolution happens alongside growth in all other zero emission and low emission forms of travel, such as walking – so we are setting out clear principles to*

minimise pavement clutter, prevent trip hazards for pedestrians and stop new EV charging bays precluding bus and cycle lanes.

26. The executive summary of the strategy goes on to say that the UK should be a place where:

Everyone can find and access reliable public chargepoints wherever they live – be that city centre or rural village, urban flat or suburban house, in the north, south, east or west of the country. Charging opportunities will not be limited by income or location.

Effortless on and off-street charging for private and commercial drivers is the norm – easy overnight charging is, and will remain, the default for those with driveways. But charging should be just as convenient and stress-free for those who currently park on street. This must extend beyond privately owned cars; those who drive vans and commercial vehicles must also have access to chargepoints that meet their needs.

Market-led rollout for the majority of chargepoints delivers a thriving charging sector – the sector is booming now with smart UK SMEs driving the pace of change and forcing big corporates to adapt. By 2030, this will represent a huge global opportunity for UK Plc. A thriving competitive market will help to drive down costs for consumers.

27. Page 20 of the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy also sets out that there will be a variety of suitable locations for public charging points for electric vehicle owners to charge in the future, and this includes destinations for ‘on-route charging’. The site is located in close proximity to the M56 and so is in a suitable location for a charging station as it will allow consumers to recharge for longer journeys.
28. The Climate Change Act 2008 also establishes a legally binding target to reduce the UK’s greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% in 2050 from 1990 levels. To drive progress and set the UK on a pathway towards this target, the Act introduced a system of carbon budgets including a target that the annual equivalent of the carbon budget for the period including 2020 is at least 34% lower than 1990 (Paragraph: 002 Reference ID: 6-002-20140306 of the National Planning Practice Guidance).
29. The Automated and Electric Vehicles Act 2018 supports the Government’s aspiration for the deployment of world-class electric vehicle charging infrastructure across the UK. The powers contained in the legislation allows the Government to regulate to improve the consumer experience of charging infrastructure, and shows the commitment and need to increase the number of charging stations across the UK.
30. We also make reference to appeal decision ref. APP/F1610/W/20/3248674 for an electric car charging service station at Fosseway, Lower Slaughter. Paragraphs 13 to 15 of the Inspector’s Decision Letter set out that (emphasis added):

*13. The Government’s mission is to put the UK at the forefront of the design and manufacturing of EVs and the Paper stated an intention to ban the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2040. In addition to ensuring that EVs are available and affordable, the transition to zero emission transport also requires a charging infrastructure network that is easy to use and is affordable, efficient and reliable. **The Government envisages that the majority of vehicle charging will***

take place at home but recognises that a widespread public charging point network is important for drivers who do high mileage, travel long distances or who do not have access to charging points at home or at work.

14. The paper notes the importance of ‘range anxiety’ for drivers considering the purchase and use of an EV and sets a number of objectives for increasing the provision of charging points on the strategic and major road network. Research commissioned by the Committee on Climate Change in January 2018 showed that the number of rapid chargers located next to the major road network needs to increase by around 710 between 2016 and 2030 and that the number of public chargers for top-up charging needs to increase from 2,700 to 27,000 over the same period. **Highways England had a target of ensuring that there is a charging point every 20 miles on the Strategic Road Network (SRN) by 2020.**

15. The Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, published by the Prime Minister on 18 November 2020, increases the sense of urgency for the development of an efficient and reliable EV charging network by bringing forward the ban on the sales of petrol, diesel and most hybrid cars to 2030. The press release [IDI] speaks of accelerating the transition to EVs and of transforming our national infrastructure to better support their use. In light of the current, very low level of EV ownership in the UK compared to many other European countries, transforming the existing charging network will be critical to achieving the Government’s objective of an accelerated transition to EV use. **The Government’s ambition is that the UK should have one of the best and most comprehensive charging networks in the world.**

E. PLANNING POLICY COMPLIANCE

Planning policy framework and key considerations

31. The development plan comprises:
 - Cheshire West and Chester Council Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies; 2015 and
 - Cheshire West and Chester Council Local Plan (Part Two) Land Allocations and Detailed Policies 2019.
32. The National Planning Policy Framework (2021) (“the Framework”) is a material consideration of significant weight.
33. The key considerations are:
 - provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure;
 - Green Belt;
 - countryside;
 - ecology;
 - access and highway safety; and
 - other matters.
34. The following assessment demonstrates that the proposal will be suitable with respect to all of these key considerations.

Provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure

35. The Framework actively encourages new development to facilitate the use of sustainable transport modes, including zero emission vehicles to help support the transition to a low carbon economy. Paragraph 107(e) sets out that planning policies should take into account the need to ensure an adequate provision of spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles.
36. At the local level, Policy STRAT10 of the Part I Local Plan states that (emphasis added):

*proposals should seek to maximise use of sustainable (low carbon) modes of transport by incorporating high quality facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport and **where appropriate charging points for electric vehicles.***
37. Policy T5 in Part 2 of the Local Plan also specifies that development is to provide appropriate charging infrastructure for electric vehicles in new development.
38. The Cheshire West and Chester Council Travel Planning Guidance also references the provision of electric vehicle charging points as an example measure to be

considered in workplace travel plans, again highlighting their importance in a range of locations.

39. The proposed electric vehicle charging station will make a valuable and important contribution towards the provision of recharging facilities in the Cheshire West and Chester region. The site is in a suitable location with direct motorway/highway access and responds to policies STRAT10 and T5 in the Cheshire West and Chester Council Local Plan and ultimately plays its part in contributing to meeting the UK's climate change targets. The Government's 'Taking Charge: The Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy' also highlights the importance of expanding the public charging network by making provision for 'on-route' charging hubs which are located along major A-roads to enable electric vehicle users to carry out long-distance journeys. The site is therefore in a prime location in this respect.
40. It is clear from the above that there is strong support for the principle of new electric vehicle charging stations in the Cheshire West and Chester region. The need for such facilities (which as per section D of this statement is set out at an international and national level) is clearly established, and the Council has set out strong support as part of its overriding spatial strategy and key planning policies.
41. The proposed development will clearly comply with these key planning policies of the development plan and the Framework and will make a valuable and important contribution towards the provision of electric vehicle charging point facilities in Liverpool, helping to deliver a sustainable City with improving air-quality.

Impact on the Green Belt

Appropriate Development

42. Chapter 13 of the Framework seeks to protect the Green Belt and seeks to resist inappropriate development, which is, by definition, harmful to the openness of the Green Belt. Paragraph 150 states that the material changes in the use of land is not inappropriate in the Green Belt, provided that it does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.
43. The proposed change of use of the land to provide an electric vehicle charging station on site is acceptable as it will not conflict with any of the purposes served by the Green Belt as set out in the Framework. The following table sets out an assessment of the contribution the site makes to the five purposes of the Green Belt along with the impact of the proposed development on these:

Green Belt purpose 1 - Check the unrestricted sprawl of large-built-up areas

Site contribution

The site makes a limited contribution to this purpose as there are no large built-up areas or sprawling settlements near to the site. Surrounding development predominantly comprises the existing highway network through which the site is connected.

Assessment of development

The proposed development will have no impact on the site's contribution to this purpose as no additional hardstanding is proposed. The proposed development will utilise the existing tarmac surfacing and so will not increase the built-up area of the site.

Green Belt purpose 2 - Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Site contribution

The site is located outside of the defined settlement boundaries but is not in close proximity to any neighbouring towns and so makes a low contribution to this purpose.

Assessment of development

The proposed development is for the construction of an electric vehicle charging station on a site that is previously developed and so it would not result in the merging of towns into one another.

Green Belt purpose 3 – Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

Site contribution

The site is already developed and forms part of the existing highway network and so makes a negligible contribution to safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

Assessment of development

The proposed charging station will be wholly contained on previously developed land and so the proposed development will continue to safeguard the surrounding countryside from any encroachment.

Green Belt purpose 4 – Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Site contribution

Assessment of development

<p>The site is not within the setting and special character of any historic towns or designated heritage assets and so therefore does not make any contribution towards this purpose.</p>	<p>The proposed development will not conflict with this purpose.</p>
<p>Green Belt purpose 5 – Assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land</p>	
<p>Site contribution</p>	<p>Assessment of development</p>
<p>The site is not in an urban area and so does not make any contribution towards this purpose.</p>	<p>The proposed development will not conflict with this purpose as it seeks to bring a vacant section of the highway network back into use as a charging station and so will assist in the regeneration of previously developed brownfield land in this respect.</p>

- 44. To support this change of use, a series of minor building operations are proposed on site, including the erection of a substation, feeder pillar and nine charging upstands. This operational development must therefore be assessed in the context of paragraph 149(g) of the Framework which states that exceptions to the construction of new buildings being inappropriate in the Green Belt are *“limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development.”*
- 45. In terms of the existing site context, the site is previously developed and comprises tarmac road surfacing and a small brick building. There is dense tree planting along the northern boundary of the site (as shown in Figure 5 below) and the area to the south comprises the existing highway network which is also within the Green Belt.



Figure 5. View of site from A5117 (looking northeast)

46. In terms of contextual ‘openness’ and surrounding development, the site immediately adjoins the Dunkirk roundabout and M56 which is hard surfaced and there are no nearby buildings visible from the site due to the dense landscaping adjacent to the highway. The existing trees along the northern boundary of the site help to screen the site from the surrounding countryside to the north and so the site does not make any real contribution to the openness of the Green Belt in this regard. The character of the site is largely influenced by its location and setting adjacent to the A5117.
47. With regards to the visual openness and impact on the green belt, the works proposed on the site will result in structures of a low scale. Due to the nature of the charging station use, the majority of the site is dedicated to access and parking bays and therefore preserves the visual openness of the Green Belt. The trees along the northern boundary of the site will be retained and so the proposed development will have no overall impact on the openness of the Green Belt, nor will it have a greater impact on its openness than the existing development on site.
48. For the reasons set out above, the proposed development will clearly comply with national policy and local policy with respect to the Green Belt. The proposed development would not significantly impact the openness of the Green Belt as the site is a brownfield land that forms part of the existing highway network and is well-screened from the surrounding area by dense tree planting to the north.

Countryside

49. The Framework sets out that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
 - protecting and enhancing valued landscape, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils; and
 - recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.
50. The Framework notes that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.
51. At the local level, Policy STRAT9 of the Local Plan (Part One) largely reflects the Framework in that it sets out that the intrinsic character and beauty of the Cheshire countryside will be protected. Policy DMI of the Local Plan (Part Two) supports this policy by encouraging new development on land that is previously developed land.
52. Both Policies STRAT9 and DMI set out various key considerations to inform the assessment of whether a new development is suitable in a countryside location. Specifically, Policy STRAT9 sets out a list of certain types of development that will be permitted within the countryside. The policy sets out that development that has an operational need for a countryside location (such as, but not limited to, for agricultural or forestry operations), will be permitted.
53. The electric vehicle charging station on the site has an operational need to be in the proposed location. This is because it will provide much needed charging infrastructure in an accessible location that serves a key motorway and highway network. This is the M56 motorway, which is the key route from north Wales

(where it becomes the A594) to the North West of England, including the main destinations of Ellsmere Port, Greater Manchester and beyond, and Liverpool and Chester via the M53; and in the opposite direction from these locations to north Wales.

54. The need for the charging station is to serve traffic on these main motorways travelling across the district and within it to other locations via the connecting main roads, such as the A41 and A540. As all of this road network is within the countryside (as shown in the image below), the development has a 'need' to be in a countryside location, in accordance with Policy STRAT9, and cannot be accommodated within existing settlements (as it would not serve the need it will meet in such locations).

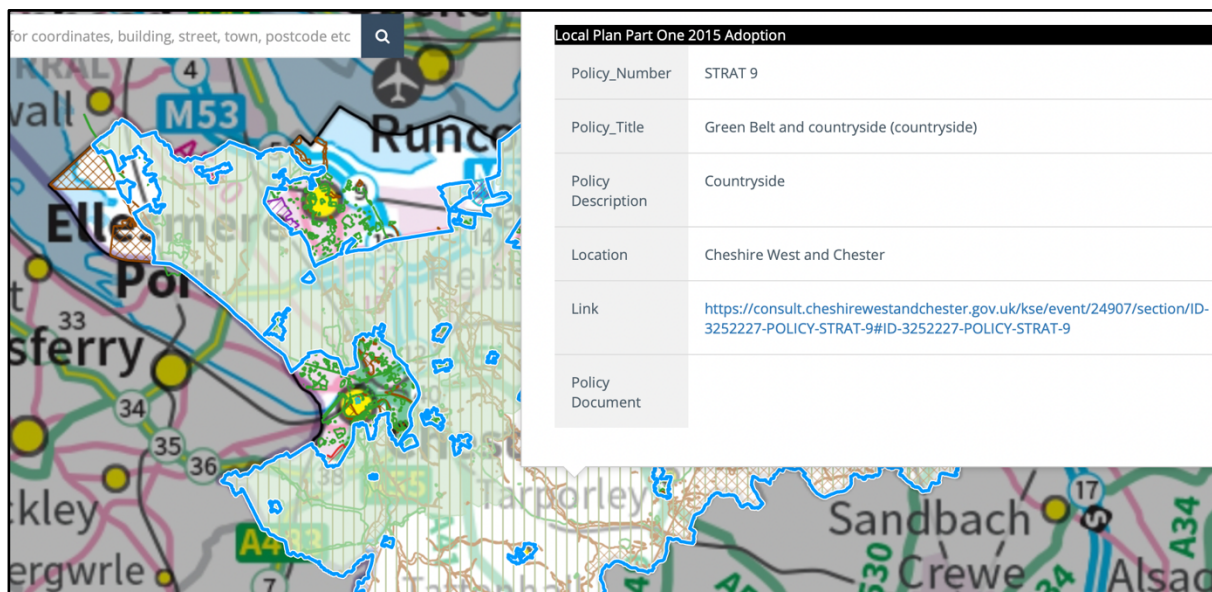


Figure 6. Policies map extract showing the extent of land within the countryside, including the road networks

55. Having regard to Policy STRAT9 more widely, its fundamental aim is to ensure that development is of “an appropriate scale and design to not harm the character of the countryside”. The proposed development meets this criteria for the following reasons:
- the layout of the charging station utilises the existing hardsurfacing on site and does not propose any encroachment onto undeveloped land within the countryside. The proposed development is therefore of a scale that will not harm the character of the countryside; and
 - the proposed development does not propose any large buildings or structures on site that have the potential to cause any visual harm to the character of the countryside. The feeder pillar and substation are modest in size and do not exceed the height of the existing one storey brick building located on the site. The proposed development is therefore of an appropriate design in these regards.

56. The proposal will also be in accordance with Policy DM1 of the Local Plan Part 2, meeting the criteria as follows:
1. it will not result in the loss of buildings that contribute to the rural character of an area;
 2. does not propose any replacement buildings; and
 3. the design and layout of the development fully reflects the rural character of the area and will not 'urbanise' the countryside, for the reasons set out above.
57. The proposed development will make effective use of brownfield land in accordance with paragraph 119 of the Framework.
58. When considering the Framework and Local Policy as a whole, the aim is to protect the character and landscape of the countryside. Although this site falls within the countryside, it is previously developed land which is predominately hardstanding and immediately adjacent to a major motorway corridor. The site does not have any attributes of the countryside that place it higher in the hierarchy of value – it is not an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or a 'valued landscape'; on the contrary, it is previously developed land on the edge of a main road which links to the wider motorway and highway network. In these terms, it has the least value as countryside and the proposed electric vehicle charging station on the site will not result in any harm to its character or detract from its setting. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Policies STRAT9 and DM1 of the Local Plan.

Ecology

59. The site is located in a Restoration Area and adjacent to designated Corridor and Stepping Stones.
60. The Framework recognises the importance of conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Policy DM44 of the Local Plan reflects this, stating that development will be supported where there is no net loss of natural assets and, wherever possible, it delivers net gains within the borough. Development will also be supported where it makes a positive contribution to the borough's ecological network.
61. Policy DM44 sets out that proposals in Restoration Areas should seek to improve their structural connectivity, resilience and function. Proposals within corridors and stepping stones should also seek to improve the connectivity of habitats for the movement of mobile species.
62. The site, in its entirety, is previously developed and comprises primarily tarmac ground with a small brick building located in the site. However, a Preliminary Ecological Assessment of the site has been undertaken to identify any ecological assets on site. This concludes that:
- The proposed development will not impact the function of the Corridor and Stepping Stone designation as part of the Cheshire Ecological Network.*
63. As part of the Preliminary Ecological Assessment, a Construction Ecological Management Plan has been prepared which recommends a series of mitigation measures to ensure the protection of the adjacent woodland during construction. An

Ecological Enhancement Plan has also been prepared which sets out details of the provision of new landscaping and species-specific enhancements on site, including bird and bat boxes and additional tree and shrub planting.

64. Further soft landscaping is proposed along the boundaries of the site to enhance biodiversity on site.
65. The proposed development will improve the structural connectivity and resilience of the Restoration Area and so is wholly in accordance with Policy DM44.

Access and highway safety

66. The Framework recognises that transport policies have an important role to play in facilitating sustainable development and states that development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. Paragraph 111 of the Framework states that developments should not be refused on transport grounds unless there would be an *unacceptable impact on highway safety*, or the residual cumulative impact of the development are severe.
67. At the local level, Policy T5 (Parking and Access) requires that safe provision is made for access to and from the site as well as allowing for safe movement within the site. The development must not create any unacceptable impacts on amenity or road safety that cannot be satisfactorily mitigated by routeing controls or other highways improvements.
68. Further, Policy T5 states that sufficient parking facilities must be provided to serve the needs to the development.
69. A total of 20 charging bays are proposed (excluding two further bays without charging facilities) and so any traffic impact generated by the charging station will be limited in the context of the overall number of trips made along the adjoining highways.
70. A Transport Technical Note has been prepared by Pulsar Transport Planning. It sets out a detailed assessment of access and highways related matters, and demonstrates that the proposed development:
 - will have appropriate access arrangements, allowing for electric vehicles to enter and exit the site safely;
 - will not result impact upon the local highway network; and
 - ultimately, will be appropriate in transport terms and will not result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety and so be wholly in accordance with the requirements of the Framework.
71. Paragraphs 6.7 and 6.8 of the Transport Technical Note concludes that:

The proposed development is expected to have a minimal impact on the public highway network and from a transport perspective meets local/regional policies to increase electric vehicle charging infrastructure in order to meet other environmental objectives such as improved air quality and net zero targets.

In conclusion, and on the basis of the above, the proposed development should not be refused on transport grounds. The cumulative residual transport impacts of the proposal would be negligible. The proposal would comply with national and local policy.

72. The proposed development is therefore acceptable with regards to access and highway safety matters and will have no adverse impact on the transport network in accordance with the Policy T5 and the Framework.

F. OTHER MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS AND THE PLANNING BALANCE

73. The above assessment has demonstrated that the proposed development is wholly in accordance with the provisions of the development plan when taken as a whole.
74. As set out in section D of this statement, the Government has made a legally-binding commitment to reduce carbon emissions, and its 'Taking Charge: The Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy' released in March 2022 sets out a target that a minimum of 300,000 public charging points should be provided.
75. The social, economic and environmental benefits of the proposal are clear and must be afforded significant weight. This position has been supported at appeal, including recently in connection with decision ref. APP/Y9507/W/22/3308885 (Appendix I) for a mixed-use development in the South Downs National Park, comprising a recharging centre for electric vehicles and tourist accommodation. Paragraphs 61 and 62 of the Inspector's Decision Letter sets out that (emphasis added):

61 ...there is a national, regional and local need for a huge roll out of Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCPs) in appropriate locations as EV take up increases. The Government has legislated to prevent the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles from 2030 and is actively encouraging the uptake of electric vehicles, whilst noting that the infrastructure necessary to support them is not currently in place. **This infrastructure must be facilitated and will be required on a significant scale if a cultural shift is to be achieved.**

62 The NP [South Downs National Park] is not exempt from this need and the delivery of a significant number of EVCPs alongside the very busy A3 trunk road is very beneficial, even bearing in mind the potential for charging in other locations such as at home or workplace. It is not realistic to expect that existing fuel forecourts or service stations will convert from petrol and diesel at any scale whilst combustion engines remain predominant and **so delivery of bespoke provision is likely to be part of the solution. In short, the country, and the NP in particular, is nowhere near the threshold of EVCP provision where it can be argued that there is no demonstrable need for more.**

76. Despite the level of protection afforded to the appeal site by virtue of its location within a National Park (i.e. one of the most protected sites in planning terms), the Inspector still judged these benefits to outweigh the visual harm and landscape impacts caused by the development. This proposal should also be assessed in the same context in terms of weighing these benefits against the harm to the character of the area.
77. The legislative context and Government support for new electric vehicle charging infrastructure is clear and is a material planning consideration that weighs heavily in favour of granting planning permission in the planning balance.



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APPENDIX 01 – SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK APPEAL DECISION



Appeal Decision

Inquiry held over seven days between 21 February - 7 March 2023

Site visit made on 1 March 2023

by Michael Boniface MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29th March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/Y9507/W/22/3308885 A3 Buriton Interchange, Petersfield

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Recharge One A3 against the decision of South Downs National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref. SDNP/21/06431/FUL, dated 22 December 2021, was refused by notice dated 20 April 2022.
 - The development proposed is a change of use and redevelopment of the site to provide a recharge centre for electrically powered vehicles, with control and battery room and secure area for the delivery and storage of Bio Gas. Up to 60 eco-lodges (Use Class C1), and engineering work to create an earth sheltered block comprising up to 1,330m² of tunnel floor space for a flexible mix of uses within classes C1 and E(a)(b)(c). The formation of a two-way entrance off the B2070, the laying of a perimeter vehicular access road, with link roads, cycle tracks, and areas of hardstanding to provide up to 127 parking spaces. Engineering work for the purpose of landscaping and operations to install drainage infrastructure.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for change of use and redevelopment of the site to provide a recharge centre for electrically powered vehicles, with control and battery room and secure area for the delivery and storage of Bio Gas. Up to 60 eco-lodges (Use Class C1), and engineering work to create an earth sheltered block comprising up to 1,330m² of tunnel floor space for a flexible mix of uses within classes C1 and E(a)(b)(c). The formation of a two-way entrance off the B2070, the laying of a perimeter vehicular access road, with link roads, cycle tracks, and areas of hardstanding to provide up to 127 parking spaces. Engineering work for the purpose of landscaping and operations to install drainage infrastructure at the A3 Buriton Interchange, Petersfield in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref. SDNP/21/06431/FUL, dated 22 December 2021, subject to the conditions contained within the attached Schedule.

Preliminary Matters

2. The application is accompanied by an Environmental Statement (ES) prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (EIA Regulations), including technical appendices and a non-technical summary. I am satisfied that the totality of the information provided is sufficient to meet the requirements of Schedule 4 of

the EIA Regulations and this information has been taken into account in reaching a decision.

3. With the agreement of the parties, I was able to visit a prototype of the proposed tourist lodges in advance of the inquiry, which was under construction. This allowed me to see its general scale and design, though my assessment of the appeal is based on the submitted plans. During the course of the inquiry, I visited the site and surrounding area, both in daylight and darkness.
4. An executed legal agreement securing planning obligations pursuant to S106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 was received after the inquiry, in accordance with an agreed timetable and has been taken into account.
5. In advance of the inquiry, the National Park Authority (the Authority) confirmed that, following the submission of further information, and subject to suitable conditions and planning obligations, its third (relating to ecology) and fourth (relating to highways matters) reason for refusal had been overcome. As such, the Authority opted not to defend these reasons for refusal.
6. It is common ground between the parties that the development would not harm the wildlife or cultural heritage of the South Downs National Park¹.

Main Issues

7. In light of the above, the main issues are:
 - (a) Whether the proposal would conserve or enhance the National Park's landscape and scenic beauty; and
 - (b) Whether the proposal constitutes 'major development'², and if so, whether there are exceptional circumstances indicating that the development would be in the public interest.

Reasons

Landscape and scenic beauty

8. The purposes and duty for national parks are identified in the South Downs Local Plan (2019) and derive from statute³. Purpose 1 seeks to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area. Purpose 2 requires the promotion of opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park (NP) by the public. Additionally, there is a duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of the local communities within the NP.
9. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) is consistent with the purposes, noting that National Parks, amongst other designations, have the highest status of protection. Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing their landscape and scenic beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage.
10. Further detail as to the importance of the NP landscape, indeed its reasons for designation, are identified in its Special Qualities. These are set out in the Partnership Management Plan and are fundamental to any assessment of

¹ Having regard to paragraph 176 of the National Planning Policy Framework

² In the terms of paragraph 177 of the National Planning Policy Framework

³ National Parks and Access to Countryside Act 1949, as amended by the Environment Act 1995

effects on natural beauty, as they are the reason why the NP designation exists.

11. There may be parallels in considering proposal-specific landscape and visual impacts and the effects on special qualities, but a distinction should be drawn between the two. Harm in local landscape or visual terms does not necessarily equate to a failure to conserve natural beauty, having regard to the NP's special qualities.

Landscape and visual impacts

12. Landscape and visual assessments are necessarily subjective in nature and require the exercise of professional judgement. There is, therefore, always scope for legitimate disagreement between professionals, as was the case here.
13. The submitted Landscape and Visual Evidence (LVE) undertakes a short but proportionate assessment of the local landscape context, whilst the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) considers the landscape and visual effects of the appeal proposal. The Authority's concern is largely focused on the baseline assessment within the LVE, specifically that the landscape context has not been properly understood by the appellant and that the proposals are, consequently, not landscape led.
14. The Authority has not undertaken its own comprehensive assessment of landscape and visual impacts but has instead undertaken a critical evaluation of the appellant's. I did not find this approach persuasive compared to the appellant's more balanced assessment of the landscape and visual impacts, which considered relevant published landscape character assessments from the national, regional and local level and made reasonable observations, both positive and negative, about the relevant landscape characteristics.
15. Fundamentally, I disagree with the Authority that the site is an intact part of the NP landscape that contributes in any meaningful way. Whilst the site has always been a small field, its historic field boundaries have been altered as part of works to introduce the A3 slip roads, which now entirely separates the appeal site from the wider landscape. The site is dominated by the surrounding road infrastructure and embankments and is evidently an island piece of land left over after the introduction of the trunk road. The treed boundaries are characteristic of the area, but these would largely remain in place, supplemented with further planting. Similarly, the ancient watercourse would be retained and incorporated into the scheme.
16. The low level of dispersed development in the area is a key characteristic. Beyond the towns, settlements are small and stand within abundant countryside. That would not change as a result of the appeal scheme. The development would be located alongside a major trunk road and surrounded by infrastructure associated with it. It would provide facilities specifically designed to serve road users, albeit along with tourist accommodation. The arrangement of tourist lodges, parking areas and an earth covered commercial building could not reasonably be mistaken for a settlement akin to a village, hamlet or farmstead, which are scattered throughout the landscape.
17. Instead, it is likely that it would be viewed for what it is, a roadside electric vehicle charging station with tourist accommodation and supporting facilities.

It would be well related to existing road infrastructure and quite distinct from any settlement. The closest residential properties are located at Greenway Lane but these are themselves an anomaly within the landscape, standing distinct from any nearby settlement. Vast areas of countryside would continue to surround the site, maintaining the area's low level of dispersed development.

18. The site has some of the landscape characteristics associated with the area, its geology and topography are intact, and it is a small irregular grass covered field enclosed by treed boundaries and a stream. However, it makes little positive contribution to the wider landscape given its isolated context and poor condition.
19. There would of course be notable changes to the landscape within the site to accommodate the development. Some trees would need to be removed to facilitate improved vehicular access and ground levels would be altered. However, the site is heavily influenced by the road infrastructure and is already much altered, including its boundaries and landscaping. It would be an exaggeration to suggest that the field on which the development is proposed is representative of the wider K2 landscape character area or that development of the site would diminish the identified characteristics across the wider area.
20. The development has been designed to work with the site characteristics, maintaining and enhancing positive features such as the stream and boundary planting. The earth covered building would be landscaped and would also provide a visual and acoustic screen from the A3 to the remainder of the site. The lodges, although regimented in their linear layout, would subtly follow the line of the ancient watercourse. It seems to me that the development has been designed to work with the few positive characteristics that the site possesses, as well as the wider landscape, bearing in mind operational requirements and the constrained nature of the site. That being the case, I am satisfied that the site context has been understood and the design of the scheme can reasonably be described as landscape led.
21. The LVIA also assesses the visual effects of the development from various representative viewpoints and further visualisations were submitted to the appeal. From the range of views identified, it is striking that the development would be relatively well contained, assisted in large part by the established trees on the site boundaries, which would be reinforced. The focus of the concerns from the Authority were in relation to two views, first from a bus stop opposite the site entrance and secondly from the elevated position of Butser Hill Nature Reserve, across which runs the South Downs Way long distance footpath.
22. The bus stop is directly opposite the site and so direct views towards it are available, albeit with a road in the foreground. Existing boundary planting heavily filters the view into the site and beyond, though clear views can be gained through the gap accommodating the existing site access, towards a hardstanding serving an established horse paddock. The experience is currently heavily influenced by the sight and sound of cars passing by on the A3, as well as the road infrastructure close by, including an underpass beneath the A3.
23. That said, Butser Hill can be seen in the distance, beyond the site, providing an impressive backdrop. Some trees would be removed either side of the existing

site access to facilitate improvements and so views would potentially increase. The introduction of built form within the site would be a notable and adverse change from the existing horse paddock in a rural area, notwithstanding its current poor condition. However, views of Butser Hill, likely the primary focus of any receptor, would remain visible in the background as a positive attribute. Bearing in mind that bus stop users and passers-by are likely to be making a journey as opposed to coming to the location to appreciate the view, the harm would be minor.

24. From Butser Hill, the site is visible at some distance amongst wide panoramic views. As walkers make the journey over the downs, different perspectives are gained with particularly impressive views over the Meon Valley and towards Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight beyond large swaths of undulating countryside. Such views showcase the rich landscape tapestry that make the NP special.
25. The appeal site is seen in a view containing Petersfield, a relatively close large urban settlement that is clearly visible by day and night. In the immediate vicinity of the site, the houses on Greenway Lane are readily apparent, along with the scrapyard behind, and of course the A3, its slip roads and infrastructure. The view is a pleasant one, but it is not without built form, indeed built form is a significant component of the view in contrast with those available in other directions from Butser Hill.
26. The development would be seen in this context, as a very small part of the view, contained by established roads and screened heavily by existing and proposed boundary landscaping. The fact that it might be visible to a limited extent, in its context, does not equate to harm.
27. The amount of built form visibly reduces with distance from Petersfield and the area becomes far more rural in appearance. That would remain the case, even with the appeal proposal in place. The appeal site is relatively close to Petersfield, with its substantial industrial estate and service area close to the A3. The appeal proposal would become a part of the diminishing level of development seen on passing by Petersfield, sitting subtly alongside the trunk road as drivers begin to appreciate views of the downs ahead.
28. To some extent, the lack of visibility is predicated on the boundary planting being retained, much of which is located on land maintained by National Highways and outside of the appellant's control. Some of the trees are Ash and show signs of Ash dieback but these are a relatively small proportion of the overall tree mix, particularly on the west and south boundaries, between the site and Butser Hill. In any case, National Highways' published position is that it will retain the trees for as long as possible and replace where practical should they need to be removed. I see no reason to expect that this would not be the position. Furthermore, the year 1 visualisations demonstrate a good level of existing boundary screening, and it can be expected that other trees will continue to grow. The proposed development would also introduce new planting such that I am satisfied sufficient screening would exist.
29. The Authority makes the point that attempts were made to exclude the A3 corridor from the NP designation but that it was subsequently decided that, whilst the landscape was impacted to some degree, the visual impact of the road was very localised. If such a huge infrastructure project can be accommodated without unacceptably detracting from the special qualities of

the wider NP landscape, then it seems to me, that the proposed development could be equally well assimilated alongside it. This aptly demonstrates that the NP is not void of development or any built form that could detract from the landscape. Buildings and other development exist, can be seen and further development should not be presumed inappropriate out of hand, albeit that the NP benefits from the highest status of protection.

30. Overall, the scale and extent of the development would be limited, being contained within the established trunk road infrastructure. The LVIA concludes that the development would result in a neutral landscape and visual impact after new planting was established. I think it unlikely that the effects would be mitigated entirely, but they would certainly be no more than minor in nature.

Dark night skies

31. The NP is designated as an International Dark Sky Reserve (IDSR) for its exceptional or distinguished quality of starry nights and nocturnal environment. The appeal site stands within the buffer zone (E1a – Intrinsic Rural Darkness and buffer) surrounding the core area and has some areas where Sky Quality Measurements (SQM) are close to or exceeding 20.5, the point at which the Milky Way generally becomes visible to the naked eye.
32. Policy SD8 of the South Downs Local Plan (2019) (LP) seeks to protect the intrinsic quality of dark night skies. If lighting cannot be avoided, it should be demonstrated that the proposed lighting is necessary and appropriate for its intended purpose and any impacts should be avoided or mitigated to the greatest reasonable extent. Detailed requirements for the level of protection applicable to each environmental zone are specified.
33. A lighting strategy is proposed as part of the development which details the specification of the proposed lighting and includes a phased curfew for switching lights off at different stages, amongst other measures. The Authority accepts that lighting would be necessary for the proposed use and that the proposed lighting strategy is a good one that would minimise the impact of the development as much as is reasonable and technically prudent. It also accepts, that whilst a small modification to the boundaries might be needed at any subsequent review, the development would not threaten the continued existence of the reserve. I agree with this assessment, even bearing in mind that the IDSR is relatively narrow in this area, referred to as a pinch-point by some.
34. From Butser Hill, the site can be seen from a distance. The site would be lit and visible by night, but the effects of lighting would be minimised by the proposed lighting strategy and would again be seen in the context of other significant local light sources, including the urban area of Petersfield, the brightly lit roundabout to the north of the site, houses on Greenway Lane and headlights using the A3 and surrounding roads. In this context, the effect of lighting from the development would be minor.
35. From the immediate environs of the site, the presence of lighting would be apparent, but again, in the context of the other existing light sources nearby. The amount of lighting currently reduces as people pass by Petersfield, predominantly along the A3, but the effects of the development would be very localised in their extent and in proximity to the other sources of lighting I have described above. Bearing in mind the lighting strategy proposed, the lighting

would have only a minor impact with little consequence beyond the site boundaries.

36. It has been demonstrated that all opportunities to reduce light pollution have been taken and that the adverse impacts would be mitigated to the greatest reasonable extent. The detailed policy requirements relevant to the environmental zone within which the appeal site is located are all met. As such, I find no conflict with policy SD8 of the LP. To the extent that there would be minor effects from the visibility of light on the site, at odds with the area's intrinsic dark night skies, this weighs against the development but only to a limited extent.
37. In addition, for all of the above reasons, I do not consider that the development would result in any material harm to the Buriton Dark Skies Discovery Site or the Clanfield Observatory, both of which are some distance from the appeal site.

Special Qualities

38. So far as the special qualities of the NP are concerned, the Authority accepts that five out of seven would be conserved or enhanced. Those in dispute are Special Qualities (SQ) 1 and 7.
39. SQ1 refers to diverse, inspirational and breathtaking views, which is certainly an appropriate description for the South Downs National Park but that is not as a result of any contribution made by the appeal site. For the reasons I have set out above, the appeal site does not possess this SQ or contribute to it. Whilst it is within the landscape's rich tapestry, its isolated nature means that its predominant relationship is with the trunk road and associated infrastructure as opposed to the wider landscape. The appeal development would be a modest and insignificant component of the wider landscape and would not materially detract from its scenic beauty. In addition, by opening the site to the public, the opportunities to view and appreciate the Butser Hill escarpment would be increased.
40. SQ7 refers to the NP's distinctive towns and villages, and communities with real pride in their area. It is difficult to see how the proposed development, standing apart from any town, village or community would have any negative effect. The design of the development would be very different to the historic towns and villages found in the area but that is not at all surprising given its purpose and the modern needs that it seeks to meet. This would be readily understood by anyone that visited and there is no imperative to seek to replicate traditional buildings. This site offers an opportunity for innovation and the fact that modern design techniques and materials are proposed in this discrete location is entirely appropriate. I have set out above that the development would not be seen as a new settlement that might be at odds with the special qualities exhibited elsewhere in the NP and I see no reason why it should make SQ7 any less applicable.
41. The development would result in a 15% biodiversity net gain within the NP, contributing positively to wildlife and habitats (SQ2). The site is not currently tranquil or unspoilt (SQ3) given the effects of the A3 but the development would provide a more tranquil environment within the site by virtue of the earth covered building and acoustic screen. SQ3 would be conserved.

42. SQ4 recognises that the environment is shaped by centuries of farming and embracing new enterprise. The proposed development would not detract from this as the site is no longer used for agriculture, having been severed from the wider landscape. Instead, it would contribute, delivering a new enterprise aimed at tackling climate change, by utilising local produce in the farm shop and café supporting farms and businesses within the NP, and through the utilisation of innovative biogas technology that would allow local farms to make use of waste methane from their agricultural enterprises.
43. The development would contribute to opportunities for recreation activities and learning experiences in the area (SQ5), drawing people to the NP to stay at the proposed tourist accommodation and allowing them to visit the nearby Queen Elizabeth Country Park or Butser Hill Nature Reserve, as well as local towns and villages.
44. SQ6 refers to well-conserved historical features and rich cultural heritage. The site does not currently contribute to this special quality in any meaningful way and the development would not detract from this aspect of the NP in areas where this special quality is apparent.
45. I find that all the special qualities of the NP would be, at the very least, conserved and in some cases enhanced. This is significant in that these are the reasons for the NP designation and highlight what is special about the area. In light of this, it is clear that the development would accord with the first purpose of the NP.
46. Furthermore, the scheme is supportive of purpose 2 and the objective to further economic and social well-being of local communities. This would occur through the opportunities that would be created for an increased number of people to enjoy and understand the special qualities of the NP by visiting the site, with obvious benefits to the local economy.

Landscape and scenic beauty conclusion

47. The landscape and visual impacts of the scheme would be minor and localised. Indeed, they are site-specific impacts that might be expected from any development on greenfield land. The development would not detract from the special qualities of the NP, or its overall landscape and scenic beauty.
48. To the extent that there would be minor landscape and visual impacts, they weigh against the development and attract great weight in the planning balance.
49. However, I find no conflict with policies SD1, SD2, SD4, SD5, SD6, SD7, SD8, SD9, SD42 or SD45 of the LP, or paragraph 176 of the Framework.

Whether major development

50. For the purposes of the Framework, whether a scheme constitutes 'major development' in the NP is a matter for the decision maker, taking into account its nature, scale and setting, and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated.
51. Both parties presented examples of other schemes that had been found by the decision maker to be major or had not. I have had regard to these examples but none of them were comparable in terms of the specific circumstances

before me in this case. The question cannot be answered simply by comparing the size of various sites or the amount of development proposed. This is only a small element of the factors to be considered.

52. This appeal site is very unusual in that it is surrounded by major highways and very well screened by established boundary planting. The appeal proposal is also very unusual, in that it proposes a novel facility comprising a mix of uses contained within buildings of various typologies, including a large earth covered building that would be landscaped. These factors are all part of the nature, scale and setting of the scheme which distinguish it from the examples provided. Importantly, in this case, I have concluded that the development would not have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated. As such, the appeal proposal does not, in my view, constitute major development in the terms of paragraph 177 of the Framework. It is not, therefore, necessary for exceptional circumstances to be demonstrated for the purposes of the Framework.
53. As such, I find no conflict with policy SD3 of the LP, or paragraph 177 of the Framework.

Other Matters

Sustainable tourism and development strategy

54. Policy SD23 of the LP seeks to deliver sustainable tourism and it is accepted by the Authority that there is a need for additional tourist accommodation. The proposed development would help to meet this need and would positively fulfil several policy criteria in that it would provide opportunities for visitors to increase their awareness, understanding and enjoyment of the NP's special qualities; it would encourage arrival and subsequent travel by sustainable means, namely electric vehicles, and would also be served by public transport and within easy reach of recreational walking or cycling routes; and it would be closely associated with other attractions, such as the Queen Elizabeth Country Park and Butser Hill Nature Reserve.
55. Whilst the appeal site is located outside of settlement policy boundaries and would not positively contribute to natural beauty or cultural heritage, it would not be harmful. A biodiversity net gain would result and so there would be an overall net benefit from the scheme, in accordance with Policy SD23.
56. Policy SD25 of the LP seeks to restrict development outside of settlement boundaries to exceptional circumstances, including that with a need for an essential countryside location.
57. Individually, it could be argued that the different components of the appeal scheme do not require a countryside location, but they are not being proposed individually in this case. The two main components of the development would be tourist accommodation and electric vehicle charging facilities. The Authority accepts that there is a need for rapid electric vehicle charging points somewhere on the A3 and that there is a need for tourist accommodation in the NP.
58. Both could, in theory, be provided in or close to existing settlements, but the electric vehicle charging facilities seek, partly at least, to provide a convenient location for charging on the strategic road network. Necessarily, this needs to be conveniently located alongside the A3. The need for tourist accommodation

in the area might not in itself, justify a countryside location but would nevertheless be a beneficial element of the scheme when considering the development comprehensively.

59. I consider there to be merit in the appellant's argument that the mix and range of uses have a symbiotic relationship in this case. The uses are all interconnected in that the technology required to power electric vehicle charging facilities without reliance on the national grid can be deployed at scale, powering both the electric vehicle chargers, tourist accommodation and ancillary buildings. The development would be entirely off-grid.
60. The commercial building would provide a café and farm shop that would serve both road users and tourists staying on the site, stocked with produce sourced within the NP and so allowing local goods to be promoted and providing a clear local economic benefit. It would also accommodate complimentary uses such as electric bicycle hire and a NP information centre, allowing visitors to learn about the area and experience the nearby recreational activities. This could be enjoyed whilst an electric vehicle is charging or by business or tourism guests staying on site.
61. The Authority accepts that there is a general need for additional rapid electric vehicle charging facilities in the area and that there is a national, regional and local need for a huge roll out of Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCPs) in appropriate locations as EV take up increases. The Government has legislated to prevent the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles from 2030 and is actively encouraging the uptake of electric vehicles, whilst noting that the infrastructure necessary to support them is not currently in place. This infrastructure must be facilitated and will be required on a significant scale if a cultural shift is to be achieved.
62. The NP is not exempt from this need and the delivery of a significant number of EVCPs alongside the very busy A3 trunk road is very beneficial, even bearing in mind the potential for charging in other locations such as at home or workplace. It is not realistic to expect that existing fuel forecourts or service stations will convert from petrol and diesel at any scale whilst combustion engines remain predominant and so delivery of bespoke provision is likely to be part of the solution. In short, the country, and the NP in particular, is nowhere near the threshold of EVCP provision where it can be argued that there is no demonstrable need for more.
63. Similarly, there is likely to be a market for charging at different speeds, depending on the purpose of ones visit and bearing in mind the relative costs. As such, the provision of a mix of EVCP speeds is understandable and does not warrant criticism. Nor is the fact that the development would offer drivers something to do whilst waiting, allowing for a break in a pleasant environment, refreshment, browsing local produce or taking a walk or cycle in the surrounding landscape.
64. There are clear and obvious advantages arising from the scheme in combating climate change, an objective of both national and local policy. This supports the Government's target of achieving net zero by 2050. The development would be wholly off-grid, utilising biogas and solar panels to power the entire development using renewable sources. This is not only a benefit in that it avoids the need for power from more polluting sources of energy, but it would utilise waste methane from local farms, making positive use of this damaging

greenhouse gas and removing it from the atmosphere. Heat, a by-product of this process would be used to heat the tourist accommodation and other buildings on site.

65. Consequently, I do not consider it appropriate to seek a disaggregation of the proposed uses in this case so that they might be provided individually elsewhere. The various uses proposed are interconnected and demonstrably support one another, maximising the benefits that are achieved on the site and meeting a variety of established needs. With this in mind, and with particular regard to the need for convenient A3 access, the need to deliver tourist accommodation in the NP and the need for proximity to established tourism uses, I consider that this specific proposed development does require a countryside location. As such, I find no conflict with Policy SD25.

Habitat Regulations Assessment

66. Butser Hill Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is located less than 1km from the site. It is designated for its semi-natural dry grassland and scrub on chalk substrate, as an important orchid site, the richest diversity of lichen flora of any chalk grassland in England, distinctive *Scapanietum aspera* or southern hepatic mat association of leafy liverworts and mosses on north-facing chalk slopes, and yew dominated woodland.
67. The key environmental vulnerabilities are identified as: (1) air pollution, being near to the A3 (nitrogen deposition may cause reduction in diversity and sulphur deposition can cause acidification); (2) direct fertilisation; and (3) spray drift (i.e. eutrophication) from surrounding intensive arable land.
68. The development would result in a notable increase in vehicle movements compared with the existing grazing use. Consequently, there is potential for increased air pollution, particularly from combustion engines. However, the appeal proposal is specifically targeted towards electric vehicle (EV) users (though combustion engines would not be entirely precluded). In this regard, the impact from increased vehicle movements, for the purposes of this assessment, is unlikely to cause significant air pollution.
69. The other vulnerability relates to grazing and other agricultural activities, as highlighted above. The proposals would not have any significant likely effect upon the SAC given the unrelated nature of the proposed uses.
70. Pressure from recreational activities is not identified as a vulnerability for the site. Given the vast number of well-managed recreational opportunities in the area, including defined routes for walking and cycling, it is not expected that habitat would be at risk from recreation pressures.
71. There are no allocations for development within the Local Plan in the close vicinity of the site. All allocations are some distance away, generally close to settlements, and their effects have been considered through the plan making process. As such, no significant in-combination effects are anticipated.
72. It is not considered that the proposals would have any likely significant effect upon the SAC, either alone or in combination with other development, having regard to the SAC's reasons for designation and the vulnerabilities highlighted. An Appropriate Assessment is not, therefore, required. Natural England were consulted and raised no objection.

Heritage

73. The site is approximately 1km from an area of Butser Hill designated as a Scheduled Monument. It is designated due to records of its hilltop being enclosed by Iron Age cross dykes and an associated pattern of field systems, as well as Bronze Age barrows or burial mounds. These features would not be impacted by the appeal proposal, which is some distance away. Although the appeal site might be considered to fall within the setting of the Scheduled Monument, it would be seen only in long distance views and within the context of other modern development, such that it would not harm the significance of the heritage asset.

Highways

74. The application is accompanied by a comprehensive Transport Assessment and further information was submitted during the appeal to address matters raised by the Local Highway Authority, which is now satisfied that the development can be accommodated in transport terms. Whilst the development would draw traffic into the site, this would make use of the existing trunk road infrastructure. I have had regard to concerns raised by local people about previous accidents in the vicinity of the site. However, no detail has been provided and there is no evidence before me to suggest any pattern or frequency of incidents that might be worsened by the development. Subject to appropriate conditions and obligations, the development would not result in unacceptable highway safety impacts or result in a severe residual cumulative impact on the road network.

75. The development would likely be accessed predominantly by car but with a clear focus on electric vehicles, which will likely become more common as charging infrastructure is provided and combustion engines are phased out. The charging facilities provided would encourage sustainable means of travel and there would be opportunities for accessing local tourism facilities by attractive walking and cycling routes, as well as public transport connections to local towns.

Vitality and viability

76. The Authority accepts that the scale of the proposed uses is such that they would not jeopardise the vitality and viability of local town centres.

77. There is an identified need for additional tourist accommodation in the area and the development would help to meet this need, adding to the variety of accommodation currently available. It would not necessarily compete with other local businesses such as the public houses and bed and breakfast facilities in the area as the accommodation offer would be very different and seeks to target those with electric vehicles. Far from drawing perspective customers away from existing facilities, it seems to me that the development would encourage people to visit the area who might frequent local businesses or enjoy a meal at the local pub. I certainly do not consider that the proposal would be harmful to local businesses or the local economy.

Living conditions

78. The appeal site is separated from residential properties and would be accessed predominantly from the A3. Properties on Greenway Lane are the closest and residents are likely to notice an increase in the amount of traffic accessing the

site, but vehicles would not generally need to pass these residential properties directly. The additional traffic movements would be experienced in the vicinity of the A3, an already very busy transport corridor. Given the separation between the site and Greenway Lane, the development would not materially harm residential living conditions.

Planning Obligations

79. The submitted legal agreement would secure planning obligations pursuant to S106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. These include the provision of a Travel Plan to support sustainable modes of transport; highway improvements to facilitate safe access to the site, including a new footway, traffic islands and right turn lane; the translocation of reptiles to a suitable habitat; and means to secure an off-site biodiversity net gain within the NP.
80. The parties agree that these obligations are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms and otherwise accord with the requirements of Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010. I agree that this is the case and have had regard to the obligations in reaching my decision.

Planning Balance

81. The development would result in minor localised landscape and visual impacts, including from the introduction of lighting within the IDSR. I attach this harm great weight, given the location of the site within the NP.
82. Conversely, the proposal would deliver numerous benefits, notably much needed electric vehicle charging facilities of various types and tourist accommodation, which is again needed within the NP. These uses would be delivered in a contemporary and energy efficient way, powered by novel biogas technology that would make use of waste methane from local farms to provide all the energy requirements of the development. The farm shop would make use of products sourced from within the NP, promoting them to visitors and providing a local economic benefit. A 15% biodiversity net gain would also be delivered within the NP. Taken together, I attach these benefits substantial weight.
83. All of this would be delivered on a site that currently makes little contribution to the special qualities of the NP or its reasons for being designated as such. The NP is not excluded from the effects of climate change, the need to adapt to it or to find means of combatting it. Indeed, the Authority has specifically set out to do so, the LP stating that national parks should lead the way in adapting to and mitigating climate change. Furthermore, a priority for the Authority, contained in the NP Management Plan, is to establish the South Downs as an exemplar in sustainable tourism. Far from the Authority's stance that this development is simply wrong in principle within the NP, it seems to me that this is exactly the type of development that would assist in meeting these objectives.
84. Overall, I conclude that the development would be in accordance with the development plan taken as a whole. There are no material considerations that indicate a decision other than in accordance with the development plan. Whilst there would be some harm as a result of the development, to which I have

attached great weight, the substantial benefits would far outweigh this harm. As such, planning permission should be granted.

Conditions

85. The parties have agreed a range of conditions that are considered necessary if planning permission is granted. These were discussed during the inquiry and amended to reflect those discussions. The appellant also provided written agreement to the wording and reasons for the proposed pre-commencement conditions.
86. I have attached the suggested conditions, as set out in the attached Schedule, which also includes the reason for each one. I have altered the wording as necessary to improve their precision and otherwise ensure compliance with the relevant tests for conditions contained within the Framework.
87. Condition 6 was not agreed between the parties and so alternative wording was provided by the Authority and the appellant. Having regard to the tests for conditions, I do not consider that the Authority's more restrictive approach, requiring the farm shop to be stocked with at least 40% local produce and 40% regional produce to be justified or necessary to make the development acceptable. The proposed shop would not be a rural farm shop of the type contemplated by Policy SD38 and would need to serve the other uses on site. Whilst it is important to secure the promotion of local produce and the local economic benefits anticipated by the appellant, a condition requiring that the majority of goods are produced within the NP would be sufficient and would more appropriately focus these benefits on the NP. The source of stock could readily be compiled and audited so as to allow enforcement by the Authority. It would also allow for a proportion of stock sourced, as opposed to produced, from within the NP and from the surrounding area.

Conclusion

88. In light of the above, the appeal is allowed.

Michael Boniface

INSPECTOR

APPEARANCES

FOR THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:

David Forsdick KC

He called:

Ruth Childs BSc (Hons) MSc CMLI	Landscape Specialist
Mark Waller-Gutierrez BSc MA MSc CMLI	Design Officer
Dan Oakley BSc (Hons) MA Fd.Sc FRAS	Dark Sky Specialist
Richard Ferguson BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI	Development Management Lead

FOR THE APPELLANT:

Charles Banner KC
Robert Williams

They called:

Bill Dunster MA (Hons) Edin RIBA OBE	Founder and Principal, Zedpower
Amit Roy PhD MBA	Founder and CEO, Engas UK Ltd
Lionel Fanshawe BA Dip LA FLI	Managing Director, terra firma
Daniel Spreadborough MSc	Senior Lighting Designer, DFL
Roisin Naughton BSc PGCert MSc	Principal Consultant, Arcadis Consulting Ltd
Neil Marshall CMILT MIHT	Partner, i-Transport LLP
Simon Lester	Chairman and CEO, Lester Hotels
Roger Hepher BA (Hons) MTP FRICS MRTPI FRSA AAoU	Chairman, hgh Consulting

INTERESTED PERSONS:

Christopher Napier	CPRE
Tim Allen	Local resident
Shane Bird	Local resident and business owner

DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED DURING THE INQUIRY

ID1a Appellant's Opening Submission
ID1b SDNPA Opening Submission
ID2 SDNPA Design and dark night skies consultee responses
ID3 CPRE's speaking notes
ID4 Mr Fanshawe comments – boundary trees
ID5 SDNPA comments on Habitat Regulations Screening
ID6 Initial draft conditions with Appellant's comments
ID7 ILP Professional Lighting Guide 04
ID8 Kingsmead Site Details (Mr Ferguson Proof, Appendix 4)
ID9 Trimmingham Site Details (Mr Ferguson Proof, Appendix 4)
ID10 Photomontage comments from Appellant
ID11 SDNPA Statement – Scheduled Monument
ID11a Mr Bird's speaking notes (The Nest Hotel)
ID12 SDNPA Habitat Regulations Screening Opinion
ID13 CitiCharge Letter – Recharge One
ID14 SDNPA Landscape Character Assessment Extract
ID15 SDNPA Arboricultural Advice
ID16 Website extract – National Highways and Ash Die Back
ID17 Plans and images from Appellant – Mr Fanshawe evidence
ID18 Executive Summary – Beyond Energy - Monetising Biomethane's Whole System Benefits (February 2023)
ID19 The Ecology Group note 21.02.23
ID20 SDNPA pre-application advice – Coldwaltham
ID21 Area schedule – Appellant's response
ID22 Welcome Break sketches (a 2019 pre-application design iteration)
ID23 S106 Addendum
ID24 Petersfield Society comments
ID25 Updated landscape drawing – Mr Fanshawe evidence
ID26 Mr B Haverson Proof – 20.02.23
ID27 SDNPA Closing Statement
ID28 Appellant Closing Statement

DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED AFTER THE INQUIRY

ID29 Executed S106 agreement

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.

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

- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the plans listed below:

369/P/00 Rev D – Site Location Plan (A3)
369/P/300 Rev D – Existing Site Block Plan (A1)
369/P/301 Rev H – Masterplan (A3)
369/P/302 Rev H – Site Layout (A3)
369/P/303 Rev B – Site proposed levels (A3)
369/P/306 Rev B – Site Sections (A1)
369/P/307 Site Elevations (A1)
369/P/411 Rev A – Eco-lodge Floor Plan (A3)
369/P/414 Rev A – Eco-lodge Elevations (A3)
369/P/415 Rev B – Eco-lodge Type A Plans (A3)
369/P/416 – Eco-lodge Type B Plans (A3)
369/B/417 – Rev B – Eco-lodge Type A Elevations(A3)
369/B/418 – Eco-lodge Type B Elevations (A3)
369/P/421 Rev E – Earth Sheltered Building – Plan and section (A3)
369/P/606 – Earth Sheltered Building 1 – (A3)
369/P/607 Rev B – Earth Sheltered Building 2 (A3)
369/P/608 Rev B – Earth Sheltered Building 3 (A3)
369/P/609 – Earth Sheltered Building 4 – (A3)
369/P/610 – Earth Sheltered Building 5 – (A3)
369/P/611 Rev A – Cafe (A3)
369/P/612 Rev A – E-car shop (A3)
369/P/613 Rev A – Farm shop (A3)

REASON: To clarify the terms of the permission.

- 3) The floorspace of the farm shop, café and cycle shop hereby approved shall only be used for purposes within Use Class E(a) or E(b) (Commercial, business and service use) of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) and for no other purposes within Class E, or any provision equivalent to that class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that order with or without modification; The areas associated with these uses shall accord in full with Plan 369_P_421 E.

REASON: To clarify the terms of the permission.

- 4) The electric vehicles sales area hereby approved shall only operate within the area identified on Site Plan 369_P_421_E.

REASON: To clarify the terms of the permission.

- 5) The uses pursuant to conditions 3 and 4 shall only be open for trading between 06:00-22:00 on any given day.

REASON: To clarify the terms of the permission.

- 6) The farm shop (area marked '10' on approved Site Plan 369_P_421_E) shall only be stocked with a majority of goods produced within the National Park. For the avoidance of doubt, the farm shop is not an un-restricted E(a) or E(b) Use Class in the Use Classes Order 1987 (as amended).

REASON: To ensure the farm shop does not result in an un-restricted retail use which is not related to the local economy.

- 7) The lodges/pods hereby approved shall not be used at any time for any purpose other than as holiday and/or short stay accommodation. The lodges shall not be used as permanent residential accommodation or for any other purpose in Use Class C3 (dwelling houses) of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended), or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification.

REASON: This development in the countryside, outside of any identified settlement, is only acceptable as holiday/short stay accommodation for reasons of sustainable travel.

- 8) The accommodation hereby approved shall not be occupied by person(s), their dependants, or group for a period of more than 28 consecutive days. A register of the occupancy of the accommodation shall be maintained and kept up-to-date by the operator of the units, and shall be made available to the Local Planning Authority upon request (within 14 days of a written request being made). It shall record the names and addresses of all visitors and their arrival and departures dates.

REASON: This development is only acceptable as holiday accommodation and for use by short term visitors to the area.

- 9) No development shall commence until a schedule of materials and finishes and, where so required by the Local Planning Authority, samples of such materials and finishes to be used on the building hereby approved has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include, but not be limited to, the materials for walls (including locally sourced timber), roofs, windows (including glazing, head, cill and window reveal details), doors, eaves, porches, and rainwater goods. Thereafter the development shall be carried out in full accordance with the approved schedule and samples.

REASON: To ensure a suitable appearance and to protect the character and appearance of the area.

- 10) No development shall commence until detailed information in a Design Stage Sustainable Construction Report for the commercial building as a whole is submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The report shall include:

- i) Interim-stage BREEAM NC certification and associated assessment report;
- ii) SBEM calculations;
- iii) Product specifications;
- iv) Grown in Britain or FSC certificates;
- v) Sustainable Materials Report; and
- vi) Building design details.

The report shall demonstrate that the development will achieve BREEAM NC "Excellent" standard and, as part of the above, achieve the following specific BREEAM NC credits:

- For net zero carbon operational energy, all 9 ENE01 performance credits and at least 2 Ene01 exemplary performance credits
- At least half the Material credits.
- All 5credits in Wat01.
- At least half of the remaining Water credits
- At least three of the credits in Wst01.
- The Wst02 credit
- The Wst03 credit
- The Tra01 credit
- At least one of the two available flood resilience credits in Pol03.
- Two SuDS credits in Pol03.
- Four out of nine of the mandatory credits in Ene01.
- The Ene04 credit.
- The Wst03 and Wst05 credits.
- All the LE02, LE03, LE04, LE05 credits
- At least half of the Health and Wellbeing credits and
- Minimum 95% of site waste diverted from landfill
- Implementation of green roof on commercial building
- For all timber products, the use of certified "Grown in Britain" timber where possible, and where not possible, FSC or PEFC certified.

REASON: To ensure the development demonstrates a high level of sustainable performance to address the mitigation of, and adaptation to, predicted climate change, in accordance with policy SD48.

- 11) Within 3 months of the occupation of the development, detailed information in a Post Construction Stage Sustainable Construction Report demonstrating how the development has been carried out in full accordance with all the requirements of the details pursuant to condition 10 shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. This documentary evidence shall include, but not be limited to, BREEAM NC certification and associated assessment report with post construction SBEM calculations.

REASON: To ensure the development demonstrates a high level of sustainable performance to address the mitigation of, and adaptation to, predicted climate change.

- 12) The detached lodges hereby approved shall be carbon neutral in energy performance (for regulated and unregulated energy) through their construction, which shall be demonstrated through a method statement to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Statement shall detail the means of construction, energy and water efficiency, use of materials (including locally sourced timber), construction and operational waste, details of the Solar PV panels and glazing specifications. The lodges shall thereafter be constructed in full accordance with the agreed details.

REASON: To ensure a highly sustainable form of development in accordance with Policies SD3 and SD48.

- 13) The development hereby approved shall incorporate and utilise a fully installed off-grid Combined Heat and Power system, in accordance with the approved plans, to be fuelled by biogas sourced from within the National Park and battery and solar PV attached to the 44 detached lodges. Once installed, the approved power generation shall be operated and maintained in perpetuity. Only in exceptional circumstances shall the development rely on power from the National Grid.

REASON: To achieve a highly sustainable development, in accordance with the terms of the application proposals.

- 14) The electric vehicle charging spaces shall be provided in full accordance with approved plan 369_P_302 H and shall comprise the following charging capacity:

- 91 chargers of up to 7KWh (including the chargers for the lodges)
- 24 chargers of 11-22KWh; and
- 12 chargers of 50-150KWh

The electric vehicle charging points shall, thereafter, be maintained and retained unless otherwise agreed by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To accord with the terms of the application and provide a range of charging options commensurate with the proposals.

- 15) No development shall commence until details of site levels and longitudinal and latitudinal sections through the site have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These shall show how the buildings and public realm are proposed to be set into the topography of the site, in comparison to existing levels. These details shall also show how spoil from excavations is intended to be used on site, including in the creation of the public open space. The development shall, thereafter, be carried out in full accordance with the approved details.

REASON: To ensure a satisfactory development which responds to the characteristics of the site.

- 16) No development shall commence until a Soil Resource Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Plan shall include the following details, in accordance with

the DEFRA Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites:

- Existing soil survey;
- Method of stripping existing soils on site and the method of exporting soils;
- Sustainable sourcing of soils to be imported onto the site for the construction of the development.

REASON: To conserve and enhance soils and ensure the appropriate use of soils to ensure the successful creation of chalk grassland within the open space and on the commercial building for the long term, in accordance with policies SD2 and SD9.

- 17) No development shall be commenced until a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the approved CEMP shall be fully implemented and adhered to throughout the entire construction period. The CEMP shall provide details as appropriate but not be restricted to the following matters:
- a. The anticipated number, frequency and types of vehicles used during construction and routing of vehicles;
 - b. How deliveries would be managed in terms of vehicles entering and leaving the site and timings;
 - c. The method of access and routing of vehicles during construction;
 - d. The parking of vehicles by site operatives and visitors;
 - e. The loading and unloading areas of plant, materials and waste;
 - f. Measures to control surface water run off;
 - g. Construction timings to avoid disturbance of protected species;
 - h. Dust suppression, mitigation and avoidance measures;
 - i. Noise reduction measures;
 - j. Details of site monitoring and logging of results;
 - k. Hours of operation during construction;
 - l. The storage of plant and materials used in the construction of the development;
 - m. The erection and maintenance of security hoarding;
 - n. The provision of wheel washing facilities; and
 - o. A scheme for recycling/disposing of waste resulting from construction works.
 - p. Construction lighting and its operation.
 - q. A programme of and phasing of demolition (if any) and construction work;
 - r. The arrangements for deliveries associated with all construction works;
 - s. Methods and phasing of construction works;

- t. Access and egress for plant and machinery;
- u. Location of temporary site buildings, compounds, construction material, and plant storage areas.

Demolition and construction work shall only take place in accordance with the approved method statement.

REASON: In the interests of highway safety, the amenities of the area and managing the environmental considerations during the construction phase.

- 18) Prior to the commencement of development, a detailed phasing plan for the completion of the development, including timescales, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall, thereafter, be implemented in accordance with the agreed details.

REASON: To ensure timely delivery of all parts of the development, including aspects of mitigation and enhancements.

- 19) Prior to the commencement of the development, geotechnical submissions relevant to the construction of the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall, thereafter, be implemented in full accordance with the agreed details.

REASON: To ensure that the A3 continues to be an effective part of the national system of routes for through traffic and in the interests of road safety.

- 20) Piling or other deep foundation works using penetrative methods shall not be carried out other than with the written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: Piling or deep foundation, has the potential to mobilise contamination (if present) from the shallow soils into the chalk/upper greensand bedrock, and increase the potential of mobilisation/migration to the underlying chalk aquifer.

- 21) No development shall be commenced until full details of the proposed connection to the sewerage mains system and its maintenance and management arrangements have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the development shall be undertaken in full accordance with the approved details and no occupation of any of the development shall take place until the approved works have been completed in full. The foul drainage connection and system shall be maintained as approved thereafter.

REASON: To ensure a satisfactory drainage scheme for the development.

- 22) No development shall commence until a detailed surface water drainage scheme for the site, based on the principles within the Flood Risk Assessment ref: 19832-HYD-XX-XX-RP-FR-0001, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The design shall include a detailed drainage layout plan, full construction details, run-off calculations for the peak event and:

- a. Infiltration testing in accordance with the BRE365 (2016 methodology), and a groundwater assessment.

- b. Infiltration testing should be carried out at a depth and location commensurate with the proposed infiltration features. The groundwater assessment should demonstrate that there will be at least 1m unsaturated zone between the base of any proposed infiltration feature and the highest groundwater level recorded, including seasonal variations. If infiltration is not viable, a drainage strategy based on discharge to the watercourse in accordance with option 2 of the FRA will be acceptable.
- c. Detailed drainage layout drawings at an identified scale indicating catchment areas, referenced drainage features, manhole cover and invert levels and pipe diameters, lengths and gradients.
- d. Detailed hydraulic calculations for all rainfall events, including the listed below. The hydraulic calculations should take into account the connectivity of the entire drainage features including the discharge location. The results should include design and simulation criteria, network design and result tables, manholes schedule tables and summary of critical result by maximum level during the 1 in 1, 1 in 30 and 1 in 100 (plus an allowance for climate change) rainfall events. The drainage features should have the same reference that the submitted drainage layout.

The condition of the existing watercourse, proposed to take surface water from the development site, shall be investigated before any connection is made. If necessary, improvement to its condition as reparation, remediation, restitution and replacement should be undertaken. Evidence of this, including photographs shall be submitted.

Details for the long-term maintenance arrangements for the surface water drainage system shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the development being brought into use. These details shall include maintenance schedules for each drainage feature type and ownership; and details of protection measures.

The design should follow the hierarchy of preference for different types of surface water drainage disposal systems, as set out in Approved Document H of the Building Regulations and the SuDS Manual produced by CIRIA.

The development shall, thereafter, be undertaken in full accordance with the agreed details.

REASON: To ensure an appropriate surface water strategy is achieved.

- 23) Prior to the first occupation of the development, the external lighting scheme shall be implemented in full accordance with the approved Lighting Strategy (prepared by DFL ref: RMA-C2285, dated December 2021) and 'Horizontal Illuminance (LUX) Plan 1954.S3.P01 (1 of 1 and 2 of 2). The lighting shall thereafter be retained, maintained, and operated in full accordance with the approved details, and no additional external lighting on site is to be installed.

REASON: To minimise impacts upon dark night skies and ecology, plus accord with the BREEAM 'Excellent' rating requirements.

- 24) Prior to the first occupation of the development, details for the management and implementation of curfew times for dimming and

switching off of external lighting and within the commercial building shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The lighting shall thereafter be operated in full accordance with the approved details.

REASON: To minimise impacts of light pollution upon dark night skies and wildlife.

- 25) No development above slab level shall take place until a detailed Scheme of Soft and Hard Landscape works has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include:
- a. Written specifications (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment);
 - b. Planting methods, tree pits & guying methods;
 - c. Schedules of plants, noting species, planting sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate;
 - d. Retained areas of trees and hedgerows;
 - e. Details of all hard-surfaces, including paths, kerb edges, access ways, boundary treatments, bin and cycle stores and parking spaces, including their appearance, dimensions and siting.
 - f. Details of the siting, specifications and management of the Sustainable Drainage systems.
 - g. A landscape schedule and management plan designed to deliver the management of all new and retained landscape elements to benefit people and wildlife for a minimum period of 5 years including details of the arrangements for its implementation;
 - h. A timetable for implementation of the soft and hard landscaping works.

The scheme of Soft and Hard Landscaping works shall be implemented in full accordance with the approved details and timetable. Any plant which dies, becomes diseased or is removed within the first five years of planting, shall be replaced with another of similar type and size, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To achieve an appropriate landscaping scheme to integrate the development into the landscape and provide a setting for the new development.

- 26) Before any part of the scheme is brought into use, details of the design and materials of the acoustic barrier shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and the barrier shall be constructed in full accordance with the approved details.

REASON: To ensure an appropriate form of development consistent with the context of the proposals and character and appearance of the area.

- 27) Notwithstanding the details provided, a full tree survey report and Arboricultural Method Statement shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall ensure the retention of trees proposed to be retained along the site boundaries. The development shall, thereafter, be undertaken in full accordance with the agreed details.

REASON: To safeguard existing trees to be retained.

- 28) Prior to the occupation of any building, a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) which covers the whole application site shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The LEMP shall follow the principles and objectives of the approved landscape scheme and biodiversity enhancements, and include long term objectives for the site and management responsibilities. Once approved, the LEMP shall be fully implemented and used for the management of the development. The content of the LEMP shall include the following:
- a) description and evaluation of features to be managed;
 - b) ecological trends and constraints on site that might influence management;
 - c) aims and objectives of management;
 - d) appropriate management options for achieving aims and objectives;
 - e) prescriptions for management actions, together with a plan of management compartments;
 - f) preparation of a work schedule (including an annual work plan capable of being rolled forward over a five-year period);
 - g) details of the body or organisation responsible for implementation of the plan;
 - h) implementing the mitigation and enhancement measures of the Environmental Statement, Ecosystems Services Statement and ecology reports;
 - i) ongoing monitoring and remedial measures.

REASON: To ensure a high-quality landscape scheme is maintained which will contribute to the setting of the development and the surrounding character and appearance of the area, biodiversity and the amenity of future occupants.

- 29) No development shall commence until the access, including the footway and/or verge crossing shall be constructed and lines of sight of 4.5m by 114m and 4.5m by 62.5m provided in accordance with the approved plans. The lines of sight shown on the approved Site Plan shall be kept free of any obstruction exceeding 0.6m high above the adjacent carrieway and shall be subsequently maintained thereafter.

REASON: To provide satisfactory access and in the interests of highways safety.

- 30) No development shall commence until details including alignments, levels and materials of the internal roads, and the footway/cycleway connection to the B2070, as shown on drawing ITL15608-GA-001 REV G, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall, thereafter, be implemented in full accordance with the agreed details.

REASON: To ensure safe and suitable provision of sustainable transport connections within the site and to the B2070.

- 31) Prior to the development being brought into use, a Delivery Management Plan (DMP) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local

Planning Authority. The DMP shall include delivery times, frequency and routing of delivery vehicles, measures to minimise disturbance from activities associated with deliveries and/or waste collections to surrounding amenities during delivery times. Once approved, the DMP shall be implemented in full.

REASON: In the interests of the amenities of nearby residential properties.

- 32) Prior to the development being brought into use, a Car Park Management Plan (CPMP) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The CPMP shall, thereafter, be implemented in full accordance with the approved details.

REASON: To manage the car parking areas and avoid highway safety issues.

- 33) The parking and access arrangements on site shall be completed in full accordance with the approved Site Plan 369_P_302H prior to the development being occupied and thereafter be used for such purposes at all times.

REASON: In the interests of highway safety and amenities of the area.

- 34) No development shall commence until details of a Written Scheme of Investigation and its implementation for an archaeological evaluation of the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To assess the extent, nature and date of any archaeological deposits that might be present and the impact of the development upon these heritage assets.

- 35) No development shall commence until details and a programme of implementation and timetable for archaeological mitigation, pursuant to condition 34, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To mitigate the effect of the works associated with the development upon any heritage assets and to ensure that information regarding these heritage assets is preserved by record for future generations.

- 36) Within 3 months following completion of archaeological fieldwork, a written report shall be produced in accordance with the findings pursuant to conditions 34 and 35, and submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval. It shall set out and secure appropriate post-excavation assessment, specialist analysis and reports, publication and public engagement.

REASON: To ensure that opportunities are taken to capture evidence from the historic environment and to make this publicly available.

- 37) No development approved by this planning permission shall commence until a remediation strategy to deal with the risks associated with contamination of the site in respect of the development hereby permitted, has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. This strategy shall include the following components:

A) A preliminary risk assessment which has identified:

- (i) all previous uses;
- (ii) potential contaminants associated with those uses;
- (iii) a conceptual model of the site indicating sources, pathways and receptors; and
- (iv) potentially unacceptable risks arising from contamination at the site.

B) A site investigation scheme, based on (A) to provide information for a detailed assessment of the risk to all receptors that may be affected, including those off-site.

C) The results of the site investigation and the detailed risk assessment referred to in (B) 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.

D). 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 (C) are complete and identifying any requirements for longer-term monitoring of pollutant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action.

No changes to these components will take place without the written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

The development shall, thereafter, be implemented in full accordance with the agreed details.

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.

- 38) Prior to the development being brought into use, a verification report demonstrating the completion of works set out in the approved remediation strategy and the effectiveness of the remediation shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The report shall include results of sampling and monitoring carried out in accordance with the approved verification plan to demonstrate that the site remediation criteria have been met.

REASON: To ensure that the site does not pose any further risk to human health or the water environment by demonstrating that the requirements of the approved verification plan have been met and that remediation of the site is complete.

- 39) If, during development, contamination not previously identified is found to be present at the site then no further development (unless otherwise agreed in writing by 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: The above condition ensures 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.