

SITE PLAN ATTACHED

**LAND TO THE REAR OF THE NAGS HEAD, BROOK STREET, BRENTWOOD,
ESSEX**

OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION (ALL MATTERS RESERVED OTHER THAN ACCESS) FOR MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT COMPRISING UP TO 12,000SQM GIA CAR SHOWROOM USE WITH ANCILLARY OFFICE USE (SUI GENERIS), 20,250SQM GIA FLEXIBLE EMPLOYMENT/STORAGE AND DISTRIBUTION USES WITH ANCILLARY OFFICE USE (B2/B8) AND 50 RESIDENTIAL DWELLINGS (C3) WITH ASSOCIATED ACCESS, PARKING AND LANDSCAPING WORKS (APPEARANCE, LANDSCAPING, LAYOUT AND SCALE RESERVED MATTERS).

APPLICATION NO: 22/00044/OUT

WARD	South Weald	8/13 WEEK DATE	Extension of time agreed.
-------------	-------------	---------------------------	------------------------------

CASE OFFICER Mr Justin Booij

Drawing no(s) relevant to this decision:

- Planning Application Form
- Site Location Plan (3496-BTW-SRA-XX-00-M2-A-PL-001 Rev P02)
- Architectural Plans:
 - Existing Site Plan (3496-BTW-SRA-XX-00-M2-A-PL-002 Rev P05)
 - Existing Site Sections A-A, B-B, C-C and D-D (3496-BTW-SRA-XX-00-M2-A-PL-005 Rev P03)
 - Existing Site Sections E-E, F-F, G-G and H-H (3496-BTW-SRA-XX-00-M2-A-PL-006 Rev P03)
 - Illustrative Masterplan (3496-BTW-SRA-XX-00-M2-A-PL-010 Rev P11)
 - Proposed Site Sections A-A, B-B, C-C and D-D (3496-BTW-SRA-XX-00-M2-A-PL-015 Rev P04)
 - Proposed Site Sections E-E, F-F, G-G and H-H (3496-BTW-SRA-XX-00-M2-A-PL-016 Rev P05)
 - Parameters Plan 3496-BTW-SRA-XX-00-M2-A-PL-011 Rev P09
- Access Drawings:
 - Brook Street drawing ref 3260-1100-T-007 Rev L
 - Nags Head Lane Access drawing ref. 3260-1100-T-008 Rev L
- Planning Statement
- Design & Access Statement (DAS) and Statement of Design Intent

- Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA)
- LVA Supporting Information:
- Location and Designations
- Landscape Character
- Existing Visibility
- Site Analysis
- Soft Landscape Strategy
- Photographs
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA)
- Reptile Survey and Mitigation Strategy
- Nocturnal Bat Surveys
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA)
- Flood Risk Assessment (FRA)
- Proposed Drainage Strategy
- Phase 1 and Phase 2 Geotechnical and Geo-environmental Site Investigation Report
- Noise Assessment
- Air Quality Assessment
- Energy and Sustainability Statement
- Environmental & Sustainability Opportunities
- Heritage Assessment
- Archaeological Desk Based Assessment
- Transport Assessment and Transport Assessment Addendum
- Commercial Market Demand Report
- Economic Case
- Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)
- Health Impact Assessment (HIA)
- Section 106 draft Heads of Terms

The application has been referred to the Council’s Planning and Licensing Committee at the discretion of the Head of Planning and Development

1. Proposed Development

The Applicant, Brentwood gateway Park Limited, is being represented by planning agents Sphere 25 LLP in bringing forward this planning application.

The proposed development’s description is as follows.

“Outline planning application (all matters reserved other than access) for mixed use development comprising up to 12,000sqm GIA car showroom use with ancillary office use (Sui Generis), 20,250sqm GIA flexible employment/storage

and distribution uses with ancillary office use (B2/B8) and 50 residential dwellings (C3) with associated access, parking and landscaping works (Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale reserved matters).”

The specific procedural and assessment aspects of the Outline planning application format are covered further on in this report.

2. Site Description and Relevant History

This report relates to an Outline application with all matters reserved apart from Access for LAND TO THE REAR OF THE NAGS HEAD, BROOK STREET, BRENTWOOD, ESSEX.

Application Site

The Application Site comprises an 8.5 ha plot that is bounded by: the Brook Street (A1023) to the north-west; Nags Head Lane to the east; Railway to the south, and; greenfield land to the west. The Site is located outside Settlement Category 1 (Brentwood Settlement Hierarchy, policy MG03) and to the east of M25 Junction 28. The site is abutting an Air Quality Management Area (Policy NE08) to the east. It is currently green field within the Metropolitan Green Belt with verdant edges fronting onto Brook Street and Nags Head Lane and hedgerows with trees the main apparent structuring elements of its existing field pattern.

Neighbouring to the east of the Application Site is the Grade II Listed Nags Head Public House. Also adjacent to the south-east of the Site across from Nags Head Lane lies Local Plan Allocation Site R06 Land off Nags Head Lane, which is identified as a residential development for around 125 new homes. This is subject to a current yet underdetermined planning application, Reference: 22/01347/FUL.

To the north of the site across from Brook Street are a diverse range of businesses as part of an inconsistent street frontage with significant setbacks, with Vicarage Close access road interrupting. The exception to this is a residential cottage at 61 Brook Street, which sits close up to the pavement. From Vicarage Close towards Brentwood town centre, Brook Street's north side has a tree-lined green verge with footpath in front of the business premises. West of Vicarage Lane, development on the north side of Brook Street appears less coherent although there is partial verdant frontage that continues a green verge with trees further along after a slip road that leads to the Shell petrol station. The old farmhouse is located between the Application Site's western boundary and Junction 28.

Access is taken from a gated access point off Nags Head Lane, near the railway bridge.

Public transport is available immediately adjacent to the Site with the number 498 bus route between Romford and Brentwood, stopping at the front of the Site on

Brook Street. The Site is located between two railway stations: Brentwood Railway station (2.6km / 1.6 miles away) and Harold Wood Railway Station (3.4km / 2.1 miles away).

The Site's levels vary across the site with a slope up from Brook Street with a sharp change in levels at the junction with Nags Head Lane. There is a slope upwards to the centre of the Site and the landscape across the plot undulates somewhat with an overall change in levels towards the northern boundary on Brook Street which is at a lower level.

The Site's open and green character is derived from prevalent trees, hedgerows, shrubs, and pasture grassland.

In terms of heritage interest, the Site is not located within a Conservation Area and does not contain any statutorily or locally listed buildings. The Nags Head Pub (Grade II) is located adjacent the Site's northeast corner. This building was Listed on 20 February 1976 with the following description:

“Public house. C17, early C18, C19 and 1961. Red brick, machine-made tile roof. Rectangular plan with C20 additions to rear. 1961 extension to W, lower in height, in matching style, not of special interest and not to be included in this listing.

[...]

Listing NGR: TQ5739792663”

It is noted that the highest value element of the Pub in heritage terms is the original building fronting Brook Street, with later extensions to the building having taken place to the side and rear.

Apart from the adjacent Grade II Listed Nags Head Pub, there is evidence of historical development on the Site including farm buildings and a corn windmill.

In terms of underground service infrastructure, an existing gas main and associated 25m wide easement currently runs diagonally across the Site from the north-west corner to the southern boundary. Two existing foul sewers also run across the Site from the north-east corner to the southern boundary.

Planning History

The application site's relevant planning history comprises the following.

- Brentwood Council Pre-application Advice Ref. 19/06265/PMAJ (car showroom (Sui Generis), Hotel (C1) and employment floor space (B2/B8) – Officers unable to support proposals

- Brentwood Council Pre-application Advice Ref. 20/06188/PMAJ (Car showroom (sui generis) of 11,437sqm GIA; Care home (C2) of 4,528 sqm GIA, Employment (B2/B8): 22,707sqm GIA) – Officers unable to support proposals
- Essex Quality Review Panel Advice 15/10/2020 – Panel unable to support proposals
- Essex Quality Review Panel Advice 15/3/2021 – Panel unable to support proposals
- Request for EIA Screening Opinion Ref. 20/01620/EIASO 2/12/2020 – Proposed Development NOT considered to constitute EIA Development.

3. Policy Context

National Planning Policy and Guidance

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021
- National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Development Plan, Policies and Supplementary Planning Documents

The Brentwood Local Plan (2016-2033) (BLP)

- Policy MG01: Spatial Strategy
- Policy MG02: Green Belt
- Policy MG04: Health Impact Assessments
- Policy MG05: Developer Contributions
- Policy BE01: Carbon Reduction, and Renewable Energy
- Policy BE02: Water Efficiency and Management
- Policy BE04: Managing Heat Risk
- Policy BE05: Sustainable Drainage
- Policy BE07: Connecting New Development to Digital Infrastructure
- Policy BE08 Strategic Transport Infrastructure
- Policy BE09: Sustainable means of travel and walkable streets
- Policy BE11: Electric and Low Emission Vehicle
- Policy BE12: Mitigating the Transport Impacts of Development
- Policy BE13: Parking Standards
- Policy BE14: Creating Successful Places
- Policy BE15: Planning for Inclusive Communities
- Policy BE16: Conservation and Enhancement of Historic Environment
- Policy HP01: Housing Mix
- Policy HP03: Residential Density
- Policy HP05: Affordable Housing
- Policy HP06: Standards for New Housing
- Policy PC01: Safeguarding Employment Land
- Policy PC03: Retail and Commercial Leisure Growth
- Policy PC04: Retail Hierarchy of Designated Centres

- Policy PC11: Education Facilities
- Policy NE01: Protecting and Enhancing the Natural Environment
- Policy NE02: Green and Blue Infrastructure
- Policy NE03: Trees, Woodlands, Hedgerows
- Policy NE04: Thames Chase Community Forest
- Policy NE05: Open Space and Recreation Provision
- Policy NE08: Air Quality
- Policy NE09: Flood Risk
- Policy NE10: Contaminated Land and Hazardous Substances

The following guidance documents are relevant material considerations for this application.

- Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions (ECC)
- Essex Design Guide (ECC)
- The Sustainable Drainage Systems Design Guide for Essex (ECC) ,
- Draft Planning Obligations SPD (November 2022)
- Essex Planning Officers Association (EPOA) Guidance Note on Health Impact Assessments (2019)
- Building Research Establishment: Site layout planning for daylight and sunlight (2022)

4. Neighbour Responses

Where applications are subject to public consultation, those comments are summarised below. The full version of each neighbour response can be viewed on the Council's website via Public Access at the following link:
<http://publicaccess.brentwood.gov.uk/online-applications/>.

At the time of writing this report, 62 neighbour representations have been received for this application. Discounting multiple responses from the same respondents, there were 33 in support, 21 objecting, 1 neutral). The matters raised are summarised as follows.

Supports

- Principle of the Proposed Development
 - The Proposed Development would provide an opportunity to change unused and unkept land into an attractive entrance to Brentwood that would signal that its 'Open for business and growth'.
 - The Proposed Development would promote strategic planning
 - The Proposed Development would be beneficial to use this large piece of land which is currently not utilised
 - The Site's location being so close to the motorways and very busy roads are not suitable for livestock, farming, dog walking etc, and

fortunately Brentwood already has many wonderful natural and rural surrounding areas to offer this

- Character and Appearance of the Local Area
 - The Proposed Development would improve the entrance to the town
 - The Proposed Development would improve the visual appearance of the area
- Economy
 - The Proposed Development would provide much needed storage and distribution space, bringing in additional business, jobs for all levels of skill, clientele, visitors and housing, all of which are very much needed in this town to support local economic recovery and rejuvenation of Brentwood and surrounding areas
 - It is very sensible having the industrial units in one prime location
 - The Proposed Development would attract more upmarket brands
 - The Proposed Development would showcase some of what the Borough has to offer
- Highways and Economy
 - The chosen site will also move employment and distribution space away from the town centre, and thus HGVs will also be kept away from the town centre
 - The Proposed Development would reinforce the strategic position of Brentwood as an area where businesses can invest and thrive due to its excellent transport links and proximity to London
- The Proposed Development would have a beneficial effect on house prices and desirability of the area

Objections

- Principle of the Proposed Development
 - Availability of other sites including Local Plan allocation sites, brownfield sites, existing empty car showroom sites, offices, warehouse spaces, dwellings in and around Brentwood should be utilised without the need to build more.
 - The Proposed Development would be contrary to the need to protect the Green Belt (in general and specifically the reduction of the Green Belt between Brentwood and London, setting a precedent for more development in the Green Belt, jobs and training not a justification for loss of Green belt).
- Nature Conservation
 - The Proposed Development would be detrimental to wildlife, habitats incl natural ponds, insects, birds, reptiles and mammals
- Highways
 - The Proposed Development would lead to an increase in existing traffic congestion (including from construction traffic and HGVs)

- There is insufficient existing road capacity (such as traffic lights, pavement widths, pedestrian crossings, street lighting, parking spaces)
- The Proposed Development would worsen road safety
- The submitted Transport Assessment is incorrect
- The Proposed Development would lead to a potential conflict from proposed residential access junction from traffic waiting for traffic lights near to Nags Head Lane-Brook Street junction. Lack of visibility at proposed junction.
- The Proposed Development would lead to disruption from cumulative construction activity in the area
- Economy
 - The Proposed Development would have an adverse impact on Brentwood high street business
 - The advantage of extra employment being generated by a proposed nursing home has been lost
- Visual Impact, Heritage and Design
 - The Proposed Development would be unsympathetic to the current gateway at the listed Nags Head pub and Brentwood's history as a medieval cathedral town and a borough of villages
 - The Proposed Development would lead to a loss of views and local character (Brentwood's rural and green character, Nags Head Lane's quiet country lane character, the Proposed Development is too big, out-of-scale and out of character compared with its surroundings, open countryside views)
 - No detailed drawings have been provided for the proposed residential plot
- Amenity
 - The Proposed Development would lead to a loss of privacy
 - The Proposed Development would lead to a loss of amenity space
 - The Proposed Development would lead to a loss of sunlight
- Community infrastructure
 - The Proposed Development would lead to a lack of schools a to support proposed new dwellings, doctors, hospitals)
- Pollution
 - The Proposed Development would lead to pollution from increase in traffic
 - The Proposed Development would lead to dirt and muddy roads from construction activity
 - The Proposed Development would lead to light pollution
 - The Proposed Development would lead to air pollution
 - The Proposed Development would lead to an increase in noise
- Trees
 - The Proposed Development would lead to a loss of old trees
- Land and Water

- There is instable land next to the railway
- The Proposed Development would lead to potential local flooding and drainage issues
- There is insufficient existing sewage infrastructure to support the Proposed Development
- Sustainability
 - The Proposed Development would lead to an increase global warming
 - The Proposed Development would contribute to Climate Change
- Other
 - The planning application to include 50 homes appears to be a way of getting around planning laws and no doubt pay for Grange Motors' move
 - The costs of policing and security of the site and associated XR demonstrations will be considerable
 - The Proposed Development would benefit rich people

Neutral

- Would like to see some micro and scale up business units due to local shortage

Any matters raised that are material to the planning assessment have been considered as part of this report.

The application is also accompanied by a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The SCI provides further detail on the public consultation exercise carried out by the applicant prior to the submission of the application, as well as a response to key issues expressed by the local community.

5. Consultation Responses

The council consulted a number of times over the application's determination period, as follows.

- Initial consultation: 20 January 2022
- Second consultation (Additional submission comprising: amended access junctions and bus stop location and associated updated information, additional Health Impact Assessment, and Statement of Intent documents): 16 November 2022
- Third consultation (Additional submission comprising: Transport Assessment Addendum): 21 December 2022 and 9 January 2023

Detailed below is a summary of the consultation responses, if any received. The full version of each consultation response can be viewed on the Council's website via Public Access at the following link: <http://publicaccess.brentwood.gov.uk/online->

[applications/](#). Where relevant to the assessment, the Planning Assessment below contains commentary verbatim from relevant consultation responses.

- Brentwood Borough Council Landscape and Arboricultural Advisor (Ecology): No Objection, subject to planning conditions and/or planning obligations
- Brentwood Borough Council Landscape and Arboricultural Advisor (Trees): No Objection, subject to planning conditions
- Brentwood Borough Council Landscape and Arboricultural Advisor (Visual Impact): Objection
- Brentwood Borough Council Design & Conservation Officer (Design): Objection
- Brentwood Borough Council Heritage Buildings Officer (Built Heritage): Objection
- Brentwood Borough Council, Director of Housing: No Objection, subject to planning conditions and planning obligations.
- Brentwood Borough Council Environmental Health Officer (Noise): No Objection, subject to planning conditions.
- Brentwood Borough Council Environmental Health Officer (Air Quality): No Objection, subject to planning conditions.
- Brentwood Borough Council operational Services Manager: No Objection, subject to planning conditions and planning obligations.
- Brentwood Council's Corporate Manager for Economic Development: No Objection, subject to planning conditions and planning obligations.
- Brentwood Borough Council Sustainability Officer: No Objection.
- Brentwood Borough Council / Place Services Historic Environment Advisor (Archaeology): No Objection, subject to planning conditions.
- Planning Policy: Objection.
- Essex County Council (Lead Local Flood Authority): No Objection, subject to planning conditions.
- Essex County Council (Highway Authority): No Objection, subject to planning conditions and planning obligations.
- Essex County Council (Economic Development): No Objection, subject to planning conditions and planning obligations.
- National Highways: No Objection.
- Badger protection Group: No Objection, subject to planning conditions.
- Essex Police: No Objection, subject to planning conditions.
- Natural England: No Objection.
- Transport for London: No Objection.
- National Highways: No objection.
- East of England Ambulance Service: No Objection, subject to planning obligations.
- Mid and South Essex Integrated Care System: No Objection, subject to planning obligations.
- Essex County Fire and rescue Service: No Objection.

6. Outline Planning Application

Below follows an explanation of the form of application that is specific to the proposal scheme.

Parameter Plan and Illustrative Masterplan

Whilst the illustrative masterplan is not submitted as a proposed document to be approved, it has informed the parameter plan ref PI-011 Rev. P03 that has been submitted “for approval”. The other purpose of the illustrative masterplan is to demonstrate a development that could be delivered, subject to approval of such details at the Reserved Matters stage, which would involve a full assessment of all relevant details.

As detailed on the parameter plan, the proposed development for assessment at the current Outline stage therefore provides a maximum extent of development, which may be considered to be a “worst case scenario” on which assessment can be undertaken. The final specification of details for the development such as building dimensions for Reserved Matters submissions would be required to remain within any approved size parameters. If not, a further assessment and potentially a fresh planning application requirement may be triggered. One specific aspect of the assessment in this report relates to Daylight/Sunlight impact on nearby residential properties, where the approval of the parameters as a maximum extent of development should be subject to further assessment at the Reserved Matters stage. A parameter plan and any exceptions would normally be enforceable via a planning condition.

Phasing of the Development

No details regarding the sequenced delivery of the various plots of the Proposed Development have been submitted, but this information can be required via a planning condition alongside the submission of Reserved Matters.

Access

The application is made in Outline, with all matters reserved apart from Access. The Access provided in the application comprises one vehicular access junction along Brook Street to serve the retail employment component, and one vehicular access junction along Nags Head Lane, to serve the residential component of the Proposed Development. The details can be found in the Transport Assessment Addendum Appendix C.

Pre-application Process

The Application Scheme is the result of an extended pre-application phase that started in 2019 and that lasted up until the submission of the planning application. In addition to verbal feedback throughout the process, Brentwood officers provided written commentary on three occasions over this period. Whilst the Applicant team sought to enhance the proposals throughout the pre-application period, Officers confirmed at these occasions that the proposed development could not be supported and provided reasons for this position.

Pre-application submission Ref. 19/06265/PMAJ concerned the first iteration of the proposal scheme that came forward. It comprised: a car showroom (Sui Generis), Hotel (C1) and employment floor space (B2/B8). The officer assessment of the merits of the scheme was as follows.

“It is recognised that the proposed development would provide a larger site for a long established business to expand providing employment benefit to the area. In addition, the provision of a hotel and further industrial floor space would further contribute to the borough’s economy. However, the site is not allocated for development within the current or emerging local plan for development and is located in an area of Green Belt which is a primary gateway to the borough. The very special circumstances outlined in your working draft such as the provision of employment and the ‘moderate’ Green Belt value of the site do not outweigh the harm caused to the openness of the Green Belt and as such the proposal is not supported by officers.”

A meeting between the Applicant team and senior officers in the Council’s planning service was convened on 24 June 2020, where the principles were agreed a bespoke pre-application process to be secured through a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA). This was subsequently actioned in consultation with the applicant team, to allow the team to focus the preparation of an intended planning application around anticipated key issues informed by early feedback from a number of consultees and stakeholders. As intended, this process was guided by a formal Planning Performance PPA, which the Applicant entered into with Brentwood Borough Council on 2 November 2020 (Ref. 20/06188/PMAJ).

The Applicant team engaged ECC for separate pre-application advice so the pre-application process involved both BBC and ECC, and there has been some pre-application coordination between both Councils regarding Highways matters, but not regarding other matters such as Drainage and Flood Risk. The Council’s pre-application process coordinated the early involvement and consultation of BBC technical officers, but not of any external parties.

The pre-application process has therefore involved an interactive process during successive meeting sessions with opportunities to jointly review the evolving scheme and supporting information from various relevant technical perspectives, involving BBC DM officers, BBC consultees, ECC Highways Officers and the Essex Quality Review Panel (EQRP). In particular, pre-application stage consultation responses were generated from BBC technical officers and ECC Highways officer, and from the Essex Quality Review Panel (EQRP).

The Council issued two further pre-application advice letters: on 17 December 2020 and on 23 March 2022. Officers initially concluded as follows.

“The Proposed Development is inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The list of very special circumstances that you have provided are not exceptional, and do not, singularly or cumulatively clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt caused by policy definition or by actual harm.

The assessment of Land Uses lead me to conclude that the site is not appropriate either in terms of its location or its proposed uses. Whilst the economic benefits of relocating an existing local car dealership may be desirable, the quantum of proposed employment land is not supported by the Council’s plan-led approach that discounts this employment component from the delivery of economic development sites in the Borough in favour of other sites. The proposed residential care home would, contrary to policy, find itself in a relatively isolated location away from services and facilities.” ...

“In conclusion, the complexity of the Proposed Development at this Site has not successfully been resolved by the pre-application submission, and significant lacking information has been highlighted to assist with the completion of the planning application submission.”

The final letter provided subsequent advice to informally suggest critical requirements for an updated scheme that could create the potential to overcome the high threshold that needs to be met or exceeded given the Green Belt policy status of the site. The following key topics and issues were highlighted.

- a powerful vision for the re-design of the Site
- unable to reconcile a Care Home in this location
- integration of the scale of the development
- a truly aspirational and exemplary Sustainability Strategy
- Improved precision of assessments (Heritage, LVIA in particular).
- Contribution to Gateway function of the area.
- a compelling place-making rationale.
- updated supporting economic case documentation

Essex Quality Review Panel

The emerging application scheme was reviewed twice by the EQRP during the pre-application stage. On both occasions the Panel found that it was unable to support the proposals that were presented to them.

The EQRP conducted a first review of an early iteration of the proposed development (EQRP letter of 15 October 2020). The EQRP received a presentation by the Applicant Team and a briefing by the Council's Case Officer. On the basis of this and submitted information the EQRP held a discussion and subsequently circulated its formal review comments. The review comments of the Panel are a material consideration in considering a planning application, and should be accorded commensurate weight. In this regard it is worth mentioning that the scope of the EQRP review is not as wide as that of an application assessment by the LPA, and that the LPA will be the decision-making authority for the application.

The EQRP's comments received at the time can be summarised as explaining the Site attributes and characteristics including its context, and the potential impacts from the proposed development, before raising a number of fundamental concerns, and concluding that there was: *"a lot more work required for this scheme ... to bring this development to an acceptable level in terms of placemaking quality and implementing satisfactory sustainable and green infrastructural elements into the masterplan"*. Specifically, the Panel's collective explanation of the context went beyond the draft baseline assessment information in the submitted pre-application pack, and it focused on the qualities of the existing situation and the history leading up to it, to help establish an appropriate cross-cutting baseline.

This review challenged the Applicant to update the proposal scheme to respond adequately to the particular situation, including specifically, the need to compensate for the loss of the existing open greenfield land resource.

The EQRP reviewed the proposals for a second time at a Panel Meeting on 24 February 2021. A related report was issued on 15 March 2021, which came to the following conclusion.

"the panel would not support the proposals which were presented as part of the panel session. It was considered little change had been undertaken to meet the requirements of very special circumstances of the green belt and justify the role of a gateway development for Brentwood.

The approach to the landscape setting is seen as a key downfall of the proposals to date. The small interventions proposed as part of the landscape scheme contributed little and added minimal value to the green belt land. A landscape led

approach is required which will dictate the extent and type of development that can be brought forward as part of the site.

The panel questioned if large box units are suitable for green belt land given the challenges these hold in contributing positively to the very special circumstances of the site. It was recognised by the panel that a more residential led approach to the south should be explored where this offered further value to the setting and landscape approach.

The overall approach to architecture and design, particularly to Brook Street was raised as a key issue where what was presented added or contributed very little to the gateway placemaking approach required for this site.

There were several routes highlighted by the panel which the sales buildings could go, where a more forward thinking and innovative approach is required. Given the requirements of this land it was questioned why an outline application approach was being taken forward. Given the need for details to demonstrate the approach to very special circumstances and the need to enhance rather than just mitigate, it was recommended by the panel that either a full or hybrid application needs to be taken forward to both commit and demonstrate the approach.”

Environmental Impact Assessment

During the pre-application period for this application, the applicant submitted a formal Request for the Council’s EIA Screening, pursuant to The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. The Council duly published its formal Opinion Ref. 20/01620/EIASO to confirm that the proposed development is not EIA development. Relevant environmental technical matters still form part of the considerations for this planning application.

7. Planning Assessment

Consideration of the proposal

The starting point for determining a planning application is the current development plan, which is the Brentwood Local Plan 2022 (‘the Local Plan’). Planning legislation states that applications must be determined in accordance with the relevant development plan policies unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Additional policies, as relevant material considerations for determining this application, are the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG). Although individual policies in the Local Plan should not be read in isolation, the adopted plan contains policies of particular relevance to this proposal which are listed in section 3 above. The proposals have also been considered in accordance with: Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which requires the

protection of listed buildings and Historic assets, and; the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (2017).

The assessment process for this application is sequenced as follows.

- Principle of Proposed Development – Green Belt and Proposed Very Special Circumstances
- Principle of Proposed Development – Proposed Land Uses (Economic Development and Housing)
- Access, Highway and Transportation, and Parking Considerations
- Design Matters
- Landscape and Visual Impact
- Historic Environment
- Community Infrastructure
- Sustainability
- Health Impact
- Ecology and Biodiversity
- Arboriculture
- Land Contamination
- Flood and Water Management
- Noise
- Air Quality
- Refuse and Recycling
- Neighbours' Amenity
- Crime and Safety
- Planning Obligations
- Summary and Recommendation

Principle of the Proposed Development

The Brentwood Local Plan contains specific Strategic Objectives that are relevant to the assessment of the principle of the Proposed Development.

SO1 aims to *“Manage Growth Sustainably, by directing development to the most sustainable locations along identified transit growth corridors, ensuring that the characteristics and patterns of our different settlements are protected and enhanced to provide a strong emphasis on ‘sense of place’ to be enjoyed by people living, working and visiting Brentwood”*.

SO3 aims to *“Deliver Sustainable Communities with Diverse Economic & Social - cultural Opportunities for All, opportunities which flexibly respond to the changing economic climate and employment sector trends making citizens feel economically empowered to enjoy and benefit from the necessary community/social infrastructure that sustains inclusive, informed, vibrant, active and cohesive communities.”*

SO1 illustrates key requirements for the Application Scheme, which is a speculative development that is not in accordance with the Application Site's Local Plan status as being unallocated within the Green Belt, and which therefore should seek to deliver benefit over and above the assessed need for economic and housing growth that has already been accounted for in the recently adopted Local plan's sustainable growth pattern. In contrast, SO3 highlights the need to be responsive to changes in economic opportunities in the context of developing the local community. The Proposed Development therefore requires consideration on its own merits to balance the planning merits arising from the Proposed Development's policy constraints and its relative benefits.

To this end, the first issue for assessment of the principle of the Proposed Development concerns whether there would be harm to the Green Belt. The other two issues concern the additionality relative to the growth already accounted for in the Local Plan, as provided by the application's proposed land uses, and this concerns Economic Development and Housing.

Green Belt Matters and Assessment of Proposed Very Special Circumstances

The Application Site is situated within the Metropolitan Green Belt and this notation washes over the locality. This is shown on the map that accompanies the Local Plan. There is no proposal to remove the Site from the Green Belt and the Council's Planning Policy team have specifically explained some context regarding the Application Site's previous unsuccessful candidacy for removal from the Green Belt as part of the Local plan process, and the importance of this process to ensure sustainable development:

"The application site was included within the Council's Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) 2018 for a mixed-use employment led scheme. Within which the site formed part of a larger site, Reference 175B. Following assessment through the HELAA the site was considered to be "deliverable" for a mixed-use scheme, and as such was considered further as part of the Local Plan process. However, the site was later discounted principally on grounds it was considered to perform poorly in Green Belt terms, given the strategic importance of maintaining a robust Green Belt gap between Brentwood and the London Borough of Havering (for commentary on the shortlisted omission sites see Sustainability Appraisal, January 2019)."

The government attaches great importance to the Green Belt. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. Green Belt is a spatial designation not a qualitative one, therefore the requirement to protect openness applies as much to less attractive areas of Green Belt as it does to attractive parts of the Green Belt. Policies MG01 (Spatial Strategy) and MG02

(Green Belt) aim to control development but support a limited range of development, subject to being appropriate to the Green Belt and protecting its openness.

The proposed parameter plan shows that the site levels would be recontoured to create a large scale development of seven large building plots with maximum roof heights of: 10m (two car showroom plots facing Brook Street), 12m (four commercial/industrial plots) and 8m (one residential plot). Such scale of development combined with the replacement of screening vegetation and the placement of two new junctions would mean that proposed buildings would be highly visible (as described further on in the Landscape and Visual Impact section). Officers consider that such a Proposed Development on this undeveloped predominantly green pasture land, will have a fundamental detrimental effect on the existing openness at the Application Site.

The NPPF stipulates that new buildings are inappropriate development in the Green Belt unless they fall within a short list of exceptions in paragraph 149. The Applicant's Planning Statement acknowledges that the proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt and officers concur with this conclusion.

The NPPF states that:

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

148. When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations."

The last sentence is particularly worthy of note. If there were to be very special circumstances, they would need to clearly outweigh the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, which is a much higher threshold than an on balance judgement.

The application's Planning Statement provides the Proposed VSCs and the Applicant's reasoning, and this part of the assessment considers whether each Proposed VSC is considered justified. If any VSC is considered justified, then its significance is assessed for the purposes of subsequent assessment of any cumulative VSCs against harm to determine whether the assessment threshold for "inappropriate development" in the Green Belt has been met.

Proposed VSC 1: “Green Belt Objectives”

The Planning Statement describes how, in the Applicant’s opinion, the Application Site performs in relation to each of the five purposes of the Green Belt (as set out in NPPF Paragraph 138):

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

In response to the applicant’s analysis of the Council’s Green Belt Study Part 2: Green Belt Parcel Definition and Review, November 2018 – it’s important to note this study forms part of a series of 3 studies that together provide the Green Belt evidence used to inform the emerging Local Plan. The purpose of Part 2: Green Belt Parcel Definition and Review, was to assess the level of contribution of general land areas (referred to as ‘Green Belt Parcels’) to fulfilling the purposes of the Green Belt on a strategic level. The Study concludes:

“Those parcels which are generally smaller and well contained to the existing large built up areas, where they do not extend far beyond the existing settlement limits and/or are bounded by significant infrastructure, tend to be rated at an overall level of Moderate or Low Moderate; however these may still be important ‘Countryside Gaps’ (separating Towns) under Purpose 2 which may be a key special planning consideration.” (paragraph 3.2.5)

Given the above extract and its relevance to Green Belt Parcel 27B (which includes the application site area), It’s important to consider how the application site preformed at a closer level. It’s therefore necessary to consider the application sites analysis within the Green Belt Study Part 3: Individual Sites Assessment, November 2018; within the context of a mixed-use employment led scheme. As previously referenced the application site formed part of a larger site (Reference 175B) within the HELAA for a mixed-use employment led scheme, as such it was assessed on this basis through the Part 3 Green Belt site assessment work.

As per the ‘Employment Mixed Use Assessment Sheet – for Site 175B’ (Appendix L7 of the Green Belt Study Part 3), **the overall contribution of the site to Green Belt Purposes is considered moderate to high**. Significantly the comments made in the analysis under Purpose 2 state:

“The M25 is a significant barrier between Brentwood and Romford. Development would significantly reduce the countryside gap between Brentwood and Romford. Although the two ‘towns’ could not physically merge due to the presence of M25, the perception to users of the M25, A12, A1203 and rail line would be of countryside

encroachment with minimal separation between towns if Site were developed. Mixed Use development is likely to comprise a number of larger buildings. This will be perceived as a greater massing of built form in the green belt compared to housing and would be more visually intrusive – however town coalescence would not occur.”

*Within the Green Belt Study Part 3, it states - “In terms of Green Belt considerations only, Employment and Mixed Use Sites should be prioritised for consideration as per the table in Appendix L6, with Sites 024A, 101C, 111, 112D, 175A, 180 and 228 being most highly prioritised. Relative to other Sites, Sites 024B (Mixed Use), 038B (Mixed Use), **175B (Mixed Use)**, 200 (Mixed Use) and 302C (Mixed Use) should be of lower priority (i.e. all received a High or Moderate to High overall assessment rating).” (paragraph 3.3.7).*

It's noted the application site does not represent the entirety of Site 175B (see Appendix L8 of the Green Belt Study Part 3 for site area and overall contribution of site to purposes of the Green Belt), however it does represent a significant proportion, and the above analysis is considered applicable.

As set out above, the Application Site can be regarded as providing a moderate to high overall contribution to the Green Belt purposes, given it provides a significant countryside gap between Brentwood and Romford. It's within this context that harm arising from inappropriate development must be considered.

For this reason, officers are unable to accept that proposed VSC 1 qualifies as a Very Special Circumstance.

Proposed VSC 2: “Need for Employment Development”

The Planning Statement explains that the Proposed Development would complement the delivery of the Local Plan employment allocation sites and in particular, the Proposed Development:

- would be capable of early commencement without the need for large scale infrastructure mitigation such as that for the proposed Brentwood Enterprise Park (LP Allocation Site E11)
- would reduce over-reliance on a large scale employment allocation site (E11)
- would address a geographical imbalance of planned employment development
- would address insufficient quantum of new employment land to address expected displacement from London
- would address insufficient qualitative requirements for new employment land (e.g. larger scale units of over 5,000 m²)

The Applicant has sought to substantiate this proposed VSC with a number of sources of information, including HJA's economic case report and Savills'

Commercial Market Demand Report of supply and demand of employment space in the borough. Further supporting information comprises three recent planning appeal cases concerning employment developments in the Green Belt.

The Council's position is that the appropriate level of employment land and supply to meet that need (employment land allocations), have been identified in the recently adopted Local Plan, this position has been robustly tested through the Local Plan examination, is supported by extensive evidence and has been found to be sound.

The need for employment development was discussed in a great level of detail through the recent Local Plan hearing sessions as part of the examination. Topics examined as part of the relevant hearing sessions included the Council's employment land need calculation, site coverage ratios, vacancy rates, employment land trajectory and deliverability of strategic employment sites.

On 23 February 2022, the Council received the Inspectors' Final Report on the Examination of the Brentwood Local Plan 2016-2033. The report concludes "*Overall, the approach used to assess the employment need and overarching requirement is in line with the Framework and the PPG and is based on credible evidence*". No shortfall in employment land supply or need for additional site allocations is identified. The Report goes on to conclude that subject to a number of main modifications, set out in the appendix to their report, "***the identified employment and retail development needs have been positively prepared and the employment land and retail floorspace requirements in the Plan are justified and effective.***"

It's recognised that the provision of additional employment land and associated benefits the proposal would generate are a positive factor. However, the degree of weight that can be attributed to this must be considered within the context that the borough has a recently adopted Local Plan through which the employment needs and requirements have been adequately addressed.

For this reason, officers are unable to accept that proposed VSC 2 qualifies as a Very Special Circumstance.

Proposed VSC 3: "Need for Gateway Development"

The Planning Statement describes that: "*The development proposals will comprise a prestige "gateway development" for Brentwood in a strategic location at the entry to the largest settlement in the Borough, and that "It is envisaged that this new "gateway" development will raise the profile of Brentwood and encourage further inward investment in the town.*"

The relevance of the M25 Junction 28 Gateway (as identified on the Local Plan Key Diagram) to potential development at the Application Site is not clear.

- The gateway is some distance away from and does not cover the Application Site, also not the settlement areas and any growth locations within them.
- The gateway is noted on a Key Diagram that relates to functional matters related to a spatial strategy, including settlement hierarchy, growth locations and mobility & connectivity.

It should be noted that in identifying a number of gateways around Brentwood in the Local Plan's Key Diagram, the Council has, at this point in time not provided any guidance regarding specific requirements including whether or not any new development in or around them would be appropriate, apart from where new development has already been formally allocated. As explained in the assessment of VSC1, development at the Application Site was discounted in favour of superior sustainable growth locations that were adequately demonstrated to be capable of delivery to satisfy the Borough's growth needs. This is re-iterated in the Local Plan's Spatial Strategy section par. 3.12:

“Two key growth corridors have been identified, to meet our overarching aim to deliver sustainable development in accessible and connected transit corridors. Along these corridors, a comprehensive sequential analysis and review of sites has been undertaken to select suitable site allocations.”

Further, no formal placemaking or economic development requirements have been linked to the gateway locations. However, the Local Plan's Infrastructure Development Plan does contain functional improvements to the highway network at M25 Junction 28.

In conclusion, it is considered that at best the Application Site may be loosely related to the enhancement of the M25 Junction 28 Gateway although the Site is explicitly not meant to be developed. Although it is acknowledged that the Applicant engaged in a Quality Review Process, this did request further analysis of the local need for and the requirements for the Brentwood Gateway at Junction 28. Rather than a piecemeal and predominantly unilateral approach that appears to have been highlighted by the Applicant as a problematic pattern of development in the locality, a comprehensive analysis should have been generated in order to determine the role of the Application Site to address the need for the improvement of the Gateway alongside and in balance with any other complementary development. As such, officers are not able to accept the Applicant's rationale for the Proposed Development as it relates to the M25 Junction 28 Gateway and the proposed VSC3 as a qualifying Very Special Circumstance.

Proposed VSC 4: “Economic Benefits”

The Planning Statement explains that: *“The submitted Economic Case prepared by HJA in support of this application sets out the range of socio-economic benefits*

brought about by the proposed development in line with the above economic aims of the emerging Local Plan and all other policy/guidance of relevance.”

The Planning Statement summarises the economic benefits of the proposed development as helping to:

- Strengthen under-represented areas of the local economy;
- Contribute to stated policy ambitions at national, sub-regional and local level;
- Complement, de-risk and enhance the economic and employment strategy of the Local Plan;
- Help to retain a key local business in Brentwood; and
- Support jobs and wages for local residents.

Further supporting information comprises three recent planning appeal cases concerning socio-economic benefits of developments in the Green Belt.

It's noted within the Applicant's Planning Statement that *“Once fully occupied the Proposed Development will accommodate an estimated 610 full time equivalent (FTE) jobs. Once allowance is made for part-time working this increases to an estimated 680 total jobs.”* Clearly this forecast provision of job growth as a result of the proposal would have positive implications for the borough and serve to improve access to a range of employment opportunities for the borough's residents. The benefits associated with such job growth need to be placed in the context of what has been allocated in the Local Plan.

Local Plan Policy MG01: Spatial Strategy makes provision for approximately 46.64ha of new employment land, 1,604 square meters (net) of comparison retail floorspace and 4,438 square meters (net) of convenience floorspace, to enable the creation of at least 5,000 additional jobs. The proposal would provide an additional quantum of jobs on top of that secured through policies in the Local Plan, and it is within this context that the degree of weight that can be attributed to economic benefits must be considered.

124 FTE additional operational jobs accrue from the proposed car showroom use that is not provided for within the Local Plan. The car showroom would support 170 FTE jobs but this should be discounted by the current Grange car showroom site that already supports 46 FTE jobs. Additional temporary employment has been estimated to be 590–650 person-years of employment within the construction sector over the entire construction phase.

In consideration of the full context and the benefits of the Proposed Development, officers accept that the economic additionality of the proposed VSC 4 could potentially qualify as a Very Special Circumstance.

Proposed VSC 5: “Housing Delivery”

The Planning Statement advances a number of data, including historic housing delivery statistics, planned new development quantum and planning appeal

information for residential Green Belt developments, to support the argument that the Proposed Development would be beneficial to Housing Delivery. In particular, it highlights that proposed Plot 07 is targeted at over-55s, which addresses a market sector that is locally in demand, although the Applicant would be required to commit to this through a s106 Legal Agreement.

The provision of additional housing, both market and affordable is a benefit to the borough. It's understood the proposal is to provide a Policy compliant quantum (35%) of affordable housing on site, which is welcomed. As with employment provision, there is a need to consider the provision of additional housing in the context of the recently adopted local plan to 2033, which allocates sufficient land to meet identified needs.

The Council's position in respect of housing provision is that it is able to demonstrate a robust five year supply of deliverable housing sites (6.9 years) and on this basis provision to address housing need does not rely on developing Green Belt sites, which would be contrary to Local Plan policies and the requirements of the NPPF.

It's worth noting the number of new homes (NET) delivered in Brentwood Borough for the most recent monitoring period 2021/22 is 407 dwellings. This comfortably surpasses the councils housing requirement figure in the adopted Local Plan for the year 2021/22, which is 300 dwellings.

The provision of 50 new dwellings would be an additional benefit to the borough in terms of increasing housing supply. However, the degree of weight that can be attributed to this must be considered within the context that the borough has a recently adopted Local Plan, which allocates sufficient land to meet identified needs.

In consideration of the full context and the benefits of the Proposed Development, officers are unable to accept that proposed VSC 5 qualifies as a Very Special Circumstance.

Proposed VSC 6: "Design and Sustainability Considerations"

In the Planning Statement, the Applicant highlights that a number of Design features are relevant to this proposed VSC. Their qualification towards Very Special Circumstances are assessed in turn.

- Indicative designs for the car showroom element; Gateway development, and; High quality landscaping scheme to frontage: These features do not qualify as they do not form part of a commitment as part of the Outline Planning Application scope.
- Improved pedestrian and cycle accessibility will also open up the Site for a range of sustainable travel modes: These features are an ordinary requirement to meet policy compliance standards.

- Proposals will ensure that appropriate road infrastructure interventions are in place to minimise highway impacts of the development: These features are an ordinary requirement to meet policy compliance standards.
- A key area of open countryside between the Site's western boundary to the M25 is safeguarded, with a c. 11m wide tree belt of appropriate species along the Site's western boundary to screen the Site and preserve the landscape character of the wider green belt parcel: This is already existing open countryside, and this is part of a larger area of open countryside that includes the Application Site. This is not considered to contribute to Very Special Circumstances.
- Any predicted landscape effects are limited to the Site itself, and the residual character of the Site would be reflective of other commercial development within the study area: regardless of the fact that this is not agreed by the Council's Landscape and Arboricultural Advisor, this is not considered to contribute to Very Special Circumstances.
- The proposals have benefitted from two design reviews with the Essex Quality Review Panel with positive design development undertaken. Heritage advice has been fundamental to the emerging design of the scheme since an early stage, and the Heritage Assessment which accompanies this Application confirms no overall harm to the heritage asset: With reference to Local Plan Policy SP06 (Effective delivery of development), Design Review is a standard expectation for comparable large scale and/or complex development proposals (i.e. allocation sites). Therefore, this is not considered to contribute to Very Special Circumstances.
- The indicative layout will ensure significant greening with an appropriately designed central landscape zone with water feature at the centre of the Site in the interests of visual amenity and ecological diversity: These features do not qualify as they do not form part of a commitment as part of the Outline Planning Application scope.

In terms of Sustainability Considerations, the Planning Statement explains that: *“Hilson Moran as environmental masterplanners have been an integral part of the design team to advise on the emerging proposals, and have produced a robust assessment of sustainability opportunities that could be incorporated into the development proposals to enhance the environmental and sustainability credentials of the scheme, with the intention of delivering enhancements that exceed planning policy requirements to deliver a highly sustainable scheme.”...* *“a range of design interventions are recommended for incorporation within the proposed development”*. *... “inclusion of a high proportion of the measures and concepts presented would ensure delivery of a highly sustainable scheme that has the potential to meet the requirements of ‘exceptional’ sustainable design.”*

Further relevant features of the Proposed Development are:

- Delivery of a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (proposed to be secured via a planning condition or s106 planning obligation): Biodiversity

enhancement and securing a net gain in biodiversity are already a requirement of Local Plan Policy NE01, and 10% is a level of BNG that would not qualify as part of a Very Special Circumstances case, because this is the level that is due to become mandatory later on this year by virtue of the Environment Act 2021. This would be before the Proposed Development would be likely to become operational.

- Relative reduction of greenhouse gas emissions as indirect environmental benefits: this is a standard policy requirement that is not considered to contribute to very Special Circumstances.

Specialist Sustainability Consultants Ecolytik have assisted officers with the assessment of the Proposed Development's performance against sustainability criteria. Apart from the required assessment of Sustainability against policy standards that is covered further on in this report, a key matter for assessment would be whether the Proposed Development's performance beyond standard requirements is significant and if so, where it sits on a scale between basic policy compliance and demonstrating a truly aspirational and exemplary Sustainability Strategy to demonstrate its qualification as a Very Special Circumstance.

Their review of the proposals explained the relevance of the Hills Moran document relative to the submitted Energy and Sustainability Assessment: *"Hilson Moran's report identified a number of opportunities that could be proposed and implemented for the development across a wide range of sustainability considerations. We recognise the foresight presented within the report in terms of discussing new building standards, regulations and industry recognised targets prior to those becoming official guidance when the report was published (December 2021). Whilst we note the purpose of this report and appreciate the level information included within, it does not clearly set out what has been specifically proposed for the application to Brentwood Borough Council. ... When reviewed in conjunction with Cudd Bentley's [Energy and Sustainability] report, the majority of the opportunities highlighted within this document do not seem to have been incorporated as part of the application."*

Ecolytik concluded that: *"Overall, the submitted strategy fails to demonstrate how the development meets relevant planning policy as well as how it pursues some of the highest standards of energy and sustainability performance which would be relevant for development of VSCs within the Green Belt."*

Officers have recognised that this situation has partly arisen due to the time that has passed since the application was submitted, during which a number of new policy requirements have been formalised. This includes the adoption of the current Brentwood Local Plan. Officers recognise the requirement of NPPF paragraph 38 that Local Planning Authorities *"should use the full range of planning tools available, ... , and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area."*

Therefore, in order to explain the Proposed Development's potential to elevate its sustainability performance from the initially assessed under-performance to a level of performance that would be policy-compliant and that could also be considered as part of a Very Special Circumstance case, Ecolytik recommended specific features that could be secured via conditions. After some discussion with the Applicant, it was confirmed that the Applicant was in agreement with the following additional performance commitments, to:

- Net Zero carbon development
- Achieve a minimum 50% reduction in carbon emissions compared to 2021 Building Regulations Part L baseline and minimum 10% of total site's energy demand from renewable sources;
- Maximise biodiverse green roofs (not just green roofs) and high specification PVs on all roof areas so that the development is targeting net zero operation on-site as far as feasible;
- Achieve EUI targets (Total EUI of 35 kWh/m².year for residential portions of the scheme, and Total EUI of 55 kWh/m².year for offices across the scheme. The same target should apply to warehouses if they are heated, and the applicant should clarify what the proposed strategy for the warehouse is);
- Achieve specific embodied carbon emissions targets compliant with the most ambitious target from the latest guidance by LETI, RIBA and UK GBC, or achieving Passivhaus;
- Utilise all reasonable endeavours to achieve the following sustainability credentials to be fully assessed at Reserved Matters application stage(s):
- Achieve BREEAM 'Excellent' on commercial plots (1-6) at target score of 80%+
- meet and exceed where possible BREEAM 'Very good' standard under Wat 01 Water Consumption for non-residential and enhanced target of 110 l/p.d for residential use;
- Implementation of greywater and rainwater harvesting for the development informed by feasibility testing at Reserved Matters application stage(s)
- Use of building materials with Green Guide ratings of between A+ to B
- utilisation of Passivhaus standards for the design of residential development at Plot 7;
- Maximum possible utilisation of green roofs across commercial Plots 3-6 and residential Plot 7;
- Information to be submitted with regard to proposed cycle and electric vehicle parking to exceed minimum policy standards, and;
- The Applicant would have to provide detailed technical and financial feasibility reports to show that certain aspects of the condition may not be feasible to achieve and to propose compensatory alternative means of achieving exceptional sustainability standards.

In respect of proposed VSC6 (Design and Sustainability Considerations), officers consider that the Design of the Proposed Development is not demonstrated to be at an exceptional level of Design, and because only a partial aspect of the proposed

VSC can be considered to be extraordinary (i.e. the Sustainability performance), it is concluded that proposed VSC6 is unable to qualify as a Very Special Circumstance.

Conclusion on Very Special Circumstances

For the reasons explained in the step by step assessment above, officers are only able to potentially qualify the Applicant's proposed Very Special Circumstances individually in terms of the Economic Benefits. Also, certain elements of the proposed VSCs could in combination qualify as Very Special Circumstances (i.e. Economic benefits including the retention of a local business, and Sustainability Performance). However, in conclusion of this matter, taken against the potential loss of a substantial area of 8.32 ha of valued Green Belt and other planning harm (as identified further on in this report), there are not considered to be VSCs that would clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt. It is therefore considered that the Principle of the Proposed Development conflicts with Local Plan Policy MG02 (Green Belt) and with the aims and objectives of the NPPF paragraphs 147 and 148.

As noted in the Policy Context section above, the application requires specific assessment in respect of a number of topic requirements identified in the NPPF, in policies within the Local Plan, as well as other relevant requirements in published guidance. In respect of the Principle of the Proposed Development, the proposed land uses require assessment in respect of Economic Impact and Housing.

Economic Impact

The Local Plan is focused on securing a balanced distribution of economic growth. Local Plan Policy PC01 (Safeguarding Employment Land) is concerned with retaining purposely designated employment land, whilst Policy PC03 (Retail and Commercial Leisure Growth) identifies that to meet identified retail floorspace needs as set out in Policy MG01, retail floorspace will be provided at William Hunter Way Car Park (R14) and Wates Way Industrial Estate (R15), as part of mixed-use development. Policy PC04 (Retail Hierarchy of Designated Centres) aims to retain a balanced retail hierarchy within Brentwood's settlement.

It is noted that the proposed car showroom element would not be a standard retail use, and that this land use requires assessment on merit as a similar use. Assessment therefore includes a sequential assessment. In this case, it is clear that there are no readily available existing car showroom sites or development sites within Brentwood that would satisfy the Applicant's related quantum needs and qualitative requirements e.g. the former/existing Vauxhall dealership site on the opposite side of Brook Street has been suggested as a relative comparable by a number of respondents but this site only has approximately 1,200 m² GIA. In addition, the closest growth sites for retail at William Hunter Way Car Park and Wates Way Industrial Estate would not be suitable because the proposed showroom would not be in accordance with the mixed-use principles in Allocation

Policies R14 and R15. Officers therefore accept that there is no further requirement for a sequential test such as that referred to in Policy PC04.

Aside from impacts during the construction stage, the main economic impact would result from the operation of *“12,000sqm GIA Car Showroom Use with Ancillary Office Use (Sui Generis), 20,250 sqm GIA Flexible Employment/Storage and Distribution Uses with Ancillary Office Use (B2/B8).”*

As discussed in the above sections about Very Special Circumstances, for the purposes of a planning assessment there is limited weight that can be attributed to the Proposed Development's economic benefits. The net-additional benefits concern 124 FTE additional operational jobs related to the proposed car showroom's expansion compared to its existing location, and temporary construction employment estimated to be 590–650 person-years of employment.

Consultation responses have been received from both Brentwood Council's Corporate Manager for Economic Development and of Essex County Council's Principal Planning Officer for Economy, Investment and Public Health.

Both are supportive of the economic opportunities of the Proposed Development and they are keen to cooperate with the Applicant to embed additional benefits in case the application were to be approved, such as:

- The Scheme should include workspace. In particular, four B2/B8 units could attract small- and medium-sized businesses in the transport & storage, manufacturing and logistics sectors, helping to diversify Brentwood's economy. The units might also provide much-needed grow-on space for local firms.
- Proposals should consider provisions for home-based employment in terms of suitable space(s) and infrastructure.
- The Scheme should offer apprenticeships.
- The Scheme should work with the JobCentre to provide work opportunities for those who are the furthest from the labour market.
- The Scheme should link to local secondary schools to provide work experience and skills training for younger residents.
- The Proposed Development's occupying businesses and construction contractors should recruit locally wherever possible.
- The Scheme should, during the construction phase, work closely with SECTA, a government-funded training academy that is working to boost construction skills across multiple academies in South Essex, and the emerging South Essex Technical University.
- The Scheme should provide an Employment and Skills Plan and associated financial contribution secured via a s106 contribution, helping to fund employment training to give local residents the best chance of securing jobs at the Proposed Development.

On account of Economic Impact alone, subject to conditions and/or planning obligations, the Proposed Development is considered to comply with Local Plan Policy PC01 (Safeguarding Employment Land), Policy PC03 (Retail and Commercial Leisure Growth), and Policy PC04 (Retail Hierarchy of Designated Centres).

Housing

Local Plan Policy HP01 (Housing Mix), Policy HP03 (Residential Density) and Policy HP05 (Affordable Housing) aim for high quality and sustainable new housing development to meet local needs.

The main impact to local housing provision would result from *“50 Residential Dwellings (C3)”*.

The Council’s Housing Director has commented that: *“The 35% affordable housing policy compliant position is welcome and I note that the proposal is for all the affordable homes to be rental. My expectation is that 15% of the affordable offer would be delivered as a low cost home ownership product.”* ... *“we would expect all affordable homes to be delivered on a ‘tenure blind basis’ and ‘pepper potted’ through the development. I have some initial concerns with the size mix which we would want to explore with the applicant, being as it is, confined to one and 2 bed accommodation. We’d also want to understand the conversations that the applicant is having with it’s preferred RP on the future management of the stock.”*

The matters raised here are either for determination at Reserved Matters stage and/or they can be secured via planning conditions and s106 planning obligations.

The Council’s Planning Policy Officer has explained that limited weight should be given to the Proposed Development’s housing delivery due to the fact that the recently adopted Local Plan already accounts for the Borough’s housing need. There is also a recent track record of housing delivery so a robust housing supply is in place and there is no “tilted balance”.

On account of Housing alone, subject to conditions and/or planning obligations, the Proposed Development is considered to comply with Local Plan Policy HP01 (Housing Mix), Policy HP03 (Residential Density), and Policy HP05 (Affordable Housing).

Further Considerations

Access, Highway and Transportation, and Parking Considerations

The proposed main access for the car showroom and employment uses is situated from Brook Street, located along the site’s northern boundary, which will provide access for cars, delivery vehicles, cycles and pedestrians. The proposed main

access for the residential uses is situated from Nags head Lane, located along the site's south-eastern boundary, which will provide access for cars, delivery vehicles, cycles and pedestrians.

The proposed accesses off Brook Street and Nags Head Lane lead to an internal circulation layout that is yet to be determined, which would provide access to parking and servicing areas.

A Transport Assessment and Travel Plan have been submitted in support of this application. ECC Highways issued a holding objection to the application as the submitted TA fell short in a few areas. Further modelling information and updated plans of junction details were submitted. Although the outline application does not propose car parking and cycle parking because this would remain a Reserved Matter, the submitted Transport Assessment assumes that: *“Car parking will be provided in line with ECC parking standards and operational requirements. Cycle parking for each land use will be provided in line with Essex County Council’s parking standards set out in the Parking Standards Design and Good Practice guidance”*.

ECC Highways have confirmed that: *“both accesses fully comply with modern highway standards and have been safety audited. The proposals involve various improvements to the local highway network on both Brook Street and Nags Head Lane which will benefit walking and pedestrian as well as vehicular accessibility. They also complement National Highways walking / cycling improvement plans for Brook Street. The proposals have also been through a robust traffic assessment and the Highway Authority is satisfied that the development can be provided without a material impact on highway safety and efficiency.”* And that the Proposed Development would be acceptable subject to conditions.

National Highways have confirmed that they: *“are content that the development can be accommodated on the SRN without additional mitigation measures and therefore offer no objection.”*

Transport for London responded initially without objection, but with advisory comments regarding matters that have been considered by the relevant highway authorities.

Local Plan Policy MG05 (Developer Contributions) sets out that new development will be expected to make direct provision or contribute towards the delivery of relevant infrastructure as required by the development either alone or cumulatively with other developments, as set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and other policies in the Plan.

As set out within the Council’s Draft Planning Obligations SPD, *“where development is proposed on non-allocated sites in the vicinity of the identified strategic and necessary infrastructure and development will benefit or be acceptable due to the said infrastructure, landowners and developers of those sites may also be required*

by the Council to contribute towards the cost of such strategic infrastructure via a S106 agreement. The Council shall determine on a case-by case basis, in line with the statutory tests for planning obligations, whether such contributions or a proportion thereof, should be payable” (Paragraph 3.16).

The Council’s IDP sets out the key infrastructure projects required in the Borough and outlines how funding sources will be used to deliver new infrastructure. The Council’s approach to apportioning the cost of infrastructure mitigation measures is discussed in Chapter 15 of the IDP (document F45). It is considered the relevant infrastructure requiring contributions from this non-allocated site, listed in the IDP Part B, include:

- Brentwood Town Centre Public Realm Enhancement (IDP Ref T7)
- Brentwood and Shenfield Railway Station Public Realm Improvement (IDP Ref T8)
- Quietway Cycle Routes in Brentwood Urban Area (IDP Ref T10)
- Railway Station Cycle Infrastructure (IDP Ref T12)
- M25 Junction 28 (TA ref. Junction 25) (IDP Ref T28)
- M25 Junction 29 (TA ref. Junction 20 and Junction 26) (IDP Ref T29)

The infrastructure requirements listed above are based on comparable items required from allocated sites within close proximity to this non-allocated site, primarily that of Local Plan Allocation R06: Land off Nags Head Lane. In determining whether such contributions or a proportion thereof, should be payable with regard to this application its necessary to consider forecast trip generation.

Section 8 of the applicants Transport Assessment sets out the proposed development trip generation. This assessment presents the combined trip generation for the whole development during peak hours and concludes the site will generate 234 two-way vehicle movements in the AM peak and 217 two-way vehicle movements in the PM peak periods (a combined total of 451 generated trips). This level of forecast trip generation is considered to necessitate the requirement for developer contributions towards the cost of such strategic infrastructure, as set out below:

IDP Ref	Infrastructure
T7	Brentwood Town Centre Public Realm Enhancement
T8	Brentwood and Shenfield Railway Station Public Realm Improvement
T10	Quietway Cycle Routes in Brentwood Urban Area
T12	Railway Station Cycle Infrastructure
T28	M25 Junction 28
T29	M25 Junction 29

With regards to contributions towards Junction 28 and 29 (IDP ref T28 and T29), National Highways have responded to advise in this case no contributions would be required, hence no value is provided.

Subject to financial contributions and conditions, the proposal is therefore considered to be compliant with Local Plan Policies BE08 (Strategic Transport Infrastructure), BE09 (Sustainable means of travel and walkable streets), BE11 (Electric and Low Emission Vehicles), BE12 (Mitigating the Transport Impacts of Development), BE13 (Parking Standards) and Policy MG05 (Developer Contributions).

Design Matters

The scope of an Outline Planning Application (with all matters reserved apart from Access) would normally have limited consideration to Design. However, in this case, the application is accompanied by relevant information to be approved, in the form of a parameters plan that has been informed by an illustrative masterplan. The parameters plan does inform layout and scale considerations that are implicitly Design-related.

Further, as explained earlier in this report, the Applicant has advanced proposed Very Special circumstances that relate to Design in order to meet a high threshold for assessment due to the Green Belt context.

- Design and Access Statement
- Hilson Moran Environmental & Sustainability Opportunities document
- Statement of Design Intent

In giving urban design and place advice on this application, the Council's Conservation, Place & Development Officer has advised against the residential aspect of the application, because this *"component of the scheme dilutes the narrative, it is incongruous to this site as a Place; my professional opinion is the siting of residential adjacent to the operations of a large scale employment site is not conducive to inclusivity and the spirit of good placemaking"*.

The Council's Design & Conservation Officer (Design) also found: *"the layouts and large-scale orthogonal forms contextually inappropriate for development in this landscape context"*.

However, The Council's Design & Conservation Officer (Design) has offered that (should permission be granted): *"due consideration at reserved matters stage should seek a bespoke language through design coding to ensure buildings are responding to context through their arrangement, scale and architectural form. Further details for fabric first and zero carbon should be demonstrated to create a Gateway which announces in buildings terms the ethos of development which complement the corporate objectives of the Council."*

A Statement of Design Intent goes some way to overcome the usual missing link between the Outline Application scope and the detailed information required for discharge at the Reserved Matters stage. This would lead to a requirement for a Design Code via a planning condition.

However, by virtue of the Parameter Plan, the approximate site levels, the site layout and massing of the Proposed Development would be informed, giving sufficient certainty to reach the conclusion of the Conservation, Place & Development Officer in relation to inappropriate inclusion of the residential component and the contextually inappropriate layout and form of the Proposed Development. Therefore, it is considered that in relation to Design Matters, the Proposed Development fails to comply with Policy BE15 (Planning for Inclusive Communities) and Local Plan Policy BE14 (Creating Successful Places) respectively.

Landscape and Visual Impact

Policy BE14 (Creating Successful Places) is supportive of development proposals provided they *“respond positively and sympathetically to their context and build upon existing strengths and characteristics, and where appropriate, retain or enhance existing features which make a positive contribution to the character, appearance or significance of the local area (including natural and heritage assets)”* and they *“integrate and enhance the natural environment by the inclusion of features which will endure for the life of the development, such as planting to enhance biodiversity, the provision of green roofs, green walls and nature based sustainable drainage”*.

The site is in a prominent position at the gateway to the borough. It currently comprises open pasture that has not been actively farmed for several years. The grass is currently subject to ad hoc mowing.

The proposed masterplan has been subject to extensive pre-application advice and an Essex Quality Review Panel assessment. This has led to changes in the illustrative masterplan’s type and layout of the proposed buildings and wider and better-defined landscape elements that include a central ‘node’ with swales and a stronger east-west connection through the site. The changes provide more opportunities for landscape measures including increased planting. The east-west connection better reflects the existing hedges that would require removal to facilitate development. This has potential to contribute towards the ecological mitigation for commuting bats and nesting birds so long as elements such as external lighting in adjacent development plots are appropriately designed.

The proposed units fronting Brook Street would be up to 10m high. The other four would be up to 12m high.

Reprofiling of the site will result in the buildings adjacent to Nags Head Lane being set lower than the existing ground levels although they would still be visible above the existing boundary vegetation. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been submitted with the application, which has been prepared in accordance with good practice guidance.

The LVIA's landscape assessment has reviewed the national, regional and local landscape character assessments. The district LCA and Land of the Fanns LCA both assess the area as having relatively high sensitivity to change compared to the regional assessment which assesses that character area as having moderate sensitivity. This is not considered surprising as the local assessments are able to consider smaller areas in finer detail so can better assess their sensitivity to change in a local context.

The site is close to the edge of the Great Warley Wooded Farmland local character area. There is a line of development north of Brook Street and adjacent to the A12. Much of this is set back from the road on lower lying ground and which helps retain views out over the wooded hills in South Weald.

The magnitude of change of the proposed development is assessed as High. During construction there would be the loss of 8.49ha of grassland and trees and hedges within the site. The site currently contains a low ridge through the centre and there would need to be ground reprofiling to create the necessary building platforms. The central ridge would be lowered. The LVIA therefore assesses these effects as Substantial Adverse at construction.

The LVIA considers that the effects would reduce to Moderate Adverse once the new landscape planting establishes.

Views into the Site have been restricted by tall trees and hedges which reduces the sense of openness that is experienced from Brook Street and Nags Head Lane. However, in 2021 a section of hedge was removed on the Brook Street boundary near the Nags Head pub. This has opened views over the grassland and trees within the Site.

The LVIA's visual assessment considered the potential receptors that would be affected by the proposal. The Site is in a prominent location at a key entrance to the town; however views of the Site are limited by existing development and infrastructure, topography and vegetation. There are no public rights of way through the site in the surrounding area. The key receptors were therefore identified as walkers using the footways beside Brook Street and Nags Head Lane, drivers on those routes and residents. The viewpoints used in the assessment were agreed with the Local Planning Authority.

The assessment recognises that for walkers using Brook Street the effects would be Substantial Adverse during construction. It considers that the effects would reduce

to Moderate Adverse by Year 10 once the new tree and hedge planting has begun to establish. The significance for motorists would be lower as their sensitivity is lower.

The effects on users of Nags Head Lane were assessed as Moderate Adverse for walkers and Minor Adverse for motorists as most of the existing boundary trees and hedges would be retained which would help filter the views. These effects would be reduced further once additional planting had begun to establish.

The assessment recognises that the development would not be fully screened over time by the planting along Brook Street as the commercial operation requires visibility of the showrooms to be retained. Views of the site however are across the main road.

There are currently no houses on the section of Nags Head Lane north of the railway; however land to the east of the road has been allocated for housing which will increase the number of people experiencing the development in the future.

The Council's Landscape and Arboricultural Advisor has commented as follows.

“The site is currently undeveloped open grassland on slightly raised ground that is outside of the urban settlement and is wholly within the Green Belt. It therefore contributes towards a rural character at a key gateway to the town. The LVIA argues that the area is significantly influenced by the existing commercial development to the north of Brook Street. The existing larger buildings, such as the Holiday Inn are on lower ground which slopes away from Brook Street, set back from the road and partially screened by established trees and shrubs. These factors help to retain prominent views of the wooded hills to the north of the A12 which contains the buildings and lessens their prominence.

This proposal would introduce significantly larger buildings on higher ground where elevations would breach the skyline and therefore be more prominent features. The LVIA recognises that the proposed development would result in Significant Adverse (significant) landscape effects due to the removal of many of the existing hedgerows and trees, 8.49ha of grassland and the recontouring of site levels. Landscape planting cannot be provided until the works are complete. As the individual plots will be constructed for specific customers it would be essential that the structural planting and that beside the main accesses for example be delivered as soon as these are constructed to start to deliver the necessary mitigation. The effects during construction will be influenced by how quickly the individual plots are brought forward. No information has been provided on potential phasing of the individual plots. If the application is permitted and not all plots are to be constructed at the same time, it will be necessary for there to be condition requiring that structural landscaping and that associated with the access roads and public realm are delivered as part of the first phase of works. It might be necessary for planting

within the individual plots to be provided separately; this is unlikely to be significant if the rest of the landscaping is provided.

Post construction there will be a permanent change of character from grassland to large commercial buildings. The large new car showrooms would be constructed in a prominent position on slightly higher ground close to Brook Street. Landscape planting will be provided but this would seek to soften the visual effects rather than provide new tall hedging similar to the current planting to screen the buildings as the applicant wishes to retain views into the showrooms. Some screening will be provided by retained planting on boundaries; however the proposed new landscape mitigation measures will take time to establish with effects still being Moderate Adverse after 10 years.

The LVIA states that the Site is a good location for employment uses due to its proximity to the major road network. It states that the uses would not be wholly out of keeping with the character of the surrounding area as there are existing car showrooms and commercial uses nearby. However, the scale of the proposed buildings is significantly larger than other in the immediate area and sited closer to roads and therefore they would be more prominent. There is not a similar site comprising a collection of large commercial buildings in this part of the borough. The site is close to the M25/A12 junction and the LVIA argues that such a development would not be out of character in this setting. The LVIA refers to the published Landscape Character Assessments acknowledging the urbanisation around the historic towns is a characteristic of the settlements. However, the scale of the proposed development is not in keeping with other development in the vicinity.

The site is prominent at the entrance to the town being on higher ground, albeit it is proposed to grade the levels to form building platforms, and so it will be difficult to screen. The proposed showrooms on the northern boundary will require that any landscape planting does not screen the buildings. It is considered therefore that the proposal would appear out of character due to its scale.

It is agreed that the effects of the proposal would be localised as views to the site are restricted by existing development, vegetation and topography. There are no public rights of way through the site. The main viewpoints are from adjacent roads. The most sensitive receptors will be people walking along the footways beside the roads, however few would be using these routes for recreational purposes. While the effects experienced by those walkers would be significant the effects are localised and experienced in relation to busy roads and existing development. The LVIA recognises that the proposal would have Substantial Adverse effects initially. It is agreed however that these effects would be contained by the existing infrastructure and would be reduced over time by the proposed landscape strategy. Overall however, the scale of the proposed development is considered out of character and would result in the loss of an area of open countryside that is characteristic of the borough. As a result on balance, I am unable to support the proposal on landscape grounds.”

Officers concur with the Landscape and Arboricultural Advisor and it is therefore considered that in terms of Landscape and Visual impact, the Proposed Development fails to comply Local Plan Policy BE14 (Creating Successful Places).

Historic Environment

Built Heritage

A Heritage Assessment has been submitted in support of this application. The Council's Heritage Buildings Officer (Built Heritage) does not agree fully with the Heritage Assessment and raises objection to the Proposed Development. The following includes the verbatim assessment of the Heritage Buildings Officer (Built Heritage), which describes the areas of contention and the assessed resultant material harm to the setting of the Grade II Listed Nags Head Inn that the Application Site borders onto.

In particular, the submitted Heritage Assessment concludes that: "the proposals would not have direct impact upon the listed building of Nag's Head Inn, or indirect impact through development within setting. Having assessed the submission I advise that whilst it is correct to state no direct impact to the listed building (this is due to the fact there are no works proposed to the listed building of the Nag's Head Inn) the assessment of impact upon setting I find to be flawed and the conclusion of impact, in my opinion, incorrect.

The assessment on impact offered to the LPA, affords weight (Section 3.10) to the phasing of the listed building, it goes on through photographic reference to illustrate the historic core being located at the furthest point of the zone cited for development; the significance of a listed building and its setting however, is not wholly reliant on phasing of individual chambers, a listed building is listed as a whole, and as with all Heritage Assets, one aspect is not graded higher than another, significance and setting relates to more than a period of inception.

I agree the listed building is sited on an important character corner and the intersection with Nag's Head Lane is characterful, but as a transitional point it's setting has dual character, one which responds to the growth of the urban area (east) and at the west it offers an open and rural environ at the edge of Borough; the agrarian landscape which currently exists at the proposed development site is unchanged, not subjected previously to the urban growth of the town. The Heritage Assessment is silent with regards to impact within the wider setting e.g., from Mascalls, South Weald. The County Archeologist should advise in respect of Heritage Environment Record given the Roman Road Monument to the north.

Section 4.3 of the HA states 'there is historical precedent for development within its boundaries, with demolished built form visible on historic mapping on and to the rear of the Brook Street frontage'. This is in reference to very limited plots dated within the C18th and C18th century, including the Windmill, such map regression

does not illustrate a precedent of urbanism, moreover this shows the land use as agrarian, at most small holdings to support the land.”

In summarising, the Heritage Buildings Officer (Built Heritage) confirms that: *“the harm does not trigger Para 201 of the National Planning Policy Framework, it does however trigger Para 202”*. Officers concur with this analysis.

Archaeology

The Place Services Historic Environment Advisor has advised that the Application Site’s potential heritage interest may comprise Medieval and Roman remains in addition to a series of historic buildings are visible within the development site on the 1st edition OS map (surveyed in 1866), including a windmill.

“Any archaeological deposits present on site may be destroyed or disturbed by the proposed work and should therefore be recorded prior to development.” Therefore,

“A professional team of archaeologists should undertake the archaeological work, which will initially comprise a trial trenching evaluation of the proposed development site. This will be followed by a programme of archaeological excavation and/or monitoring, depending on the results of the trenching.” This should be secured via planning conditions in case the application were to be granted permission.

Balancing Assessment and Conclusion (Historic Environment)

Paragraph 200 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that *“Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.”* Therefore, an assessment of the material harm to heritage assets officers should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. In this case, neither the submitted Heritage Assessment nor the Planning Statement offer specific explanation of what the public benefits of the proposal would be for the purpose of a planning judgment regarding this matter.

These benefits are considered to comprise the additionality in terms of economic opportunities and housing provision, that have been described in the assessment of the Principle of the Proposed Development in this report. The headlines for this comprise:

- employment from the operation of the Proposed Development;
- additional business location space in particular an opportunity for the existing car dealership business to decant from its current expiring lease site (this particular benefit may be secured by a personal planning permission), and;
- 50 additional dwellings, 18 of which would be affordable housing.

It is noted again, that limited weight can be given to these benefits due to the fact that the Local Plan already allocates land for development to satisfy local need.

This should be weighed against the harm in terms of the significance of the setting of the Grade II Listed Nags Head Inn, which is ostensibly the open land that retains the contrast to inform the edge of settlement with gateway condition with the Nags Head Inn at its focal point that would be fundamentally changed as a result of the Proposed Development.

Officers consider that this a finely balanced case but that the assessed harm to heritage assets is not outweighed by the benefits from the discounted scale of economic opportunities and housing provision that is assessed to result from the Proposed Development.

In conclusion, officers consider that the Proposed Development does not accord with Policy BE16 (Conservation and Enhancement of Historic Environment) of the Brentwood Local Plan.

Community Infrastructure

Policy MG05 (Developer Contributions) requires that: *“All new development should be supported by, and have good access to, all necessary infrastructure. Permission will only be granted if it can be demonstrated that there is sufficient appropriate infrastructure capacity to support the development or that such capacity will be delivered in a timely and, where appropriate, phased manner by the proposal.”* And that: *“Where a development proposal requires additional infrastructure capacity, to be deemed acceptable, mitigation measures must be agreed with the local planning authority and the appropriate infrastructure provider.”* And the Essex Developers’ Guide to Infrastructure Contributions provides associated detailed requirements.

A number of relevant consultation responses have been received, but these do not cover all the remits of Policy MG05 and the Essex Developers’ Guide to Infrastructure Contributions. East of England Ambulance Service has requested funding for ambulance service (as well as providing design advice) and Mid and South Essex Integrated Care System has requested funding for additional floorspace of additional health services. The Essex County Fire and rescue Service responded with advisory observations regarding: emergency response arrangements; access; flood plain risk; water supplies, and; sprinkler system.

It is considered that the Proposed Development would not be able to deliver the community infrastructure required on site. Therefore, should planning permission be granted, in order to comply with Policy MG05 of the Local Plan, the Applicant would be required to enter into a Legal Agreement and planning conditions would need to be imposed so that appropriate mitigation would prevent harm to community infrastructure such that it would not be able to meet the needs of the existing community as well as the prospective occupants of the Proposed Development.

Please refer to the Planning Obligations section of this report for further information.

Sustainability

A formal Energy and Sustainability Statement and an Environmental & Sustainability Opportunities document have been prepared to clarify the overall sustainability credentials of the proposals and the extent to which renewable energy technology can be incorporated into the development.

The key sustainability features are as described in the above section regarding Proposed VSC 6: "Design and Sustainability Considerations", including the positive outcome of negotiations with the Applicant to secure improved Sustainability performance of the Proposed Development. The Council's Sustainability Officer provided an initial response, which was later supplemented by review commentary from the Council's Sustainability Consultant Ecolytik.

Therefore, officers are satisfied that, subject to planning conditions to secure additional requirements agreed with the Applicant, the Proposed Development would be compliant with and exceed the relevant standards of Local Plan Policy BE01 (Carbon Reduction and Renewable Energy), Policy BE02 (Water Efficiency and Management), and Policy BE04 (Managing Heat Risk).

Health Impact

Local Plan Policy MG04 (Health Impact Assessments) stipulates that: *"To ensure new developments is designed to promote good health, a Health Impact Assessment, will be required for residential proposals of 50 or more units (or less than 50 units at the discretion of the planning authority where the number of units could propose a significant impact on the community and infrastructure) and non-residential developments of 1,000m², or more, and hot food takeaways that are not within a designated town, district or local centre and are within 400 metres of a school entrance. The Health Impact Assessment will be prepared in accordance with the advice and best practice as published by Public Health England and locally through the EPOA HIA Guidance Note, using the most up to date guidance. The purpose of the Health Impact Assessment is to identify opportunities of positive health impacts and potential negative impacts and how they might be mitigated. "*, and that: *"Where significant impacts are identified, planning permission will be refused unless reasonable mitigation or planning controls can be secured."*

The issue of Health is a cross-cutting theme that affects many other areas of assessment, such as Employment, Housing, Design, Air Quality, Noise, residential Amenity, Community Infrastructure, etc

The application contains a Health Impact Assessment, which was prepared with reference to the Essex Planning Officers Association HIA online guidance, together with the Welsh Health Impact Assessment Support Unit (WHIASU) HIA guidance, to identify the following overarching health determinants:

1. Access to education;
2. Access to work and training;
3. Access to health and social care services and other social infrastructure;
4. Access to open space and nature;
5. Accessibility and active travel;
6. Housing and Homes Design;
7. Access to healthy food;
8. Social cohesion and inclusive design;
9. Crime reduction and community safety; and
10. Environmental Sustainability.

On each of these determinants, the Proposed Development has scored between “neutral” and “moderate benefit” apart from Environmental and Sustainability determinants (in relation to the construction phase only), on which the score is a “slight adverse”. The Proposed Development is expected to have an overall neutral effect during the construction phase and an overall slight to moderate positive effect during operation.

The key elements of the operational proposals which can be seen to improve local health outcomes can be summarised as follows:

- Creation of significant jobs during the construction and operational phases, supporting stable incomes across a range of skill levels which can in turn permit access to stable housing, healthy food and access to sport and recreational activities.
- Potential reduction in rates of out-commuting through delivery of employment locally, leading to reduced and shorter car journeys.
- Reducing overweight and obesity in adults through the provision, support, and accessibility to walking and cycle routes in and around the Site and encouragement through key connections. Furthermore, the land use proposed incorporates open amenity spaces for use by future employees and residents, and the public.
- Encouraging physical activity for all through introduction of high quality landscaping and pedestrian links, and provision of information on local sport and recreation amenities, and parks and areas of nature, to future employees and residents.
- Welcome pack information for employees and residents regarding active and public transport opportunities, and Travel Plan monitoring to set and monitor targets for reduction in car usage.

- A large central open space is to be provided as open space, which will promote activity, community cohesion and the reduction of isolation, passive surveillance and reduction in opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Combating carbon emissions within new commercial space through the delivery of energy efficient buildings, based on minimising heat loss and renewable technologies throughout.
- High quality design of homes including energy efficiency, natural lighting and green landscaping environment rich in biophilia. Homes to be designed to permit home working to reduce commuting and car reliance.
- Encouragement of community gardening initiatives among residents to increase access to healthy food and enhance community cohesion and social capital.

Officers concur with the HIA's conclusions, and the Applicant has accepted that should planning permission be granted, the proposed development will necessitate related planning conditions and planning obligations, which have been identified under other related assessment headings. This may be in line with Local Plan Policy MG05 (Developer Contributions) and Local Plan Policy MG04 (Health Impact Assessments).

Ecology and Biodiversity

Local Plan Policy NE01 (Protecting and Enhancing the Natural Environment) requires development proposals to use natural resources prudently and protect and enhance the quality of the natural environment. All proposals should, wherever possible, incorporate measures to secure a net gain in biodiversity, protect and enhance the network of habitats, species and sites (both statutory and non-statutory) and avoid negative impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity. Compensatory measures will only be considered if it is not possible fully to mitigate any impacts.

Policy NE04 (Thames Chase Community Forest) requires that development proposals which fall within the Thames Chase Community Forest Area should not prejudice the implementation, aims and objectives of the Thames Chase Plan, of which those relevant to the application's ecology are as follows.

- b. to sustain the natural integrity of the Community Forest's air, land and water including wildlife, and;
- e. to enable effective partnership working from national to local level to maximise the impact of available resources.

Two Preliminary Ecological Appraisals were undertaken in April 2019 and July 2020, in accordance with CIEEM good practice guidelines. The PEA concludes that the site has moderate ecological value and recommended mitigation measures and further surveys that would be required.

The ecology report states that a full scheme of enhancement measures should be designed for implementation on the site following the results of further surveys and establishment of any specific mitigation measures.

The Council's Landscape and Arboricultural Advisor has commented that:

"While specific mitigation has been outlined the wider enhancements have not been detailed. Measures shown in the landscape plan such as the proposed western tree belt and planting beside the swales would provide some wider mitigation for lost features however it is limited and would not fully mitigate the loss of wider habitat."

The Council's Landscape and Arboricultural Advisor has also commented in respect of the proposed 10% Biodiversity Net Gain that:

"No Biodiversity Net Gain calculations have been provided with this application. ... Running the BNG metric calculations would be a way of showing that the scheme can achieve an overall benefit for biodiversity to help demonstrate the sustainability of the scheme."

Officers understand that the detailed assessment of the Proposed Development is not a realistic possibility until further details are available in the form of surveys and design and specification details, including Biodiversity Net Gain. This is inherent to the limited scope of an Outline Planning Application. The Council's Landscape and Arboricultural Advisor has not raised significant concern advising an objection on the grounds of ecological impact. Therefore, it is reasonable that further details of ecological surveys and mitigation measures including those within detailed landscaping proposals should be the subject of a planning condition to inform further ecological assessment. Further the specific deliverable of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain should also be secured, either through a planning condition or a planning obligation as appropriate.

The Essex Badger Protection Group have raised no objection subject to conditions. Natural England responded to confirm they have no comment. Thames Chase Community Forrest did not respond to its consultation notification.

It is considered that subject to the above conditions, in respect of ecology and biodiversity, the Proposed Development would comply with Local Plan Policy NE01 (Protecting and Enhancing the Natural Environment) and Policy NE04 (Thames Chase Community Forest).

Arboriculture

Local Plan Policy NE03 (Trees, Woodland, hedgerows) requires that: *"proposals should, so far as possible and practicable, seek to retain existing trees, woodlands and hedgerows where they make a positive contribution to the local landscape"*

and/or biodiversity or which have significant amenity value. Wherever possible and appropriate, landscaping schemes should take account of and incorporate these existing features in the scheme and where any loss is unavoidable, incorporate measures to compensate for their loss.”

The arboricultural assessment recorded a total of 187 individual trees, 14 hedges, 13 tree groups and 1 woodland area on-site or immediately adjacent to the site boundary. A total of 136 of the trees were assessed as Category C (Low Value) or Category U (72%). One Category A tree was recorded within the grounds of the Nags Head. The proposed layout would require the removal of 97 individual trees, 7 hedges and 9 trees to facilitate development or due to their poor condition. Most of the tree to be removed have been assessed as Category C with 14 Category B trees requiring removal. The most significant trees to be removed are the old and veteran oaks associated with the hedges crossing the site. These include two historic pollards which were assessed for their cultural value.

The proposed landscape strategy shows a new woodland belt on the western boundary and new tree and shrub planting throughout the site. While these would help to mitigate the losses, it is essential that as part of a final landscape scheme large growing specimen trees are incorporated to replace the larger mature oaks that would be lost. There should be space, for example within the central green spine. The trees fronting Brook Street will be clear stemmed and need to retain views of the car showrooms.

The Council’s Landscape and Arboricultural Advisor has commented that: *“A large proportion of the existing trees would require removal to facilitate development however most of these are of low value when assessed individually. The scheme will result in the loss of 14 Category B some of which are veteran pollards which have cultural value, albeit the trees have defects which are typical of specimens of that age. Most of the trees to be removed are within the site and screened by existing vegetation on the boundaries. This reduces the impacts on amenity that the proposal would have if these trees were removed. New tree planting would be provided which would mitigate for the loss of the trees. It would be necessary however to ensure a proportion of the new tree planting comprises large growing specimens that adequately mitigate the loss of the mature oaks. As this is an outline scheme it is considered that the detail could be provided as part of reserved matters application; however I would request that the principle of providing some larger specimens is included within a landscape condition.”*

Therefore, officers consider that subject to a condition, the Proposed Development complies with Local Plan Policy NE03 (Trees, Woodland, hedgerows).

Land Contamination

Local Plan Policy NE10 (Contaminated Land and Hazardous Substances) aims to manage any risks, including to human health and the environment including the quality of local groundwater or quality of surface water.

A Geo Environmental Assessment and a Geo Environmental Risk Assessment. Brentwood Council's Environmental Health Officer has commented that: *"The Phase 1 and 2 Geotechnical and Geo-Environmental Report, dated 1st January 2019 found no significant pollution linkages, suggesting the land is uncontaminated. There were a couple of recommendations within the report, that should be followed, including:*

- *If topsoil is to be exported from the site it should first be stockpiled and an*
- *appropriate number of samples tested for the BS3882 suite to confirm its*
- *suitability as multipurpose topsoil.*
- *A Design Sulphate Class of DS-4 AC-3s should be adopted for concrete in contact with the ground."*

These matters should therefore be the subject of a planning condition so that the Proposed Development complies with Local Plan Policy NE10 (Contaminated Land and Hazardous Substances).

Flood and Water Management

Local Plan Policies NE09 (Flood Risk) and BE05 (Sustainable Drainage) aim to avoid unacceptable risk of flooding and to incorporate appropriate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) for the disposal of surface water, in order to avoid any increase in surface water flood risk or adverse impact on water quality. The Sustainable Drainage Systems Design Guide for Essex provides complementary guidance on the planning, design and delivery of attractive and high-quality SuDS schemes which should offer multiple benefits to the environment and community alike.

A Flood Risk Assessment and a drainage strategy accompany the application. The Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning shows the site to lie within Zone 1. The site is not at significant risk of flooding from any source.

Shallow infiltration type SuDS, such as shallow soakaways, have been shown to be unsuitable through soakaway testing due to the presence of impermeable London Clay. Deep borehole infiltration has also been shown to be unviable by testing. It is proposed that surface water will discharge to an existing highway drainage system, which is assumed to discharge to an unnamed watercourse 200m north of the site. The off-site drainage system will be offered for adoption by Thames Water. Attenuation storage will be sized for the 1 in 100 year plus climate change event and accommodated by permeable block paving over a voided stone sub-base in the car parking areas and oversized pipes or proprietary below ground voided storage

units if required. Foul effluent will discharge to the diverted public foul sewer systems crossing the site. The on-site drainage systems will be privately owned and maintained.

Additional information was requested by ECC SuDS to assess the application, which was provided by the Applicant. Further to this, ECC SuDS confirmed that the proposal is acceptable subject to conditions.

The above demonstrates that, subject to conditions, the scheme meets the requirement of Local Plan Policies NE09 (Flood Risk), BE05 (Sustainable Drainage) and the Sustainable Drainage Systems Design Guide for Essex.

Noise

Local Plan Policy BE14 (Creating Successful Places) aims to safeguard the living conditions of future occupants of the development and adjacent residents.

A Noise Impact Assessment has been submitted in support of this application.

Brentwood Council's Environmental Health Officer has confirmed that: *"the construction hours [that have been submitted] are in line with Environmental Health's recommendations and the noise mitigation measures are appropriate. It is recommended the construction times are conditioned ..."*

Due to the site's proximity to the strategic road network, Brentwood Council's Environmental Health Officer has concluded that traffic noise *"would likely impact the material enjoyment of future property owners and occupiers"*. The imposition of a planning condition has been recommended.

The noise assessment not only assessed the current noise but considered noise from the proposed commercial sites within the build, including noise from deliveries and increased traffic as a result of the build. Brentwood Council's Environmental Health Officer has concurred a required condition to curtail operational activities.

Subject to planning conditions, with respect to Noise, the Proposed Development is therefore considered to comply with Local Plan Policy BE14 (Creating Successful Places).

Air Quality

The purpose of Local Plan Policy NE08 (Air Quality) is for development to meet national air quality standards and identify opportunities to improve air quality or mitigate local exceedances and impacts to acceptable legal and safe levels.

An Air Quality Assessment report has been submitted in support of this application.

The air quality report concludes that the development should not have any impact on local air quality, and close receptors will not be impacted. However, with the proposed construction, the risk from dust was classed as “medium risk”. This is because large volumes of dust will be produced by earthworks, construction, and truck out, creating a medium risk of dust soiling to sensitive receptors. The report lists recommendations from the Institute of Air quality Management.

Brentwood Council’s Environmental Health Officer has commented that: “would like an Environmental Construction Management Plan (CEMP) or Dust Management Plan confirming how dust will be controlled at the proposed build.” This may be imposed by a planning condition.

Officers consider that the Proposed Development would, subject to a condition, with Local Plan Policy NE08 (Air Quality).

Refuse and Recycling

Local Plan Policy BE14 (Creating Successful Places) aims for proposals to meet high design standards and deliver safe, inclusive, attractive and accessible places. This includes consideration of functional needs for storage, refuse and recycling collection points.

The application is submitted in Outline so specific design and management arrangements regarding refuse and recycling should be submitted at a follow-on stage in case the application were to be approved. Environmental & Sustainability Opportunities report does include a number of suggested measures in relation to the management of the Proposed Development’s waste as follows.

- Incorporation of recycled materials into the development where possible;
- Provision of composting facilities for residential dwellings and site landscaping, and;
- Encouraging tenants to explore local recycling options for waste produced on site e.g. end-of-life tyre recycling for rubber modified asphalt.

The Sustainability Statement that accompanies this application notes that: *“It is anticipated that this development will produce a Site Waste Management Plan, highlighting key refurbishment materials and the correct waste streams for recycling these materials.”* Therefore, no specific proposals have been included for how the Proposed Development’s would manage its waste, and a condition should require submission of relevant proposed details including a Site Waste Management Plan.

Subject to conditions to secure the matters discussed above, the Proposed Development is considered to be compliant with Local Plan Policy BE14 (Creating Successful Places), in respect of Refuse and Recycling.

Neighbours' Amenity

Policy BE14 (Creating Successful Places) of the Local Plan is generally supportive of development proposals provided they safeguard the living conditions of future occupants of adjacent residents, and, as noted above, a number of related issues of specific concern have been raised in representations.

A small number of residential properties are located relatively close to the Application Site. These properties may have the greatest potential to be affected by the Proposed Development in terms of any impact on their amenity. There are also residential areas east of the Nags Head junction.

There would be two key stages of the Proposed Development to be considered specifically in relation to residential amenity and these are the construction and the operational stages. Most of these matters are assessed elsewhere in this report under headings, including: Noise and Air Quality (alongside Highways and Transportation).

There would be specific requirements enshrined in planning conditions to govern the mitigation arrangements for neighbouring residential amenity (as well as other users of the area) during the construction stage. Examples of these are a Construction Environmental Management Plan and a Dust Mitigation Plan as advised by the Council's Environmental Health Officer.

One specific matter in relation to residential amenity is the potential impact on residential properties' access to Daylight and Sunlight. The Building Research Establishment's advice is that properties should retain adequate levels of light, not necessarily retain existing levels. Whilst the Outline application does not include a daylight and sunlight assessment regarding light to nearby residential properties, officers have reviewed the distance and relative situation of the properties. Officers have had particular regard to the westerly offset and distance of 61 Brook Street with the nearest proposed corner building block, and the old farm's situation due west of the Application Site. Officers are satisfied that there are no concerns that the proposed parameter outline of the nearest buildings could not be constructed to avoid potential harmful impact on the daylight and sunlight exposure of these two nearby properties, so long as their detailed design was properly tested. In order to secure such a safeguard, a planning condition should be imposed to ensure that this matter would be properly assessed at the Reserved Matters stage.

Therefore, subject to such a condition, officers consider that in terms of any potential harmful impact for reasons of Daylight and Sunlight, the Proposed Development complies with Policy BE14 (Creating Successful Places) of the Local Plan.

Crime and Safety

Policy BE14 (Creating Successful Places) of the Local Plan is generally supportive of development proposals provided they safeguard the living conditions of future occupants of adjacent residents, and that proposals should provide a comprehensive design approach that delivers a high quality, safe, attractive, inclusive, durable and healthy places in which to live and work.

The Essex police service responded with a requirement to achieve the relevant Secured by Design accreditation for this development, which will be Secured by Design Homes 2019 Version 2, March 2019 for the residential properties and Secured by Design Commercial Developments 2015 version 2 for the commercial units. Further, the Police service also provided advisory commentary regarding: Lighting; Public Realm and open Space; Car Parking Provision, and; Road Layout, Cycle Paths and Footpaths.

As mentioned above, the Outline application format does not include full design details for the Proposed Development and therefore, at Reserved Matters stage, such details will be assessed with reference to Policy BE14 and with reference to Secure by Design Guidance.

Therefore, officers consider that in terms of Crime and Safety, at this stage the Proposed Development complies with Policy BE14 (Creating Successful Places) of the Local Plan.

Planning Obligations

The applicant has accepted that any planning permission granted would necessitate certain obligations in respect of the proposed application to be dealt with by way of an Agreement under Section 106 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990. This is in line with Local Planning Policy MG05 (Developer Contributions) and the Essex Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions.

The Applicant has provided proposed s106 Heads of Terms, covering the following topics.

- Highways and S278 Works
- Employment and Training
- Health
- Affordable Housing
- Biodiversity Net Gain

Officers observe that the above list does not cover all relevant topics for this development, including those specified in the Essex Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions. In light of officers' recommendation (see further

below), the obligations required to make the Proposed Development acceptable in planning terms have not been fully resolved between the applicant, officers, the Highway Authority and other consultees/stakeholders.

As the application is recommended for refusal, no legal agreement has been advanced. Should the Committee be minded to approve the application, further discussions on any legal agreement is delegated to officers to resolve. However, based on the current position, it is considered that the Proposed Development does not comply with Local Planning Policy MG05 (Developer Contributions) and the Essex Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions.

7. Conclusion

As is appropriate for the assessment of a planning application of this scale, officers have conducted a proportionate assessment that has reached a number of conclusions that need to be balanced against each other in order to advise a final recommendation.

The Proposed Development is inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would have a significant impact on the openness of the Green Belt. There would need to be very special circumstances that *clearly* outweigh this harm for the application to be approved. It is officers' view that the very special circumstances advanced by the applicant, either individually or collectively, do not outweigh the established overall harm to the Green Belt and the assessed other harm arising from the proposed development, such as the effect on the setting of the listed building. Despite the assessed benefits in respect of Economic Development, Housing and Sustainability Performance, the residual harm to the Green Belt means that the Proposed Development fails to comply with NPPF paragraphs 147 and 148, and Local Plan Policy MG02 (Green Belt) and for this reason the principle of the Proposed Development is unacceptable.

The assessed harm from the Proposed Development apart from its impact on the Green Belt comprises the following matters.

- The Proposed Development fails to comply with Local Plan Policy BE14 (Creating Successful Places) because:
 - (in terms of Design) the layouts and large-scale orthogonal forms contextually inappropriate for development in this landscape context.
 - (in terms of Landscape and Visual impact) temporary but Significant Adverse landscape effects would result due to the removal of many of the existing hedgerows and trees, 8.49ha of grassland and the recontouring of site levels, and because the scale of the proposed development is considered out of character and would result in the loss of an area of open countryside that is characteristic of the borough.

- The Proposed Development fails to comply with Local Plan Policy BE15 (Planning for Inclusive Communities) because (in terms of Design) the siting of residential adjacent to the operations of a large scale employment site is not conducive to inclusivity and the spirit of good placemaking.
- The Proposed Development does not accord with Local Plan Policy BE16 (Conservation and Enhancement of Historic Environment) due to the resulting harm to the setting of the Grade II Nags Head Inn that is not outweighed by the assessed public benefit.
- The Proposed Development does not comply with Local Planning Policy MG05 (Developer Contributions) and the Essex Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions, without a commitment to all the required mitigation in respect of Community Infrastructure and other matters.

As a final conclusion; whilst beneficial economic outcomes and a welcome additional supply of housing would result from the Proposed Development, only limited weight can be given to their additionality. The assessment has therefore established that overall, there would be resulting planning harm from the Proposed Development. Officers recommend that the planning permission be **REFUSED** for the detailed reasons stated above.

Recommendation

The Application be REFUSED for the following reasons:-

R1 The Proposed Development is unacceptable because it would result in the erection of new buildings in the greenbelt outside any exception listed in the National Planning Policy Framework. The proposal therefore represents inappropriate development in the greenbelt which is harmful. The very special circumstances advanced by the applicant, either individually or collectively, do not clearly outweigh the significant harm to the Green Belt and the other identified harm arising from the proposed development including the impact on the setting of the listed building. The development conflicts with Local Plan Policy MG02 and the aims and objectives of the National Planning Policy, paragraphs 147 and 148.

R2 The layouts and large-scale orthogonal forms are contextually inappropriate for development in this landscape context, and the siting of residential units adjacent to the operations of a large scale employment site is not conducive to inclusivity or of good placemaking.

The Proposed Development is therefore contrary to Local Plan Policy BE14 (Creating Successful Places) and Local Plan Policy BE15 (Planning for Inclusive Communities).

R3 Temporary but significant adverse landscape effects would result due to the removal of many of the existing hedgerows and trees, 8.49ha of grassland and the recontouring of site levels, and because the scale of the proposed development is

considered out of character and would result in the loss of an area of open countryside that is characteristic of the borough.

The Proposed Development is therefore contrary to Local Plan Policy BE14 (Creating Successful Places).

R4 The Proposed Development would result in harm to the setting of the Grade II Nags Head Inn. Although that harm is considered to be less than substantial, it not outweighed by the public benefit of economic development and housing.

The Proposed Development is therefore contrary to Local Plan Policy BE16 (Conservation and Enhancement of Historic Environment).

R5 The proposal fails to provide the required level of mitigation in respect of Community Infrastructure.

The Proposed Development is therefore contrary to Local Planning Policy MG05 (Developer Contributions) and the Essex Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions.

Informative(s)

1 INF05 Policies

The following development plan policies contained in the Brentwood Replacement Local Plan 2005 are relevant to this decision: CP1, GB1, GB2, PC1, National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019 and NPPG 2014.

2 INF20 Drawing Numbers (Refusal)

The drawing numbers listed above are relevant to this decision

3 U0007906

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by identifying matters of concern with the proposal and clearly identifying within the grounds of refusal either the defective principle of development or the significant and demonstrable harm it would cause. Furthermore, the opportunity was provided for the applicant to revise the proposal in a way that might have overcome the objections to the application but the applicant requested that the application be determined as it stands.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

All background documents including application forms, drawings and other supporting documentation relating to this application can be viewed online:
<https://www.brentwood.gov.uk/-/applicationsviewcommentandtrack>

DECIDED: