

 <b>Reigate &amp; Banstead</b> BOROUGH COUNCIL Banstead   Horley   Redhill   Reigate	<b>TO:</b>	PLANNING COMMITTEE
	<b>DATE:</b>	29 <sup>th</sup> September 2021
	<b>REPORT OF:</b>	HEAD OF PLANNING
	<b>AUTHOR:</b>	James Amos
	<b>TELEPHONE:</b>	01737 276188
	<b>EMAIL:</b>	james.amos@reigate-banstead.gov.uk
<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b>	5	<b>WARD:</b> <i>South Park and Woodhatch</i>

<b>APPLICATION NUMBER:</b>	21/00192/F	<b>VALID:</b>	26/01/2021
<b>APPLICANT:</b>	Reigate and Banstead Borough Council	<b>AGENT:</b>	Define Planning and Design Ltd
<b>LOCATION:</b>	<b>LAND PARCEL SOUTH WEST OF WOODHATCH ROAD, REIGATE, SURREY</b>		
<b>DESCRIPTION:</b>	<b>Construction of a crematorium with associated landscape, parking and infrastructure, including a revised junction with Woodhatch Road. As amended on 01/04/2021, 09/04/2021 and on 04/05/2021.</b>		
<b>All plans in this report have been reproduced, are not to scale, and are for illustrative purposes only. The original plans should be viewed/referenced for detail.</b>			

**This application is referred to Committee in accordance with the Constitution as the application site is owned by the Council and the applicant is the Council.**

## **SUMMARY**

This application is made by Reigate and Banstead Borough Council for the construction of a crematorium. The Planning Committee must determine the application irrespective of, and 'blind' to, the applicant, considering it solely on its planning merits against development plan policies and material considerations. Ethical walls have been in place throughout the pre-application and planning application process between the planning officer team considering the application and the those within the Council promoting it.

The application proposes a single-storey, low-rise building of contemporary but simple design which would appropriately blend into the landscape and not adversely harm the open, countryside character of the site. The proposal would have a single cremator allowing for services of up to 45 minutes between the hours of 10am and 4pm Monday to Friday, so avoiding peak rush hours.

The site is located to the south of Woodhatch Road, adjacent to the New Pond Farm allotments and would be accessed off a new/revised access to avoid conflict with the Earlswood Lakes car park on then opposite side of Woodhatch Road. 99 spaces would be provided for the crematorium and 26 spaces for the allotment and countryside users to replace those existing spaces lost to the development.

The application site is located within the Green Belt and is considered to represent inappropriate development. Substantial weight must be given to any harm to the green belt and inappropriate development ought only be permitted where very special circumstances exist which clearly outweigh the harm caused.

In this case the overriding factor in favour of the application is the need for cremation facilities in the local area. This is due to the increase in deaths generally and the increase in those favouring cremations over burials. The outcome of which has led to two local crematoria exceeding capacity, one approaching capacity and only one (Croydon) with spare capacity. Aside from meeting this need, the proposal would provide other benefits in terms of providing residents with more choice of crematoria, better facilities, shorter drive times and potential for longer services. It is accepted that a facility of this type cannot be provided within the urban area whilst meeting the locational requirements of the Crematorium Act and it is considered that the site performs only moderately in its green belt importance with limited other harm. Very special circumstances are therefore considered to exist which clearly outweigh the harm to the green belt and it is not considered that any alternative suitable sites exist that could better provide for the proposed facility.

The proposal is considered to accord with Policy CEM1 of the 2019 Development Management Plan. It is accessibly located with sufficient car parking to meet its needs and designed to be visually discreet so not harming the character of the wider area. It is not within a Groundwater Protection Zone 1 nor is there any contamination issue with the site. The proposal would present a biodiversity net gain and would not impact on any geological assets. A landscape visual appraisal has been prepared in support of the application which demonstrates that there would not be an adverse visual impact on the landscape character of the area. The proposal would be located sufficiently distant from any neighbouring residential properties such that it would not have a harmful impact upon their amenities by reason of noise, pollution, privacy, visual obtrusiveness or for any other reason.

The site is designated as a site of nature conservation interest (SNCI) and part of a wider biodiversity opportunity area however, ecological assessments have confirmed that there would be no harm to protected species and a biodiversity net gain can be achieved. There is therefore no objection from the Surrey Wildlife Trust.

Although two 'B' category trees would be lost to the development, this and the proposed hedgerow loss, is considered acceptable subject to robust landscaping and tree protection conditions with the application offering the potential for significant hedgerow and structural landscape planting.

An air quality assessment has been undertaken which confirms there would be no harm to air quality at the site or in the local area.

The proposal would result in the loss of some allotments and an existing sports pitch but there would be re-provided for by condition so satisfying the requirements of Policy INF2 of the DMP. There is therefore no objection by the Council's allotments Officer or Sport England respectively.

New countryside accesses are proposed across the site to provide for those lost to the development with the potential also for a new cycleway between Woodhatch Road and Lonesome Lane the feasibility of which is to be explored by means of condition.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Planning permission is **GRANTED** subject to conditions.

**Should the Planning Committee resolve to grant planning permission, the application will be referred to the Casework Unit of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities for consideration by the Secretary of State.**

## **Consultations:**

Highway Authority: *The County Highway Authority has assessed the application on safety, capacity and policy grounds and is satisfied that the application would not have a material impact on the safety and operation of the adjoining public highway with respect of access, net additional traffic generation and parking. The County Highway Authority therefore has no highway requirements subject to conditions relating to the following:*

- *Provision of sightlines of 2.4m x 126m at the site access onto Woodhatch Road with no obstructions over 1.05m in height and a means of preventing water from entering the highway.*
- *Provision of tactile paving and dropped kerbs on the north and south sides Woodhatch Road (A2044) on the western side of the proposed access.*
- *Closure of existing access from the site to Woodhatch Road.*
- *Provision of 99 car parking spaces.*
- *Provision of 10 bike stands*
- *Provision of the internal site roads and pavements in accordance with the approved plans.*
- *Provision of a Construction Transport Management Plan*
- *Provision of electric vehicle charging points*
- *Restriction on the commencing of cremation services between 10.00hrs and 16.00hrs on Monday to Fridays.*

*A number of informatives are also recommended.*

Surrey CC Countryside Access: *The planning application site is located north west of FP64. The proposed development does not appear to have any impact on this public right of way although we are aware of informal paths across the site which may be affected. I can confirm that SCC has received an application for modification of the Definitive Map and Statement which is the legal record of rights of way in Surrey.*

*We welcome the proposal to retain many of the existing pedestrian routes as either permissive or dedicated rights of way and will assist with this, but there appears to be no provision for cyclists. We would therefore request a cycle route be provided between Lonesome Lane and Woodhatch Road as well as improvements to the surface of FP64.*

Environmental Health (Contaminated Land): *Whilst no areas of concern have been identified from historical mapping from the application site, there are some areas of potentially concern in the vicinity. An informative is recommended.*

Environmental Health – Air Quality – *In his initial comments the Council's EHO requested an Air Quality Assessment and information on the height of the proposed chimneys on the proposed crematorium. Following the receipt of an Air Quality Dispersion Modelling and a Chimney Height Assessment, the EHO has provided further detailed comments.*

*Further information has been requested in respect of the dispersion model, including that*

- i) *The model should be run for a 1 cremator scenario as there was evidence of building downwash and are likely to be periods when only 1 cremator is running*
- ii) *That the model was rerun to examine mercury and HCl under the 1 and 2 cremator scenarios*
- iii) *That the scale of the isopleth / contour maps was made more visible, and the data expressed as a decimal rather than in a scientific notation, and that following completion the contour maps of the model output be supplied to the Council as a shapefile or DXF format*

*Overall, following a review of the information the EHO has no objections although it is stated that a new assessment would be required should anything alter in the cremator set-up than currently proposed. A condition is suggested to this effect.*

*The current work is based on Facultative Technologies kit and assumes that cremator is gas fired and also has NOx and mercury abatement kit fitted (p3) and assumes a common flue (p4) – page numbers are from the D1 calculation report. If anything is different in the final cremator set up e.g. different manufacturer, use of electric rather than gas, or different abatement kit, then some of this work is likely to need to be rerun. As the D1 assessment report states on p4 ‘if an alternative to this is used then operator must rerun the assessment.’*

*Surrey CC Sustainable Drainage: The following updated documents submitted as part of the above application have been reviewed and should be referred to as part of any future submissions or discharge of planning conditions:*

- *Flood Risk Assessment and SuDS Assessment, Price & Myers, April 2021, revision 3, document reference: 29105;*

*They state that they are satisfied that the proposed drainage scheme meets the requirements set out in the aforementioned documents and are content with the development proposed, subject to suitably worded conditions are applied to ensure that the SuDS Scheme is properly implemented and maintained throughout the lifetime of the development.*

*Environment Agency: The majority of the site is located within Flood Zone 1 (<0.1% AEP), with the southern boundary of the site being located in Flood Zone 2 (>0.1% AEP) and Flood Zone 3 (>1% AEP). The proposed development (as detailed in the FRA) is classified as Less Vulnerable under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and as such would be considered appropriate within Flood Zone 1. The development has taken a sequential approach and located the building and landscaping outside of Flood Zone 2 and 3, as such we are satisfied that this meets the requirements of the sequential test.*

*We would request that the surface water discharge is limited to greenfield rate, as detailed in the submitted FRA. Any discharge into the main river (Earlswood Brook and New Pond Ditch) would require a Flood Risk Activity Permit from the Environment Agency.*

*Sport England: Initial objection to the proposal on the basis of substantial loss of a playing field with no replacement provision. Concern raised that the Council had not undertaken a robust assessment of its playing pitch needs in the form of a Playing Pitch Strategy (PSS) and as a result there was insufficient evidence that the playing field was excess to the requirements of the district.*

*Subsequently the applicant submitted additional information in the form of an update in regard to its Playing Pitch Strategy to be completed in Spring 2022. As part of the review this will consider the use of the recreation pitches within the application site, to ensure the appropriate long-term provision of pitches across the Borough. In the interim, a mitigation strategy has been prepared that proposes the reprovision of the recreation pitch that is lost as a result of the proposed development. The replacement pitch would be provided on the field to the east of the existing recreation pitches, as shown on the submitted Recreation Pitch Relocation Plan.*

*Following the provision of additional information to Sport England regarding the replacement pitch, Sport England have no objection and the proposal is considered to meet their exception policy. A condition is proposed to secure its provision prior to the commencement of development.*

*Natural England: Do not foresee any issues with the proposals with regards to the impacts upon the Reigate Heath SSSI (3.1km from the site) and the Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment SAC (3.8km from the site). Recommend that good landscaping proposals are put forward to ensure that as well as creating a tranquil environment for those wishing to visit or attend a ceremony that it also provides a benefit to wildlife locally. As such seeing that local species of trees and plants are used which would fit in with and expand on the local character of the surroundings would be ideal here. Landscaping can also help to ensure that the proposed crematorium itself is to some extent shielded from wider views out of Reigate and Redhill locally.*

*Surrey Wildlife Trust (SWT): SWT note that the site boundary is located immediately adjacent to land identified by Natural England as Deciduous Woodland and Wood pasture and Parkland, both Habitats of Principal Importance. Further, Earlswood Brook, a river running immediately south of the site is a Habitat of Principal Importance. The majority of the site also forms part of New Pond Farm/Felland Copse SNCI, whose habitat comprises 'Ancient semi-natural woodland (Felland Copse), semi-improved neutral grassland (wet and species-rich), scrub and a brook'. Hedges are present within the application site and it also includes habitat suitable for protected species including bat, amphibians (noting Great Crested Newt (GCN) presence within 500m of the site), reptile and breeding birds. Advice is provided in this respect.*

*A Preliminary Ecological Assessment Report and Outline Biodiversity Management Plan has been submitted with the planning application. This confirms that the proposal would have a direct impact on the SNCI. Planting proposals are included within the landscape plan to mitigate the proposal. Conditions are proposed to secure the details of the landscape plan and a Landscape and Ecology Management Plan to ensure the ongoing management of habitats, flora and fauna on the site and ensure that the SNCI is not adversely affected by the proposals. The use of a Construction Environment Management Plan is also suggested, together with a condition to control external lighting to ensure against harm to bat foraging.*

*SWT recommend the proposed species surveys, relating to bats, great crested newts / amphibians and reptiles are conducted prior to the determination of the planning application. Tree felling of two trees (with low bat roost suitability) should be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of European Protected Species legislation. A condition is also proposed to secure the biodiversity enhancements set out in section 6*

*of the Ecological Appraisal on the site in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF.*

*It is noted that the applicant has undertaken some additional survey work however given the seasonal nature of ecology surveys not all can be completed at this stage. Conditions are proposed to secure additional survey work in respect to further bat surveys, GCN / amphibian surveys and reptile surveys and to secure the reptile and amphibian mitigation (translocation strategy).*

*Earlswood Common Steering Group:* *Object on grounds of flawed site assessment; increase in traffic; SNCI and AONB impacts.*

*Planning Policy Team:* *Advise that the application is inappropriate development within the green belt for which very special circumstances must be demonstrated. The alternative sites assessment is considered appropriate but independent advice ought to be sought regarding compliance with Policy CEM1 of the DMP.*

*The Reigate Society:* *No objection but raise a number of concerns, including:*

- *The need for the development has not been fully justified*
- *Lack of evidence of actual public demand or consultation with local undertakers / religious leaders in the local area*
- *The economic viability of the new crematorium*
- *Inappropriate development within the green belt. Although very special circumstances have been argued this would not counterbalance the position.*
- *Development would set a precedent for further urban creep into the green belt*
- *Impact on SNCI. Landscape plan submitted insufficient*
- *Increase in traffic and congestion*
- *Proposed development would offer an element of formality to what is quite an 'untidy' entrance and certainly with New Pond Farm and a large derelict house adjoining, all in Council ownership, needing a major makeover and natural screening.*
- *Proposed building itself is a welcomed clean, modern, single storey design with good use of materials that will allow it to site harmoniously within and not impact upon its rural surrounding.*
- *The site layout is well considered and will not increase noise levels to the residents of the houses to the north due to speed restrictions. The Crematorium Act states that one must not be nearer than 200 yards from housing. It appears that some houses may be slightly under that distance, however, they have no concerns over the efficiency of the emissions and affect on the local area.*

*Campaign to Protect Rural England:* *Objection on grounds of inappropriate development in the green belt.*

*CPRE Surrey do not consider that the applicants very special circumstances case which is based on the need for a crematorium in the Borough and the lack of any acceptable alternative sites, and also that this need outweighs the harm to the Green Belt and 'any other harm' is sufficient. As such it is considered that the application is contrary to local plan policies including policy CS3 and CEM1 as a clear case of need has not been demonstrated and the harm out weighs the case of need for a crematorium.*

*A number of concerns are raised including:*

- *Need Assessment is insufficient – Insufficient need in the locality to justify the harm, Do not accept the argument that because there is no facility in the Borough at present that this is in itself a justification, No evidence of demand from local residents, No support from funeral undertakers, Use of 30 minute drive time to examine other crematoria in the vicinity inappropriate, Capacity remains available at other crematoria outside the borough, No allocation in the DMP for a crematorium.*
- *Examination of alternate sites insufficient – assessment should have examined any non Green Belt sites, as required in CEM1, and then full details of all the other potential sites which were investigated. Instead there is only reference to one other location which, on the surface, would seem no worse than the Woodhatch Road site.*
- *Impact on the Green Belt – Development would be inappropriate development in the green belt. It would fail to meet 3 of the functions of the Green Belt and would cause harm to the openness of the green belt arising from the proposed built development, the visual impact and increase in intensification arising from the use. CPRE Surrey do not consider that the VSC case has been made to overcome this harm.*
- *Any other harm – replacement public rights of way will lack the rural character as well as the convenience and desire lines of the existing routes, loss of formal and informal playing fields with only a vague promise of replacement facilities, loss of allotment spaces. Proposal considered contrary to policy INF2*
- *Traffic and Parking – concerns relating to the traffic assessments, lack of requirement for right hand turning bays into the site, junction proximity to the Earlswood Lake car park access and inadequate parking.*
- *Impact on the biodiversity and ecology of the area including with respect to the Earlswood Common Local Nature Reserve, New Ponds Farm and Fellands Copse SNCI and Biodiversity Opportunity Area.*
- *Impact on the landscape – Does not reflect local distinctiveness, harm to landscape in both long and local views.*
- *Loss of community facilities and the effect on allotment provision if the access is moved to meet the highway authority's concerns.*

Woodhatch Green Spaces Preservation Group: *WGSPG strongly object to the proposal, considering the proposal to represent inappropriate development in the green belt for which it has not been demonstrated that there are very special circumstances. In addition to the original objection and reports commissioned by WGSPG, a further letter of objection was received in response to amendments and additional information submitted by the applicants.*

*The Woodhatch Green Spaces Preservation Group (WGSPG), has been formed in direct response to Reigate and Banstead Borough Council's (RBBC) proposal to provide a local crematorium in Woodhatch. In summary, WGSPG object to the proposals for the following reasons:*

1. *The Need has not been proven – the applicants needs assessment is flawed (as identified by submitted reports by Impact Planning Services Ltd (IPS Ltd) on behalf of WGSPG). This includes objections relating to:*
  - o *Lack of site allocation in DMP*
  - o *Lack of consideration of Council document "Development Management Plan (Regulation 18 stage) Cemetery and Crematorium Needs June*



2016” which concludes that there is not an overriding need for either a new cemetery or crematorium provision at present within the Borough. Conflicts between evidence provided in this report and applicants planning application submission.

- *Objections to methodology and assumptions used in assessing need and therefore analysis unreliable and conclusions flawed, Lack of demographic analysis of natural catchment area, No evidence of demand from local residents, No support from funeral undertakers. Lack of proven need arising from proximity and accessibility, Lack of qualitative need arising from capacity issues at nearby crmatoria / failure to examine funeral delay evidence satisfactorily, Failure to demonstrate if the proposal would satisfy a need.*
2. *The Alternative Site Assessment is flawed. As a result of the needs assessment flaws, the selection of sites has been wrongly narrowed. Objections to methodology - see IPS Ltd reports.*
  3. *Very special circumstances have not been demonstrated, justification of very special circumstances should include as a minimum, the following:*
    - a. *A robust demonstration of need for the facility: and*
    - b. *Demonstration that there are no alternative suitable sites outside of the Green Belt.*
  4. *The proposal conflicts with policy CEM1. The proposal does not comply with (a), (c), (d) and (e), and possibly (b) also. (see submitted report by Colin Smith Planning on behalf of WGSPG).*
  5. *The site is inappropriate: Harm is extensive and includes, but not limited to:*
    - a. *Site is Metropolitan Green Belt and does perform well as an essential buffer between Reigate and South Earlswood*
    - b. *It is a Site of Nature Conservation Importance*
    - c. *It is in the Low Weald Biodiversity Opportunity Area*
    - d. *It provides valuable amenity benefit to the local community:*
      - i. *Access to open spaces and the countryside*
      - ii. *Access to allotments locally*
      - iii. *Access to football pitches for both formal and informal recreation locally*
      - iv. *Extensive footpaths with access to Felland Copse, Earlswood Lakes SNCI and Greensand Ridge*
      - v. *Extensively used by residents and visitors, very popular with dog walkers as a safe area to allow dogs to exercise off the lead*
      - vi. *Eases pressure off Earlswood Lakes*
  6. *Various conflicts within the NPPF and local plan particularly (policies CS2 and CS3 of the Core Strategy and CEM1, DES1, DES9, TAP1, NHE1, NHE2, NHE3, NHE4 of the Development Management Plan) - see submitted report by Colin Smith Planning on behalf of WGSPG. Objections raised relating to:*
    - *Inappropriate development*
    - *No need for a crematorium (see attached document IPS Ltd),*
    - *Very special circumstances have not been made*
    - *Alternative location/proposal preferred*
    - *Harm to the Green Belt/countryside*

- *Out of character with surrounding area*
- *Loss of Public Open Space and Recreational Space, including allotments*
- *Highway safety concerns*
- *Access arrangements not adequate*
- *Increase in traffic and congestion;*
- *Inadequate parking*
- *Impact on SNCI and Biodiversity Opportunity Area and insufficient consideration of these designations*
- *Impact on protected habitats, species and biodiversity*
- *Impact on ancient woodland and adjacent nature reserve*
- *Landscape and visual impact*
- *Loss of trees/Conservation Hedgerow;*
- *Potential flooding & drainage issues;*
- *Proximity to local housing;*
- *Overlooking and loss of privacy;*
- *Impact on heritage/Archaeological*
- *Pre-application consultation inadequate*
- *Design and layout concerns including in relation to parking, building design, lack of clarity regarding choice of gas or electric cremator and height of chimney stack*
- *Impact to human health / air quality concerns*
- *Conflict with covenant*
- *Viability concerns*

*Reigate Ramblers:* *In summary, the Reigate Ramblers make the following points in respect to footpath related issues:*

- *The development is taking place in an open field green area commonly used for walking and other leisure purposes and sited in Green Belt. In walking terms, it provides a rural link between the South Park/Rushetts Farm/Dover Green area and Earlswood Lakes. This then connects onwards to routes to the North and East including the Greensand Way.*
- *The Planning Application proposes a number of mitigating actions in the form of new ProWs and permissive paths. While these are welcome, they are very much a second best to a continuation of the current position.*
- *If the development were to go ahead, the status of the connecting routes along the outside of the crematorium grounds should be strengthened by:*
  - *converting the proposed Riverside Way from a permissive path to a PRow;*
  - *Re-establishing the former trackway linking Woodhatch Road with the Rushetts Farm area as a PRow. This would be in line with potential proposals by the national Don't Lose Your Way project.*

*London Green Belt Council:* *Object to the proposed development on the following grounds:*

- *Inappropriate development within the Green Belt – concerned that very special circumstances do not exist and there is no need for new crematoria in the area;*
- *Failure to preserve openness – the proposals would have an urbanising impact detrimental to the recreational and footpath users of the site;*
- *Loss of recreational uses – including allotments and playing pitch;*

- *Failure to support and promote healthy lifestyles – due to loss of allotments and playing pitch;*
- *Ecological impact – due to designations and bio-diversity net gain and climate change concerns.*

Horizon Cremation Ltd (HCL):

*Horizon Crematorium are promoting a new crematorium development in Tandridge DC area on site between Godstone and Oxted just to the north of the A25. An initial objection was received together with a further letter of objection in response to additional information from the applicants.*

*Objection has been received on the following grounds:*

- 1. Inappropriate development within the green belt for which very special circumstances have not been demonstrated.*
- 2. The need argument fails to consider better placed sites available for crematorium outside of the district and fails to include comparative analysis of the impact of land outside of the 30 minute drive catchment areas (White Land) with their (Horizon's) proposal and others proposed outside this Borough potentially better serving a wider catchment as follows:*

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Population left unserved within Reigate and Banstead, Sevenoaks and Tandridge Council areas</i>
<i>Existing</i>	<i>125,900</i>
<i>Existing plus Woodhatch Road</i>	<i>65,000</i>
<i>Existing plus Old Farleigh Road</i>	<i>58,000</i>
<i>Existing plus Byers Lane</i>	<i>45,000</i>
<i>Existing plus Oxted</i>	<i>29,000</i>

*Table 1 Comparative analysis of the population left in white land were current crematorium proposals to be built.*

- 3. It has not been demonstrated that there are not alternative sites that are better placed to meet the identified need for a crematorium and would result in less harm to the green belt. The alternative sites assessment is considered inadequate and the methodology flawed. Other sites not considered by the applicant are better located and more suitable*
- 4. The sites designation as a SNCI and adjacent to a Local Nature Reserve has not been appropriate considered and weighted. The submitted ecology report identifies that protected species surveys are undertaken, reptile surveys must be undertaken prior to a decision being taken on the application. Concern is also raised by Ecology Solutions Ltd (on behalf of HCL) that the site is of high interest to local bat populations and the development of the site could have an effect on local bat populations.*
- 5. Part of the site is in flood zone 3 the remainder is in flood zone 1, objection is raised to the Environment Agency position that the site is suitable for a crematorium and the flooding situation at Randalls Crematorium was raised.*
- 6. The suitability of the site is questioned noting the complex requirements the development of the site would involve including the relocation of allotments,*

*playing fields and diversion of footpaths, coupled with the scale of objections received from local residents*

7. *Viability and highway safety concerns*

8. *The additional information submitted by the applicant does not address concerns raised by HCL, particularly in relation to the alternative site assessment. Additional information on ten alternative sites not considered in the Council's Alternative Site Assessment has been provided by HCL.*

## **Representations:**

Letters were sent to neighbouring properties on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021, a site notice was posted 26<sup>th</sup> February 2021 and advertised in local press on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021. Neighbours were re-notified on the revised plans for a 21 day period commencing 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

533 responses have been received raising the following issues:

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Response</b>
Inadequate parking	See paragraph 6.27
Noise & disturbance	See paragraph 6.86
Inconvenience during construction	See paragraph 6.86
Out of character with surrounding area	See paragraph 6.6
Increase in traffic and congestion	See paragraph 6.27
Overdevelopment	See paragraph 6.6
Hazard to highway safety	See paragraph 6.27
Harm to Conservation Area	The site is not located within a Conservation Area
Overshadowing	See paragraph 6.86
Overbearing relationship	See paragraph 6.86
Health fears/air quality	See paragraph 6.42
Poor design	See paragraph 6.6
Loss of/harm to trees	See paragraph 6.33
Harm to wildlife habitat	See paragraph 6.49
Drainage/sewage capacity	See paragraph 6.64
Flooding	See paragraph 6.64
Harm to Green Belt/countryside –	See paragraph 6.92

Property devaluation	This is not a material planning consideration
No need for development	See paragraph 6.103
Alternative location or proposal preferred	This is not a material planning consideration
Loss of private view	This is not a material planning consideration
Loss of allotments	See paragraph 6.78
Loss of playing pitch	See paragraph 6.83

4 comments in support has been received which express support for the economic benefits of the proposals.

A petition was also submitted to the Council (as applicant) asking that it not submit or consider the application.

## **1.0 Site and Character Appraisal**

- 1.1 The application site comprises approximately 4.98ha of open land to the south of Reigate, located to the south of Woodhatch Road. The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt.
- 1.2 The site is served by an existing access drive serving New Pond Farm house and associated Council depot. The existing site comprises an area of allotments to the north, beyond which is the residential area of Dovers Green along Fellands Close, which forms the southern extents of Reigate (around 85 metres away). To the north east is a further area of allotments located along Woodhatch Road. To the east lies Fellands Copse Park which is designated as ancient woodland around 40 metres from the application site. Beyond this lies a farmstead with associated outbuildings. Further east lies the A204 Woodhatch Road, the main route into Reigate from the south and the proposed access route to the site. To the south lies open fields and an area of open woodland (Fellands Copse). Immediately to the west lies a recreational park and an area of scrub land.
- 1.3 The application site lies to the west of Earlswood Brook, which run westwards beyond Lonesome Lane to eventually link to the River Mole close to the village of Sidlow. The edge of the site where it abuts the brook is designated as EA flood zone 2 and 3 with the majority of the site lying in flood zone 1.
- 1.4 The main area of the site comprises an irregular shaped open field that is defined by hedgerows boundaries. The site also incorporates some areas of existing open space, part of a playing field and allotments to the north of this field for the purposes of providing an improved access and junction with Woodhatch Road. A large part of the site is designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI)

## **2.0 Added Value**

- 2.1 Improvements secured at the pre-application stage: Pre-application consultation was carried out prior to the application being submitted for a scheme broadly similar to the current proposals. The applicants were advised that the proposals would constitute inappropriate development in the green belt which would have a harmful impact on openness. They were advised it would need to be demonstrated that very special circumstance existing in order to outweigh the harm caused not only by the proposed crematorium but also be the other matters such as the enlarged car park alongside the access to the proposed crematorium.
- 2.2 Further advice was offered with regards to the impact of the proposals on the open landscape of the site and the need for substantial and meaningful landscaping, on the use of materials proposed to try to soften the appearance of the proposed building, on the need to take account of the bio-diversity of the site and surrounding area, taking account of the location within a Site of Nature Conservation Interest, on the need for an assessment of the impact of the proposals on the adjoining allotments, on public footpaths and playing fields in the area, on flooding and drainage and on adjoining highways in terms of an increase in traffic on the highway and a satisfactory form of access
- 2.2 Improvements secured during the course of the application: During the course of the application, further information has been provided on a range of issues which is discussed in more detail below.
- 2.3 Further improvements could be secured through the use of conditions as discussed below

## **3.0 Relevant Planning and Enforcement History**

- 3.1 There is no relevant planning history.

## **4.0 Proposal and Design Approach**

- 4.1 This is a full application for the construction of a crematorium together with associated access, parking and landscaping on land located to the west of Woodhatch Road. The crematorium would be formed by a series of interconnected single storey elements with flats roofs of varying heights and with a low pitched roof to the rear element where the chimneys protrude from the roof, and which feature large areas of glazing and glazed roof slopes within brick elevations. The roof over the cremator part of the building would be a green roof.
- 4.2 The proposed crematorium would be accessed via a new junction and access road directly from Woodhatch Road. This proposes to effectively upgrade an existing road that runs south west from Woodhatch Road and serves existing allotments and farmsteads located either side of it. The new junction would be offset further east from the existing entrance to Earlswood Common car park to the north of Woodhatch Road and incorporates a wider route than existing to accommodate two-way vehicle traffic and to provide a pedestrian footway along its length.

- 4.3 The main crematorium building comprises an entrance foyer with single chapel that would accommodate up to 120 people. A single crematory is proposed, allowing space for an additional crematory if required in future (subject to further assessment and planning permission). A waiting area is provided within a linked building at the entrance connected to the main building via the port cochere.
- 4.4 The proposed crematorium would be surrounded by an extensive landscape area, incorporating formal gardens for quiet contemplation and incorporating memorial features closer to the building, with a more natural landscape towards the site boundary that ties in to the existing woodlands and waterside landscape character.
- 4.5 The proposed layout would include a two-way primary route that provides circular access to the main building with secondary routes that provide access to the service area, the hearse pick-up area and car parking facilities. There would also be a distinct footpath network through the site to provide pedestrian access to the main building and garden areas.
- 4.6 The main visitor car parking areas would be located at the entrance to the crematorium site, to minimise vehicle movements around the site. Parking provision reflects the needs of the proposed services, with an area of overflow parking to accommodate larger service attendance. The parking areas are interspersed with landscape features to soften their appearance and integrate them with the wider site. A total of 110 car parking spaces are provided in connection with the proposed crematorium, as follows:
- 99 parking spaces (of which 12 are disabled bays);
  - 7 staff spaces;
  - hearse bay spaces;
- 4.7 Further to this, there is currently an area of hardstanding which is used by vehicles accessing the park area to the south of Woodhatch Road. This area could broadly accommodate 26 vehicles and therefore, these spaces would be re-provided formally off the access road in an area before the entrance to the crematorium parking area. These spaces would not form part of the crematorium site from an operational perspective. This area also accommodates a bus/coach layby and a horse and cart holding area for the service which require a horse drawn cortege.
- 4.8 The proposed crematorium would operate time slots for services between the hours of 1000 – 1600 on weekdays. It is forecast that the proposed crematorium would perform up to 1,600 services per year, after the first few years of operation. This averages at between 6-7 funerals per weekday; however, the number of funerals varies in line with increased deaths typically occurring in the winter months.
- 4.9 The duration of a typical service is usually 40/45 minutes. Therefore, each time slot is 60 minutes which allows time for people to enter the chapel, hold the service and leave. No services would take place at weekends; however, the site

would be open 365 days a year to allow people to visit the grounds, gardens of remembrance and the memorials of loved ones.

- 4.10 The proposed crematorium would only undertake a single service in the chapel at any one time.
- 4.11 A design and access statement should illustrate the process that has led to the development proposal, and justify the proposal in a structured way, by demonstrating the steps taken to appraise the context of the proposed development. It expects applicants to follow a four-stage design process comprising:  
Assessment;  
Involvement;  
Evaluation; and  
Design.
- 4.12 Evidence of the applicant's design approach is set out below:

Assessment	<p>The character of the surrounding area is assessed as being predominantly open space lying to the south of the built up area of Reigate, which slopes gently down to the north-west and south-east. The highest point on the site is located away from the road frontage at Woodhatch Road.</p> <p>Site features meriting retention are listed as boundary hedgerows.</p>
Involvement	<p>Community views were sought by the applicants prior to the application being submitted. Due to lockdown restrictions a virtual public consultation event was held to present the emerging proposals. The event was advertised via a letters that were distributed by post to around 3,400 homes and businesses within the surrounding area of the site, including within Dovers Green and South Earlswood. A website was created to accept feedback and a virtual event was held between 6:30pm and 8:30pm via Zoom on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> October 2020, chaired by a Borough Councillor.</p> <p>Pre-application consultation was also carried out with a range of stakeholders.</p>
Evaluation	<p>No other development options considered were by the applicants. However, other sites in the Borough were considered by the applicants and assessed in the submitted Alternative Sites Assessment.</p>
Design	<p>The applicant's reasons for choosing the proposal from the available options are discussed in more detail below.</p>



4.13 Further details of the development are as follows:

Site area	4.9ha
Existing use	Agricultural land, parkland and playing field, allotments (part)
Proposed use	Crematorium
Existing parking spaces	26
Proposed parking spaces	125 (99 for the crematorium use plus 26 as reprovision of the above for the allotment and countryside users.

**5.0 Policy Context**

5.1 Designation

Metropolitan Green Belt New  
Pond Farm/Felland Copse SNCI

5.2 Reigate and Banstead Core Strategy

CS1(Sustainable Development)  
CS2 (Valued Landscapes and Natural Environment),  
CS3 (Green Belt)  
CS5 (Valued People/Economic Development),  
CS10 (Sustainable Development),  
CS11 (Sustainable Construction),  
CS12 (Infrastructure Delivery),  
CS17 (Travel Options and accessibility)

5.3 Reigate and Banstead Development Management Plan 2019

DES1 (Design of New development)  
DES8 (Construction Management)  
TAP1 (Access, Parking and Servicing)  
CCF1 (Climate Change Mitigation)  
CCF2 (Flood Risk)  
NHE2 (Protecting and enhancing biodiversity and areas of geological importance)  
NHE3 (Protecting trees, woodland areas and natural habitats)  
NHE5 (Development within the Green Belt)  
CEM1 (Cemetery and crematorium provision)  
INF1 (Infrastructure)  
INF2 (Community Facilities)

5.4 Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework  
National Planning Practice Guidance

Supplementary Planning Guidance	Surrey Design Local Distinctiveness Design Guide Vehicle and Cycle Parking Guidance 2018 Outdoor Playing Space Provision Planning Obligations and Infrastructure SPD
Other	Human Rights Act 1998 Equalities Act 2010 Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 Equality Act 2010 (inc Public Sector Equalities Duty)

## 6.0 Assessment

6.1 Development Management Plan Policy CEM2 relates to the provision of cemetery and crematoria. It states as follows:

1. *The Council will support applications for cemeteries and crematoriums where proposals meet the following criteria:*
  - a. *The site should have access from roads, should be located near to transport nodes and should provide sufficient on-site car parking, designed to be visually discrete, to ensure that peak parking demand can be met on the site.*
  - b. *Proposals providing burial and/or cremation plots, should not be situated within a Groundwater Source Protection Zone 1, within a certain distance from specific water sources as set out in national policy, or in areas where there is known evidence of high water tables that would affect the depths required for burial and/or cremation plots.*
  - c. *Where a site is known to be contaminated, or where there is a reasonable possibility of contamination, appropriate investigation, and where necessary mitigation and/or remediation will be required.*
  - d. *The proposed development would not have an unacceptable adverse impact on biodiversity, or geological assets.*
  - e. *The proposal would not have an adverse visual impact on the landscape character of the area.*
  - f. *The proposal would not have a harmful impact on the amenities of neighbouring occupiers, by reason of noise, pollution, privacy, and visual obtrusiveness.*
2. *Within the Green Belt proposals for change of use to cemeteries or crematoriums will only be supported if very special circumstances are demonstrated, and appropriate facilities are kept to a minimum to limit the impact on the Green Belt. Justification of very special circumstances should include as a minimum, the following:*
  - a. *a robust demonstration of need for the facility; and*

*b. demonstration that there are no alternative suitable sites outside of the Green Belt.*

*3. Proposals for crematoriums will be expected to meet the requirements of the Cremation Act 1902 (Section 5), with regards to the siting of the crematorium.*

6.2 The main issues to consider are:

- The principle of new buildings in the Green Belt
- Design appraisal
- Landscape impact assessment
- Highways
- Impact on Trees
- Impact on Air Quality
- Ecology and Bio-diversity
- Flooding and Drainage Issues
- Impact on Public rights of way and footpaths
- Impact on Allotments
- Impact on Playing fields
- Impact on amenity of residential properties
- Energy and Sustainability
- Very Special Circumstances

#### The principle of new buildings in the Green Belt

- 6.3 The application site is located wholly within the Metropolitan Green Belt where the construction of new buildings is generally regarded as inappropriate unless it falls within the specific exceptions set out in Para 149 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Para 150 of the NPPF also advises that only changes of use which preserve openness and do not conflict with the purpose of the green belt are appropriate.
- 6.4 The site comprises open land and is largely free from built development. As such, none of the exceptions set out in the NPPF would apply to this proposal and therefore the proposal would be considered to constitute inappropriate development. Para.147 of the NPPF states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. At Para 148 it continues that, 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. This is mirrored by Core Strategy Policy CS3.
- 6.5 The application will therefore be assessed against the other planning considerations before an assessment of whether 'very special circumstances' exist which outweigh the harm by reason of inappropriateness.

### Design appraisal

- 6.6 DMP Policy DES1 relates to the Design of New Development and requires new development to be of a high quality design that makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of its surroundings. It states that new development should promote and reinforce local distinctiveness and should respect the character of the surrounding area. The policy states that new development will be expected to use high quality materials, landscaping and building detailing and have due regard to the layout, density, plot sizes, building siting, scale, massing, height, and roofscapes of the surrounding area, the relationship to neighbouring buildings, and important views into and out of the site.
- 6.7 The proposed built form has been situated within the centre of the site to utilise the site's topography and the existing mature woodland, hedges and shaws so seeking to ensure that the building is assimilated into the surrounding landscape and to provide an appropriate setting for the facilities use. The crematorium would be formed by a series of interconnected single storey elements with flat roofs of varying heights and with a low pitched roof to the rear element where the chimneys protrude from the roof, and which feature large areas of glazing and glazed roof slopes within brick elevations. The roof over the cremator part of the building would be a green roof so helping mitigate its visual impact and assist in it blending into the landscape.
- 6.8 The materials palette has been amended from that initially proposed to remove the more stark render in favour of a softer, natural brick appearance.
- 6.9 The proposed layout has been directly influenced by the requirements of the Cremation Act 1902, and therefore, the location of the built form on site has been considered in order to consider the relationship of the built form with neighbouring residential properties.
- 6.10 The siting of the built form has also been designed to ensure that it sufficiently located away from the floodplain located to the south east of the site. This will ensure that the proposed development will not result in an increase in flood risk to the site or surrounding area.
- 6.11 The layout and orientation of the building has also been designed to take into account the practical and operational requirements of the use and to enhance the customer experience of the proposed crematorium. It has been designed to allow for a clear sense of procession consisting of approach, arrival, ceremony and departure. The orientation allows exit from the chapel into a sunny south facing flower court with views to the surrounding landscape and proposed Memorial Garden.
- 6.12 The layout incorporates the provision of parking for both visitors and staff to meet the needs of the crematorium facility. This provision has been split into two separate areas across the site, including a primary car park and an overflow car park, to ensure that the visual impact on the surrounding landscape is reduced.
- 6.13 The Council's Local Distinctiveness Design Guide SPD identifies the site as being within the Low Weald, which was once heavily wooded and is

characterised by traditional buildings with local orange-red brick, tile-hanging, and older buildings of timber frame or weatherboard barns. There are no buildings of that vernacular in the vicinity which tends to be dominated by buildings characteristic of 1930s-50s suburbia. As such and given the nature of the proposed use, it is not considered that the proposed development ought to take its cues from the local vernacular but instead be of a high-quality stand alone design. The proposal is considered to be of simple, contemporary but peaceful design which is capable of blending into the landscape subject to landscape planting as will be discussed further in the report.

- 6.14 It is considered that the design and external appearance of the proposed crematorium has been carefully considered to provide a high quality development which sits within a landscaped setting and which provides an appropriate scale, form and external appearance for the crematorium utilising materials which site well within its setting. In this regard, the proposals are considered to accord with the provisions of DMP Policies DES1 and CEM1.

#### Landscape assessment

- 6.15 Policy NHE1 of the DMP requires development proposals to respect landscape character and landscape features, have regard to sensitive receptors, be designed to complement the landscape and its surroundings, to use appropriate building materials, demonstrate opportunities taken to enhance immediate and wider setting and seek to protect the most versatile agricultural land.
- 6.16 Relevant to any landscape assessment is Surrey County Council's Surrey Landscape Character Assessment (SCLA) which categorises the site as WF2 "Flanchford to Horley Low Weald Farmland" with description as follows:

#### *WF2: FLANCHFORD TO HORLEY LOW WEALD FARMLAND*

##### *Location and Boundaries*

*The Flanchford to Horley Low Weald Farmland runs along the eastern side of the River Mole floodplain.*

*It is defined by underlying geology, the River Mole River floodplain to the west and constrained by Built Up Areas to the east. The boundary follows easily recognisable features such as roads and field boundaries. The character area is outside the Surrey Hills AONB.*

##### *Key Characteristics*

*A low lying landscape, underlain by Wealden Group Mudstone, Siltstone and Sandstone solid geology.*

*Landform is very gently undulating, which rises up from the River Mole to meet the greensand hills to the north.*

*The character area includes a number of winding streams including the Wallace Brook, Earlswood Brook, and Salfords Stream, which issue into the River Mole. In addition, the area is characterised by drains and mill ponds.*

*The character area consists predominately of medium to large scale arable fields with well-maintained hedges. There are a few isolated woodlands, the most significant of which is Slipshatch Wood, registered as ancient woodland and includes a small area of conifer plantation. There are fairly uncontained views, occasionally framed by woodland, across the character area. Rural lanes cross the majority of the character area.*

*Public rights of way link across the character area, from settlements to the east, to and across the River Mole. Public rights of way are limited in some areas, particularly to the north.*

*There is ribbon development along Lonesome Lane, and low density houses at Saxley Hill. With street lighting, signage and fencing, these areas have the appearance of low density extensions to nearby settlements of Horley and Salfords.*

*There are Sites of Nature Conservation Importance in the character area, including Slipshatch Wood, and Bolters Wood. New Pond Farm/Felland Copse, and small parts of Home Grove link across with Character Area UE8.*

*Roads, settlement (mainly to the south) and adjoining Built Up Areas reduce the sense of tranquillity and of remoteness of the area. Although relatively peaceful, providing an undisturbed setting to River Mole.*

*The character area has less woodland, simpler topography and appears more maintained than the Wooded Low Weald (Type WW) to the west of the County, and consequently feels less wild and remote than the wooded low weald.*

In guiding new development the County Council landscape character assessment sets the following criteria:

*Conserve the rural, largely unsettled landscape.*

*Conserve the pattern and character of existing settlements, resisting spread and coalescence of settlement.*

*Conserve and enhance the landscape setting to villages and edge of settlement.*

*Any new development should conserve the enclosure and vegetated character of the surrounding landscape.*

*Built form to be integrated by woodland edges, shaws, hedgerows and open areas linked to the existing network.*

*Ensure new development respects existing rural characteristics and conserves distinctive open areas, greens and commons.*

*Encourage and new built development including sympathetic contemporary architecture to respect local characteristics, through high quality detailing and use of local pattern and building materials.*

*Refer to Surrey design guidance; Surrey Design (Surrey Local Government Association).*

*Ensure farmstead or other agricultural conversions are sensitive to surrounding landscape, with consideration given to design of new domestic curtilages and boundary treatments.*

*New transport or other infrastructure to be integrated in to the landscape by careful siting and additional planting that respects the scale and pattern of the landscape.*

*Ensure new development does not impact on the existing 'dark skies' within this sparsely settled area.*

*Ensure design of lighting and signage respects rural location, biodiversity and dark skies area.*

*Encourage the use of appropriate surfacing, materials and signage for public rights of way footpaths, and cycle ways to minimise the impact on the landscape and character of the open countryside.*

- 6.17 The application is supported by a Landscape and Visual Appraisal which provides an appraisal of the effects of the proposed development on the surrounding landscape and from a number of identified receptors. There are

also illustrative and indicative plans of the envisaged landscape to compliment the development, provide for future visual amenity, biodiversity and importantly screening of the development from external views, particularly those views from the nearby residential areas and the adjoining allotments.

- 6.18 The LVA identifies the site as being relatively well screened from visual receptors by combination of the sloping topography and mature vegetation around the site including along both sides of the Earlswood Brook to which I concur. It continues that direct unimpeded close views are only possible when visual receptors enter the main site from either the two entrance points in the eastern boundary which both cross over the small stream that runs from the allotments down to the Earlswood Brook (Viewpoint B and 1) or from the north western corner of the site (Viewpoint C). It does however identify potential views from the areas to south of the Earlswood Brook, for visual receptors egressing out from the network of paths within Felland Cops out on to the adjacent open ground, are screened and filtered by the mature vegetation growing along the Brook. However, due to the vegetation being deciduous in nature these potential filtered views may become more available to receptors during the winter months.
- 6.19 The LVA identifies that visual receptors using the allotments may have filtered views from the site through the mature vegetation located along southern boundary of the allotments concurrent with the above ground pipeline. Whilst views from the west are effectively screened by the site's boundary hedge and the natural regenerating vegetation on the adjacent land combined with nature of the valley side topography
- 6.20 The LVA correctly identifies the entrance area of the site as being where the majority of the visual impact of the proposals will be perceived by not only the users of the site, the commercial yard, allotment holders but those using the Woodhatch Road with its parallel formal Cycle/footpath and the Earlswood Common Park area. The latter group of receptors will see the new entrance and access road alignment. The former group of receptors have direct close views associated with the new allotment and open space user's car parking area within a mosaic of new planting.
- 6.21 The LVA follows accepted methodology in assessing impacts as positive or adverse with categorisation of substantial, moderate, slight and no notable change/neutral. The sensitivity of the landscape is assessed as being moderate which is agreed and is consistent with the County Council's landscape character assessment.
- 6.22 The LVA includes a summary table, represented below.

Summary Table 8	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Scale	Overall Effect Year 1	Mitigated Effect Year 5	Mitigated Effect Year 10	Mitigated Effect Year 15
<b>Landscape Effect Main Area</b>	Moderate	Moderate Adverse	N/A	Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Slight Adverse	Neutral
<b>Entrance Area</b>	Moderate	Negligible Adverse	N/A	Slight Adverse	Slight Adverse	Neutral	Slight Beneficial
<b>Visual Effects</b>							
<b>Public Footpaths FP64</b>	High	Neutral	No Change	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
<b>Permissive Footpaths Eastern Area (Main Site Area)</b>	High	Neutral	No Change	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
<b>Permissive Footpaths Eastern Area (Entrance Area)</b>	High	Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Slight Moderate Adverse	Slight Moderate Adverse	Slight Adverse	Neutral
<b>Permissive Footpaths within Main Site</b>	High	Major Adverse	Large Adverse	Large/ Very Large Adverse	Large Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Slight Adverse
<b>Users of Earlswood Common and Cycleway Footpath</b>	High	Moderate Beneficial	Moderate Beneficial	Moderate/Large Beneficial	Moderate/Large Beneficial	Large Beneficial	Large Beneficial
<b>Residential No 2 New Pond Farm</b>	High	Major Beneficial	Large Beneficial	Large Beneficial	Large Beneficial	Very Large Beneficial	Very Large Beneficial
<b>No 11 to 56 Felland Way</b>	High	Negligible Adverse	Neutral	Slight Adverse	Slight Adverse	Neutral	Slight Beneficial
<b>39 Lonesome Lane</b>	High	Neutral	No Change	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
<b>Redhill Common</b>	High	Neutral	No Change	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral

- 6.23 This concludes that the most significant adverse effects of the proposed development would relate to the permissive footpaths within the site and I concur with this. The LVA considers that the impact of the building on views from the footpaths can be reduced through mitigation to result in a neutral or slight adverse effect in the long term. I would contend that this is broadly correct, there will be greatest impact at or shortly after construction before landscaping has had an opportunity to take, after which new planting has the potential to significantly mitigate the visual impact of the development.
- 6.24 The LVA also notes an immediate moderate to major beneficial effect to users of the Earlswood Common and cycleway footpath and the residential property at New Pond Farm. The existing entrance to the site is relatively unkempt, dominated by the Connick Tree Care sign and views of the various paraphernalia associated with the allotments to either side. The proposal represents the opportunity to remove the most unattractive elements, formalise the access arrangements and provide enhanced planting to help provide new



landscape planting which would improve the landscape impact from along Woodhatch Road.

- 6.25 The residential property most affected visually, 2 New Pond Farm, will see some visual improvements associated with enhanced landscaping, the removal of the informal car parking and re-siting of the access road. With other residential receptors located further from the proposed development and separated from it, I agree that the impacts upon these would be neutral or slight adverse.
- 6.26 I agree that longer distance views of the site would not be affected and concur with the general findings that there would be an overall moderate adverse impact for the main part for a period of 10 years whilst construction works are completed and landscaping is established and that will continue to a slight adverse impact thereafter. When combined with the slight beneficial impact that could result to the entrance and nearest residential neighbour (subject to conditions) I consider that the overall longer term visual impact upon the landscape to be neutral and the proposal to be compliant with Policy NHE1 of the DMP.

#### Highway matters

- 6.27 Policy TAP1 of the Development Management Plan 2019 requires new development to demonstrate that it would not adversely affect highway safety or the free flow of traffic, that it would provide sufficient off-street parking in accordance with published standards and that it would constitute development in a sustainable location.
- 6.28 The application has been reviewed by the County Highway Authority. They note that the current access to the site is 15 metres from the centre line of the Earlswood Common Car Park access. This access would therefore be closed, and a new access created 15 metre to the west so that it is located 30 metres from the centre line of the access to the Earlswood Common Car park avoiding any vehicular conflict with it. The proposed access has been modelled and the SCC modelling team has assessed and passed it. The proposed junction operates within capacity in all scenarios with no impact on capacity or queuing passed the access to Earlswood Common Car Park. The developer carried out a robust assessment of the access, including:
- Inbound traffic is assumed to be 100% from the northwest and outbound traffic is assumed to be 100% to the southeast. Both movements have to give way to opposing flows and would have a big impact on capacity and queuing. Despite this there is no queuing back to the Earlswood Common Car Park access. In reality the trips will be more dispersed therefore it is even less likely that queuing from the development would extend as far back as the Earlswood Common Car Park access.
  - Traffic flows were taken from 20 09 20 to 26 09 20 inclusive were reviewed in relation to historical data and shown to be comparable to what they should be (despite Covid). However, TEMPro background growth has been applied to the survey and an additional 10% growth applied to base line. Again, despite this there is no queuing back to the Earlswood Common Car Park access.

- The traffic generation for the crematorium site has been taken directly from a surrogate site at West Herts (14 services and two chapels with a daily flow of 870 movements) therefore the trip generation is considerably higher than the proposed site with 7 services (no overlap) with the traffic generation likely to be half (435 daily movements) of the West Herts Site.
  - In addition to this, the worst-case hour (168 movements) of the surveyed West Herts site has been used in the assessment of the junction.
  - Peak hour vehicle generation from the crematorium would be interpeak (from 1000 hours to 1600 hours). This has been applied to the network base peak hours (0800 to 0900 hours peak and 1500 hours and 1600 hours). Therefore, a peak within a peak has been assessed. In reality this situation will not occur.
- 6.29 In terms of parking, the Transport Assessment submitted with the application states 99 spaces including 12 disabled spaces would be provided for the crematorium use. The proposed quantum of spaces is likely to be adequate. A parking accumulation survey of a site with two chapels where services overlap had a maximum parking accumulation of 138 vehicles. The proposed development has one chapel which is half of the two chapel site therefore the quantum of spaces could be reduced by 50% to get 69 spaces. The applicant is proposing 87 spaces for non-disabled drivers in front of the chapel and a further 12 disabled spaces. The proposed development is to also have 7 staff parking bay and 7 hearse bays, and 26 spaces for the allotment and countryside visitor car park.
- 6.30 It is also recommended that cremations only commence between the hours of 10.00 and 1600 to avoid peak hour traffic on the wider highway network between 1700 and 1800 hours which is the traditional highway peak, since the applicant has only assessed the impact of the development at the junction of the new access with Woodhatch Road and not included other junctions.
- 6.31 The applicant is proposing dropped kerbs and tactile paving on the west side of the new access, so that users of the site can cross the road to the footway on the north side of the site access junction with Woodhatch Road to walk to the bus stop to the west of the access on the south side of Woodhatch Lane.
- 6.32 The County Highway Authority has assessed the application on safety, capacity and policy grounds and is satisfied that the application would not have a material impact on the safety and operation of the adjoining public highway with respect of access, net additional traffic generation and parking. The County Highway Authority therefore has no highway requirements subject to conditions relating to the following:
- Provision of sightlines of 2.4m x 126m at the site access onto Woodhatch Road with no obstructions over 1.05m in height and a means of preventing water from entering the highway.
  - Provision of tactile paving and dropped kerbs on the north and south sides Woodhatch Road (A2044) on the western side of the proposed access.
  - Closure of existing access from the site to Woodhatch Road.
  - Provision of 99 car parking spaces.
  - Provision of 10 bike stands

- Provision of the internal site roads and pavements in accordance with the approved plans.
- Provision of a Construction Transport Management Plan
- Provision of electric vehicle charging points
- Restriction on the commencing of cremation services between 10.00hrs and 16.00hrs on Monday to Fridays.

### Impact on Trees

- 6.33 Policy NHE3 advises that unprotected but important trees, woodland and hedgerows with ecological or amenity value should be retained as an integral part of the development.
- 6.34 The Council's tree officer was consulted on the proposal in order to assess the proposed development against impact upon existing trees and vegetation. The application was supported by a tree and vegetation survey undertaken in October 2020 and an arboricultural impact assessment (AIA) dated 27/01/21. The Tree Officer is satisfied with the accordance to the British Standard.
- 6.35 The AIA identifies trees and hedges that will be removed to facilitate development. Two trees are directly lost to the proposal, number T1 and T2 both are Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) referred to within the updated AIA and the survey extract on drawing number RBBC-WT-001-02 as category 'B' trees. The Tree Officer advises they are relatively small specimens and their loss would be resisted under Policy NHE3 unless there is overwhelming need or benefit from the development, losses of such trees will require significant replacement planting with specimens that will provide visual amenity from day 1. In such a large scheme as on this site there is considered ample opportunity to easily mitigate the loss and provide additional planting and enhancement to the existing landscape to satisfy Policy NHE3 and mitigate for the two trees lost.
- 6.36 The AIA also details the loss of hedges to facilitate the proposed development. The removal of hedgerow H1 which comprise of a native mixture along the Woodhatch Road estimated at 23m in total would be the most 'obvious loss', H1 is a maintained native hedge, its replacement is possible using a similar species mix which should comprise of mainly Hawthorn (60%) with the remaining percentage comprising of 6 other species. Native hedges can provide much greater bio diversity and wildlife habitat and can be managed at a desired height and width, other hedgerow are lost within the application site these are poorer quality, some are fragmented and generally of internal landscape value only, opportunity exists through the planning process to significantly increase the quality of hedges with the application site and section 4.1 of the AIA gives an indication of the level of new native hedging, thicket and low woodland mix that would be introduced, it does also mention the use of 363m of ornamental hedging, which the Tree Officer considers should be revised in the locations to accommodate 'managed' species rich native hedging. I am in agreement with this view, given the biodiversity benefits that would result and this will be expected through the landscaping details to be secured by condition.
- 6.37 Retained trees, hedges and vegetation will need to be afforded high levels of protection throughout the development processes and activities and a robust

arboricultural method statement and tree protection condition is suggested accordingly. Construction activity and processes would be expected to be high with such a development and not only should existing retained trees and vegetation be protected from these processes but areas identified for replacement planting should also be protected in order to prevent damage to the soil structure; these requirements are clearly set out with British Standard 5837:2012.

- 6.38 The Tree Officer also considers the potential impact on the wider landscape from this development with regards the landscape strategy, design statement and reference to a Landscape, ecological management plan (LEMP). He advises there will be a requirement to incorporate substantial soft landscaping to provide the necessary improvements and enhancements and the essential elements of screening to this scheme.
- 6.39 The replacement of hedgerows within this locality should have a strong native influence to replace those lost and to improve the existing structures. Dense planting to all boundaries ought to be undertaken with the use of thicket planting and the establishment where possible of small areas of native woodland, providing connectivity to the existing and planned new hedgerows. As advised by the Tree Officer, ornamental hedges should be avoided and the use of 'managed' native hedging which can provide greater benefits be adopted. This information is generally not prepared at the application stage and is more commonly designed following the illustrative and indicative designs 'post' decision and controlled by condition. The landscaping scheme will also be expected to incorporate structural landscape trees which make a positive contribution from day 1 of planting with a full range of initial planting sizes being used.
- 6.40 Again, the use of native or indigenous species reflecting the current make up within the locality will be required with any ornamental inclusion kept to a minimum. Landmark trees will be required in prominent positions, including the use of semi mature specimens where appropriate. Building resilience into the structural tree landscape is crucial in order to combat existing pests and diseases but also emerging pests and diseases, adopting the 10-20-30% (10% of single tree species 20% of any single genus and 30% of any single family) rule can help to reduce risk presented by monoculture
- 6.41 Therefore, subject to arboricultural, ecological and landscape conditions, the tree officer raises no objections. The scheme has potential to enhance tree and hedge planting across the site and the scheme is considered compliant with Policy NHE3 and is acceptable in this regard.

#### Impact on Air Quality

- 6.42 DMP Policy DES9 relates to Pollution and Contaminated Land and states that for all types of development across the Borough, development will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that (on its own or cumulatively) it will not result in a significant adverse or unacceptable impact on the natural or built environment (including sensitive habitats); amenity; or health and safety due to fumes, smoke, steam, dust, noise, vibration, smell, light or any other form of air, land, water or soil pollution. Where there would be potential adverse effects from

- pollution and adequate mitigation cannot be provided, development will not normally be permitted. This includes pollution from construction and pollution predicted to arise during the life of the development. Particular attention should be paid to development within Air Quality Management Areas.
- 6.43 With regards to Air quality, the Council's Environmental Health officer requested that an Air Quality Assessment was undertaken in order to determine the height of the flue (chimney) that would be attached to the proposed crematorium and to assess the overall impact of the development on the air quality of the surrounding area.
- 6.44 The application is supported by an Air Dispersion Modelling (ADM) report to support the Chimney Height Assessment, and Reigate Heath SSSI Map. The ADM report assesses the impact of the proposed development on air quality. The development proposes a single cremator will be installed at the outset but allows space internally for a second cremator to be installed in future years, should that be required (subject to a separate planning application). The dispersion modelling is, therefore, based on a worst-case scenario with the crematorium operating with 2 cremators and at its maximum theoretical capacity. Overall, the ADM concludes that the modelling shows the stack emissions from the proposed crematorium is unlikely to cause a breach of the current air quality standards and that it is considered that the process contribution to air quality (based on EA assessment criteria) in this instance is insignificant for the pollutants measured at the sensitive receptor locations.
- 6.45 Based upon the maximum capacity for 2 cremators, the ADM and supporting documents confirm that the crematorium would be required to provide up to 3 chimneys. To incorporate this, the roof of the building has been redesigned to accommodate this approach. The proposed ground floor plan remains unchanged, which clearly illustrates the potential location of a second future cremator within the proposed crematory.
- 6.46 As a result of the revisions to the building design, an updated LVA confirms that the amended scheme would continue to result in limited visual impact on the surrounding area. As noted above, a pitched roof is proposed which has been designed to ensure that the chimneys are successfully assimilated into the landscape. Moreover, the proposal would provide an increased area of green roof (total area circa 600sqm) to support the site-wide sustainable drainage strategy.
- 6.47 The applicants go on to state that given the intention to only provide a single cremator as noted above, it is anticipated that only 2 chimneys would be required. They state that as is typical for this type of development, the final detailed specification of the cremator will be agreed post determination of the application and they propose that the final chimney design is required to be submitted for subsequent approval within the parameters of the submitted ADM and LVA through a planning condition.
- 6.48 The Council's Environmental Health officer reviewed the additional information submitted and was satisfied that on the basis of the assumptions made of the cremator (gas fired with mercury and NOx abatement kit fitted), the proposal would have a satisfactory impact with regards air quality. However a condition is

recommended to secure details of the actual cremator to be installed in order that any changes can be assessed and appropriately mitigated.

### Ecology and Bio-diversity

- 6.49 DMP Policy NHE2 relates to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and areas of geological importance. It states in part 3 that development likely to have an adverse effect upon any site designated as an SNCI (site of nature conservation interest) will only be granted where the need for and benefits off development clearly outweigh the impacts and adequate mitigate or as a last resort, compensation, for the impact will be put in place. The Policy states at part 5 that throughout the borough, and especially within Biodiversity Opportunity Areas, development proposals will be expected to: a. retain and enhance other valued priority habitats and features of biodiversity importance; and be designed, wherever possible, to achieve a net gain in biodiversity. Where a development will impact on a priority habitat or species, or protected species, and mitigation cannot be provided on site in an effective manner, developers may be required to offset the loss by contributing to appropriate biodiversity projects elsewhere, in a location agreed with the Council.
- 6.50 The site is located within New Pond Farm/Felland Copse SNCI. New Pond Farm is designated as an SNCI for its sports and open recreational species. Felland Copse is designated as an SNCI for woodland. The development will result in a loss of some grassland habitats at New Pond Farm SNC, but will result in no direct habitat loss within Felland Copse. In the absence of mitigation the loss of grassland area at New Pond Farm SNCI arising from the development could result in a negative impact on the availability of that habitat. It is proposed that other grassland areas within New Pond Farm SNCI will be enhanced, including overseeding existing grassland with additional native wildflower species and management as a meadow. The loss of the 'South Field' grassland area will be mitigated through the implementation of the landscaping strategy, creating a mosaic of semi-natural habitats and results in a biodiversity net gain
- 6.51 The site is also within a biodiversity opportunity area identified by the Surrey Nature Partnership. It forms part of the LW07 Lower Earlswood to the River Mole area which sites within the Low Weald designation. The Surrey Nature Partnership's September 2019 document identifies 50 BOAs within Surrey, covering 39% of the County and states "*BOA consists of a spatial concentration of already recognised and protected sites for wildlife conservation (its 'foundation sites'), inside a boundary that also includes further but as yet un-designated 'Priority habitat' types (plus some other essentially undeveloped land-uses); all of which have common and contiguous geological, soil, hydrological and topographic characteristics to those of the foundation sites. As such, BOAs represent those areas where improved habitat management, as well as efforts to restore and re-create Priority habitats<sup>3a</sup> will be most effective in enhancing connectivity to benefit recovery of Priority species<sup>3b</sup> in a fragmented landscape. They therefore remain the basis for achieving a coherent and resilient ecological network in Surrey, which furthermore now underpins the national ambition for achieving a Nature Recovery Network... In development management; as with any eligible development, proposals within or adjacent to a BOA should be required to deliver biodiversity enhancements as 'net gains' through*

*implementation of local planning policy; but within a BOA such enhancements will be most effective when they are tailored to meet the stated objectives of that BOA. As ever, the scale of enhancements required should be guided by the size and impact of the development, whilst their achievability must be rigorously assured.”*

- 6.52 In support of the proposals, a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) was undertaken that has assessed the ecological impact of the proposed development on the site and surrounding area. The PEA confirms that there are no statutory conservation sites of international importance within 2km of the site. The site is adjacent to the Earlswood Common Local Nature Reserve, which is a statutory conservation site of local importance. The features of nature conservation interest within this LNR are two large lakes, several smaller ponds, wetland corridors, scattered trees and woodland, and semi-improved grassland which includes the nationally rare plant Chamomile. However, the applicants do not consider that the development of the site would have a negative impact on this nature conservation interest area.
- 6.53 The PEA highlights that there are twelve non-statutory designated sites within 2km of the site. However, only two are considered likely to be affected by the development of the site. These include New Ponds Farm / Fellands Copse and Earlswood Common SNCI. The New Ponds Farm / Fellands Copse is designated for its semi-natural woodland and species rich wet grassland habitats, whilst Earlswood Common SNCI has been designated for its ‘mosaic of habitats including acid grassland’.
- 6.54 The PEA considers that the habitats contained within the site itself are common and widespread and do not have a high ecological value. However, the streams scrub and hedgerows may be used by protected species such as bats, great crested newts and reptiles. It, therefore, recommends that the connectivity between the more ecologically valuable areas of Fellands Copse and Earlswood Common are maintained and where appropriate enhanced.
- 6.55 The PEA also sets out a series of ecological enhancement measures, which overall seek to enhance the surrounding ecological value of the area and ensure that the overall ecological impact on the surrounding biodiversity is minimised. These include a range of measures to maintain and enhance the existing hedgerows, wet ditches and streams that are recognised as suitable reptile habitats. It also recommends the provision of additional tree planting to screen the development and encourage wildlife, as well as the creation of a long-term biodiversity management plan to monitor the biodiversity enhancement measures.
- 6.56 The PEA concludes that if the ecological enhancement measures are implemented, then it is considered that the biodiversity of the wider site can be enhanced, and therefore, the impact of the sites proposed development can be adequately compensated for.
- 6.57 The PEA was reviewed by Surrey Wildlife Trust who have noted that further species surveys are recommended by the PEA, including the additional bat

- emergence and/ or dawn re-entry surveys, Great Crested Newt surveys and the further reptile surveys.
- 6.58 Subsequently an Ecological Impact Assessment and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment has been submitted. This includes the results of bat surveys undertaken on 31<sup>st</sup> May and the 15<sup>th</sup> June 2021 with a further survey scheduled in the autumn, the report for which and any further mitigation required from which would be required by condition.
- 6.59 The assessment finds that the site is not used for bat roosting but is actively used for bat foraging. Whilst this may be impacted by construction works, nearby alternative foraging routes are identified such that it is unlikely that there would be any harmful impacts. The Surrey Wildlife Trust has reviewed this and agreed with the findings, suggesting external lighting be restricted by condition to ensure against harm to bat foraging.
- 6.60 The assessment found no great crested newts on site during the survey although they are known to be present in the local area. Construction impacts are therefore considered to be negligible although there is risk to other amphibians through construction. Continuous habitats that support the movement of amphibians will be created as part of the landscaping scheme and this is considered a minor benefit.
- 6.61 No reptiles were found on site and so if present they are likely to be in low numbers, with further surveying to be undertaken by condition. If any are found to be present then mitigating action to avoid harming them can be required. The site provides for a mosaic of habitats suitable for reptiles meaning that if reptiles do move to site in the operational phase then it is likely that they could become easily established. Given the small amount of hedgerow and the lack of records of any dormice within 1km of the site, it is considered highly unlikely that any would be present at the site. The Surrey Wildlife Trust therefore has no objections with regards the scheme's impact upon protected species, which can be suitably mitigated, subject to condition.
- 6.62 Policy NHE2 along with the NPPF also require biodiversity net gain to be demonstrated with new development proposals. At Para 174 the NPPF advises that planning decisions should minimise impacts on the natural environment by providing net gains for biodiversity. The assessment identifies the biodiversity net gain which would result from the proposed scheme, which incorporates replacement planting (including for tree and hedgerow loss) as well as other new planting and better maintenance. This is calculated as resulting in a 8.44% net gain in biodiversity which is considered acceptable under current policy.
- 6.63 However, in accordance with advice from the Council's Tree Officer, more native species will be expected from the final landscaping scheme to be submitted and as such there is potential for this to increase the biodiversity net gain offered above 8.44%. In order to monitor this the assessment, along with the Council's Tree Officer and Surrey Wildlife Trust suggest the requirement for a landscape and ecology management plan (LEMP) to be based upon the final landscaping scheme, by condition. The LEMP would cover the ground preparation; plant and seed selection; establishing management; operational management and



monitoring. Subject to such a condition I consider the proposal would offer appropriate biodiversity net gains and is considered by the Surrey Wildlife Trust to be acceptable, ensuring the local planning authority fulfils its duty to conserve biodiversity.

#### Flooding and Drainage Issues

- 6.64 A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been submitted in support of the application that has assessed the potential flood risk of the proposed development. It confirms that the majority of the site is located within Flood Zone 1, and is therefore, at low risk of flooding from groundwater, reservoir failure and overland flows.
- 6.65 The FRA does highlight that a part of the site is located in Flood Zone 3, and therefore, within an area at high risk of fluvial flooding within an annual probability higher than 1%. However, the proposed development has taken a sequential approach and located the built form outside of Flood Zone 3. It is not, therefore, considered that the proposed development would result in an increase in flood risk to the site or the surrounding area.
- 6.66 The FRA also sets out Sustainable Urban Drainage Strategy (SUDS) for the proposed development. This includes the provision of above ground storage systems to attenuate surface water run-off, prior to discharging into the adjacent watercourse. This is due to the ground conditions not being suitable for infiltration. It also recommends the incorporation of rainwater harvesting, rain gardens, swales and bio-retention areas in the final SUDS scheme to further slow the discharge of surface water run-off.
- 6.67 Moreover, given the proximity of the site to Earlswood Brook and the small portion site that falls within Flood Zone 3, formal pre-application consultation was undertaken by the applicants directly with the Environment Agency to consider the finding of the FRA and the proposed SUDS strategy.
- 6.68 The response from the EA confirmed that they are satisfied that the proposed development meets the requirements of the sequential test and consider that the proposed drainage scheme is acceptable.
- 6.69 The Environment Agency has also been consulted on the details submitted in the application and confirm that the development has taken a sequential approach and located the building and landscaping outside of Flood Zone 2 and 3, as such they are satisfied that this meets the requirements of the sequential test. They have request that the surface water discharge is limited to greenfield rate, as detailed in the submitted FRA. Any discharge into the main river (Earlswood Brook and New Pond Ditch) would require a Flood Risk Activity Permit from the Environment Agency.
- 6.70 The proposed development does not include the provision of any burial plots, nor is it located within a Groundwater Source Protection Zone 1 area. It is, therefore, considered that the proposals are acceptable in this regard.

- 6.71 Surrey CC Sustainable Drainage team have stated that they are satisfied that the proposed drainage scheme meets their requirements and would be content with the development proposed, subject to suitably worded conditions are applied to ensure that the SuDS Scheme is properly implemented and maintained throughout the lifetime of the development.
- 6.72 Overall, the proposed development has an acceptable level of flood risk in terms of the requirements of the NPPF. It is considered that the proposed development accords with the requirements of DMP Policy CEM1 and DMP Policy CCF2.

Impact on Public rights of way and footpaths

- 6.73 The only public right of way in the locality is the public footpath is FB64 which is located east of the site, beyond the allotments, and depot, extending from the pair of semis fronting Woodhatch Road, down to the south, through Felland Copse woods to Lonesome Lane before continuing to the A217. This would be largely unaffected.
- 6.74 There are a series of informal paths running across the site and it is understood that applications have been made by interested parties for these to be formally recognised. That process will run separately to the planning application process and consideration of the planning merits should not be determined by the outcomes of this exercise. However, should such paths be formally recognised then, depending on their location and details it may affect the ability for the scheme to be constructed in its current layout, require amendments or footpath diversion orders.
- 6.75 In order to improve access to/from and across the site, the application proposes new formal links, in the form of a new north-south link, running towards the south of the application site from rear of Felland Way to connect to footpath FB64. A new 'Earlswood Park Link' is also proposed, off the aforementioned north-south link, up to Woodhatch Road. A new permissive footpath is also proposed, south of this with a number of existing permissive footpaths retained.
- 6.76 The proposal would provide improved countryside access by virtue of the new links created with improved surfaces as well as replacement bridges where the retained permissive footpaths cross the drainage ditch towards the north of the site. More significant however, would be the new pedestrian footbridge at the south-east of the application site, allowing a new crossing over the Earlswood Brook and creating opportunities for pedestrians to link up directly from Felland Way and the built-up residential areas of the west to footpath FB64 and the wider footpath network accessed from this.
- 6.77 The SCC Countryside Officer has also requested further improvements be considered in the form of improved access for cyclists between Woodhatch Road and Lonesome Lane. Whilst this would involve land outside the application site, it would appear possible to achieve across land in the applicant's control and would provide a significant benefit in terms of providing improved countryside access and improved cycling provision, helping meet the Council's sustainability objectives. Therefore, whilst not critical to the acceptability of the application, I do consider the application provides the opportunity for this to be explored further and created if feasible. A condition requiring the submission of details of the

proposed new footpaths and exploration of a means of access for a cycleway is therefore suggested.

#### Impact on Allotments

6.78 DMP Policy INF 2 relates to community facilities and states that the loss or change of use of existing community facilities will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that, *inter alia*, the loss of the community facility would not result in a shortfall of local provision of this type, or equivalent or improved provision in terms of quantity and quality, or some wider community benefits, will be made in a suitable location.

6.79 The proposed development would result in the loss or partial loss of a number of allotments due to the re-alignment and provision of the new access to the crematorium. The applicants have confirmed that the allotments to the north and south of the proposed access are as follows:

##### New Pond Farm Allotments:

- Full plots potentially affected: 13
- Half plots potentially affected: 10
- Of the 23 plots potentially affected, 17 are tenanted.
- 19 plots in their entirety would be lost if the planning application was successful – 14 of those are tenanted. (3 plots would lose a part-section, all 3 of which are tenanted).

##### The Paddock Allotments

- Full plots potentially affected: 0
- Half plots potentially affected: 3
- 3 plots in their entirety would be lost if the planning application was successful – 2 of those are tenanted.

6.80 In support of the proposals an Allotment Replacement Plan has been prepared to illustrate the allotment plots that would be affected by the proposals. It also identifies the vacant plots, and therefore, the potential for relocating those plots which are occupied and lost to the development to available vacant plots within the existing sites.

6.81 The applicants have also confirmed that any re-provision would be delivered in accordance with Section 8 of the Allotments Act 1925. The applicants propose that the re-provision will also need to be secured prior to the commencement of the proposed development and that this approach effectively mitigates the impact of the proposed development and ensures that any affected allotment users are able to remain within the existing allotment sites.

6.82 On the basis of the existing allotment users having pitches reallocated within the existing New Pond Farm allotment sites and provided that the allotments lost will be re-provided for locally, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable and in accordance with Policy INF2, subject to a pre-commencement condition requiring details of the re-provision to be submitted for approval. It is appreciated that this does not address the inconvenience that would be caused to allotment

holders with regards lost crops due to a relocated plot, but in planning terms, the requirements of the relevant policy would be met.

#### Impact on Playing fields

- 6.83 The proposal would result in the loss of an existing sports pitch which has been laid out and in use for football in this past year. As such Sports England were consulted on the application and initially raised objection on the basis that there was no detail or certainty over a replacement pitch being re-provided for. This would also be contrary to the requirements of Policy INF2 (set out above).
- 6.84 Whilst a replacement pitch was always proposed, the applicants have responded to the lack of detail by providing an agronomists report and drainage assessment relating to the proposed replacement pitch. The replacement would be provided outside the red lined application site boundary but within the blue line boundary indicating other land within the applicant's ownership. I am therefore satisfied that there is a strong chance of the replacement pitch being provided for, with the agronomists report and drainage assessment showing that this can be done without any significant issues arising.
- 6.85 Although a separate planning application may be required for the replacement pitch, there is no in-principle objection and therefore, a pre-commencement *Grampian* condition requiring the replacement pitch to be re-provided is considered to be an appropriate and satisfactory mechanism in this circumstance. Sport England have confirmed that they are content on this basis and therefore have no objections, subject to the reprovision of the pitch by condition. I am also satisfied that this would meet with the requirements of Policy INF2 in that equivalent provision will be made in a suitable location.

#### Impact on amenity of residential properties

- 6.86 DMP Policy DES1 requires new development to provide an appropriate environment for future occupants whilst not adversely impacting upon the amenity of occupants of existing nearby buildings, including by way of overbearing, obtrusiveness, overshadowing, overlooking and loss of privacy.
- 6.87 The nearest residential properties would be located around 185 metres away from any proposed buildings and so would not suffer any harm to their amenities by virtue of the physical nature of the building.
- 6.88 Most residential properties would also be remote from the proposed access road and car parking to be affected although the New Pond Farm occupiers would be located closer and so have potential to be more affected. However, the proposed access road will be curved away from this property to reduce any noise impacts from passing vehicles whilst the proposed new parking would be sited further away than the existing area provided for allotment users so reducing this impacts.
- 6.89 Overall I do not consider that any adverse neighbour impacts would result, given the distance of the proposed development from any residential occupiers, the nature the proposed use and adjacent uses, including the tree depot to the east. On this basis the proposal would be compliant with residential amenity aspects of

Policy DES1 and, as established above, there would be no significant air quality, odour or pollutant issues associated with the use, subject to conditions.

### Energy and Sustainability

- 6.90 The application falls short of the floorspace requirements for which Policy CCF1 of the DMP requires provision of renewable or low carbon energy sources. However Planning Policy CS11: Sustainable Construction states that the Council will expect a non-residential development to be constructed to a minimum standard of BREEAM 'Very Good' taking into account the overall viability of the proposed development at the time the application is submitted. The application is supported by an energy statement which seeks to demonstrate how this will be achieved.
- 6.91 This statement explains the objectives of the energy hierarchy to be lean, be clean and be green (i.e. use less energy, supply energy efficiently and use renewable energy) and explains how this will be achieved through a high-performance thermal envelope and ventilation strategy; a heat recovery system from the cremation process and a energy efficient condensing boiler for times when heat recovery is not possible. In terms of renewables, only photovoltaics are considered to be appropriate for use on the development. The assessment details how these measures, in conjunction, would provide the BREEAM very good rating but in order to provide for any changes, a condition is suggested requiring submission of details of a final energy assessment for approval.

### Other matters

- 6.101 Representations have been received regarding noise and disturbance and inconvenience during the construction period. The proposed development is not considered to result in an unsatisfactory level of disturbance. Whilst there may be a degree of inconvenience and disturbance during the construction phase, the proposal would not warrant refusal on this basis and statutory nuisance legislation exists to control any significant levels of disturbance which would be mitigated by condition. The fear of crime has also been stated as an objection although I can see no legitimate basis for this.

### Very Special Circumstances

#### Green Belt harm

- 6.92 The National Planning Policy Framework advises that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. Very special circumstances (VSC) to justify inappropriate development will not exist unless the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. As explained earlier, it is considered that the development is inappropriate in the Green Belt, and must only therefore be permissible where very special circumstances exist.
- 6.93 In considering the VSC test, the decision maker must be mindful that substantial weight must be given to any harm to the green belt. In this case there would be both a volumetric and spatial loss of openness by virtue of the extent of new development on the site. The site is currently largely open and undeveloped in the

main, comprising open fields and grassland albeit containing less open characteristics such as the existing allotments and areas of surface parking. The proposal would introduce a relatively large building onto an open area of the site otherwise devoid of built form. By its very nature this would be harmful to the openness of the green belt. The proposal also includes large areas of hardstanding, surface car parking and other paraphernalia associated with the crematorium use which would themselves be harmful to the openness of the green belt. However, the proposed development would also allow for the significant majority of the site to remain open and undeveloped and given the various requirements of the Cremation Act it is likely that that any crematorium in or near this Borough would need to be located within the green belt and the impact upon the green belt would be less harmful and more appropriate than some other types of development which would have a more intensive sprawl of development across a site, diminishing openness more than is proposed here.

6.94 Paragraph 138 of the NPPF explains that Green Belts serve purposes:

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

The site was not considered in the Development Management Plan Green Belt Review, undertaken in 2017, but it is appropriate to consider the site's importance in Green Belt terms against the decision aiding criteria used for that purpose and attached at Annexe 1.

6.95 The application site is located close to the edge of the south Reigate built up area, in an otherwise open site. Its boundaries are not contiguous with the urban area but it is located in close proximity to it, separated by the allotment site which itself has a semi-urban functions and character. For this reason, it is considered that the proposal would not lead to ribbon or sprawling development to a significant degree. Furthermore, the application site comprises strong outer boundaries in the main which would help contain any sprawl. Overall therefore, the proposal would contribute to the sprawl of South Reigate, in conflict with green belt purpose (a) but the green belt is of lower importance in this area by virtue of the high contiguity and high proportion of strong boundaries.

6.96 With regards purpose (b), the site is located adjacent to South Reigate and would be interpreted as part of South Reigate. There would be little impact on the gap to the south given its extent, however the nearest settlement beyond the green belt to the east is South Earlswood. This would be around 0.75km away at the nearest point which could lead to the site being of higher importance to the green belt. However, although the gap is narrow in this area, South Earlswood itself forms part of Redhill to which Reigate has a contiguous relationship.

Because of this and the modest scale and the limited closure of the gap, I see only limited conflict with green belt purpose (b).

- 6.97 The proposed development would further conflict with green belt purpose (c) given it would see encroachment into the countryside. The site has strong boundaries and so is of lower importance to the green belt in this regard, although only a limited amount of the site is developed, giving it medium importance. Overall, it is considered to be of lower-medium importance in this regard.
- 6.98 It is not considered that the site has potential to impact the setting or spatial character of any historic town or conservation area and so is of lower importance in this regard (d).
- 6.99 By virtue of the nature of development requiring a location outside the urban area, the site must also be considered of lower importance with regards purpose (e).
- 6.100 The green belt harm would therefore be through conflict with purposes a, b and c. On the basis of the above assessment, it is considered that the site would be considered of moderate importance to the green belt, in terms of the purposes that it serves. Any harm to the green belt must be given substantial weight although I am mindful that the proposed development cannot realistically be developed in the urban area and its layout and form is more sympathetic to a green belt location than some other, more intensive forms of development which are less able to retain the level of open space proposed, helping mitigate this harm to a degree.

#### Any other harm

- 6.102 In terms of any other harm that would result from the proposal and weigh against it in determining whether VSC exist, I consider that there would be short-term landscape harm whilst the development is under construction and before the landscaping has had an opportunity to establish. Given the short term nature of this impact I afford it limited weight. I find no harm with regards neighbour amenity, flood impacts, ecology, air quality, allotment or playing pitch provision, highway safety or for any other reason.

#### Need

- 6.103 The principle factor in the proposal's favour is the need for crematoria within the area. The application was supported by a Crematorium Needs Assessment undertaken by Dunn & Co which provides a detailed analysis of four alternative crematoria outside the borough which residents currently use including Randalls Park Crematorium, Leatherhead; Surrey & Sussex Crematorium – Crawley; Croydon Crematorium and North East Surrey Crematorium, Modern. The report considers that three of the crematoria are either operating at or close to their capacity. Two of them (Randalls Park and Surrey & Sussex) are among the most expensive crematoria in the country.
- 6.104 The Dunn & Co needs assessment has been challenged, including by Impact Planning Services on behalf of the Woodhatch Green Spaces Preservation

Group. Dunn & Co provided a response document to counter the criticisms made. Various assertions on need have been considered below.

- 6.105 It is not generally disputed that due to capacity issues, two of the aforementioned crematoria currently provide a 30-minute service, below the 45 min time advised as an objective by the industry for mourners to pay their respects. It is also generally accepted that shorter services and intervals can lead to cremation services feeling rushed so failing to give grieving families the time they feel they need for a service, before the next service takes place. The applicant's needs assessment is challenged in considering a potential shorter service period for calculating the capacity and number of services that could take place across a day which is challenged on the basis that it could lead to its operating at practical capacity (equivalent to 80%), which in turn would reduce the qualitative service offer. In response the applicant advises that the 8-service a day figure has been accepted elsewhere but, if capacity were to be calculated based on longer services then practical capacity of existing crematoria would be even more stretched. As such I do not consider this argument to be of significant relevance.
- 6.106 Currently both Croydon and Crawley still have capacity, but Crawley's is running out. Deaths are predicted to increase by 23% by 2036 across the UK although in Reigate and Banstead that figure is estimated at 35%, with Tandridge at 34% and Mole Valley and Crawley at 25%. This is a result of the population growth and the 'baby boomer' population ageing. This highlights how existing facilities will be even more stretched and how need for crematoria space in the area will increase to 2036 and beyond. Only Croydon appears to have any long term capacity and on most qualitative measures performs badly.
- 6.107 The above need must be considered in light of the planning policy team's own 2016 cemetery and crematorium needs assessment undertaken to inform the DMP. This found there to be no overriding need for new crematorium provision within the Borough. However, it was accepted that the assessment looked only at the plan period to 2027. Recent appeals for crematoria in Essington (called in by the Secretary of State – Weblink: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/975280/210331\\_Land\\_off\\_Broad\\_Lane\\_Essington.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/975280/210331_Land_off_Broad_Lane_Essington.pdf)) found that a longer timespan ought to be considered with 2027 be the earliest point at which to consider future need given the time taken to achieve planning permission and set up such a service. In order to independently assess the need position, the local planning authority appointed independent consultants to review the evidence and provide an up to date and independent assessment of need. The LPA's independent consultants sought to probe and fact-check the various assertions made within the applicant's own needs assessment and concluded it to be fundamentally sound. Their report is attached at Annexe 2.
- 6.108 A key aspect of the need consideration is not just the capacity of local crematoria but also their proximity. In order to demonstrate this a 30-minute drive time was calculated in order to capture what level of population can/cannot access crematoria provision within a 30-minute drive. The appointed consultants conclude "there to be over 306,000 people who live within 30 minutes at cortege speed (from the application site). Of these, 142,000 live closer to the proposed site than any other crematorium.... We



therefore conclude that there is a definite need for a new crematorium in the Reigate and Banstead area and the location proposed at Woodhatch would appear to better serve the 142,000 people who currently after travel further afield for crematorium services.” The exact methodology, isochromes and cortege drive speeds has been criticised by 3<sup>rd</sup> parties and it is agreed that there are various ways to represent such data. Overall however I consider the catchment and isochromes to be sound. In the response document, Dunn & Co calculate that 60,900 would be served by a new crematorium at Woodhatch who currently live outside a 30-minute drive time to any crematorium. This is obviously less than the 142,000 that would benefit from it being nearer to them than any other, due to catchment overlap. Nevertheless it is a significant number and, if neighbour crematoria exceeded capacity such that they were unable to provide services within a reasonable timescale, as seems likely, then the number could be even higher.

- 6.109 Whilst there is no requirement to provide crematoria services within a 30-minute drive time, it is understandably desirable. Each service will be of huge emotional significance to any number of grieving family members and friends, and it will therefore minimise both the travelling times (during a time of emotional grief) for the cortege as well as attendees. The proposal would thereby offer improved choice, reducing overall journey times and so consequently driving hours and greenhouse emissions that result from this. Each cremation will also likely involve a wake and possibly a separate service, both at which are desirable locally and so local crematorium provision avoids the inconvenience associated with local service followed by a long drive to cremation, followed by along drive back to a wake.
- 6.110 Another compelling argument in favour of the need case, is about ensuring a quality service and not just sufficient capacity to meet demand. In this regard, the assessments all point towards the proposal helping meet a move to longer, more relaxed services of 40 minutes minimum rather than the ‘conveyor belt’ of 30-minute cremations that can occur when facilities are at or close to capacity. Impact Planning Services raise concern that the increased trend for direct cremation had not been factored into the applicant’s needs assessment, whereby cremation takes place without any friends or family present. It is agreed that direct cremation would increase capacity at existing facilities but the extent to which this trend is likely to increase is unknown and is a relatively small proportion of overall cremations, such that it could not be considered to significantly reduce need.
- 6.111 A qualitative review is provided of existing facilities which shows some failings of existing crematoria, not just in their cost and capacity but also in terms of their environment, facilities, and other constraints. These are not disputed and it is agreed that the proposal would benefit consumer choice in this regard.
- 6.112 Horizon, a rival crematoria operator, has submitted representations highlighting that a wider population catchment could be served by proposals in Tandridge. However, that is to be expected, given their assessment considers a catchment across Reigate & Banstead, Tandridge and Sevenoaks and would obviously differ if a different catchment were considered, such as Reigate & Banstead, Mole Valley and Croydon. Furthermore, the need position is such that it is not an either/or approach to crematoria provision across the two districts with they

themselves having identified a need for multiple increased provision and I therefore give their objection little weight on this ground.

- 6.113 Overall, it is concluded that there is a compelling need for additional crematoria capacity in the area. This is in terms of meeting growing overall demand; providing quality services with the appropriate time given to each service; improving consumer choice and providing a local facility and reducing the number of residents within the borough that need to travel more than 30 minutes to access their nearest crematorium at a time of significant grief and emotional distress. I give this need substantial weight.

#### Alternative sites

- 6.114 An alternative sites assessment was submitted by the applicants in support of the application, which considers 13 sites across 10 broad areas of search, scoring them against their green belt designation, landscape designation (AONB or AGLV) and ability to meet the requirements of the Crematorium Act. The requirements of the Crematorium Act 1902 for crematoria to be located in excess of 200 yards from the nearest dwelling and over 50 yards from nearest roads obviously limits the available sites that would be suitable.
- 6.115 The assessment then considers further detail such as ecology, flooding and access and finds the application site to be most suitable as might be expected. However, irrespective of this and any flaws associated with the assessment, given the high land values and demand of land for residential and employment uses within the borough and neighbouring boroughs, together with the locational demands of crematoria under the Crematorium Act, I consider any urban site or those outside the green belt are effectively ruled out.
- 6.116 Against the application site's favour is its designation as a site of nature conservation interest although there is nothing within the ecological assessment that would point to any significant harm to protected species or other wildlife and the application meets with no objections from the Surrey Wildlife Trust and can demonstrate biodiversity net gain. The allotment and playing pitch losses would be reprovided for whilst the site is sufficiently well located outside the floodable part of the site so as not to represent a flood risk. The site serves the purposes of the green belt moderately rather than significantly. In its favour locationally is the proximity to centres of population, being accessible and well located to address a 30-minute drive time for borough residents. It is also not considered to be a high valued landscape, and its low-lying elevation and defensible site boundaries would minimise its visual impact.
- 6.117 The assessment does not consider locations outside the borough but I do not find that unreasonable, given the potential need for multiple crematoria across Boroughs and given any site would be outside the urban area irrespective of the district in which it is located. It has also been suggested that the site is too far south to best serve those residents outside of a 30-minute cortege drive time. Whilst there may be other sites which can better provide for this currently, it is only one factor and represents the current moment in time. As nearby crematoria reach capacity then their location within a 30-minute drive time loses relevance. Overall therefore, I find there to be a need for the proposed facility

and this together with the additional benefits that would be provided in terms of convenience, improved service offer, reduced journey times and consumer choice is a substantial benefit. I consider the application site to be well located in terms of best meeting this need, close to centres of population and with good accessibility without causing additional or avoidable harm.

#### Other benefits

- 6.118 In concluding whether very special circumstances exist it is also necessary to consider what other benefits may exist in the application's favour. I consider that the longer term landscape improvements would outweigh the shorter term landscape harm given the proposal would tidy up the appearance of the site from the Woodhatch Road and provide opportunity for significant new structural tree planting to enhance the natural landscape such that the overall landscape impact is neutral or slightly positive I afford this limited weight. I also find that any ecological impacts would be appropriately mitigated and that a biodiversity net gain could be achieved through new habitat creation, native planting, and the requirement of an LEMP although overall I consider such impacts should not be given weight in favour. It is undoubted that the proposal would boost the local economy, both directly and indirectly and support job growth to which I afford some limited weight. Finally, very limited weight is given by virtue of the countryside access improvements that may be provided through the new river crossing, new accessways and potential for a new cycleway, especially given the uncertainty regarding the latter.

#### VSC Conclusions

- 6.119 The proposal is inappropriate development which is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. Such harm is given substantial weight against the proposal. Although this harm is limited by the green belt importance of the site and the somewhat sympathetic nature of the proposed use. In the application's favour, there exists a clear and growing need for additional crematoria facilities locally and the provision on this site would help benefit significant numbers of people in giving them more local and convenient access to a crematorium or one within a 30-minute drive time where currently there exists none. It would also help provide consumer choice and improved quality of service by easing pressure caused by high demand locally. I give very substantial weight to the proposal in its ability to meet this need. There would be limited other harm and some limited other benefits associated with the proposal, none of which attract more than limited weight. In conclusion by virtue of the need, together with the benefits that would be provided to residents of the borough and surrounding districts through the provision of a new facility it is considered that very special circumstances exist to clearly outweigh the harm to the green belt.

### **CONCLUSION**

- 6.120 It is recommended that the planning permission be granted by virtue of the need crematoria and the benefits that the proposal would provide in meeting this need. Very special circumstances are considered to exist on this basis, clearly outweighing the substantial harm by reason of the inappropriate nature of the development in the Green Belt.

## CONDITIONS

1. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans.

Reason: To define the permission and ensure the development is carried out in accord with the approved plans and in accordance with National Planning Practice Guidance.

Note: Should alterations or amendments be required to the approved plans, it will be necessary to apply either under Section 96A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for non-material alterations or Section 73 of the Act for minor material alterations. An application must be made using the standard application forms and you should consult with us, to establish the correct type of application to be made.

Plan Type	Reference	Version	Date Received
Survey Plan	2615-TU01-D01-T02	D01	26.01.2021
Survey Plan	2615-TU01-D01-T03	D01	26.01.2021
Survey Plan	2615-TU01-D01-T04	D01	26.01.2021
Survey Plan	2615-TU01-D01-T05	D01	26.01.2021
Survey Plan	2615-TU01-D01-T06	D01	26.01.2021
Survey Plan	2615-TU01-D01-T07	D01	26.01.2021
Survey Plan	2615-TU01-D01-U02	D01	26.01.2021
Survey Plan	2615-TU01-D01-U03	D01	26.01.2021
Survey Plan	2615-TU01-D01-U04	D01	26.01.2021
Survey Plan	2615-TU01-D01-U05	D01	26.01.2021
Survey Plan	2615-TU01-D01-U06	D01	26.01.2021
Survey Plan	2615-TU01-D01-U07	D01	26.01.2021
Location Plan	29798A/01	P1	26.01.2021
Floor Plan	29798A/10		26.01.2021
Elevation Plan	29798A/11		26.01.2021
Section Plan	29798A/12		26.01.2021
Site Layout Plan	RBBC-WH-MP-008		26.01.2021
Site Layout Plan	RBBC-WH-MP-001		26.01.2021
Other Plan	RBBC-WH-MP-003-1		26.01.2021
Other Plan	RBBC-WH-MP-003-2		26.01.2021
Site Layout Plan	RBBC-WH-MP-007		26.01.2021
Arboricultural Plan	RBBC-WH-T-001-1		26.01.2021
Arboricultural Plan	RBBC-WH-T-001-2		26.01.2021
Roof Plan	29798A/13	P2	04.05.2021
Section Plan	29798A/12	P2	04.05.2021
Elevation Plan	29798A/11	P2	04.05.2021
Site Layout Plan	SK 6000		04.05.2021
Site Layout Plan	RBBC-WH-ECO-001		04.05.2021
Site Layout Plan	RBBC-WH-MP-011		04.05.2021
Site Layout Plan	RBBC-WH-MP-008		04.05.2021
Site Layout Plan	RBBC-WH-MP-007		04.05.2021
Site Layout Plan	RBBC-WH-MP-006	A	04.05.2021
Site Layout Plan	RBBC-WH-MP-003-4	A	04.05.2021
Site Layout Plan	RBBC-WH-MP-003-3	A	04.05.2021
Site Layout Plan	RBBC-WH-MP-003-2		04.05.2021
Site Layout Plan	RBBC-WH-MP-003-1		04.05.2021
Location Plan	RBBC-WH-MP-001		04.05.2021
Site Layout Plan	RBBC-WH-MP-005-2	B	04.08.2021
Site Layout Plan	RBBC-WH-MP-005-1	B	04.08.2021

Site Layout Plan	RBBC-WH-MP-004-2	B	04.08.2021
Site Layout Plan	RBBC-WH-MP-004-1	B	04.08.2021
Site Layout Plan	RBBC-WH-MP-002-2	B	04.08.2021
Site Layout Plan	RBBC-WH-MP-002-1	B	04.08.2021
Site Layout Plan	RBBC-WH-MP-010	A	04.08.2021
Proposed Plans	RBBC-WH-MP-003-4	A	04.08.2021

2. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

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

3. No development shall take place until the developer obtains the Local Planning Authority's written approval of details of both existing and proposed ground levels and the proposed finished ground floor levels of the buildings. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved levels.

Reason: To ensure the Local Planning Authority are satisfied with the details of the proposal and its relationship with adjoining development and to safeguard the visual amenities of the locality with regard to Reigate and Banstead Development Management Plan 2019 policy DES1.

4. No development shall take place above slab level until written details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces, including fenestration and roof, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and on development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure the Local Planning Authority are satisfied with the details of the proposal and its relationship with adjoining development and to safeguard the visual amenities of the locality with regard to Reigate and Banstead Development Management Plan 2019 policy DES1.

5. No development shall commence including any groundworks preparation or vegetation removal until a detailed, scaled Tree/Hedge Protection Plan (THPP) and the related Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) which shall be compiled in conjunction with the construction method statement and submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority (LPA). These shall include details of the specification and location of exclusion fencing, ground protection and any construction activity that may take place within the Root Protection Areas (RPA) of trees/hedges and identified planting areas shown to scale on the Tree/Hedge Protection Plan (THPP), including the installation of service routings, drainage routes, compound storage and location of site and any welfare offices. The AMS shall also include a pre commencement meeting, supervisory regime for their implementation & monitoring with an agreed reporting process to the LPA. All works shall be carried out in strict accordance with these details when approved.

Reason:

To ensure good arboricultural practice in the interests of the maintenance of the character and appearance of the area and to comply with British Standard 5837:2012 'Trees in Relation to Design, demolition and Construction –

Recommendations' and reason: To ensure good landscape practice in the interests of the maintenance of the character and appearance of the area and to comply with policies NHE3, NHE5 and DES1 of the Reigate and Banstead Development Management Plan 2019 and the recommendations within British Standard 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction.

6. No development shall commence on site until a scheme for the landscaping and replacement tree and hedge planting of the site including the retention of existing landscape features has been submitted and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Landscaping schemes shall include details of hard landscaping, planting plans, written specifications (including cultivation and other operations associated with tree, shrub, and hedge or grass establishment), schedules of plants, noting species, plant sizes and proposed numbers/densities and an implementation programme.

The details shall include replacement planting of trees and species rich native hedging which shall be in keeping with the character and appearance of the locality. There is an opportunity to incorporate large structural landscape trees into the scheme to provide for future amenity and long term continued structural tree cover in this area. Strengthening and enhancement to the application site boundaries is expected. Replacement and structural landscape trees will be minimum of Advanced Nursery Stock sizes with initial planting heights of not less than 4.5m with girth measurements at 1m above ground level in excess of 16/18cm

All hard and soft landscaping work shall be completed in full accordance with the approved scheme, prior to occupation or use of the approved development or in accordance with a programme agreed in writing with the local planning authority

All new tree planting shall be positioned in accordance with guidelines and advice contained in the current British Standard 5837. Trees in relation to construction.

Any trees shrubs or plants planted in accordance with this condition which are removed, die or become damaged or become diseased within five years of planting shall be replaced within the next planting season by trees, and shrubs of the same size and species.

Reason:

To ensure good arboricultural and landscape practice in the interests of the maintenance of the character and appearance of the area and to comply with policies, NHE3, NHE5 and DES1 of the Reigate and Banstead Borough Local Plan 2019, British Standards including BS8545:2014 and British Standard 5837:2012

7. Notwithstanding the submitted site access plans within the developer's transport assessment dated January 2021 no part of the development shall be first occupied unless and until the proposed vehicular access to Woodhatch Road (A2044) has been constructed and provided with sight lines from 2.4 metres back into the access from the near side kerb line by 126 metres in both directions and a means within the private land of preventing private water from entering the highway all in accordance with a revised scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing with the Local Planning Authority and thereafter the visibility zones shall be kept permanently clear of any obstruction over 1.05m high above the ground.

Reason: The condition above is required in order that the development should not prejudice highway safety, nor cause inconvenience to other highway users, and to accord with the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 and Policy TAP1 Parking, access , and Servicing of the Reigate and Banstead Local Plan Development Management Plan September 2019.

8. No part of the development shall be first occupied unless and until tactile paving and dropped kerbs have been provided on the north and south sides Woodhatch Road (A2044) on the western side of the proposed access in accordance with the approved Mode Transport Planning drawing numbered J32 5248 PS 002 Rev A.

Reason: The condition above is required in order that the development should not prejudice highway safety, nor cause inconvenience to other highway users, and to accord with the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 and Policy TAP1 Parking, access , and Servicing of the Reigate and Banstead Local Plan Development Management Plan September 2019.

9. The development hereby approved shall not be first occupied unless and until the existing access from the site to Woodhatch Road (A2044) has been permanently closed and any kerbs, verge, footway, fully reinstated.

Reason: The condition above is required in order that the development should not prejudice highway safety, nor cause inconvenience to other highway users, and to accord with the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 and Policy TAP1 Parking, access , and Servicing of the Reigate and Banstead Local Plan Development Management Plan September 2019.

10. Notwithstanding the submitted plans numbered RBBC WH MP 002 2 and RBBC WH MP 002 1 the development hereby approved shall not be first occupied unless and until space has been laid out within the site for 99 car parking (including 12 disabled spaces) spaces in front of the proposed crematorium accordance with a revised scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the parking and turning areas shall be retained and maintained for their designated purposes.

Reason: The condition above is required in order that the development should not prejudice highway safety, nor cause inconvenience to other highway users, and to accord with the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 and Policy TAP1 Parking, access , and Servicing of the Reigate and Banstead Local Plan Development Management Plan September 2019.

11. The development hereby approved shall not be first occupied unless and until space has been laid out within the site for 10 bike stands in front of the proposed crematorium accordance with the approved plan numbered RBBC WH MP 002 2. Thereafter the bike parking shall be retained and maintained for its designated purpose.

Reason: The condition above is required in order that the development should not prejudice highway safety, nor cause inconvenience to other highway users, and to accord with the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 and Policy TAP1

Parking, access, and Servicing of the Reigate and Banstead Local Plan Development Management Plan September 2019.

12. The development hereby approved shall not be first occupied unless and until space has been laid out within the site in accordance with the approved plans numbered RBBC WH MP 005 2 and RBBC WH MP 005 1 for the internal site roads and pavements. Thereafter the road and pavement areas shall be retained and maintained for their designated purposes.

Reason: The condition above is required in order that the development should not prejudice highway safety, nor cause inconvenience to other highway users, and to accord with the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 and Policy TAP1 Parking, access, and Servicing of the Reigate and Banstead Local Plan Development Management Plan September 2019.

13. No development shall commence until a Construction Transport Management Plan, to include details of:

- (a) parking for vehicles of site personnel, operatives and visitors
  - (b) loading and unloading of plant and materials
  - (c) storage of plant and materials
  - (d) programme of works (including measures for traffic management)
  - (e) provision of any boundary hoarding behind visibility zones
  - (g) vehicle routing
  - (h) measures to prevent the deposit of materials on the highway
  - (i) before and after construction condition surveys of the highway and a commitment to fund the repair of any damage caused
  - (j) no HGV movements to or from the site shall take place between the hours of 8.30 and 09:30 am and between the hours of 3.00 and 4.00 pm nor shall the contractor permit any HGVs associated with the development at the site to be laid up, waiting, on the highway within the vicinity of the site.
  - (k) on-site turning for construction vehicles
  - (l) working hours
- has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Only the approved details shall be implemented during the construction of the development.

Reason: The condition above is required in order that the development should not prejudice highway safety, nor cause inconvenience to other highway users, and to accord with the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 and Policy DES8 Construction Management of the Reigate and Banstead Local Plan Development Management Plan September 2019.

14. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied unless and until a minimum of one of the staff spaces, nine of the non-disabled driver spaces, two of the disabled driver spaces, and 3 of the allotment and countryside visitor spaces are provided with a fast charge socket (current minimum requirement: 7kw Mode 3 with Type 2 connector - 230 v AC 32 amp single phase dedicated supply) and a further one of the staff spaces, nine of the non-disabled driver spaces, two of the disabled driver spaces, and 3 of the allotment and countryside visitor spaces are provided with an electrical supply to fit a charging point in the future in accordance with a scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.



Reason: The condition above is required in order that the development should not prejudice highway safety, nor cause inconvenience to other highway users, and to accord with the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 and Reigate and Banstead Core Strategy 2014 Policy CS17 (Travel Options and Accessibility).

15. Cremation services shall only take place between the hours of 10.00 and 1600 hours Monday to Friday with no services on Saturdays or Sundays.

Reason: The condition above is required in order that the development should not prejudice highway safety, nor cause inconvenience to other highway users, and to accord with the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 and Policy TAP1 Parking, access , and Servicing of the Reigate and Banstead Local Plan Development Management Plan September 2019.

16. The development hereby permitted shall not commence until details of the design of a surface water drainage scheme have been submitted to and approved in writing by the planning authority. The design must satisfy the SuDS Hierarchy and be compliant with the national Non-Statutory Technical Standards for SuDS, NPPF and Ministerial Statement on SuDS. The required drainage details shall include:

a) Evidence that the proposed final solution will effectively manage the 1 in 30 & 1 in 100 (+20% allowance for climate change) storm events, during all stages of the development. The final solution should follow the principles set out in the approved drainage strategy. Associated discharge rates and storage volumes shall be provided using a maximum discharge rate of 5.23l/s/ha.

b) Detailed drainage design drawings and calculations to include: a finalised drainage layout detailing the location of drainage elements, pipe diameters, levels, and long and cross sections of each element including details of any flow restrictions and maintenance/risk reducing features (silt traps, inspection chambers etc.).

c) A plan showing exceedance flows (i.e. during rainfall greater than design events or during blockage) and how property on and off site will be protected from increased flood risk.

d) Details of drainage management responsibilities and maintenance regimes for the drainage system.

e) Details of how the drainage system will be protected during construction and how runoff (including any pollutants) from the development site will be managed before the drainage system is operational.

Reason: To ensure the design meets the national Non-Statutory Technical Standards for SuDS and the final drainage design does not increase flood risk on or off site.

17. Prior to the first occupation of the development, a verification report carried out by a qualified drainage engineer must be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. This must demonstrate that the surface water drainage system has been constructed as per the agreed scheme (or detail any minor variations), provide the details of any management company and state the national grid

reference of any key drainage elements (surface water attenuation devices/areas, flow restriction devices and outfalls), and confirm any defects have been rectified.

Reason: To ensure the Drainage System is constructed to the National Non-Statutory Technical Standards for SuDS.

18. Prior to the commencement of development, final details of the proposed cremator and set-up shall be submitted to the local planning authority. Should these details differ from the current cremator set-up proposals, they shall be accompanied by a revised air quality assessment. The development shall be carried out only in accordance with the cremator details and air quality assessment approved.

Reason:

In order to ensure that the proposal does not adversely affect air quality in the local area with regard to Development Management Plan policy DES9.

19. The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until a scheme for the provision of a replacement sports pitch in accordance with the principles set out in the Agrostis Agronomist Report (Reigate crem - sports pitch appraisal) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved replacement pitch scheme shall be implemented and made available for use prior to the loss of the playing pitch associated with the approved crematorium development (application ref 19/00192/F).

Reason:

To ensure that the loss of the playing pitch is appropriately reprovided for with regards policy INF2 of the Development Management Plan 2019.

20. A Landscape Ecological Management Plan, including the long-term design objectives, management responsibilities and maintenance schedules for all the implemented landscaped areas shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the occupation and use of the approved development. The Landscape Ecological Management Plan shall specifically set out the management operation for the retention, enhancements and future maintenance of the application site boundaries. The Landscape Ecological Management Plan shall be carried out as approved.

Reason:

To ensure good arboricultural and landscape practice in the interests of the maintenance of the character and appearance of the area and to comply with policies NHE3, NHE5 and DES1 of the Reigate and Banstead Borough Local Plan 2019, British Standards including BS8545:2014 and British Standard 5837:2012 and all other relevant standards which apply to both soft and hard landscaping operations and maintenance.

21. No development shall be commenced until a scheme to provide biodiversity net gain has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall accord with the principles of the SJM Ecological Impact Assessment and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment dated 4<sup>th</sup> August 2021 but updated to accord with the landscaping details approved and the development be implemented in full accordance with it.

Reason:

To ensure that maximum achievable biodiversity net gain is provided in accordance with Policies NHE2 and NHE4 of the Development Management Plan 2019.

22. No development shall commence until the final ecological surveys have been undertaken as set out in the SJM Ecological Impact Assessment and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment dated 4<sup>th</sup> August 2021. These shall be submitted to the local planning authority and should any protected species be identified on site, the appropriate mitigation shall be undertaken and licenses acquired in accordance with the assessment.

Reason:

To ensure that no harm to protected species occurs with regards policy NHE2 of the Development Management Plan 2019.

23. No development shall commence until a Construction Ecological Management Plan, including measures to control external illumination and protect habitats, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason:

To ensure good arboricultural and landscape practice in the interests of the maintenance of the character and appearance of the area and to comply with policies NHE3, NHE5 and DES1 of the Reigate and Banstead Borough Local Plan 2019, British Standards including BS8545:2014 and British Standard 5837:2012 and all other relevant standards which apply to both soft and hard landscaping operations and maintenance.

24. No development shall commence until details of improved countryside access has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. The details shall include:

- The exact location, widths and surface treatment of all paths, footways and cycleways to be provided; and
- An assessment into the feasibility of the provision of a cycle link between Woodhatch Road and Lonesome Lane

The accessways, together with the cycleway if feasible, shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details prior to the occupation of the development.

Reason:

To ensure that the development provides good countryside access in the interests of recreation and sustainability with regards Development Management Plan policies DES1 and TAP1.

25. No development shall be commenced until details have been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority of an allotment replacement plan, detailing how existing plot holders on the site will be reprovided for locally as well as details of a plan for the reprovion of allotments lost to the development.

Reason:

To ensure that suitable, alternative allotment provision is made with regards Policy Inf2 of the Development Management Plan 2019.

26. No development shall be commenced until an energy statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority detailing how the development will achieve the principles of BREEAM 'Very Good'.

Reason:

To ensure that the development reduces its carbon footprint with regards Policy CS11 of the Core Strategy 2014.

27. No new development shall be occupied until details of all external lighting have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason:

To ensure that no harm to protected species occurs with regards policy NHE2 of the Development Management Plan 2019.

## INFORMATIVES

1. Your attention is drawn to the safety benefits of installing sprinkler systems as an integral part of new development. Further information is available at [www.firesprinklers.org.uk](http://www.firesprinklers.org.uk).
2. The applicant is encouraged to provide renewable technology within the development hereby permitted in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Further information can be found on the Council website at : [Climate Change Information](#).
3. You are advised that the Council will expect the following measures to be taken during any building operations to control noise, pollution and parking:
  - (a) Work that is audible beyond the site boundary should only be carried out between 08:00hrs to 18:00hrs Monday to Friday, 08:00hrs to 13:00hrs Saturday and not at all on Sundays or any Public and/or Bank Holidays;
  - (b) The quietest available items of plant and machinery should be used on site. Where permanently sited equipment such as generators are necessary, they should be enclosed to reduce noise levels;
  - (c) Deliveries should only be received within the hours detailed in (a) above;
  - (d) Adequate steps should be taken to prevent dust-causing nuisance beyond the site boundary. Such uses include the use of hoses to damp down stockpiles of materials, which are likely to generate airborne dust, to damp down during stone/slab cutting; and the use of bowsers and wheel washes;
  - (e) There should be no burning on site;
  - (f) Only minimal security lighting should be used outside the hours stated above; and
  - (g) Building materials and machinery should not be stored on the highway and contractors' vehicles should be parked with care so as not to cause an obstruction or block visibility on the highway.

Further details of these noise and pollution measures can be obtained from the Council's Environmental Health Services Unit.

In order to meet these requirements and to promote good neighbourliness, the Council recommends that this site is registered with the Considerate Constructors Scheme - [www.ccscheme.org.uk/index.php/site-registration](http://www.ccscheme.org.uk/index.php/site-registration).

4. The applicant is advised that the essential requirements for an acceptable communication plan forming part of a Method of Construction Statement are viewed as: (i) how those likely to be affected by the site's activities are identified and how they will be informed about the project, site activities and programme; (ii) how neighbours will be notified prior to any noisy/disruptive work or of any significant changes to site activity that may affect them; (iii) the arrangements that will be in place to ensure a reasonable telephone response during working hours; (iv) the name and contact details of the site manager who will be able to deal with complaints; and (v) how those who are interested in or affected will be routinely advised regarding the progress of the work. Registration and operation of the site to the standards set by the Considerate Constructors Scheme (<http://www.ccscheme.org.uk/>) would help fulfil these requirements.

5. The applicant is advised that the Borough Council is the street naming and numbering authority and you will need to apply for addresses. This can be done by contacting the Address and Gazetteer Officer prior to construction commencing. You will need to complete the relevant application form and upload supporting documents such as site and floor layout plans in order that official street naming and numbering can be allocated as appropriate. If no application is received the Council has the authority to allocate an address. This also applies to replacement dwellings. If you are building a scheme of more than 5 units please also supply a CAD file (back saved to 2010) of the development based on OS Grid References. Full details of how to apply for addresses can be found [http://www.reigatebanstead.gov.uk/info/20277/street\\_naming\\_and\\_numbering](http://www.reigatebanstead.gov.uk/info/20277/street_naming_and_numbering).
6. The applicant site is situated on or in close proximity to land that could be potentially contaminated by virtue of previous historical uses of the land. As a result there is the potential of ground contamination to be present beneath part(s) of the site. Groundworkers should be made aware of this so suitable mitigation measures and personal protective equipment measures (if required) are put in place and used. Should significant ground contamination be identified the Local Planning Authority should be contacted promptly for further guidance.
7. The permission hereby granted shall not be construed as authority to carry out any works on the highway or any works that may affect a drainage channel/culvert or water course. The applicant is advised that a permit and, potentially, a Section 278 agreement must be obtained from the Highway Authority before any works are carried out on any footway, footpath, carriageway, verge or other land forming part of the highway. All works on the highway will require a permit and an application will need to be submitted to the County Council's Street Works Team up to 3 months in advance of the intended start date, depending on the scale of the works proposed and the classification of the road. Please see <http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/road-permits-and-licences/the-traffic-management-permit-scheme>. The applicant is also advised that Consent may be required under Section 23 of the Land Drainage Act 1991. Please see [www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/emergency-planning-and-community-safety/floodingadvice](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/emergency-planning-and-community-safety/floodingadvice).
8. The developer is reminded that it is an offence to allow materials to be carried from the site and deposited on or damage the highway from uncleaned wheels or badly loaded vehicles. The Highway Authority will seek, wherever possible, to recover any expenses incurred in clearing, cleaning or repairing highway surfaces and prosecutes persistent offenders. (Highways Act 1980 Sections 131, 148, 149).
9. Section 59 of the Highways Act permits the Highway Authority to charge developers for damage caused by excessive weight and movements of vehicles to and from a site. The Highway Authority will pass on the cost of any excess repairs compared to normal maintenance costs to the applicant/organisation responsible for the damage. HInf 23 The applicant is advised that as part of the detailed design of the highway works required by the above condition(s), the County Highway Authority may require necessary accommodation works to street lights, road signs, road markings, highway drainage, surface covers, street

trees, highway verges, highway surfaces, surface edge restraints and any other street furniture/equipment.

10. It is the responsibility of the developer to ensure that the electricity supply is sufficient to meet future demands and that any power balancing technology is in place if required. Please refer to: <http://www.beama.org.uk/resourceLibrary/beama-guide-to-electric-vehicle-infrastructure.html> for guidance and further information on charging modes and connector types.
11. The use of a suitably qualified arboricultural consultant is essential to provide acceptable submissions in respect of the arboricultural tree condition above. All works shall comply with the recommendations and guidelines contained within British Standard 5837.
12. If proposed site works affect an Ordinary Watercourse, Surrey County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority should be contacted to obtain prior written Consent. More details are available on our website.

## **REASON FOR PERMISSION**

The development hereby permitted has been assessed against development plan policies CS3 and NHE5 and material considerations, including third party representations. It has been concluded that although the development is inappropriate within the green belt, material considerations exist which cumulatively amount to very special circumstances which clearly outweigh the harm caused and there are no other material considerations that justify refusal in the public interest.

## **Proactive and Positive Statements**

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development where possible, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.