

### LANDSCAPE PLANNING POLICIES

1. The following planning documents are considered relevant to the landscape of the review site and surrounding areas:
  - National Planning Policy Framework (2012);
  - Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan Review 2002 – 2016 (adopted 2007);
  - Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document (adopted November 2012);
  - City and District of St Albans District Local Plan Review (adopted 1994); and
  - Welwyn Hatfield District Local Plan (adopted 2005).

### National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

2. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in 2012 sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. At its heart is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
3. Under paragraph 17 the National Planning Policy Framework sets out twelve core land-use planning principles that should underpin decision-taking, including a presumption in favour of sustainable development, taking account of *"the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it."*
4. The application site is located within Green Belt. The purpose of green belts is set out in paragraph 80, being:
  - *to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
  - *to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
  - *to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
  - *to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
  - *to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.*
5. Under paragraph 56 it states that *"good design is a key aspect of sustainable development"* and paragraph 58 describes how planning decisions should aim to ensure that developments *"function well and add to the overall quality of the area...establish a strong sense of place...respond to character and history and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials...are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping"*.
6. Under paragraph 109 it refers to *"protecting and enhancing valued landscapes..."*, with paragraph 115 emphasising the *"Great weight to be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty"*.

7. The NPPF also considers that when preparing Local Plans, Local Planning Authorities should *“put in place policies to ensure worked land is reclaimed at the earliest opportunity, taking account of aviation safety, and that high quality restoration and aftercare of mineral sites takes place, including for agriculture (safeguarding the long term potential of best and most versatile agricultural land and conserving soil resources), geodiversity, biodiversity, native woodland, the historic environment and recreation” in order to facilitate sustainable use of minerals.*

### Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan Review 2002-2016 (adopted 2007)

8. The application site covers the south-western part of the Preferred Area No.1 (Land at BAe) as shown on Inset Map No 6 in Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan Review 2002-2016. This map also shows Hatfield Quarry covering land immediately to the north of the application site and Suttons Farm extending for a further 2km.
9. This is covered by Minerals Policy 3, with Preferred Areas defined as *“parcels of land likely to be required to make up the balance of the County’s contribution to the regional apportionment for the plan period (to 2016) and the landbank period beyond.”*
10. Within Appendix 8, the Land at former British Aerospace, Hatfield it is stated that *“the land should ideally be worked very early in the Plan period”* and also that:
  - *The Ellenbrook Linear Park is excluded from the preferred area but any reclamation proposals should clearly demonstrate how the Park is to be integrated in the overall scheme. The reclamation of any extraction area should clearly demonstrate that it is consistent with the principles set out in the Supplementary Planning Guidance and planning permission ref S6/1999/1064/OP for the BAe site as a whole to deliver the proposed Country Park*
  - *Appropriate buffer zones will be required to protect the amenity of residents at Ellenbrook, Smallford and Popefield Farm.*
  - *A landscaped buffer zone incorporating Ellenbrook Linear Park shall be provided to the eastern part of the site with the boundary to the redeveloped area of the BAe site (non-Green Belt land) and the niversity playing fields.*
  - *The site lies within the Watling Chase Community Forest, and so there is potential for restoration to include extensive new woodland combined with suitable amenity use.*
11. Minerals Policy 9 requires *“Proposals for mineral development should, where appropriate, provide opportunities to contribute to the delivery of the national, regional, and local biodiversity action plan targets. Additionally, proposals that prejudice the delivery of these targets or would result in the loss of, or damage to habitats and/or species will not be supported. Where appropriate, the minerals planning authority will seek long-term overall enhancement to local biodiversity through restoration or by other means such as by the attachment of conditions or planning obligations”*

12. Minerals Policy 12 requires *“All mineral extraction and related development proposals will be required to take account of existing and, where appropriate, historic landscape character and maintain its distinctiveness. Planning applications may be refused where there is significant local landscape intrusion and loss of important landscapes or distinctive landscape features. Development proposals will be expected to:*
  - i) respect landscape character both during operations and in proposals for reclamation;*
  - ii) ensure that any distinctive landscape features are protected from the impact of development;*
  - iii) be accompanied by landscape conservation, design and management measures that both strengthen the character and enhance the condition of the landscape.*

*The County Council will have regard to the visual impact of proposals (including any proposed mitigation measures to minimise visual or other intrusion) on sensitive landuses, including areas of public access. Particular regard will be had to the Hertfordshire Landscape Strategy in assessing proposals. “*
13. Minerals Policy 13 states that *“The County Council will refuse applications for mineral working if:...ii) the proposed form of restoration or afteruse is inconsistent with the landscape character of the area or would involve detrimental environmental impact, including the impact on the highway network;”*
14. Minerals Policy 18 requires mineral extraction and related development to, where appropriate *“iv) include measures to minimise visual intrusion and any adverse impact on the local landscape;”*
15. Paragraph A2.4 also states that *“The settlement pattern of the sand and gravel belt is such that remaining known resources are often in close proximity to the urban areas. If these resources are to be extracted, it is essential that the afteruse takes account of the proximity of the urban area. Most of the gravel belt outside the towns is designated Green Belt. Although not a constraint in terms of national policy, in Green Belt situations the overriding consideration must be the appropriate afteruse and the restoration process which leads to it.”*

### Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies

16. The Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD (WCS) was adopted in November 2012 and covers the period between 2011 and 2026.
17. Policy 4 states that *“Reclamation proposals should ensure that the site is restored to a state that is of equal or greater environmental or agricultural value than the previous land use.”*

18. As noted above, Policy 11 covers *inter alia* the siting, scale and design of waste management developments in the context of the surrounding landscape character and that the landscaping and screening of the site is designed to effectively mitigate the impact of the proposal.
19. Policy 14 refers to 'buffer zones' indicating that proposals should incorporate an appropriately defined buffer zone in order to safeguard sensitive land-uses. It then sets out four criteria that can be used to define the buffer zone, including ii) "*natural and manmade features, which may reduce the impact of the development, for example landscape features, e.g. woodland, trees, hedgerows, water courses, roads, railway lines etc;*" and iv) "*the proximity of the proposed development to neighbouring land uses.*"

### **City and District of St Albans District Local Plan Review (adopted 1994)**

20. The application site straddles the boundary between the districts of St Albans and Welwyn Hatfield, with St Albans lying to the west of the line.
21. The application site lies within the Green Belt, as defined in the St Albans District Local Plan and which covers 130sq.km.
22. The policies relating to landscape include Policy 74 which seeks to protect existing landscape features such as trees and hedgerows. This policy also requires new landscaping with the use of native trees and shrubs and the retention or creation of wildlife corridors. Policy 104 seeks to protect and conserve landscape quality throughout the District.

### **Welwyn Hatfield District Local Plan (adopted 2005)**

23. The application site straddles the boundary between the districts of St Albans and Welwyn Hatfield, with Welwyn lying to the east of the line.
24. The application site lies within the Green Belt, as defined in the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan and which covers 102sq.km.
25. The key landscape-related policy is Policy R28 which recognises the importance of historic parks and gardens and the contribution these make to the landscape, and seeks to promote the preservation and maintenance of this resource.