WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING CONTROL COMMITTEE – 21JUNE 2012
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR (STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT)

N6/2012/0549/DE

QUEEN ELIZABETH II HOSPITAL, HOWLANDS, WELWYN GARDEN CITY, AL7 4HQ

APPROVAL OF RESERVED MATTERS RELATING TO THE APPEARANCE, LANDSCAPING, LAYOUT AND SCALE OF A NEW LOCAL GENERAL HOSPITAL INCORPORATING A LOCAL A & E FACILITY AND RAPID ASSESSMENT CENTRE INCLUDING ASSOCIATED AMENDMENTS TO EXISTING CAR PARKING, SERVICING, INTERNAL ROAD LAYOUT, LANDSCAPING AND OPEN SPACE FOLLOWING APPROVAL OF OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION N6/2011/0358/OP

APPLICANT: Assemble Community Partnership

(Howlands)

1 Site Description

1.1 The QEII Hospital Site occupies a site area of approximately 8.5 ha. The application site for the new QEII (Phase 1) occupies an area of 2.06 ha and comprises part of the existing QEII Hospital Site, a 350-bed district general hospital, at Howlands, Welwyn Garden City. The site is currently occupied by:

• Harmer House
• Buildings occupied by Ante-Natal, Diabetes and Social Services
• Accident and Emergency (part)
• Ascot Day Hospital (part)
• Bayford Geriatrics (part)

1.2 The QEII site lies on the southern built up edge of Welwyn Garden City, approximately 2km to the south east of the centre of Welwyn Garden City and 4 km from junction 4 of the A1 (M). The application site is bounded to the north and west by residential development, known as Hatfield Hyde. To the south west lies a cricket ground and pavilion and beyond that, the Commons Wood Caravan Park. To the south and south east lies The Commons Local Nature Reserve, a 15 ha designated site which comprises The Commons Wood, the Commons Meadow and Blackfan Fen. Commonswood Community Primary School and Nursery lies approximately 600m to the east of the QEII. Ascots Lane forms the boundary along the north west boundary of the site whilst Howlands forms the boundary along the north eastern frontage of the site.

1.3 The main route used by visitors and staff to the application site is from Howlands, which serves the public parking areas. The primary bus route passes the site along Howlands with a bus stop and lay-by directly outside Birch Court. There is
also a secondary access off Ascots Lane which serves staff parking. All accesses to the site are 2-way. A third access is from Howlands to the east. Ascots Lane leads directly to the A1000 and the A414, which in turn leads to the A1(M).

1.4 The area within the immediate vicinity of the application site is a mix of residential use with some recreation, public open space and educational facilities.

1.5 The QEII Hospital currently provides a range of acute services to over 300,000 people living in parts of east and south Hertfordshire. It was opened in 1965 and was one of the first new hospitals to be completed in England following WWII. The majority of buildings on site date from the 1960s and 1970s with some buildings being added in the past 20 years.

1.6 The site is characterised by the Main Block which has eight floors of accommodation (7 storeys in height), most of it used for inpatient use, divided into the North, West and East Wings. The Hospital contains a total of 350 beds and currently provides a full range of core NHS medical and surgical specialities. The general surgical and medical wards are supported by the following:

- Accident and emergency unit;
- Main and day surgery theatres;
- Intensive care, high dependency and coronary care units;
- Pathology, diagnostic and pharmacy services;
- Maternity Unit;
- Children’s and paediatric services;
- Renal medicine;
- Ophthalmology including an eye casualty unit;
- Outpatient care services;
- Acute elderly medical unit;
- Acute mental health (approximately 65 beds);
- Physio and occupational therapies;

1.7 The key buildings on site at present which make up the hospital facilities and shown on are:

- Stanborough and Bayford Wards and Ascot Day Hospital - stroke and elderly care;
- Queens Wing - Anaesthetics, Theatres and Gastroenterology;
- Elizabthe House (Private ward);
- Mental Health Unit and Occupational Therapy;
- South Block One – Radiology and Pathology, Women and Children’s Services, Specialist Surgery, Oncology, Haematology and Palliative Care;
- Vicki Adkins Unit – breast clinic;
- Main Block – Women and Children’s Services, Trust Management, Trauma and Orthopaedics, Specialist Surgery, Specialist Medicine and General Surgery, Radiology and Pathology, Pharmacy, Oncology, Urology, Gastroenterology, Elderly Care, Education and Training;
- Harmer House – administration;
- Social services;
- Princes Wing – Trauma and Orthopaedics;
- Estates Department;
- Social Club.
1.8 In total, the existing hospital occupies approximately 33,000 sq m of gross floorspace which includes approximately:

- 350 inpatient beds;
- 7 main and 2 day surgery operating theatres;
- A&E with 140,000 outpatient attendances per annum.

In addition, the application site includes the following existing facilities:

- Isabel Hospice. The original hospice opened in 1990 and was extended in 2000/1. The facility has 16 in-patient beds.
- Birch Court. This is an H-shaped block of 213 one and two-bedroom apartments for keyworkers.
- Beech Tree Day Nursery. The nursery has children from 6 weeks to 5 years, of whom 50% are children of staff currently employed at the QEII.

1.10 The main access to the site is via a priority junction onto Howlands. This leads to the main entrance and serves the majority of the site including the main patient/visitor car parks, staff car parks and drop off at the main entrance. A secondary access exists from Howlands 360m to the east of the main access which is again a priority junction. This is mainly used by staff and servicing vehicles. A third priority junction access is located on Ascots Lane and is used mainly by staff to access further parking areas and by visitors to Elizabeth House and the Queens Wing. The emergency access for ambulances is from Howlands, with the ambulance drop off being to the west of the main entrance.

2 The Proposal

2.1 Two outline planning applications have been previously approved by the council for the redevelopment of the hospital site. The smaller of the two outline planning applications in terms of site area, and the one these reserved matters relates to sought outline planning permission for the new QEII and associated car parking and landscaping. This represented phase 1 of the overall redevelopment of the site and a resolution to grant planning permission subject to conditions and subject to a S106 legal agreement was made at the Planning Control Committee meeting on 8 September 2011. The agreement was completed and planning permission issued on 10 February 2012. The second outline planning application sought outline planning permission for the remainder of the site, including a new Health Facility, an extension of the existing hospice, new residential development and associated car parking. Again, planning permission was granted subject to conditions and a S106 legal agreement and for members information the requirements of this agreement are still being negotiated.

2.2 The new facility will include a Local A&E unit, available 24 hours a day. The facility will also include the following services:

- Local A&E Unit, available 24 hours a day;
- A Rapid Assessment Unit;
- General Outpatients;
- GP services including evenings and weekends;
- Diagnostics including Computed Tomography (CT) and Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI);
- Ante and Post Natal Services;
• Vicki Adkins Breast Unit;
• Child Zone, comprising Children’s and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Children’s Development Centre (CDC) and Paediatric Outpatients)
• Therapies; and
• Endoscopy and Day Treatment Unit

There will be no day or overnight beds within the hospital building; however as part of the Intermediate Care Strategy the trust is looking into providing beds within the future health care facility.

2.3 This is the follow on ‘Reserved Matters’ application for the Appearance, Layout, Landscaping and Scale of the Phase 1 building.

2.4 Under the approved outline application the QEII building was to be four storeys in height and have a gross internal floor space of approximately 8,323 sqm with a total of 345 parking spaces, broadly split between patients, visitors, and staff. The only change to the scheme is that the building now has a gross internal floor area of 8500 sqm. All other elements of the proposal are as per the approved outline consent.

2.5 The design of the new healthcare building shown on the drawings submitted for this Reserved Matters application arranges the accommodation around a large central courtyard and creates a series of more private gardens between the building and the mature hedge that forms the northern boundary to the site. The building is formed in three ‘L’ shaped wings that define the courtyard space, around which the main public circulation is arranged. A covered colonnade provides protected routes to the principle and Local A&E entrances from the entrance plaza with drop-off facilities located close to the entrances. The principle entrance will lead to the main circulation space with central reception, café, pharmacy and a range of retail, information and community support facilities. The triple height main entrance space will connect the external spaces of the plaza and the landscaped central courtyard. Department receptions and sub-waiting zones on each floor are arranged around the courtyard and internal open voids, linking these spaces visually. Externally the topography for the New QEII site is generally level with no significant changes of level. This allows level access to all entrances from the car park, vehicle drop-off points, disabled parking bays and all pedestrian approaches to the building.

2.6 The proposed landscape design for the QEII Hospital aims to sympathetically integrate the new building within the existing landscape setting and provide a new courtyard landscape for the hospital. This is considered in more detail in section 8 of the report. In summary, the landscape can be defined into four distinct character areas:

• Courtyard
• Perimeter Landscape to New QEII Hospital
• Hedges and Woodland Fringes
• Car Park

2.7 The car park will be designed with a north south orientation which aims to guide patients, visitors and staff to the main entrance. The car parking bays will be identified separately from the tarmac road using coloured tarmac. In addition, trees with groundcover planting are proposed along the bays to provide a layer of
screening and provide visual interest to the car park. A wide range of tree species have been carefully selected to ensure they have an adequate crown size, providing a visual interest and increased solar shading.

3 Planning History

N6/2011/0359/OP - Outline application (with all matters reserved apart from means of access) for the redevelopment of the existing QE11 hospital site (phase 2), to include the construction of a new health care facility (or residential development), extension to the existing Isabel hospice, residential development of up to 164 dwellings and associated amendments to existing car parking, internal road layout, landscaping and open space.

N6/2011/0358/OP - Outline application (with all matters reserved apart from means of access) for the construction of a new local general hospital incorporating a local a & e facility and rapid assessment centre (phase 1) and associated amendments to existing car parking, servicing, internal road layout, landscaping and open space.


N6/2005/1026/FP - Erection of part three, four and six storey building comprising 213 units of key worker housing, following the demolition of Woolmer House (as variation of planning permission granted on 8th march 2005).


N6/2004/1802/FP - Erection of part three, four and six storey building comprising 213 units of key worker housing, following the demolition of Woolmer House. Approved March 2005.


N6/2003/1114/FP - Erection of a single storey extension to provide 2 store rooms. Approved September 2003

N6/2003/0711/FP - Roof top telecom installation comprising three pole and wall mounted sector antennas, two 0.3m dish antennas and ancillary development. Approved June 2003


In addition to the above, there are an additional 22 applications dating back to 1989 for minor alterations, works and extensions.

2009/2322/EI – Screening Opinion that an Environmental Impact Assessment is not required 16 November 2009.

In addition to the above pre-application discussions were entered into in 2009/2010 under N6/2010/0191/PA. Meetings in relation to Transport and Design took place but discussions in relation to parking, environmental issues and S106 Planning obligations were not completed at the request of the applicant.

A Development Consultation Forum (DCF) was also held on 13 July 2011.

4 Planning Policy

4.1 National Planning Policy Framework

4.2 Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991-2011 (Saved Policies)

   None

4.3 Hertfordshire County Council Waste Local Plan 1999

   Policy 3 – Waste Minimisation and New Developments
   Policy 7 – Re-use of Waste Arising from New Developments
   Policy 8 – Use of Recycled materials in new developments
   Policy 11 – Major Developments and Waste Recycling

4.4 Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 (Saved Policies)

   SD1 - Sustainable Development
   R3 - Energy Efficiency
   R4 - Renewable Energy Sources
   R5 - Waste management
   R7 - Protection of Ground and Surface Water
   R9 - Conservation of Water Resources
   R10 - Water Conservation Measures
   R11 - Biodiversity and Development
   R18 - Air Quality
   R19 - Noise and Vibration Pollution
   R29 - Archaeology
   M1 - Integrating Transport and Land Use
M2 - Transport Assessments  
M3 - Green Travel Plans  
M4 - Developer Contributions  
M5 - Pedestrian Facilities  
M6 - Cycle Routes and Facilities  
M9 – Bus and Taxi Facilities  
M14 - Parking Standards for New Development  
IM2 - Planning Obligations  
D1 - Quality of design  
D2 - Character and context  
D3 - Continuity and Enclosure  
D4 - Quality of the Public Realm  
D5 - Design for Movement  
D6 - Legibility  
D7 - Safety by Design  
D8 - Landscaping  
D9 - Access and Design for people with disabilities  
D10 - Public Art  
D11 - Design Statements  
H1 - New Housing Development  
H7 - Affordable Housing  
H8 - Dwelling Type and Tenure  
H10 - Accessible Housing  
CLT16 – QEII Hospital

4.5 Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005

4.6 Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Planning Guidance, Parking Standards, January 2004

4.7 Welwyn Hatfield 2021: The Borough’s Sustainable Corporate and Community Strategy, May 2009, sets 5 Corporate Priorities –

1. People and safer communities.
2. Maintaining and enhancing a cleaner and greener environment.
3. Encouraging prosperity and a healthier community.
4. Improving homes and neighbourhoods.
5. Accountable to the community.

4.8 Circular 11/95 – The Use of Conditions in Planning Permissions  
Circular 1/2006 – Guidance on Changes to the Development Control System  
Circular 05/2005 – Planning Obligations

5 Constraints

5.1 The site lies within the Specified Town Settlement of Welwyn Garden City as designated in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005. The site also lies adjacent to Urban Open Land 120 (Howlands Green Fingers), Wildlife Site 80 (Blackfan Fen and the Commons Meadow) and Local Nature Reserve 3 (Commonswood)

6 Representations Received
6.1 This application has been advertised by site notice, newspaper notice and neighbour notifications. Two representations have been received, from a resident of 329 Howlands and from the Isabel Hospice. The resident states:

- My only concern is in relation to the position of the new local general hospital. It is going to be sited in close proximity to my dwelling. With the height and depending on the windows facing make I would lose privacy within the front and especially to my back garden with windows on the upper levels looking in. I support the build but am worried how it will affect me and my family.

6.2 Isabel Hospice

- No comments to make other than we have sought and received assurances that the Hospice will be kept informed of any construction traffic, hours of work, abnormal noise or other issues that may affect Hospice services at our In Patient Unit. We understand that it is unlikely the hospice will be affected but should be grateful if this point could be noted.

7 Consultations Received

7.1 Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Landscaping and Ecology –

**Tree Protection Plan** - The trees, outside the site on Council maintained land are noted on at the junction of Ascots Lane and Howlands. The trees on the verge on Ascots Lane have not been included. The proposed temporary access is sited very close to the Norway maples on the verge. Although these trees are not the best specimens, they will be screening an elevation of the building which is not glamorized. The tree on the end needs to be protected from turning vehicles and appropriate care taken to insert a crossover, possibly in the root protection area (RPA). Should these measures be taken I would have no further concerns with this.

I have no objection to the removal of the trees indicated within the site. No trees on the Council maintained area will need to be removed or pruned to facilitate the development and therefore no works should be undertaken. I would not expect there to be a need to fence the tree outside 316 Howlands.

**Green Roof**
It would have been useful to know the minimum depth of growing media for the green roof. The living roof planting schedule is effectively a wild flower meadow mix. No sedum species are present although the text within document suggests there will be. It should be clear the suggested mix would be suitable on a roof if give sufficient depth of growing media, especially if sedums are included. It will not look like the photographs within the document as these are a completely different planting style and mix.

**Courtyard Area**
The bold planting scheme will look very effective within the space – very nice. My only two points are with certain species. Although very pretty, lavender is not a good looking plant after a few years as it gets very leggy and woody, even with annual trimming. As all the other plants are a long term fixture, it might be worth swapping this plant for another. This is more of a maintenance rather than amenity suggestion.
Six birch are to be planted in the courtyard. Birch within the Borough, especially in WGC, are struggling. They are commonly showing signs of stress and large proportions are in decline with thin crowns and deadwood. Many are in decline and are often found with a secondary infection of honey fungus. We are attributing these common symptoms to insufficient water for a species which is shallow rooted and prefers a slightly damper soil. The same dappled light effect and proportions could be achieved with another more tolerant species such as Gladitsia ‘Shademaster’, although the beautiful effect with the bark is lost.

**Memorial Garden**
I think it a wonderful idea to undertake the design of the raised planter with the friends group. The use of birch have been discussed elsewhere, but a raised planter is going to be very dry, especially with ornamental planting underneath. A different species may be more prudent. Trees which are smallish, not oppressive and could cope with a dry planter are trees such as Arbutus unedo or Cercis silicuastrum.

**Trees and Planting**
The four trees on the south east elevation are a mix of Sorbus and Carpinus. This would look more striking as all Sorbus. I would prefer the seven trees on the southern edge of the car park to be all Liquidambar as this will give a much stronger line and be stunning in autumn. This could then leave the four trees between these and the Sobus to be a row of Acer Elsrijk.

The overall distribution of trees in the car park is very good -the best we have had on an application without having to repeatedly ask for it. Quercus palustris on the south west of the car park are very nice, a locally found native species. I am also fond of Acer Elsrijk and use this tree myself. It’s refreshing to see the car park trees given a small space to stand in.

The use of birch has been covered elsewhere. These and the tree at the southern end of the staff/visitor car park boundary be changed to Quercus palustris. The hedge mix for the Hedge Garden, ground cover mix and perimeter planting are all fine. All the size and planting density of planting material are fine.

**Item Not Covered – Tree Planting Pits**
The only item not covered in a little more detail is the tree planting pits. I would expect the trees planted in hard surfacing to be given the best start possible by planting in a 3D anti-compaction product and/or with structural soils.

Only two of the trees in the car park are not sited in a ‘planted bed’. These should have some sort of protection from vehicular damage. Furnitubes and Marshalls (furniture used elsewhere on site) do some tree protection.

Bound gravel surfaces over planting pits - I have mixed feelings over these. They do look very neat and tidy. Some say the porous quality is reduced and possibly stops as fine particles collect in it but if it only covers a small area of otherwise porous surfacing it is not a large problem. The problem arises if the tree fails and has to be replaced – it is very expensive to chip out the bonded material and replace it. Often it is cheaper to lose the tree pit and fill in the block paving. No one expects the trees to fail, but accidents and unruly people happen. If the continued use of the tree locations could be assured beyond the normal five year condition period I would have no concerns.
Overall, the landscape scheme is very good. If the choice of birch could be modified and the species moved around a little in the car park I would have little to say.

7.2 Environment Agency – No comments. All of our concerns are addressed as conditions on the outline application N6/2011/0358/OP.

7.3 Hertfordshire County Council Transportation Planning and Policy - Notice is given under article 16 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010 that the Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority does not wish to restrict the grant of permission.

This is a reserved matters application remaining to be determined for appearance, landscaping, layout and scale. Comments on the proposed access arrangements and associated amendments to the existing parking servicing and internal layout were made as part of an outline application N6/2011/0358/OP, which was granted approval subject to appropriate S106 Agreement. In terms of appearance and landscaping, the proposals are unlikely to have any highways implications. Therefore, the Highway Authority does not wish to restrict the grant of permission.

7.4 Natural England – Advice given as part of the consultation for N6/2011/0358/OP. The advice provided in this previous correspondence applies equally to this reserved matters application although we made no objection to the original proposal. This new application relates largely to layout and scale of the development, and are unlikely to have significantly different impacts on the natural environment than the original proposal.

7.5 Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue – Access for fire fighting vehicles should be in accordance with The Building Regulations 2000. Water supplies should be provided in accordance with British Standards. Makes comments in relation to fire hydrant provision.

7.6 Thames Water - Waste and Water comments – The reserved matters application does not affect Thames Water and as such we have no observations to make.

7.7 Hertfordshire Police – Satisfied that the level of security being fitted is commensurate with the risk, accordingly no objections.

7.8 Hertfordshire County Council Development Services – No comments received

7.9 Welwyn Hatfield Access Group – No comments received, consulted on 16 April 2012

7.10 British Gas – No comments received, consulted on 16 April 2012

7.11 Transco – No comments received, consulted on 16 April 2012

7.12 Hertfordshire County Council Minerals and Waste – No comments received, consulted on 16 April 2012

7.13 Hertfordshire County Council Archaeology – No comments received, consulted on 16 April 2012
8. Discussion

8.1 This application is presented to the Planning Control Committee because the outline application was presented to the Planning Control Committee because of the significance of the proposals on health care provision within the borough. This is the Reserved Matters application following that approval.

8.2 The main issues to be considered are:

1. Whether the details submitted in relation to Appearance, Layout, Landscaping and Scale are acceptable in relation to the impact on the character and appearance of the area, appropriate parking provision and highway safety

2. Consideration of any other ‘Reserved Matters’ details relating to other material planning considerations such as ecological impacts and energy efficiency

8.3 An amended Design and Access Statement accompanies the application and outlines the additional design rationale that has been followed in working up the detailed proposals for the new building following the grant of outline consent. For clarity the report considers each of the reserved matters (Layout, Scale, Appearance and Landscaping in turn although Layout, Appearance and Scale are considered together because they essentially relate to the same subject)

 Layout, Scale and Appearance

8.4 The above Reserved Matters can be defined as follows:

 Layout – the way in which buildings, routes and open spaces are provided within the development and their relationship to buildings and spaces outside the development.

 Scale – the height, width and length of each building proposed in relation to its surroundings.

 Appearance – the aspects of a building or place which determine the visual impression it makes, excluding the external built form of the development.

8.5 The building is sited on the corner of Howlands and Ascots Lane on the site of the existing car park. The demand for the existing QEIi Hospital to maintain operational whilst the new hospital is constructed has been the determining factor for the location of the new building and the only suitable area of site is the existing open car park area. This allows the new facility to be built at the ‘front’ of the site whilst maintaining the access to and the operation of the existing hospital. This site ‘constraint’ is also an opportunity, as it allows the new building
to have a presence and frontage to Howlands, the main access route from the local neighbourhood. In design terms the positioning of a large scale public building at the ‘front’ of the site ensures good visibility and accessibility, also corresponding well with the scale and context of Birch Court.

8.6 The existing QEII Hospital and the buildings that have been added since it was opened are typical of 1960s and 1970s construction. The appearance of the Hospital is characterised by concrete buildings with flat roofs and windows on all sides and levels. Service infrastructure is located on the roofs in many instances and hard surfacing of the roads and car parks consist of tarmac. Soft landscaping is formulated by grass verges and some open spaces with a number of mature tree belts on the Site and its boundary.

8.7 The new building arranges the accommodation around a large central courtyard and creates a series of more private gardens between the building and the mature hedge that forms the northern boundary to the site. The building is formed in three ‘L’ shaped wings that define the courtyard space, around which the main public circulation is arranged which allows for good legibility and clarity for pedestrian users. A covered colonnade provides protected routes to the principle and Local A&E entrances from the entrance plaza with good drop-off facilities located close to the entrances.

8.8 The principle entrance will lead to the main circulation space with central reception, café, pharmacy and a range of retail, information and community support facilities. The triple height main entrance space will be light and open, connecting the external spaces of the plaza and the landscaped central courtyard. Department receptions and sub-waiting zones on each floor are arranged around the courtyard and internal open voids, linking these spaces visually for good interconnectivity. Externally the topography for the site is generally level with no significant changes of level. This allows level access to all entrances from the car park, vehicle drop-off points, disabled parking bays and all pedestrian approaches to the building.

8.9 In terms of secured by design principles and public safety, public walkways will be overlooked by windows of buildings and be designed to separate pedestrian and vehicle routes to minimise potential conflicts. All public areas of the New QEII Hospital will be well lit at night and covered by a new CCTV network within the Hospital site. The proposed landscaping proposals set out in the landscaping strategy will ensure a balance is achieved between the need for screening to reduce visual impact and the need for public areas to be visible. Car parks will be designed to reduce crime through good visibility and overlooking, access control, good lighting and proximity to the building. In accordance with requirements of Policy D7 of the development plan, the proposed development will therefore incorporate features within the design and layout which will improve personal safety of visitors, patients and staff. Wherever possible, public walkways will be overlooked by windows of buildings and all public areas will be well lit at night.

8.10 In terms of how the layout of the building relates to adjoining buildings and spaces outside of the development, the building is sited further forward than any of the previous hospital buildings that occupied the site. Therefore the building will appear as a dominant feature within the streetscene; however the same could be said of Woolmer House which is directly adjacent. The layout and form of a building directly relates to its function and the difference between the two buildings is that the layout of the new healthcare facility has been specifically
designed and considered as a series of different architectural elements that helps to mitigate the fact that it will be sited in an area where previously only a car park and single storey buildings were located. The layout has been designed to break up the overall scale of the building whilst still taking into account the strict operational requirements of the NHS.

8.11 Following on from this, in terms of the scale of the new facility the building will be four storeys in height, but stepping down in scale towards the north which seeks to acknowledge the domestic scale of them surrounding neighbourhood on the opposite side of Howlands.

8.12 The scale of the building also takes reference from the existing scale of Birch Court (4-6 storeys) which will be the immediate neighbour to the proposed new hospital. This scale of building provides a suitable presence for a building of significant public status and also generates an efficient relationship between the plan form and height. From the primary approach to the building from Howlands the scale of the building gently slopes upwards from the 2 storey scale at the site frontage to the 4 storey scale facing the centre of the site. This has the effect of ‘drawing-in’ the eye and creating a dynamic profile against the skyline, reinforcing the direction towards the main entrance façade. The covered colonnade also adds to the increasing scale as the building is approached, starting as a single storey height projection – at a more domestic scale – then stepping up to a 2 storey colonnade at the Local A&E entrance and continuing around to the main entrance and public areas. The scale of the covered colonnade is very important to the design, being both a protective element and also providing a ‘civic’ scale to the building.

8.13 The building does have a significant mass and will form a dominant addition to the streetscene when viewed travelling east along Howlands and when viewed across the landscaped amenity area on the junction with Ascots Lane. Given the presence of Birch Court and the existing hospital (although set back within the site) the resultant built form along this section of the streetscape would be considerable.

8.15 The proposed architectural form of the building responds to the surrounding environment by stepping up from two to four storeys as the building is approached from the main site entrance in Howlands. The stepping form is accentuated by the undulating roof profile which creates a distinctive presence, particularly to the southern elevation.

8.16 The form of the building is set back at entrance level to create generous covered colonnades that shelter the approach the main entrance and the 24 hour Local A&E entrance. A palette of three main materials has been selected for the elevations glazed terracotta rain screen cladding for the upper parts of the elevations above the colonnade, vertical timber cladding to the undercroft of the colonnade and to the inner elevations to the courtyard and coloured render to the 2 storey wings enclosing the courtyard and ‘hedge gardens’. A brindle brick forms a low plinth at ground level below the timber, render and rain screen cladding. These materials work with the scale and form of the building creating a ‘smooth’, reflective and subtly toned primary treatment to the upper levels, with the coloured render, timber cladding and brick plinth providing a more human scale, tactile yet robust materials at the lower levels. The glazing under the colonnaded areas and around the inner elevations to the courtyard also add to this palette of materials, the two storey high aluminium/timber composite window walling provides generous views and light into the building and central courtyard,
enhancing the feel of openness and accessibility. The design for the windows is consistent to both the rain screen cladding and the brickwork elevations, incorporating a fixed glazed element and an inward opening ventilator for natural ventilation, with external protection screen. The main pitched roof should be perceived as a single undulating plane, simply detailed in an aluminium folded seam, long-strip cladding with crisp, minimal details at the ridge and verge junctions with the glazed terracotta cladding. The combination of these elements create a highly distinctive form and appearance that presents an appropriate architectural design for this new healthcare building.

8.17 The increasing scale of the building is also defined by the external materials and fenestration proposed for the elevations, above and below the projecting colonnade. The main entrance is set within the two storey colonnade as a recognisable feature under the covered space. The two storey glazing to the entrance provides views through to the reception areas, café and galleried upper floors just inside. It is proposed that visual artwork could be incorporated in to this double height, glazed screen wall to create a lively and welcoming entrance but this is not something which could be controlled under planning legislation. The entrance doors and lobby will be formed in a coloured ‘portal’ in the glazed screen to provide visible and a human scale entrance to the new hospital.

8.18 A palette of materials has been put forward as part of the submission but it would still be appropriate to condition that samples if the various materials be submitted for approval in order that the principles that have guided the design are secured.

8.19 The proposed Layout, Scale and Appearance of the new healthcare facility demonstrates that the proposal incorporates a high standard of design, as required by Policy D1 of the development plan. Whilst it does not necessarily fit in with the traditional context of development in the area, i.e. New Towns Commission Architecture, the site has to be considered as a standalone site given its use. It is clear how the design and layout has evolved over time, what the buildings and spaces will be used for and where, the range of different uses that will be placed on the site and how they work together with the existing facilities on the site. It is also clear how the detailed design of the building and its layout and scale have sought to mitigate its modern appearance and its scale when viewed from the surrounding locality, much more than adjacent buildings of a similar scale such as Woolmer House.

8.20 Overall officers consider that the hospital building will have an impact on the character and appearance of the area because of its size, scale and siting. However, this would be a positive impact and overall it is considered that it will not have a sufficiently harmful impact on the character and appearance of the area to warrant refusal on these grounds alone.

**Landscaping**

8.20 This is the treatment of private and public space to enhance or protect the site’s amenity through hard and soft measures, for example, through planting of trees or hedges or screening by fences or walls.

8.21 The site of QEII Hospital sits on the south eastern fringe of Welwyn Garden City and provides good connection to the open space with the Commons Local Nature Reserve to the east of the site and The Commons Woodland to the south and west of the site. The proposed landscape design for the QEII Hospital aims to sympathetically integrate the new building within the existing landscape setting.
and provide a new courtyard landscape for the hospital. The Landscape Concept Aims are as follows:

- To create a dynamic environment, enhance positive views, aid legibility and provide access to attractive external spaces;
- To provide softening and greening to the building facades, improving views into and out of the hospital environment;
- To create a positive visual relationship between the Hospital and the surrounding landscape and townscape;
- To encourage use of animated external spaces through considered provision of furniture, planting and facilities;
- To make maximum use of the existing tree resource on Site.

8.22 The proposed landscape design for the site provides a reference to the site’s urban fringe and the topography of the site lends itself to a responsible management of surface water runoff and the adjoining woodland offers an opportunity to link the development to its natural surroundings.

8.23 The retention of existing landscape features such as trees and hedgerows would be complemented by the introduction of new planting and a responsible management of surface water runoff in order to reduce the impact of the development on sensitive adjoining land uses. The purpose of the Landscaping Plan is to provide clear access points and a distinct sense of arrival whilst also creating a heightened sense of ‘Civic’ presence. An enhanced natural environment will encourage and create suitable environments for meeting, greeting and waiting through a variety of public spaces, landscaping and useable green spaces. It is envisaged that a variety of amenities including art, waiting space, play space and retail integrated with the Hospital functions will improve the sense of external security. The Landscaping Plan also seeks to deliver intuitive way finding.

8.24 The landscape can be defined into four distinct character areas:

- Courtyard
- Perimeter Landscape to New QEII Hospital
- Hedges and Woodland Fringes
- Car Park

The Courtyard

8.25 The rectilinear design of the courtyard makes reference to the roof line of the new QEII hospital, providing connection between the building and the landscape beyond. Blocks of shrub planting will provide a variety of colour, texture and height to the courtyard as well as providing seasonal interest. The birch trees proposed in the courtyard would offer solar shading to the western façade in the summer and transparency in winter as well as scale and a sense of place. These will be underplanted with native ferns and woodland groundcovers. There will be a paved outdoor seating area for the café and additional quiet seating areas located throughout the courtyard.
Perimeter Landscape to New QEII Hospital

8.26 There will be a wide paved area in front of the building to the south and east. The paving design will communicate entrance locations and define the designated cycle route and fire access vehicle route. Linear paving will be used to define the main entrance and link through with the internal paving and match with courtyard paving. Along the eastern and southern boundaries, a textured concrete buff colour paving is proposed with charcoal colour banding.

Hedges and Woodland Fringe

8.27 To the north of the hospital building, the existing hedgerow along the boundary of Ascots Lane will be retained. Additional planting is proposed to create ‘hedge rooms’ offering external views from the treatment and waiting rooms on the north side of the hospital. The proposed hedges will link to the existing boundary hedge. The enclosed nature of the space will provide privacy and screening along the northern façade of the building.

8.28 There is currently a memorial garden on the QEII hospital site; when the existing hospital is decommissioned, the land where the garden sits will be disposed of by the NHS. As a result of this and engagement with relevant parties, it has been decided to relocate the memorial garden to the new QEII. The garden will be located to the north of the hospital building, adjacent to the hedge rooms and screened from Ascots Lane by the existing boundary hedge. It will provide a quiet place for contemplation and reflection for visitors, patients and staff.

8.29 In relation to the other landscaping matters, the comments of the council have been taken into account and a revised plan was received on 8 June 2012. The revisions that this relates to are matters of detail in relation to planting species to be addressed in relation to the retained trees, the green roof, tree planting pits and planting species. The revisions do not fundamentally change the recommendation in relation to this reserved matter in principle; however the details are currently being reviewed by officers and will be reported to members at this meeting.

8.29 Subject to these details being agreed, this is an acceptable landscape strategy that conforms to the masterplan proposals. Subject to conditions, the Landscape proposals will comply with the broad provisions of national and regional landscape and townscape planning policy and specifically policies R17: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows and D8: Landscaping and sufficiently help to mitigate against the impact of the building.

8.21 In relation to vehicular access, as set out in the outline consent all the existing accesses into the Hospital Site will remain. The existing access from Howlands will serve the new QEII (including the main entrance and the local A&E), Birch Court, the new future healthcare facility and the Isabel Hospice. The eastern access will serve the nursery and the residential units. Ascots Lane access will serve the staff working at the new QEII and the residential units on the western part of the site. The current access for service and refuse vehicles, via the main access off Howlands will remain.
8.22 Because the principle of development has been accepted and the details in relation to the Access (which were considered as part of the outline subject to the S106 requirements and conditions) the only matters that can be considered here are the detailed matters of provision and design for the car parking.

8.23 The detailed proposal still includes the 170 staff spaces (including 9 disabled spaces) and 175 patients and visitors spaces (including 17 disabled spaces) as per the outline and the layout of the car parking is considered to be acceptable.

8.24 In terms of cycling facilities, these will be enhanced on site by providing safe and secure cycle parking numbers in line with adopted standards. A total of 25 cycle spaces will be provided for staff, based on a ratio of 1 per every 10 members of staff. Cycle parking demand for patients is generally low and therefore, five spaces are proposed and use of the cycle facilities will be monitored as part of the Green Travel Plan. Motorcycle parking will be provided in line with current adopted standards. There are no objections to this level of provision as per the outline.

8.25 In terms of the detailed design of the cycle stores which needs to be considered as part of this application, three separate cycle and motorcycle storage areas are being proposed. There will be fifteen cycle stands in total (which provides space for up to 30 cycles) with two groups of five stands along the eastern elevation of the building and under the canopy and five stands located within a covered Broxap Sheffield cycle stand along the eastern boundary of the car park. Furthermore, motorcycle spaces will be located adjacent to the shelter. To ensure safer cycling, there will be a separate cycle lane (1.8m wide) indicated within the paving which links from the main entrance to the cycle stands. In addition, there will be CCTV surveillance of the cycle stands at all times. Accordingly, the application demonstrates sufficient long term and short term stands in accordance with the council’s adopted guidance.

2. Consideration of any other ‘Reserved Matters’ details relating to other material planning considerations such as ecological impacts and energy efficiency

8.26 Ecological Impacts: The presence of protected species is a material consideration, in accordance with PPS9 (Biodiversity and Geological Conservation), Natural Environment & Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (section 40), Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as well as Circular 06/05.

8.27 Protected species such as great crested newts, otters, dormice and bats benefit from the strictest legal protection. These species are known as European Protected Species (‘EPS’) and the protection afforded to them derives from the EU Habitats Directive, in addition to the above legislation. Water voles, badgers, reptiles, all wild birds, invertebrates and certain rare plants are protected to a lesser extent under UK domestic law (NERC Act and Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981).

8.28 In the UK the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive is implemented by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (the Conservation Regulations 2010). Where a European Protected Species (‘EPS’) might be affected by a development, it is necessary to have regard to Regulation 9(5) of the Conservation Regulations 2010, which states:
“a competent authority, in exercising any of their functions, must have regard to the requirements of the Habitats Directive so far as they may be affected by the exercise of those functions.”

8.29 The Conservation Regulations 2010, (Regulation 41) contains the main offences for EPS animals. These comprise:

- “Deliberate capture or killing or injuring of an EPS”
- “Deliberate taking or destroying of EPS eggs”
- “Deliberate disturbance of a EPS” including in particular any disturbance which is likely –
  
  (a) to impair their ability –
  
   (i) to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young, or,
   
   (ii) in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate, or

  (b) to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong

- “Damage or destruction of a EPS breeding site or resting place” (applicable throughout the year).
  
  o e.g. bat maternity roost (breeding site) or hibernation or summer roost (resting place)
  
  o e.g. great crested newt pond (breeding site) or logpiles / piles of stones (resting place)
  
  o e.g. dormice nest (breeding site or resting place (where it hibernates)

8.30 In some circumstances a person is permitted to ‘derogate’ from this protection. The Conservation Regulations 2010 establishes a regime for dealing with such derogations via the licensing regime administered by Natural England. The approval of such a license by Natural England may only be granted if three strict “derogation” tests can be met:

- the activity to be licensed must be for imperative reasons of overriding public interest or for public health and safety;
- there must be no satisfactory alternative; and
- favourable conservation status of the species must be maintained

8.31 Notwithstanding the licensing regime, the council as Local planning authority (LPA) has a statutory duty to have regard to the requirements of the Habitat Directive and therefore should give due weight to the presence of an EPS on a development site. Therefore in deciding to grant permission for a development which could affect an EPS the LPA should:

  a) Consider whether an offence to an EPS is likely to be committed by the development proposal.
  
  b) If the answer is yes, consider whether the three “derogation” tests will be met.
A LPA failing to do so would be in breach of Regulation 9(5) of the Conservation Regulations 2010 which requires all public bodies to have regard to the requirements of the Habitats Directive in the exercise of their functions.

8.32 This matter was considered at outline stage and appropriately conditioned. Therefore no further consideration of the principle is necessary. Members should be aware that officers have a current application for the discharge of conditions and the only issue that has arisen is the need for some additional bird nesting boxes. The applicant has agreed to the provision of these bird boxes, subject to siting (there is a need to ensure that the boxes do not affect the operation of the facility from a health perspective because of droppings etc). The discharge of conditions applications are mostly resolved but the boxes are not shown on any of the drawings and it is unlikely that this would be resolved before this meeting. To ensure these are implemented and to ensure the two approval processes tie in together a condition has been added to this effect.

8.33 **Energy Efficiency**: The applicant’s Energy Statement demonstrates that the new QII Hospital will comply with Part L2a2010 of the building regulations. The building will also achieve a 10% reduction in CO2 by on site renewable energy measures through the use of air source heat pumps, solar thermal systems and low energy lighting. A Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) Healthcare 2008 Pre-Assessment Estimate has been made which indicates that an ‘Excellent’ rating will be achievable. BREEAM Excellent requires a maximum EPC level of 40 and a 10% provision of total energy from renewable low or zero carbon sources.

8.34 Further clarification has been sought regarding the exact extent of the measures being proposed and these have been confirmed as an Air source heat pump, PV and Solar Thermal panels. Whilst approval of these details is a requirement of the outline consent, the details of the siting of these have also been submitted for this application to ensure they tie in with the outline consent and they are considered acceptable.

8.35 **Waste Management**: In accordance with what are complex statutory requirements for healthcare provision details of waste management are still being clarified by the NHS. However sufficient space has been designed into the scheme to accommodate waste management vehicles and accordingly, any additional waste management issues will be reported at the meeting.

8.36 **East of England Plan 2008**: On 10th November 2010, The High Court quashed the decision of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to unilaterally revoke Regional Spatial Strategies in England on two grounds:

- That he acted outside his statutory powers in circumventing the need for parliamentary scrutiny of such a fundamental change to the national planning system; and

- He failed to consider the likely environmental effects of revoking Regional Strategies.

8.37 However, the Government is still committed to the abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies through the Localism Bill. In the meantime, the policies in the East of England Plan are re-established and form part of the development plan again and are therefore a material consideration which can be taken into account in
reaching a decision. However, the Government's intention to abolish Regional Spatial Strategies is also a material consideration that could be considered to reduce the weight to be attached to policies in Regional Spatial Strategies.

8.38 The application has been considered against policies in the East of England Plan, which at the time of this decision forms part of the development plan for the Borough but that the weight accorded to these policies, in light of the above circumstances, has been carefully considered in reaching a decision.

9 Conditions

9.1 In relation to conditions, once outline planning permission has been granted, it cannot be withdrawn except by a revocation order under section 97 of the Act, and any subsequent approval of reserved matters does not constitute the granting of a further planning permission. Any conditions relating to anything other than the reserved matters should be imposed when outline permission is granted. The only conditions which can be imposed when the reserved matters are approved are conditions which directly relate to those matters. So, where certain aspects of the development are crucial to the decision, local planning authorities will wish to consider imposing relevant conditions when outline permission is granted.

9.2 Authorities should seek to ensure, where possible, that conditions other than those relating to reserved matters are self-contained, and do not require further approvals to be obtained before development can begin. Where necessary, however, a local planning authority may also, when granting a full or outline planning permission, impose a condition requiring that details of a specified aspect of the development which was not fully described in the application (e.g. the provision of car parking spaces) be submitted for approval before the development is begun.

9.3 Officers are currently dealing with a number of applications to discharge the conditions relating to the outline consent. The details that have been submitted, for the most part are satisfactory and subject to further clarification on matters relating to contaminated land which have been requested by the Environment Agency and the revised landscaping details requested by the council, the only conditions that need to be applied to this decision are in relation to the reserved matters and these are set out below. The imposition of these conditions have been agreed with the applicant and are considered to be entirely reasonable and necessary and in accordance with the provisions of Circular 11/95 ‘Use of Planning Conditions’.

10 Conclusion

10.1 The reserved matters details that have been submitted in respect of the Layout, Appearance, Scale and Landscaping accord with the outline permission granted pursuant to N6/2011/0358/OP. Accordingly, subject to some minor areas of clarification in relation to the details submitted to discharge the conditions of the outline and the details submitted for this application are considered to be acceptable and accord with the provisions of the development plan. Subject to the inclusion of the conditions set out below the application for reserved matters should be approved.

11 Recommendation
11.1 It is recommended that the Reserved Matters (Layout, Scale, Appearance and Landscaping) be approved subject to the following conditions:

**Conditions**

1. Development in accordance with approved plans (plan numbers tbc)

   **REASON:** To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved drawings and any changes must be agreed in advance in writing by the local planning authority.

2. Implementation of Landscaping

   All planting, seeding, or turfing and soil preparation comprised in the above details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the buildings, the completion of the development, or in agreed phases whichever is the sooner: and any plants which within a period of ten years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the local planning authority gives written consent to any variation. All landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the guidance contained in British Standards, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

   **REASON:** To ensure proper implementation of the agreed landscape details in the interest of the amenity value of the development in accordance with Policy D8 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

3. Retention and protection of trees and shrubs for the duration of development

   (a) No retained tree or shrub shall be cut down, uprooted or destroyed, nor shall any retained tree or shrub be pruned other than in accordance with the approved plans and particulars, without the written approval of the Local planning authority. Any topping or lopping approved shall be carried out in accordance with British Standard 3998 (Tree Work).

   (b) If any retained tree or shrub is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies, another tree or shrub shall be planted at the same place and that tree or shrub shall be of such size and species, and shall be planted at such time, as may be specified in writing by the local planning authority.

   (c) The erection of fencing for the protection of any retained tree, shrub or hedge shall be undertaken in accordance with details approved in writing by the Local planning authority to comply with the recommendation of British Standard 5837 (2005) before any equipment, machinery or materials are brought on to the site for the purposes of the development, and shall be maintained until all equipment, machinery and surplus materials have been removed from the site. Nothing shall be stored or placed in any area fenced in accordance with this condition and the ground levels within those areas shall not be altered, nor shall any excavation be made, without the written consent of the Local planning authority. No fires shall be lit within 20 metres of the retained trees and shrubs.
In this condition, retained tree or shrub, means an existing tree or shrub, as the case may be, which is to be retained in accordance with the approved plans and particulars; and paragraphs (a) and (b) above shall have effect until the expiration of [ten years] from [the date of the occupation of the building for its permitted use]

REASON: To protect the existing trees, shrubs and hedgerows in the interest of visual amenity in accordance with Policy D8 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

4. Submission of material samples

No development shall take place until samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the building hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be implemented using the approved materials and subsequently, the approved materials shall not be changed without the prior written consent of the local planning authority.

REASON: To ensure a satisfactory standard of development in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Policies GBSP2, D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

5. No occupation of building until roads constructed, surfaced and spaces laid out

The building hereby approved shall not be used until the roads and footpaths associated with the building and the area set aside for car parking have been constructed, surfaced and made available for use.

REASON: In order to ensure that adequate vehicular and pedestrian access is provided in the interests of highway safety in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy D1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, 2005.

6. Prior to the occupation of the building, details of the provision and installation of swift/bird/bat boxes shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Subsequently, the building shall not be occupied other than in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: To make appropriate provision for natural habitats within the approved development and to provide a reliable process for implementation and aftercare in accordance with Policy ENV3 of the East of England Plan 2008 and Policy R11 and R16 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

**Summary of reasons for grant of permission (if applicable)**

The proposal has been considered against the National Planning Policy Framework, East of England Plan 2008, and Hertfordshire County Council Waste Local Plan 1999 Policy 3, Policy 7, Policy 8, Policy 11 and policies SD1, R3, R4, R5, R7, R9, R10, R11, R18, R19, R29, M1, M2, M3, M4, M5, M6, M9, M14, IM2, D1, D2, D3, D4, D5, D6, D7, D8, D9, D10, D11, H1, H7, H8, H10, CLT16 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005, in addition to the Human Rights Act 1998, which, at the time of this decision indicate that the proposal should be approved. Material planning considerations do not justify a decision contrary to the development plan (see Officer’s report which can be inspected at these offices).
Informatives: None

Richard Aston (Strategy and Development)
Date 8 June 2012

Background papers to be listed (if applicable)