

Agenda Item: 6

- Reference:** EDC/16/0071
- Site Address:** Former Northfleet West Substation Site, Southfleet Road, Swanscombe.
- Proposal:** Erection of a standalone two storey office development comprising 1,093 sq. m Use Class B1a Floor Space and 50 car parking spaces with associated landscaping and public realm enhancements.
- Applicant:** Redrow Homes Limited
- Parish / Ward:** Swanscombe & Greenhithe

SUMMARY:

The proposed development, to which this full planning application relates, is for the erection of a standalone two storey office development comprising 1,093 sq. m (use class B1a) floorspace and 50 car parking spaces with associated landscaping and public realm enhancements on the Ebbsfleet Green site. The office development would be the new headquarters for Redrows South East Division.

The wider site of Ebbsfleet Green, benefits from outline planning permission (granted 31 March 2014) for the redevelopment of the site comprising a mixed use development of up to 950 dwellings and non-residential floorspace for: shopping, food & drink, hotel use; community, health, education & cultural uses; assembly & leisure facilities & associated works to provide the development. The proposed development seeks to introduce office (use class B1a) floor space which does not currently form part of the description of development under the approved outline planning permission ref. DA/05/00308/OUT.

The proposed office would add to the mix of uses on the site and its position close to the retail unit, pub / restaurant and hotel would provide for a vibrant commercial cluster. The office would be an attractive building that would sit comfortably within the masterplan and not cause detrimental impacts to the amenity of the area. The scheme complies with the adopted parking standards.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval subject to the following conditions with delegated authority to the Strategic Planning Manager to make minor changes to the wording of the conditions:

Time Limit

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

Reason: In pursuance of s.91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by s.51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

Approved Plans

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following plans:

AL-1C-06-20-001 Rev P1; AE-1C-06-20-0001 Rev P1; AE-1C-06-20-002 Rev P1; AL-1C-06-00-001 Rev P1; AL-1C-06-90-001 Rev P1; AL-1C-06-90-001 Rev P1; AL-1C-06-20-002 Rev P1

Reason: For avoidance of doubt and to ensure a satisfactory form of development.

Prior to Development above Foundation Level

3. No development above foundation level shall take place until details and samples of all materials to be used externally (including windows) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the appearance of the development is satisfactory and without prejudice to conditions of visual amenity in the locality, in accordance with policy B1 of Dartford Borough Local Development Framework – Local Plan – Saved Policies (2011).

4. No development above foundation level shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority a scheme of landscaping (hard and soft) and boundary treatment. All boundary treatment and hard landscaping shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details before occupation of the development. All planting, seeding and turfing shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details during the first planting season following occupation of the buildings or completion of the

development, whichever is the earlier.

Reason: Pursuant to condition 197 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and to protect and enhance the appearance and character of the site and locality.

5. No development above foundation level shall take place until details of the facilities for the storage and collection of waste and refuse have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The waste and refuse site shall be provided in accordance with the approved details prior to the first occupation of the building.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed development does not prejudice the appearance of the locality and that adequate access can be gained by collection vehicles in accordance with policy B1 of the Dartford Borough Local Development Framework – Local Plan – Saved Policies (2011).

6. No development above foundation level shall take place until details of compliance with the overall surface water drainage strategy for the site has been submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, such information should include pre-approved and post-development impermeable areas and the associated attenuation volumes as provided within the greater scheme.

Reason: To ensure satisfactory means of surface water drainage which need to be considered before development commences.

Prior to Occupation

7. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied, until the area shown on the submitted layout as vehicle parking space has been provided, surfaced and drained and the approved cycle parking provided. Thereafter it shall be kept available for such use and no permanent development, whether or not permitted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (or any order amending, revoking or re-enacting that Order) shall be carried out on the land so shown or in such a position as to preclude vehicular access to this reserved parking.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport in accordance with policy B1 of the Dartford Borough Local Development Framework – Local Plan – Saved Policies (2011).

8. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied until a management

programme for the landscaping has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such landscaping shall thereafter be maintained for a period of five years in accordance with the approved details. Any trees, shrubs or grassed areas which die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased within this period shall be replaced within the next planting season with plants of similar species and size to that approved unless the Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: To safeguard the visual amenities of the locality in accordance with policy B1 of the Dartford Borough Local Development Framework – Local Plan – Saved Policies (2011).

9. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied until a Travel Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Travel Plan shall include a programme of implementation and proposals to promote alternative forms of transport to and from the site, other than by private car and provide for periodic review. Once approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, the Travel Plan shall be implemented, maintained and reviewed as so-approved.

Reason: To encourage the use of all travel modes and ensure a sustainable approach to travel.

Other

10. The building hereby approved shall be used only for Use Class B1a and for no other purpose, including any other purpose in Class B1a of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning [use class] Order 1987 (as amended) or in any provision equivalent to that class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order [with or without modification].

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure a satisfactory form of development.

11. The development hereby approved shall achieve BREEAM level 'Very Good' in accordance with the requirements of BREEAM [or such national measure of sustainability for non-residential design that replaces that scheme] unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the development meets the objectives of energy efficiency in new building design and construction pursuant to policy CS23 of the Dartford Core Strategy 2011.

12. No deliveries shall be taken in or dispatched from the site outside the hours of 08:00 – 18:00 Monday to Saturdays nor at any time on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays.

Reason: To ensure that the development does not prejudice the amenities of neighbouring properties in accordance with policy B1 of the Dartford Borough Local Development Framework – Local Plan – Saved Policies (2011).

13. All plant, machinery, mechanical ventilation equipment and ducting, other than that shown on the approved plans, shall be installed internally. No other plant, machinery, mechanical ventilation equipment, flues, ducting or other paraphernalia shall be placed on the outside of the building without the prior written permission of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed development does not prejudice the appearance of the locality in accordance with policy B1 of the Dartford Borough Local Development Framework – Local Plan – Saved Policies (2011).

14. No external lighting shall be installed on the building or within the site until details of its design and siting have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The submitted details shall provide sufficient information as to enable assessment of the impact that the lighting would have on the surrounding light sensitive properties. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority pursuant to this condition, all external lighting shall be switched off when the building is not in use. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed development does not prejudice the appearance of the locality or the amenities for local residents in accordance with policy B1 of the Dartford Borough Local Development Framework – Local Plan – Saved Policies (2011).

Informatives

1. In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Ebbsfleet Development Corporation, as local planning authority, has taken a positive and proactive approach to the proposed development, focusing on finding solutions:

- The agent was advised of planning issues during the processing of the application and additional information has been submitted to address these.

- The application was determined within the relevant timescales.
2. The following documents have been considered in the assessment of this planning application: -
- Design and Access Statement (July 2016)
 - Planning Statement (July 2016)
 - Transport Assessment (July 2016)
 - Travel Plan (July 2016)

1.0 SITE CONTEXT AND PROPOSAL

Background

- 1.1 The application site lies within the wider Ebbsfleet Green development. Outline planning permission (ref. DA/05/00308/OUT) was granted by Dartford Borough Council in March 2014 for the redevelopment of the site to create a new community with a mix of uses. All matters were reserved for subsequent detailed approval, with the exception of the means of access which approved junctions with Southfleet Road. The permission is subject to a total of 60 planning conditions and Section 106 Agreement.
- 1.2 The outline permission approved the following land uses for the Ebbsfleet Green site:
- Up to 950 residential dwellings in a mix of houses/flats;
 - Primary school and associated open space (2.05ha);
 - Community hall (358 sqm);
 - Neighbourhood foodstore (339 sqm);
 - Up to 5,000 sq m hotel with conferencing and leisure facilities;
 - Pub and restaurant (920 sqm);
 - Public open space (no less than 30% of the site) including parkland, 2 No. sports pitches, 2 No. hard-surfaced courts, with changing facilities and community allotments;
 - A Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP), Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) and 3 x Local Equipped Areas of Play (LEAPS);
- 1.3 Subsequent reserved matters applications have been approved for phase 1 infrastructure works and the detailed consent for phase 1. Phase 1 Infrastructure works (application ref. 14/01517/ECREM) enables early delivery of the northern and southern sections of the spine road, associated earth

works, formation of the noise bund along the A2 corridor, the Local Park, LEAP and associated planting. These details were previously approved by Dartford Borough Council. The detailed consent (application ref. 15/01001/ECREM) of 180 residential units including details of streets, buildings, structures, car parking areas, open spaces, materials, noise mitigation and drainage was approved by the EDC Planning Committee in 2015.

- 1.4 This application seeks full planning permission for an office development comprising of 1,093 sq. m of (use class B1a) floorspace and 50 car parking spaces with associated landscaping and public realm enhancements. The proposal seeks to introduce a new non-residential use to the site, not currently consented under the outline planning permission.
- 1.5 The application was validated on 26th July 2016 and is supported by plans, a planning statement, design and access statement, travel plan and a transport statement. In conjunction with the aforementioned application, a separate submission has been made for revisions to the site wide masterplan (EDC/16/0039) which reflects detailed design proposals coming forward across the site.

Site Description

- 1.6 Ebbsfleet Green is approximately 38 hectares in area and lies to the south east of Eastern Quarry. It previously comprised of 3 electrical sub-stations which have now been decommissioned. The remainder of the site was last in arable use. The site is bounded to the south by the A2 and to the east by Southfleet Road. The western and northern boundaries of the site are bounded by the DS20 Public Right of Way.
- 1.7 In terms of site topography, the land rises steadily in a west/north-westerly direction from its southern and eastern boundaries. The levels rise from a low point of approximately 22 metres AOD at the south-eastern corner, to approximately 34 metres AOD at the sites north west corner. It should be noted that extensive 'cut and fill' earthworks have taken place, approved as part of Phase 1 infrastructure works and the levels across the site will drastically change. Power lines run from north to south across the site.
- 1.8 The application site for the office is 2,721 sq. m in size and is situated within the south eastern corner of the Ebbsfleet Green development, in what is defined as Phase 1c. A number of complimentary uses (set out in the outline permission) will be delivered in this area of the site have been identified, including residential development, a retail unit and a pub/restaurant.

2.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.1 **05/00308/OUT** – Redevelopment of site comprising a mixed use of up to 950 dwellings and non-residential floorspace for: shopping, food and drink, hotel use; community, health, education and cultural uses; assembly and leisure facilities and associated works to provide the development.
Approved with conditions, 31st March 2014
- 2.2 **14/01520/ECCDNA** – Submission of details relating to Masterplan pursuant to condition 12 of outline planning permission DA/05/00308/OUT for development of the site comprising a mixed use of up to 950 dwellings and non-residential floorspace for: shopping, food and drink, hotel use; community, health, education and cultural uses; assembly and leisure facilities and associated works to provide the development.
Approved, 16th November 2015
- 2.3 **14/01517/ECREM** – Submission of Reserved matters in respect of Phase 1 Infrastructure Works pursuant to Conditions 2,19,21,22 and 32 of outline planning permission DA/05/00308/OUT inclusive of northern and southern sections of spine road, site levels, hard and soft landscaping (excluding Phase 1 residential area), indicative street and parkland lighting, local play area, associated earth works and noise bund (amended plans for spine road, site levels, cut and fill, sections).
Approved with Conditions, 24th December 2015
- 2.4 **15/01001** – Submission of reserved matters of siting, design, external appearance and landscaping pursuant to conditions 2,19,20,21,22,26, and 43 of outline planning permission DA/05/00308/OUT for Phase 1 development of 180 residential units including details of streets, buildings and structures, car parking areas, open spaces, materials, noise mitigation and drainage.
Approved with Conditions, 21st January 2016
- 2.5 **EDC/16/0009** – Request for a screening opinion pursuant to regulation 5 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 (as amended) in relation to the construction of a standalone three storey office development of approximately 1,000sq m (GIA) and up to 70 car parking spaces with associated landscaping and public enhancements, on an area of land 2,941 sq. m (0.29ha) in size.
EIA Not Required, 20th April 2015

3.0 PUBLICITY

- 3.1 Site notice expiry date: 8th September 2016

3.2 Press notice expiry date: 8th September 2016

4.0 REPRESENTATIONS

4.1 No letters of representation have been received in relation to the application.

5.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSES

5.1 The application has been subject to consultation and re-consultation where appropriate incorporating press and site notices; consultation with statutory agencies; representative bodies and various teams within Dartford Borough Council.

The following groups and organisations have been consulted on the application;

- Dartford Borough Council
- KCC Lead Local Flood Authority
- KCC Highways and Transportation
- Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council

5.2 The comments listed below reflect the latest position of each consultee who has provided comments: -

Dartford Borough Council – No objection has been raised. The principle of office development at this site is considered acceptable provided that the re-provision of residential floorspace through subsequent phases of development does not compromise other aspects of the scheme (e.g. a loss of open space). It is recommended that a condition is imposed to remove permitted development rights allowing conversion to residential use to ensure any future proposals are fully assessed against all relevant policies. Furthermore, it is recommended that a BREEAM assessment is undertaken or further evidence presented by the applicant to ensure the proposals meet the requirements of Core Strategy Policy CS23.

Officer comment: Conditions have been recommended to remove permitted development rights relating to the use of the building (condition 10) and to ensure the appropriate BREEAM level is met (condition 11).

KCC Lead Local Flood Authority – No objection has been raised to the principle of the office development. However, concerns have been raised by the Drainage Officer in regards to the surface water strategy provided. There is still uncertainty as to whether the design approved at Reserved Matters ref

EDC/15/01001/ECREM will be sufficient with respect to capacity and providing sufficient surface water management controls to prevent flooding. The site has undergone significant amount of technical design and it is expected that the additional capacity will easily be accounted for. A condition has been recommended which requires the submission of information to confirm compliance with the overall surface water drainage strategy; such information should include pre-approved and post-development impermeable areas and the associated attenuation volumes as provided within the greater scheme.

Officer comment: A condition has been attached to the approval which requests further detailed design information to confirm compliance with the overall surface water drainage strategy for the site (condition 6).

KCC Highways and Transportation – No objection has been raised. It should be noted that the officer has commented in regards to the number of parking spaces provided. The Transport Statement states that surveys of the applicant's current offices in Chatham show that up to 66 car parking spaces are sometimes required, although the proposed provision at Ebbsfleet Green is 50 car parking spaces. Concerns have been raised that this may result in staff and visitors parking on-street in surrounding roads.

The officer highlighted that the Travel Plan is inadequate. The applicants need to further assess why staff need to drive to work and should identify ways of enabling staff to leave their cars at home. In addition, the Travel Plan should identify ways of ensuring that the number of vehicles needing to visit these offices never exceeds the capacity of the car park.

Officer comment: The proposals accord with the Dartford Borough Council Parking Standards SPD. A condition is recommended to secure a revised Travel Plan in order to promote sustainable modes of travel to and from the site (condition 9).

Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council – No objection has been raised. The Town Council have requested a review of the Travel Plan, which currently highlights the sites connectivity with the local area and stations etc. and bus services, in particular Swanscombe Station. The station is heavily used by residents in adjoining new developments and the expectation is that this new development will add to this. The bus services mentioned in the plan are the 481 connecting to Swanscombe; it only reaches the fringe of Swanscombe but not to the High Street or Station. Experience now shows us that people are now using their cars and leaving them in the High Street area whilst travelling to work etc. which is creating local parking problems. The Town Council suggest that a condition is placed on the application to request that

the developer seeks an agreement with the Town Council, with a revision to the travel plan, to take this into account and thus create a better connectivity with the development and the existing area.

Officer comment: A condition is recommended to secure a revised Travel Plan (condition 9).

6.0 PLANNING POLICY

6.1 National Policy & Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

6.2 Dartford Borough Local Development Framework – Core Strategy (2011):

- CS1 - Spatial Pattern of Development
- CS4 - Ebbsfleet to Stone Priority Area
- CS5 - Ebbsfleet Valley Strategic Site
- CS7 - Employment Land and Jobs
- CS8 - Economic Change
- CS23 - Minimising Carbon Emissions
- CS25 - Water Management
- CS26 - Delivery and Implementation

6.3 Dartford Borough Local Development Framework – Local Plan – Saved Policies (2011):

- T18 - Traffic Management
- T23 - Parking
- T27 - Pedestrians and the Environment
- T33 - Provision for Disabled People and the Less Mobile
- B1 - New Development

6.4. Dartford Development Policies Plan (DDPP) (draft December 2015) as emerging policy:

- DP1 - Sustainable Development
- DP2 - Good Design
- DP4 - Transport Access and Design
- DP5 - Environmental and Amenity Protection
- DP15 - Dartford Town Centre and its Primary Frontages
- DP20 - Identified Employment Areas

6.5 Other Guidance

Dartford Borough Council Parking Standards SPD – Adopted 26th July 2012

7.0 APPRAISAL

7.1 The main issues to be considered in connection with this proposal are the principle of development, access, appearance, landscaping, layout, scale, parking and highway issues and neighbouring amenity. Intrinsic to the assessment of these issues is whether the proposal complies with local and national policy and the overarching aims of the parameter plans, Masterplan and strategies for the wider Ebbsfleet Green site.

Principle of Development

7.2 The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the Local Development Plan. The Dartford Borough Council Core Strategy 2011 is the development plan for the area and the application should be determined against the policies in this plan, unless material considerations suggest otherwise. Policy CS4 identifies a series of Priority Areas where the majority of future development in the Borough will take place. Each Priority Area is comprised of a number of major sites which have been assessed for their suitability for housing and employment use. Ebbsfleet, Eastern Quarry and Northfleet West Sub Station, at the eastern end of the Priority Area, are the most significant of the sites and jointly form the Strategic Site referred to as Ebbsfleet Valley. It is envisaged that the development of these sites will act as an economic driver to provide the stimulus for regeneration in the area.

7.3 Policy CS5 sets out development aspirations for the Ebbsfleet Valley Strategic Site and the principles against which applications to change existing consents will need to be determined. These include the delivery of up to new 10,000 homes and a business district providing approximately 16,900 new jobs. In addition, the policy identifies the need for a mixed use centre at the heart of each residential village to include community facilities and local shops.

7.4 The principle of development on wider site has already been established by the consented outline planning permission. It should be noted that the proposed office development would result in the displacement of residential floorspace as approved under the outline planning permission. The approval of this planning application would not result in a loss of residential floor space, as it is envisaged that this would be recovered in subsequent residential phases.

- 7.5 The proposed development seeks permission for the erection of a standalone two storey development comprising 1,093 sq m of Use Class B1a office floor space and 50 car parking spaces, with associated landscaping and public realm enhancements. The office development would be the new headquarters for Redrows South East Division, who is the developer of the wider Ebbsfleet Green site. The proposed location of the office is driven by the opportunity to be based at one of their most important development projects and is a reflection of Redrows long -term commitment to the sites success and delivery.
- 7.6 An office use is not currently consented under the outline planning permission for the wider Ebbsfleet Green site. The NPPF defines 'offices' as 'main town centre uses' (Annex 2: Glossary). This is supported by paragraph 23 which confirms that office development helps ensure the vitality of town centres, and that 'it is important that needs for retail, leisure, office and other main town centre uses are met in full and not compromised by limited site availability'. The outline planning permission for the wider site at Ebbsfleet Green currently allows for a range of commercial uses, all of which support the new community at Ebbsfleet Green, through the creation of jobs and services. These include up to 5, 000 sq. m for hotel uses (Class C1), local shop (339 sqm) and a restaurant/pub (920sqm) all of which would typically be associated with a town centre (albeit the site is not a defined town centre in the development plan). The introduction of the office would add a positive interaction between these uses, leading to greater levels of activity on site.
- 7.7 Policy CS8 (Economic Change) seeks to transform the local economy by focusing key growth sectors in particular, office uses. In addition, Policy CS9 (Skills and Training) of the Core Strategy seeks to ensure the provision of a locally skilled workforce to support economic transformation of the Borough. The office development would provide approximately 70 new highly skilled jobs in the Garden City. The office, as part of the consented wider residential scheme for Ebbsfleet Green, would directly contribute to local growth and employment targets. The employment provision on site would increase the level of activity throughout the wider scheme, leading to multiple benefits including increased local spending which would maintain and strengthen commercial activities such as the pub/restaurant and the shop. On this basis, Ebbsfleet Green is therefore considered to represent a suitable and sustainable location for new office (use class B1a) development.
- 7.8 There are a number of other sites in the Ebbsfleet Valley Area that have been identified to bring forward significant office developments, in particular around Ebbsfleet Station. The proposed office development does not seek to compete with these developments.

- 7.9 A planning condition is recommended to restrict the use of the building to an office. Recent changes to legislation now allow some changes of use from office without planning permission and it is considered that such changes should be considered in full to ensure impacts on amenity and highways are fully considered.

Access

- 7.10 Matters relating to access include consideration of the accessibility to and within the site for vehicles, cycles and pedestrians in terms of the positioning and treatment of access and circulation routes and how these fit into the surrounding access network. Matters relating to parking provision will be considered separately under the Highways section below.
- 7.11 Paragraphs 29 and 30 of the NPPF support the favourability of sustainable transport modes and solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion. Policy CS15 of the Core Strategy encourages mixed use development and close interrelationship between different land uses and the provision of Fastrack to minimise car use and make effective and sustainable use of the transport network and policy T33 encourages consideration to those disabled people and the less mobile. Emerging policy DP3 of the DDPP requires development to be appropriately located to minimise and manage arising transport impacts and DP2d) and DP4 promote the prioritisation of walking, cycling and public transport through clear linkages and permeability.
- 7.12 The development would take access onto the main spine road within the Ebbsfleet Green, via the access road serving the proposed hotel and pub/restaurant. The southern site access junction to Ebbsfleet Green site is in the form of a roundabout with Southfleet Road and the A2 slip road. The office site sits within Phase 1c and as such, much of the infrastructure linking the office site with the surrounding network would be set through parallel reserved matters application for the phase. The office site would therefore directly connect with the proposed pedestrian network on the site.

Layout

- 7.13 The NPPF encourages the provision of safe and secure layouts which minimise conflicts between traffic, cyclists and pedestrians. Emerging policy DP4 of the DDPP requires that the layout should promote walking, cycling and public transport through the provision of attractive and safe routes which addresses the needs of all users. The layout parameters for the proposal have been defined based upon an understanding of existing site features and landscape analysis.

- 7.14 The application site is located in the south east corner of the wider Ebbsfleet Green Development. The area consists of residential development (phase 1c), retail, a pub/restaurant, community sports facilities and a hotel. The proposals have been subject to discussions between EDC Officers and the applicants, to ensure that the access, key linkages and connections through the site are secured and to ensure that the proposed development is aligned to the vision for the wider Ebbsfleet Green. The layout of the application site has been orientated so that the office building sits at the heart of the Phase 1c.
- 7.15 Under the approved indicative Masterplan for the site, it is proposed that to the north of the office building would be a retail unit and residential dwellings (flats). To the east of the building would be the hotel and the amended parameter plans for the site would also relocate the pub/restaurant to this area. The community sports facilities would be to the south of the building and to the east residential car parking would be provided. In terms of amenity, there is a significant separation distance proposed between the office building and the other proposed uses and therefore it is not envisaged that the proposed would result in a loss of privacy, or would be overbearing in any way.
- 7.16 It is anticipated that the majority of visitors to the development would arrive via the southern site entrance and therefore the entrance of the building has been located on the northeast end of the building fronting the access point. The vehicular parking spaces have been located to the northern/west boundary of the site and would adjoin the proposed Phase 1c residential properties parking courts, to minimise impact. The building has been set back from the street (to the east), to allow additional street planting and pedestrian linkages.
- 7.17 The internal layout of the building consists of two open plan floors; both floor plans are almost identical in appearance with the exception of a few small variations. Both the ground and first floor provide 4 x 20 sq. m office cubicles, in addition to a print room, staff kitchen, WC's, store and lift shaft. All of these uses are located around a central open plan office (providing up to 40 workstations). On the ground floor there is 2x 30 sq. m meeting/board rooms, in addition to a reception area. The main reception area has been designed with a double height to maximise the light and to reinforce the sense of arrival for visitors.
- 7.18 The building has two independent stair cores located at both the eastern and western ends of the building, which allow staff to circulate throughout the building without passing through the reception area. The primary entrance to the building is provided to the north of the site, with a secondary entrance to the west of the building. This entrance is designed to provide direct access

from the car park area and is linked to one of the independent stair cores. A plant area for air conditioning and electrical equipment is located on each floor with a larger plant deck area on the second floor, within the roof void to minimise visual impact. The overall layout has been developed with the aspiration of creating an attractive working environment.

Scale

- 7.19 Matters of scale are intrinsically linked to good design quality as set out in NPPF Paragraph 58 and policy DP2 of the emerging DDPP, which requires developments to be visually attractive, function well and add quality to the area to making high quality and inclusive design for all developments. The matter of scale relates to the height, width and length of each building proposed within the development in relation to its surroundings.
- 7.20 Phase 1c of the wider site Ebbsfleet Green site has been envisaged as delivering a mix of 2-2½ and 3-4 storey building heights. The 2 - 2.5 storey scale of the proposed development is appropriate, taking into account the residential scale proposed in the immediate site locality. As reflected within the approved (building heights) parameter plans for the site, the proposed building would be two storeys, with a ridge height of approximately 12.3 metres and an eaves height of 8 metres. The building would sit within an external area (including public realm) of 2,721 sq. m. The length of the building (E to W) would be approximately 42.5 metres, with a depth (N to S) of approximately 16 metres.
- 7.21 It is therefore considered that while the size of the building would present a prominent structure, it would be largely obscured from surrounding development following later phases of development. The amount of space surrounding the building is of an appropriate scale and would not result in an overdevelopment of the site. The proposals are considered to be acceptable in terms of impact upon the amenities of future adjoining occupiers.

Appearance

- 7.22 The NPPF sets out the importance of good design as being indivisible from planning (paragraph 56) and gives weight to achieving high quality designed buildings and spaces (paragraph 57) and states that planning permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions (paragraph 64). Policy CS4 of the Dartford Borough Council Core Strategy 2011 promotes the creation of a chain of distinctive and individual, but linked communities within built development 'reflecting the varied heritage of the area on order to create a sense of place'.

- 7.23 Whilst the proposed development is a standalone planning application and is therefore not bound by the wider parameters of the outline planning permission, the applicant has sought to ensure that the location, layout and design of the proposed office building is complimentary to the vision, character and objectives for the site. It should be noted that the detailed design of the site, including residential development (phase 1c), the hotel, pub/restaurant and the office building have been undertaken in a collaborative manner between the various design teams to ensure that there is a clear design rationale running through all of the proposals.
- 7.24 The architectural form of the proposed office building is traditional in nature, taking reference from the vernacular architecture of the area. The building consists of two elongated gables, whose form mirror that of a traditional rural farm shed or barn. The 'barn style' structures are positioned adjacent to each other (with a slight offset), to form one larger unit.
- 7.25 In terms of materials, pg.24 of the accompanying design and access statement illustrates the approach taken. The primary materials comprise of a palette of red multi coloured facing brickwork in stretcher bond, with natural mortar colour. The roof tiling would comprise of Forticrete Gemini plain tiles in sunrise. The proposed elevational treatment of the building responds to the rich historic context of the local area, taking a direct reference from half-timbered buildings, areas of rich red brick and a variety of roof finishes commonly seen across rural Kent. Elevational treatments include the use of dark timber cladding on the south, east and west elevations (on the southern gable ends). The north elevation and remaining gable ends would be finished in red multi-coloured facing brickwork in stretcher bond with natural mortar colour. A select palette of materials has been applied to give the elevations a 'regular rhythm and distinct appearance'. A condition is recommended to require samples of these materials to be submitted.
- 7.26 The building has been orientated to maximise the potential for solar gain and window sizes have been varied dependent on the orientation. Smaller windows have been located on the southern elevation and along the northern open plan office areas. All windows have been set back from the brick work to provide definition to the elevations. Interest has been added to the buildings simple form, through the inclusion of large double height glazed windows 'to break up the horizontal massing of the building by employing a vertical emphasis'. A hardwood feature frame has also been located at the main entrance providing a double height reception, to reinforce the sense of arrival and to create 'an animated façade which contributes to the public realm'.

Highways/Parking

- 7.27 The NPPF strongly advocates sustainable transport methods. The reduction of pollution and the use of public transport, walking and cycling are at the heart of the policy document as part of the core planning principles. The Dartford Borough Council Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document (July 2012) 'provides guidance on parking standards in the Borough for all locations and land uses'. The guidance states that car parking for non-residential use should take account of the needs of pedestrians, particularly in relation to pedestrian desire lines.
- 7.28 For B1 land use, relating to office development between 500 and 2,500 sq. m gross floor area, there would be a requirement for 1 car space per 25 sq. m. On this basis, there would be a requirement for 40 car parking spaces for the proposed scheme. The Parking layout for the development is set out on drawing AL- 1C-06-90-001 and is supported by Transport Statement (July 2016). A total of 50 car parking spaces are proposed, located at the northern and western boundary to the site. The car parking provision provides 10 additional spaces than required by the Parking Standards SPD. The car parking provision therefore accords with the standards set out in the DBC Parking Standards SPD.
- 7.29 The level of parking proposed is based on the results of a car parking accumulation survey of Redrows current offices for a typical day. In the Transport Statement (July 2016) submitted to support the application, the applicant highlights that on the busiest day of the week (Monday), the peak parking accumulation was 66 which is in excess of the car provision currently provided on site. It is the applicant's intension that any overflow within the proposal is accommodated within the nearby sports facilities car parking area.
- 7.30 Paragraph 29 and 30 of the NPPF supports sustainable transport modes and solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to reduce congestion. Policy CS 15 of the Core Strategy encourages mixed use development and close interrelationships between different land uses ad the provision of Fastrack to minimise car use and make effective and sustainable use of the transport network. Emerging policy DP3 of the DDPP requires development to be appropriately located to minimise and manage arising transport impacts. Policies DP2 and DP4 promote the prioritisation of walking, cycling and public transport through clear linkages and permeability.
- 7.31 The DBC Parking Standards SPD includes cycle parking standards. For B1 office use, the minimum provision is 1 space per 200m² gross for staff and 1 space per 1,000m² for visitors. Application of these standards would result in a total of 5 cycle spaces for staff and 1 space for visitors. Covered bicycle

parking has also been provided to the west of the building providing 6 long stay spaces and 1 short stay space in accordance with the DBC standards.

- 7.32 The NPPF strongly advocates sustainable transport methods. The reduction of pollution and use of public transport, walking and cycling are at the heart of the policy documents as part of the core planning principles. The submission of a Transport Assessment and Travel Plan is encouraged for all developments generating significant transport movements. The adopted Core Strategy includes recognition that development should be “well-integrated with transport”, and that jobs could be “locally, to stem the high levels of out-commuting”. The approach to development should include a “close interrelationship between homes and jobs and homes and community facilities, with locally based provision”.
- 7.33 Policy CS5 of the Dartford Core Strategy in respect of the Ebbsfleet Development Strategic Site sets out the provision of a walking and cycling network and a Fastrack route across the area encouraging a high proportion of trips by sustainable means. Policy CS15 of the Core Strategy encourages a reduction in car travel and promotes mixed use developments and close interrelationship between complementary land uses. Amongst other things the policy requires development proposals to be located where sustainable travel patterns can be achieved, with more intensive, high density mixed use development at accessible centres and along or close to main public transport routes.
- 7.34 Proposals should minimise the need to travel, especially by private car, and maximise opportunities for the use of walking, cycling and public transport. This accord with the advice contained within the NPPF which recognises the contribution transport policies have in facilitating sustainable development and also in contributing to the wider sustainability and health objectives. A Transport Statement and Travel Plan have been submitted to support the planning application and consider the sustainability and accessibility of the site and the travel demand associated with the proposal.
- 7.35 The adopted Core Strategy includes recognition that development should be well integrated with transport and that jobs could be located locally to stem the high levels of out commuting. Bus services currently run on Southfleet Road adjacent to the site. Service 481 runs on Southfleet Road to the north of Ebbsfleet Link Road with new bus stops soon to come into operation adjacent to the northern access to the Ebbsfleet Green site. The service is 6 minute walk from the site.
- 7.36 Fast Track route B also serves Ebbsfleet Station providing a ten minute headway service (6 services and hour) in each direction between Dartford and

Gravesend. At a later date, Fastrack services will be routed through the adjacent Eastern Quarry site, with a stop provided close to the Ebbsfleet Green site to serve residents and employees. The stop will be an 8 minute walk from the site. There will be a number of local amenities within walking distance of the site including an A1 retail convenience store, outdoor sports pitches and a pub/restaurant. All of which offer opportunities for journeys to be made by foot.

- 7.37 It should be noted that the KCC Highways officer has commented in regards to the robustness of the Travel Plan. A Travel Plan is a package of measures designed to reduce single occupancy car journeys and therefore should be included as one of the primary objectives (set out paragraph 4.2.1.) and should be part of the monitoring and evaluation process. Further assessment is required within the Travel Plan as to the need for such high numbers of staff to drive to work. In addition it should identify ways of enabling staff to leave their cars at home and to utilise other sustainable transport methods. Measures will also need to be identified to ensure that the number of vehicles needing to visit the offices never exceeds the capacity of the car park. A condition is recommended to secure the additional information and updated Travel Plan.

Landscaping

- 7.38 The NPPF states that planning decisions should aim to ensure developments are visually attractive as a result of appropriate landscaping (paragraph 58). The application considers the treatment of land (other than buildings) for the purpose of enhancing or protecting the amenities of the area including the area in which it is situated, including the planting of trees, hedges, shrubs or grass. The external landscaped areas around the office feature planting and landscaping. The design and access statement (pg. 39) identifies a number of Landscape Design Strategy Principles, which aim to create a cohesive landscape scheme that integrates with the proposed prevailing character, whilst creating a sense of place. Key landscape features are to include:

- Creation of a green corridor network through the site which connects to the hotel, restaurant and village green.
- Boundaries will be designed sensitively to permit key views in and out of the site where appropriate, but also to provide a level of screening so that the development is integrated into the surrounding landscape.
- The trees and hedges will comprise of a mixture of native species along boundaries.
- Development of a robust and visually appealing planting scheme which is both attractive and relates to the adjacent character and streetscape.

7.39 The principles set out within the design and access statement appear to be in line with the landscape proposals for the wider site and are therefore considered to be acceptable. A condition has been placed, for the submission of detailed landscaping scheme early in the build programme and an associated management plan prior to occupation.

Ecology

7.40 Ecology across Ebbsfleet Green has previously been considered in earlier applications in connection with the outline permission for Ebbsfleet Green. It is considered that there is no significant ecological value at the site, which has not already been mitigated and addressed as part of the Outline Planning Permission.

Drainage

7.41 The wider Ebbsfleet Green site has undergone a significant amount of technical design in respect of drainage. The primary concern in relation to this application is to ensure that any development changes are appropriately provided for within the drainage scheme for the wider site, which may have been designed some time ago. The KCC Flood Management Officer is of the opinion that the additional capacity required for the office building can be accommodated within the current drainage strategy, however has recommend that a condition be attached to the planning approval. Condition 6 requires further detailed design information be submitted to the Local Planning Authority, to confirm compliance with the overall surface water drainage strategy for the wider site. Such information would include pre-approved and post-development impermeable areas and the associated attenuation volumes as provided within the greater scheme.

Archaeology

7.42 Archaeological investigations have been carried out across the site in accordance with the outline permission and a Historic Environment Framework secured under condition 11 of the outline permission. It is therefore considered that any archaeological potential has already been addressed and the impact of the proposed development is negligible.

Sustainable Construction

7.43 With regard to sustainability credentials a Sustainability Strategy (pg. 27 of the design and access statement) has been submitted to accompany the application which demonstrates that the applicant and the design team have

given due consideration to the principles of sustainability. Policy CS23 of the Dartford Borough Council Core Strategy 2011 requires all new non-residential development over 1,000 square metres gross floorspace to meet BREEAM 'excellent' (or any future national equivalent). Recent changes to BREEAM have meant that the previous 'excellent' is the current 'very good' and the approved sustainability strategy for the wider scheme requires 'very good'. It is therefore considered appropriate to require the development to achieve the same level as the buildings which will surround it. A condition is recommended to ensure that BREEAM 'very good' is met.

Other Issues

CIL

7.44 The office proposal will introduce 1,093 sq m of B1a Office development to the site, in accordance with the Dartford Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule (April 2014) the proposal is liable to pay CIL.

Environmental Impact Assessment

7.45 The proposed office development has been assessed under an Environmental Impact Assessment 'EIA Screening Request' which was submitted to EDC in March 2016. It has been determined that the application will not require an EIA and would not be expected to give rise to significant effects on the environment and therefore would not constitute EIA development.

8.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 Whilst this is not material to the decision, financial benefits will accrue to the area if permission is granted. The Government wishes to ensure that the decision making process for major applications is as transparent as possible, so that local communities are more aware of the financial benefits that development can bring to their area. In this area the following benefits to the public purse accrue from development – Business Rates for new commercial floorspace.

9.0 HUMAN RIGHTS

9.1 The application has been considered in the light of the Human Rights Act 1998 and it is considered that the analysis of the issues in this case, as set out in this report and recommendation below, is compatible with the Act.

10.0 PUBLIC SECTOR DUTY

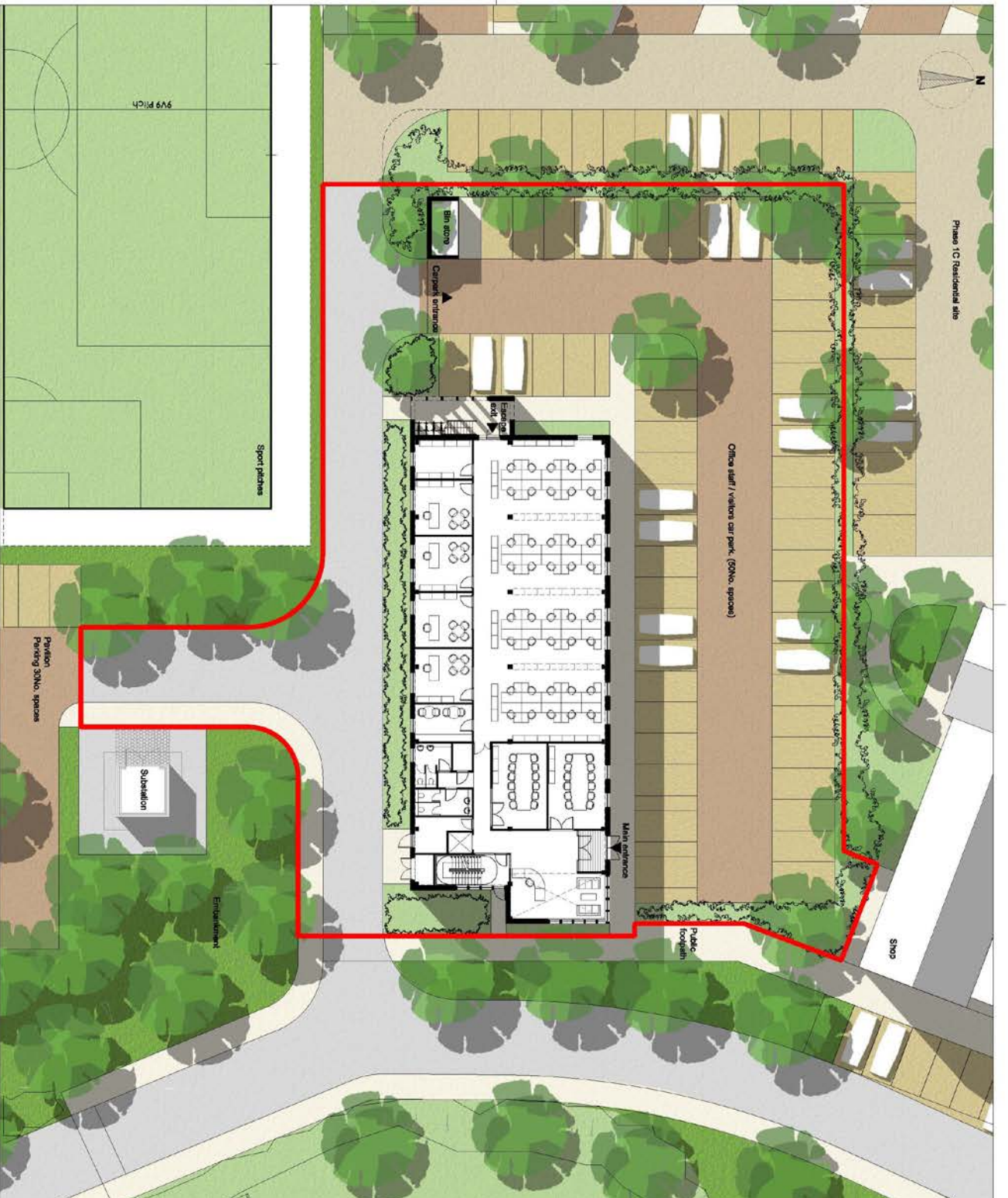
10.1 In determining this application, regard has been had to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) as set down in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, in particular with regard to the need to –

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. It is considered that the application proposals would not undermine objectives of the Duty.

10.2 It is considered that the application proposals would not conflict with objectives of the Duty.

11.0 RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

11.1 The proposed office development would add to the mix of uses within the south eastern corner of the Ebbsfleet Green site. The use would provide for local employment opportunities on a scale that would not undermine the aspirations for Ebbsfleet Central. The building has been attractively designed and would sit comfortably with the surrounding buildings. The scheme accords with the adopted vehicle and cycle parking and cycle standards. There would be no significant impacts caused with regards amenity, highways, drainage, contamination or trees. As such, the proposal is considered to accord with local and national planning policy and is therefore recommended for approval.



NOTES

ALL DIMENSIONS AND LEVELS ARE TO BE CHECKED ON SITE

ANY DISCREPANCIES ARE TO BE REPORTED TO THE ARCHITECT

NO USE OF WORK COMMENCED

THE DRAWINGS SHALL NOT BE SCALED TO ASCERTAIN ANY

DIMENSIONS WORK TO FOUNDED DRAW ONLY

THIS DRAWING SHALL NOT BE REPRODUCED WITHOUT EXPRESS

WRITTEN PERMISSION FROM N.A.C. LTD.

Key: — Office site boundary

Project: P1 20/07/14 PRELIMINARY
 N/A
 Location: Southfield Road, Northfield
 Client: Redrow Homes (South East)

NPA
 ARCHITECTS

London office
 1-44 (020) 761 8877

Proposed site plan
 Phase 1C - Office application

Project: P1 20/07/14 PRELIMINARY
 N/A
 Location: Southfield Road, Northfield
 Client: Redrow Homes (South East)