

**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**PLANNING CONTROL COMMITTEE**

**MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER - DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES, GERONON ROAD, LETCHWORTH, SG6 3JF  
ON THURSDAY, 12TH MARCH, 2026 AT 7.00 PM**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** *Councillors: Nigel Mason (Chair), Emma Fernandes (Vice-Chair), Clare Billing, Ian Mantle, Louise Peace, Martin Prescott, Tom Tyson, Dave Winstanley and Sadie Billing (In place of Val Bryant).*

**In Attendance:** *Faith Churchill (PA - Director Governance), Susan Le Dain (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer), Anne McDonald (Principal Planning Officer (Development Management)) and Nazneen Roy (Locum Planning Lawyer).*

**Also Present:** *At the commencement of the meeting approximately 6 members of the public, including registered speakers.*

*Councillor Paul Ward was also in attendance as Ward Member Advocate.*

**138 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

*Audio recording – 1 minute 12 seconds*

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Val Bryant, Caroline McDonnell, Ruth Brown and Bryony May. Having given due notice, Councillor Sadie Billing substituted for Councillor Bryant.

**139 MINUTES - 12 FEBRUARY 2026**

*Audio recording – 1 minute 32 seconds*

Councillor Nigel Mason, as Chair, proposed and Councillor Ian Mantle seconded and, following a vote, it was:

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 12 February 2026 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

**140 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS**

*Audio recording – 2 minutes 26 seconds*

There was no other business notified.

**141 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*Audio recording – 2 minutes 33 seconds*

- (1) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be recorded.
- (2) The Chair drew attention to the item on the agenda front pages regarding Declarations of Interest and reminded Members that, in line with the Code of Conduct, any Declarations of Interest needed to be declared immediately prior to the item in question.
- (3) The Chair clarified matters for the registered speakers.
- (4) The Chair confirmed the procedure for moving to debate on an item.
- (5) The Chair advised that Section 4.8.23(a) of the Constitution applied to the meeting.
- (6) The Chair confirmed the cut off procedure should the meeting proceed at length.
- (7) The Chair advised that Item 7 had been deferred from the agenda.

**142 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

*Audio recording – 5 minutes 57 seconds*

The Chair confirmed that the registered speakers were in attendance.

**143 25/02999/HYA REDWOOD, DEARDS END LANE, KNEBWORTH, HERTFORDSHIRE, SG3 6NL**

*Audio recording – 6 minutes 24 seconds*

The Principal Planning Officer (Development Management) presented the report in respect of Application 25/02999/HYA accompanied by a visual presentation consisting of plans and photographs.

The Chair invited the first Public Objector, Alex Mitchell to speak against the application. Mr Mitchell thanked the Chair for the opportunity and provided the Committee with a verbal presentation, and highlighted the following:

- The demolition of the existing building and subsequent building of the new houses would cause harm to the local environment.
- The density and form of the proposed development was inconsistent with the requirements of the Knebworth Masterplan KB1.
- There was not sufficient justification to cause harm to the Conservation Area to facilitate access to 8 new dwellings by construction of a new road.
- Deards End Lane was already avoided by pedestrians as it was felt to be unsafe to walk along.
- The new link road would not be safe for use by either pedestrians or cyclists and any visibility would rely entirely on the removal of a hedge.
- This application did not comply with either the Local Plan or Knebworth Neighbourhood Plan policies and specifically for the Knebworth Masterplan KB1.
- This application should therefore be refused.

There were no points of clarification from Members.

**Thursday, 12th March, 2026**

The Chair thanked Mr Mitchell for his presentation and invited the second Public Objector Parish Councillor Roger Willcox to speak against the application. Mr Willcox thanked the Chair for the opportunity and provided the Committee with a verbal presentation, and highlighted the following:

- Knebworth Parish Council objected to this application as it did not meet policy requirements.
- The application did not comply with the requirement of the Knebworth Neighbourhood Plan Policy that densities should respect site boundaries, trees and hedgerows, existing properties and the character of surrounding areas.
- There was not a safe pedestrian walking route from the site as there was no pavement on that side of the road.
- The houses planned at the rear of any development should be integrated within the masterplan.
- The Knebworth Neighbourhood Plan policy stated that the site should be developed at densities that respected the local character and Knebworth Garden Village Context.
- The proposed 8 new homes on the site would result in greater plot densities than homes adjacent in the Conservation Area.
- Harm from this development outweighed any benefit from the new homes and this application should be refused.

There were no points of clarification from Members.

The Chair thanked Mr Willcox for his presentation and invited the Member Advocate Objector, Councillor Paul Ward to speak against the application. Councillor Ward thanked the Chair for the opportunity and provided the Committee with a verbal presentation, and highlighted the following:

- He was speaking this evening as a resident and also as a Ward Councillor for Knebworth.
- Deards End Lane was an old rural road with no pavements.
- Granting permission to this development would cause harm to the local Conservation Area.
- This application did not comply with the Local Plan and Knebworth Neighbourhood Plan policies, specifically in relation to the housing density of the outline proposal on KB1.
- The proposed new T junction would expose pedestrians and cyclists to danger, and a pavement could not be built without damage to the Conservation Area.
- This proposal would damage heritage assets, and therefore the titled balance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework was not engaged.
- The development would result in permanent harm to the Conservation Area and this harm would not be outweighed by the benefit from 8 new houses.
- This application failed heritage tests and failed key highway and pedestrian safety measures.

There were no points of clarification from Members.

The Chair thanked Councillor Ward for his presentation and invited the Applicant, Mr Anthony Sarno to speak in support of the application. Mr Sarno thanked the Chair for the opportunity to speak and provided the Committee with a verbal presentation, and highlighted the following:

- He was the owner and applicant for the proposed development.
- He had purchased Redwood house along with the land to the rear of the property.
- The pre application had raised concerns regarding Deards End Lane and he had made every effort to work with the Council to rectify matters.
- The last time he had been in communication with master planning was back in June 2023.

Thursday, 12th March, 2026

- The Council had not responded to his last email and he had still progressed with the proposed development.
- The replacement of Redwood House had been designed to reflect the arts and crafts of the local area and would be a benefit to the Conservation Area.
- Although he acknowledged that access to the development would cause some concern, this would be outweighed by the proposed 8 new homes in the area.
- Landscaping was one of the reserved matters to be dealt with at a later stage.
- This scheme could be integrated into the masterplan.

In response to a point of clarification from Councillor Tom Tyson, the Applicant advised that he was proposing to build a conservation designed footpath from Deards End Lane to Park Lane which would benefit the whole community.

In response to points raised in the verbal presentations, the Principal Planning Officer (Development Management) advised that:

- The Knebworth KB1 Masterplan has not yet been submitted and therefore was not the masterplan mentioned by the Applicant.
- This application site formed an integral part of the wider KB1 housing allocation within the Local Plan, but it was not known at this point in time how this would progress and where any connection points would be planned.

In response to points raised in the verbal presentations, Councillor Louise Peace advised that the website of the Knebworth Parish Council displayed an illustrative strategic masterplan which had been prepared by the other landowner.

Councillor Nigel Mason proposed to refuse planning permission, and this was seconded by Councillor Martin Prescott.

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor Clare Billing
- Councillor Martin Prescott
- Councillor Louise Peace

Points raised during the debate included:

- Members appreciated the frustration felt by the Applicant with the lack of communication and slow progress of this application that he had experienced.
- The depth and detail provided in the report demonstrated that this was not a suitable development for the area.
- From a sustainability perspective the Council should not support an application to demolish one property to then build another in its place.

Having been proposed and seconded and, following a vote, it was:

**RESOLVED:** That application 25/02999/HYA be **REFUSED** planning permission for the reasons set out in the report of the Development and Conservation manager.

Thursday, 12th March, 2026

**144 25/02260/FP NORTHWAY FILLING STATION, GREAT NORTH ROAD, HINXWORTH, BALDOCK, HERTFORDSHIRE, SG7 5EX**

*Audio recording – 42 minutes 8 seconds*

The Chair confirmed that this item had been withdrawn from the agenda to allow for further information to be clarified with National Highways.

**145 APPEALS**

*Audio recording – 42 minutes 22 seconds*

The Principal Planning Officer (Development Management) provided an update on Planning Appeals and advised that there had been appeal under the regulation of a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). This appeal had been dismissed by the Inspector as he agreed with the decision made by the Council.

The meeting closed at 8.47 pm

Chair