

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

PLANNING CONTROL COMMITTEE

**MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER - DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES, GERON ROAD, LETCHWORTH, SG6 3JF
ON THURSDAY, 18TH JUNE, 2026 AT 7.00 PM**

MINUTES

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

In Attendance: *Luca Benedito (Trainee Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer), Peter Bull (Project Officer), Faith Churchill (PA - Director Governance), James Lovegrove (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager), Frank Mabbett (Tree and Landscape Officer), Anne McDonald (Principal Planning Officer (Development Management)), Nazneen Roy (Locum Planning Lawyer) and Melissa Tyler (Senior Planning Officer).*

Also Present: *At the commencement of the meeting approximately 9 members of the public, including registered speakers.*

Councillor Ian Albert was also in attendance as Member Advocate Objector.

11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio recording – 1 minute 26 seconds

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Martin Prescott.

Having given due notice, Councillor Claire Strong substituted for Councillor Prescott.

12 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Audio recording – 1 minute 43 seconds

There was no other business notified.

13 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio recording – 1 minute 46 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.

N.B. Councillor Claire Strong declared her interest in Agenda Item 6, as Member Advocate Objector, and advised she would move to the public speaking gallery at the appropriate time in the meeting.

- (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.

14 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Audio recording – 4 minutes 26 seconds

The Chair confirmed that the registered speakers were in attendance.

15 25/03084/RM LAND TO THE EAST OF TALBOT WAY AND KRISTIANSAND WAY AND FLINT ROAD ALLOTMENTS, FLINT ROAD, LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY, HERTFORDSHIRE, SG6 1TY

Audio recording – 5 minutes 51 seconds

The Project Officer provided a verbal update on matters relating to Application 25/03084/RM and advised that:

- This was a Reserve Matters application following the granting of Outline Permission in April 2025 and was for up to 120 dwellings.
- A supplement had been published which confirmed the final documents to be considered with this application.
- A proposed additional condition was included within the supplementary document.

The Project Officer then presented the report in respect of Application 25/03084/RM accompanied by a visual presentation consisting of plans and photographs.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Ian Mantle
- Councillor Ruth Brown
- Councillor Tom Tyson
- Councillor Dave Winstanley
- Councillor Emma Fernandes
- Councillor Louise Peace
- Councillor Claire Strong
- Councillor Val Bryant

In response to questions, the Project Officer advised that:

- The Outline Planning application established that pedestrian connection would be through the school, though it was unclear how this would work in reality. Otherwise, pedestrian and cycle access to the site would be via Right of Way 26 to the east.
- There was a Masterplan document approved as part of the Outline Planning application.
- Whilst this application pre-dated the Design Code adoption, this was discussed with the applicant throughout the process and has led to the inclusion of certain aspects to meet the Code, such as balconies installed on the apartment blocks and the provision of open spaces on site.
- The design had not been presented to the Design Review Panel.
- The highest building would be a maximum of three stories and would be located in the lower part of the site in the south.

- The SUDs features were multi-use by design and would be an open play area when not used as SUDs.
- There were a number of revised documents for this application as a high level of work had been put into ensuring the layout was appropriate. Therefore, whenever a site plan was updated in the process, a new, updated layout plan was produced.
- Through the documents on the website, it was possible to see the development from the original plan to the plan presented at this meeting.
- The site met tenant neutrality requirements and it would not be possible to distinguish between the housing types.
- There were lots of high quality open spaces provided, with landscaping and trees to be planted, with input from Officers to ensure the scheme was of a high quality.
- Sustainability had been dealt with in the Outline Planning application, and a statement from the Applicant had been provided as part of this. It was proposed that 4 solar panels would be installed on each house and that air source heat pumps would be installed.
- The biodiversity requirements had been dealt with through condition and had been agreed with the North Herts Ecologist.
- A Management Plan had not yet been submitted but was required as part of the S106 agreement.
- There were bird and bat boxes installed on site and there would be further wildlife measures included around the site boundary.
- The S106 agreement was made as part of the Outline Planning application. There were still aspects of this to be discharged, but that sat outside of the application at this meeting.

In response to questions, the Locum Planning Lawyer advised that the S106 agreement had been signed off as part of the Outline Planning Application, which included conditions which the developer would have to comply with to ensure trigger points for payments were met and the agreement could be signed off.

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

- Decarbonise Letchworth wanted all new developments to be no brick, no gas, no bills and no garages.
- Well insulated houses, supported by solar panels and air source heat pumps, would mean houses would not need to pay for energy.
- Whilst the installation of air source heat pumps was welcomed, and updated information confirmed that solar panels would be installed on the houses, the provision of solar proposed was not sufficient or suitably located to be of maximum benefit.
- Alternative materials to brick should be used on site, as these were not good insulators. Although home buyers and developers want to use brick as it was long lasting, other countries used alternative materials.
- Wooden frames should be considered, as these would be quicker to install and can meet higher eco standards.
- It was unclear from proposals whether the entire site would be no gas.
- Cars in the 21st century did not need garage storage and instead suitable outbuildings should be provided for storage.
- Some proposed garages on this site amounted to 50% of the back garden space and, as the garages were proposed to be in the rear garden, they would require a driveway for access, taking up more of the garden space.
- Delivering sustainability and self-sufficiency on this site should be the priority.

There were no points of clarification from Members.

The Chair thanked Mr Lovegrove for their presentation and invited the agent to the Applicant, Mr Mark Osborn, to speak in support of the application. Mr Osborn thanked the Chair for the opportunity and provided the Committee with a verbal presentation, and highlighted the following:

- This was a Reserve Matters application for up to 120 dwellings on site LG3, which was an allocated site within the adopted Local Plan.
- Already agreed at the Outline Permission stage were the number of dwellings, the provision of 40% affordable housing, the retention of the allotments, access via Flint Road, a comprehensive landscaping plan and a Masterplan document for the site.
- The Masterplan defined the principles of the development and the final design responded to the landscape and existing built area.
- The proposals encompassed future homes principles and would link into existing travel networks.
- The developer had worked closely with Officers throughout the process.
- There had been key engagement with the Lead Local Flood Authority, the Highways Authority and the public through a consultation hosted on the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation website.
- There were no outstanding technical objections.
- The rural lane on the edge of the site had been increased to 3m, following discussions with Officers and was supported by the County Council.
- There was no condition or local or national policy to require solar PV installation on site, but the developer had agreed to meet these standards, as well as installing air source heat pumps.
- The final design of dwellings would be confirmed in the next few weeks, but the approximate location of dwellings was included in the plans.
- Refuse collection would mainly be from the kerbside, but otherwise it was within 30m of the dwelling.
- No trees would be lost to accommodate play areas.
- A water point would be provided for the allotments.
- The aim was to preserve and enhance the landscape and setting, whilst delivering a meaningful and timely contribution to the housing need in the district.

The following Members asked points of clarification:

- Councillor Dave Winstanley
- Councillor Tom Tyson

In response to points of clarification, Mr Osborn advised that:

- Pedestrian access would be possible through the north of the site, via a footpath through the woods which would link to the existing network.
- The S106 agreement included various improvements to existing Rights of Way in the area, with details submitted to Officers on these proposed improvements.
- It was not a conscious decision to omit flared eaves, as seen elsewhere in Letchworth, but simply followed the design document included at the Outline Planning stage. There were other aspects of the Garden City principles which had been included in these proposals.
- The site would not be self-sufficient as it stands, but what has been provided on this site was above and beyond what was required of developers, with some PV installed on dwellings and charging points for cars across the site.
- They were doing as much as any developer in the UK to promote self-sufficiency of sites, but this was not completely possible.
- The water point at the allotments would be provided by the developer as part of the Allotment Improvement plan, which would include installation of toilets and storage as well.

In response to points raised during the public participation, the Project Officer confirmed that:

- The original improvements proposed for access along Flint Road was proposed at 2m width. However, through negotiations, this was now proposed to be 3m width, to provide access for cyclists and pedestrians.
- The application had been inspired by Garden City arts and crafts principles but had not followed them completely. However, there was good detailing around the proposed dwellings, which would mean the site would be considered as part of Letchworth Garden City and would not stand out through design.

Councillor Nigel Mason, as Chair, proposed and Councillor Emma Fernandes seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That application 25/03084/RM be **APPROVED** subject to:

- A) The delegation of power to the Development and Conservation Manager to update conditions with minor amendments as required.
- B) The inclusion of any conditions recommended by Hertfordshire County Council Highways.
- C) The conditions as set out within the report, with the addition of Condition 4 as follows:

'Condition 4:

Approved elevation dwellings which do not include a fourth (side) elevation detailing shall be mirrored to match the side elevation provided.

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

16 25/03153/FP LAND TO THE EAST OF 2, WEST LANE, PIRTON, HERTFORDSHIRE, SG5 3RA

Audio recording – 47 minutes 36 seconds

N.B. At the start of this item, having previously declared an interest as Member Advocate objector, Councillor Claire Strong moved to the public speaking gallery.

The Principal Planning Officer advised there were no updates to the report, however clarified for Members that the application was for the retention of the existing hardstanding area, the gravel laid on site and proposed work for landscaping. The use of the site for a mobile home was not for consideration with this application.

The Principal Planning Officer then presented the report in respect of Application 25/03153/FP accompanied by a visual presentation consisting of plans and photographs.

In response to questions from Councillor Tom Tyson, the Principal Planning Officer advised that:

- A landscaping condition had been proposed and details of that, including hedge heights, would need to be agreed with the Applicant.
- It would be difficult to impose a minimum hedge height, as sapling would need to be planted and would take time to grow. It would therefore not be reasonable to apply a condition on this aspect.
- A condition could be included to impose a requirement to replace any trees which died within 5 years, but the size could not be conditioned.

The Chair invited the Member Advocate Objector, Councillor Claire Strong, to speak against the application. Councillor Strong thanked the Chair for the opportunity and provided the Committee with a verbal presentation, and highlighted the following:

- All previous applications for dwellings on this site had been refused. Previously a caravan had been positioned on the site, which was then provided a Certificate of Lawful Dwelling.
- The previously small caravan has been replaced with a larger static home and the site has been cleared of shrubs at the front and gravel has been installed, which did not appear compliant with standards required for highways.
- The site was outside of the village boundary and was situated between two larger properties, with views through to the fields beyond.
- The hardstanding footprint was excessive and now ran from the front of the site through to the caravan at the rear.
- There had been no continuous use of the caravan since the previous occupant died in the early 2000s.
- If this was an application for a new dwelling, then an EV charging point should be included as required by policy.
- The driveway appeared disproportionate to the site.
- The street scene had dramatically changed through the works already carried out on site and this application sought to regularise the actions which had already been done.
- The Parish Council, who were unable to register to speak at this meeting, did not feel this was appropriate for the village and had concerns over the Right of Way to the side of the site, the lighting situation on the site and over the proposed installation of a septic tank.

There were no points of clarification from Members.

The Chair thanked Councillor Strong for their presentation and invited the agent to the Applicant, Mr Tony White, to speak in support of the application. Mr White thanked the Chair for the opportunity and provided the Committee with a verbal presentation, and highlighted the following:

- This application was sought to facilitate works at an existing caravan site, with lawful consent for this use granted in 1995.
- There was no restriction on the number of caravans allowed on site in the Certificate granted in 1995.
- No period of vacancy of the site would invalidate the existing certificate.
- There were proposed improvements to both hardstanding and landscaping on site and would provide the site with its own access, rather than through the current shared access point.
- There was support from the Highways Authority for the application, which would mirror neighbouring properties.
- The site was outside of the Conservation Area and there were no listed buildings in the vicinity.
- The Applicant had worked hard to positively address concerns raised in the refused application. There were improved landscaping proposals, improved delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain on site and the installation of instant hedging.
- All five of the previous reasons for refusal had now been addressed and this was confirmed in the report of the Officer.
- If the application was refused, the Biodiversity Net Gain would be lost and the site would still be able to be used.
- Condition 2 clarified what caravans and how many could use the site, which would not be in place should permission be refused.

The following Members asked points of clarification:

- Councillor Val Bryant
- Councillor Emma Fernandes
- Councillor Tom Tyson
- Councillor Claire Winchester

In response to points of clarification, Mr White advised that:

- The certificate did not limit the number of caravans allowed on the site. As no specific number was included in the certificate, it would be difficult to defend this position on appeal.
- The static caravan on site was currently occupied.
- The touring caravan on site was owned by the Applicant.
- He was not aware of protective fencing on the driveway currently, but anything not included within the application would be removed.
- The hedging installed would be native and instant hedging, which was covered by the soft and hardstanding condition included. Trees would be installed and staggered at 5m apart, with hedging to supplement.
- Plans for landscaping would be provided to Officers as part of the conditions, but it would not be reasonable for a condition to be included for a minimum hedge height.
- A condition could be included to require the hedging to be planted at the first planting season following consent.

In response to points raised during the public participation, the Principal Planning Officer confirmed that it was felt that the conditions proposed would be robust and sufficient to cover points raised by Members.

In response to a further question from Councillor Ruth Brown, the Principal Planning Officer advised that the orange coloured gravel would be retained on site, but it was expected that the proposed landscaping would provide sufficient screening of this from the street view.

N.B. Following the conclusion of the public participation, Councillor Strong left the Chamber for the debate and vote on this item.

Councillor Nigel Mason, as Chair, proposed and Councillor Emma Fernandes seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That application 25/03153/FP be **GRANTED** planning permission subject to the conditions and informatives outlined in the report of the Development and Conservation Manager.

N.B. Following the conclusion of this item, there was a break in proceedings and the meeting reconvened at 20.28, at which point Councillor Strong returned to the Committee.

17 26/00403/S73 151C BEARTON ROAD, HITCHIN, HERTFORDSHIRE, SG5 1UB

Audio recording – 1 hour 26 minutes 05 seconds

The Senior Planning Officer advised there were no updates to the report, however clarified for Members that:

- This application was only to consider an extension of opening hours between 4-8pm on Sundays.
- Whilst issues were acknowledged at a neighbouring business, this application should be assessed on its own merits and no objections had been received from Environmental Health.
- The application was for a 12-month temporary period, before consideration of a permanent arrangement.

The Senior Planning Officer then presented the report in respect of Application 26/00403/S73 accompanied by a visual presentation consisting of plans and photographs.

In response to a question from Councillor Louise Peace, the Senior Planning Officer advised that after the 12-month period, an application would be required to make the changes to the operating hours permanent. This would only return to the Planning Control Committee for consideration if it was called-in by a Ward Member.

The Chair invited the Member Advocate Objector, Councillor Ian Albert, to speak against the application. Councillor Albert thanked the Chair for the opportunity and provided the Committee with a verbal presentation, and highlighted the following:

- There were many high quality hospitality businesses in Hitchin, of which this was one, and given the current viability of the hospitality sector, this was not an attempt to prevent business.
- There have historically been three businesses in this area of Bearton Road, with several attempts at other sites having been rejected.
- It was sensible that this was a proposed 12-month trial.
- The biggest impact would be on Brampton Park Road residents, which was where delivery vehicles parked to wait for orders. There was also a large amount of noise from kitchens, which it should be acknowledged the Applicant tonight was already taking steps to address at his premises.
- It was proposed that only in house drivers would be used, but the business was available through JustEat and Uber Eats. This position needed to be clarified.
- There was an increased risk to pedestrians.
- Proposed Sunday hours would impact on residents right to private enjoyment, especially considering the cumulative effects in this area.
- Mitigations should be put in place to reduce harm to residents where possible.
- Whilst there were dangers of a precedent being set by approving this application, the inclusion of a trial period and delivery only service was welcomed.
- Some further clarification was required around the rear door of the premises and whether it would only use in house delivery drivers.

There were no points of clarification from Members.

The Chair thanked Councillor Strong for their presentation and invited the Applicant, Mr Abdul Mummin, to speak in support of the application. Mr Mummin thanked the Chair for the opportunity and provided the Committee with a verbal presentation, and highlighted the following:

- He had attended the meeting with a hope that a small business would be given the opportunity to thrive in Hitchin.
- Comments on the rear door have been looked at and acted on, with the door now required to remain closed and the shed at the rear should only be opened once on arrival and once at the end of the shift.
- He operated several other sites under the same name and part of the business ethos was ensuring residents were happy to ensure that the business could survive.
- They could use external delivery drivers, but they would not always meet the ethics of the business and so it was decided that only in house delivery drivers would be used to ensure standards of service.
- As part of this, it was expected that only one delivery driver would be required on a Sunday evening, with an expected 12 orders over the additional 4 hour opening period.

In response to a point of clarification from Councillor Claire Strong, Mr Mummin advised that the rear door did not currently have a soft-closing feature installed, but this could be done.

In response to points raised during the public participation, the Senior Planning Officer confirmed that conditions in relation to the rear door and parking of delivery drivers had been considered but was not enforceable and therefore had not been included.

In response to a further question from Councillor Clare Billing, the Senior Planning Officer advised that the temporary permission would allow for any issues during this period to be raised and investigated by Environmental Health. When a permanent application was received, should complaints have been made during the temporary period, these would be documented and considered as part of the permanent application process.

Councillor Nigel Mason, as Chair, proposed to grant permission and this was seconded by Councillor Emma Fernandes.

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor Dave Winstanley
- Councillor Claire Strong

Points raised during the debate included that:

- It was a well run takeaway business and, whilst not preferable to all immediate neighbours, it would not create unacceptable harm.
- The times proposed were still sociable and not late night, there would be one in-house delivery driver, it would operate as delivery only and was for a 12-month period.
- The Applicant has confirmed that he would explore changes to the rear door.
- If noises were reported from the rear door, then this would be an indication that it had been deliberately left open.
- There was apprehension about applying too much micro-detail onto businesses through condition.

In response to points raised during the debate, the Locum Planning Lawyer advised that as no objections have been received from the Environmental Health team it would not be possible to impose conditions relating to the noise of the rear door on this application.

In response to a question from Councillor Tom Tyson, the Senior Planning Officer advised that the application was for a change to the operating hours, but the intensity of use would be considered when a permanent application was made in a year. If the intensity was such that complaints were received, then these would be lodged as objections on the permanent application and a different recommendation may be proposed.

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

RESOLVED: That application 26/00403/S73 be **GRANTED** planning permission subject to the conditions and informatives outlined in the report of the Development and Conservation Manager.

18 TPO00226 (2026) LAND AT MILL LANE (LONDON ROAD END) ST IPPOLYTS, SG4 7NN

Audio recording – 1 hour 52 minutes 03 seconds

The Tree and Landscape Officer presented the report in respect of Application TPO/00226 accompanied by a visual presentation consisting of plans and photographs.

In response to a question from Councillor Ruth Brown, the Tree and Landscape Officer advised that whilst not all the trees were in great condition, there was benefit in protecting them for 20 years and an application could be made to the Council in order to carry out any works required.

Councillor Nigel Mason proposed to confirm the Tree Protection Order and this was seconded by Councillor Ruth Brown.

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor Ruth Brown
- Councillor Val Bryant
- Councillor Clare Billing

The following points were made as part of the debate:

- It was important to protect trees, so long as there was an option for necessary works to be carried out, if required.
- Trees will be increasingly important to residents over the next 20 years in terms of well being a quality of life.

In response to a question from Councillor Claire Strong, the Tree and Landscape Officer advised that the Parish Council would have been consulted, but no comment had been received.

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

RESOLVED: That TPO/00226 be **CONFIRMED** without modification.

19 TPO/00228 (2026) LAND AT COLEMANS ROAD, BREACHWOOD GREEN, SG4 8PA

Audio recording – 1 hour 59 minutes 35 seconds

The Tree and Landscape Officer presented the report in respect of Application TPO/00228 accompanied by a visual presentation consisting of plans and photographs.

In response to questions from Councillor Claire Strong, the Tree and Landscape Officer advised that:

- The Council had been made aware of these trees following an application made for the site.
- The Tree Protection Order had been requested by an Officer.
- The Parish Council would have been consulted, but no comment had been received.

Councillor Nigel Mason, as Chair, proposed and Councillor Val Bryant seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That TPO/00228 be **CONFIRMED**.

The meeting closed at 9.06 pm

Chair