

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

PLANNING CONTROL COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER - DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES, GERON
ROAD, LETCHWORTH, SG6 3JF
ON THURSDAY, 23RD JULY, 2026 AT 7.00 PM

MINUTES

Present: *Councillors: Emma Fernandes (Chair), Clare Billing, Val Bryant, Ian Mantle, Caroline McDonnell, Dave Winstanley, Jon Clayden (In place of Ruth Brown), Claire Strong (In place of Martin Prescott) and Tamsin Thomas (In place of Nigel Mason).*

In Attendance: *Luca Benedito (Trainee Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer), Peter Bull (Project Officer), Faith Churchill (PA - Director Governance), Sarah Kasparian (Principal Planning Officer), James Lovegrove (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager) and Nazneen Roy (Locum Planning Lawyer).*

Also Present: *At the commencement of the meeting approximately 3 members of the public, including registered speakers.*

29 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio recording – 1 minute 12 seconds

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ruth Brown, Nigel Mason, Louise Peace, Martin Prescott, Tom Tyson and Claire Winchester.

Having given due notice, Councillor Jon Clayden substituted for Councillor Brown, Councillor Claire Strong substituted for Councillor Prescott and Councillor Tamsin Thomas substituted for Councillor Mason.

30 MINUTES - 18 JUNE 2026

Audio Recording – 1 minute 44 seconds

Councillor Emma Fernandes, as Chair, proposed and Councillor Caroline McDonnell seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 18 June 2026 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

31 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Audio recording – 2 minutes 28 seconds

There was no other business notified.

32 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.

33 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Audio recording – 5 minutes 5 seconds

The Chair confirmed that the registered speakers were in attendance.

34 26/00587/S73 Ickleford Mill, Arlesey Road, Ickleford, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG5 3UN

Audio recording – 5 minutes 27 seconds

The Project Officer provided a verbal update on matters relating to Application 26/00587/S73 and advised that:

- A single presentation covered both the Section 73 application in Item 6 and the Reserved Matters application in Item 7, but Members were required to determine the Section 73 application first.
- Refusal of the Section 73 application would require deferral of the Reserved Matters application as it would not comply with the outline permission.
- The written addendums had been published that morning updating recommendations and conditions, and Members should vote based on the original reports as amended by the addendums.
- The Section 73 addendum updated conditions to reflect the position on conditions discharged under the outline permission.
- The financial contributions listed in the published report were indicative.
- The contribution to St Catherine's Church was no longer required as the project had been completed, and the applicant had agreed that the outstanding £20,000 could be redirected to a community project at Ickleford Sports and Recreation Ground.
- The Reserved Matters addendum clarified issues relating to cycle parking, boundary treatments, bridge width and dwelling heights.
- The neighbour re-consultation letters had not been received due to an administrative error, so new letters had been issued, and consultation would run until 12 August 2026.
- The published report had already assessed residential amenity impacts, and the revised recommendation explained how any new issues raised during re-consultation would be handled.

The Project Officer presented the report in respect of Application 26/00587/S73 accompanied by a visual presentation consisting of plans and photographs.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Jon Clayton
- Councillor Dave Winstanley
- Councillor Claire Strong
- Councillor Caroline McDonnell

In response to questions, the Project Officer advised that:

- The outline permission secured a zebra crossing and two informal crossing points.
- New footways and dropped kerbs would be provided at both access points.
- Several outline conditions required refinement due to phasing and detailed design.
- Solar panels were not shown on elevations but could come forward under the sustainability condition.
- Plott 44 had been redesigned to remove habitable windows and include privacy screening.
- Dust and demolition management plans had been discharged and would be secured again under the Section 73 permission.
- Silt traps and ecological protection measures would prevent contamination of the chalk stream.
- The pump station would be below ground and relocated into the developable area.
- Impermeable area would reduce post-development due to gardens and landscaping.
- Officers would investigate any reported breaches of demolition or construction management plans.

The Chair invited the Applicant, Ms Isabelle Yeardley to speak in support of the application. Ms Yeardley thanked the Chair for the opportunity and provided the Committee with a verbal presentation, and highlighted the following:

- The Hill Group acquired the site in 2025 with outline permission already granted.
- The Section 73 amendments were practical refinements developed with officers and Hertfordshire Highways.
- Confirmation that amendments allowed phased infrastructure delivery and improved pedestrian safety.
- Ecological conditions protected the river while allowing minimal encroachment into the buffer.
- Small strips of land were incorporated into gardens to improve amenity and avoid unmanaged spaces.
- Confirmation that officers concluded the amendments were acceptable and policy compliant.

In response to a point of clarification from Councillor Jon Clayden, Ms Yeardley advised that visibility at the crossing north of the bridge would be improved by vegetation clearance and a traffic-calming build-out.

Councillor Emma Fernandes, as the Chair, proposed to grant permission and this was seconded by Councillor Dave Winstanley.

The following members took part in the debate:

- Councillor Dave Winstanley
- Councillor Claire Strong

The following points were made as part of the debate:

- The amendments were sensible and understandable.
- Agreement regarding the number of changes from the original permission and it was difficult to identify anything concerning.
- Positive comments on the redevelopment of the brownfield site, the removal of the problematic mill buildings, and the sympathetic design of the scheme.
- Improvements to bin storage, car park efficiency and the bridge crossing priority arrangement.
- Concerns regarding pedestrian crossings but noted that highways officers were satisfied.
- Any issues arising once implemented would likely be raised by residents.

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

RESOLVED: That application 26/00587/S73 be **GRANTED** planning permission subject to:

- A) The satisfactory completion of a Deed of Variation to the S106 agreement secured on the original planning permission 17/01955/1 to secure the original Heads of Terms as set out in the original report as amended by this addendum.
- B) Providing delegated powers to the Development and Conservation Manager to update conditions with minor amendments as required.
- C) The Conditions as set out in the report, with the following amendments to Conditions 7, 8, 9, 11, 22, 24,25, 36 and 37:

Condition 7

Details of retained trees and protection measures shall be carried out in accordance with Appendices 2 and 3 to the Arboricultural Impact Assessment as submitted under reference 26/01348/DOC unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To prevent damage to or destruction of trees to be retained on the site in the interests of the appearance of the completed development and the visual amenity of the locality.

Condition 8

The development shall be carried out in complete accordance with the Dust Management Plan approved under reference 26/00672/DOC unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To minimise environmental impacts and protect the residential amenity of existing residents.

Condition 9

The demolition stage of the development shall be carried out in complete accordance with the Demolition Stage Construction Management Plan received, Ickleford Mill logistics plan and Construction Vehicles Swept Paths Analysis (Sheets 1 to 4) drawing number KMC2532_TR05_Construction Vehicles.S.P.A. as approved under reference 26/00671/DOC unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To minimise the impact of construction vehicles on the highway network and to maintain the amenity of the local area.

Condition 11

(a) Prior to first occupation of the development, the proposed system of footways shown on drawing KMC25232/002 shall be provided to connect the new development with the existing bus stops along Arlesey Road as part of the application. The bus stops will need to be complete with easy access kerbs and shelters as appropriate. The exact location and accommodating works will need to be as identified on drawing number KMC25232/002 and agreed in conjunction with appropriate parties. These works shall be secured and undertaken as part of the s278 works.

(b) In addition, and as part of the S278 stage, the applicant shall fund, design and promote a Traffic Regulation Order for a 20mph zone for the section of Arlesey Road between the built up edge of north Hitchin extending to the junction with Turnpike Lane.

Reason: In order to provide safe and suitable pedestrian access to public transport facilities, in line with HCC Local Transport Plan Policy 5.

Condition 22

The development shall be carried out in complete accordance with SS25335 - Flood Risk Assessment prepared by Superstructures dated 05/03/2026 together with the Preliminary Drainage Strategy drawing 25355 SUS XX XX DR C 0001 as approved under reference 26/01495/DOC on all correspondence unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To prevent environmental and amenity problems arising from flooding.

Condition 24

The development shall be carried out in complete accordance with the Structural Inspection Report prepared by Superstructures dated 22/10/2026 as approved under reference 26/01349/DOC unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to retain important details associated with the historic mill use of the site.

Condition 25

(a). The demolition shall be carried out in complete accordance with the Historic Building Recording and Analysis prepared by Prospect Archaeology dated April 2026 as approved under reference 26/01145/DOC unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

No development (other than demolition phase works up to but not including the removal of any existing hardstanding aprons) shall take place/commence until an Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation has been submitted to and approved Page 41 by the local planning authority in writing. The scheme shall include an assessment of archaeological significance and research questions; and: 1. The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording 2. The programme for post investigation assessment 3. Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording 4. Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation 5. Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation 6. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation. (NMA)

Reason: To ensure the protection of heritage assets of archaeological interest.

Condition 36

The development shall be carried out in complete accordance with the Pre-Commencement Mammal Survey Version 3.0 by MKA Ecology received 17/07/26 as approved under reference 26/01805/DOC.

Reason: Reason: in the interests of wildlife protection and in accordance with Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Condition 37

No works on any new dwellings shall commence (other than demolition works) until full details of the following have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority:

- (i) a site wide wildlife-sensitive lighting scheme;
- (ii) hedgehog friendly boundary treatments;
- (iii) the provision of 20 bat boxes.

Thereafter, the development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and retained in perpetuity unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority. (OP)

Reason: In the interests of wildlife and habitat protection and enhancement.'

35 26/00631/RM Ickleford Mill, Arlesey Road, Ickleford, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG5 3UN

Audio recording – 39 minutes 32 seconds

The Chair advised that the officer presentation for Item 7 had already been delivered under Item 6.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Claire Strong
- Councillor Clare Billing
- Councillor Val Bryant

In response to questions, the Project Officer advised that:

- Reuse of bricks from the existing mill would depend on quality and quantity.
- Some hardstanding would be reused for levelling due to changes in site levels.
- Height and design of dwellings had been assessed and justified in the officer report.

In response to questions, the Locum Planning Lawyer advised that a Construction Management Plan was secured under the Outline Permission previously granted and not part of Reserved Matters.

The Chair invited the Applicant, Ms Isabel Yeardley and two Representatives, Mr David Fletcher and Mr Henry James, to speak in support of the application. Ms Yeardley thanked the Chair for the opportunity and provided the Committee with a verbal presentation, and highlighted the following:

- The Reserved Matters application sought approval of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for 55 dwellings.
- A design-led approach reduced the number from 71 to 55 dwellings to maximise amenity.
- Two character areas were proposed: mill and riverside.
- The landscape strategy retained the river as a defining feature and provided generous open space.

- All homes would have air-source heat pumps, EV charging points and water-efficient designs.
- There had been no objections received from key consultees.
- Hill Group was committed to early commencement if approved.

The following Members asked for points of clarification:

- Councillor Dave Winstanley
- Councillor Clare Billing
- Councillor Caroline McDonnell
- Councillor Val Bryant

In response to point of clarifications, Ms Yeardley, advised that:

- Solar panels were not proposed, and energy efficiency would be achieved through a fabric-first approach.
- They confirmed bus services included the 9A, 9B and the Bedford route.
- There was 40% affordable housing overall comprised of 8 shared ownership, 13 affordable rent and 1 social rent unit.

In response to point of clarification from Councillor Clare Billing, Mr James advised that the reuse of bricks would be assessed after demolition.

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

The following Members took part of the debate:

- Councillor Claire Strong
- Councillor Clare Billing
- Councillor Dave Winstanley
- Councillor Emma Fernandes

The following points were made as part of the debate:

- Construction traffic and interest in understanding the route of demolition and construction vehicles once works commence.
- It was acknowledged that construction management arrangements had already been approved under the outline permission and were not part of the Reserved Matters application.
- Residents would likely be interested in the construction traffic routes due to existing road restrictions in the area.
- It was noted that weight restrictions on Old Hale Lane remained in force and would need to be adhered to by construction vehicles.
- Expression of support for the development, describing it as sympathetic to the character of the former mill buildings and an appropriate use of a brownfield site.
- The redevelopment was considered a significant improvement over the derelict mill, with benefits including sustainability measures, affordable housing provision and thoughtful design.
- The positive transformation of a site previously associated with antisocial behaviour and welcomed the delivery of new homes.

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

RESOLVED: That the reserve matters on application 26/00631/RM be **APPROVED** subject to:

- A) The approval of the associated S73 application.
- B) The applicant agreeing to extend the statutory period in order to allow time for the Deed of Variation to be completed for the associated S73 application which this RM approval will be pursuant to and to enable the decision notice to be issued.
- C) Providing delegated powers to the Development and Conservation Manager to update conditions and informatives with minor amendments as required.
- D) No substantive new issues being raised during the reconsultation process which expires 12 August 2026. In the instance where new issues are raised, the matter would be referred back to Members for reconsideration.
- E) The conditions and informatives as set out in the report of the Development and Conservation Manager, with the additional Condition 5,6 and 7 as follows:

Condition 5

Prior to the first occupation of any dwellings hereby permitted, a Scheme of additional site wide visitor cycle parking facilities shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The Scheme shall include a programme for the installation of the additional cycle parking facilities.

Reason: To ensure the provision of adequate cycle parking that meets the needs of occupiers of and visitors to the proposed development and in the interests of encouraging the use of sustainable modes of transport in accordance with the adopted NHC Design Code and with Policies 1, 5 and 8 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).

Condition 6

Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 as amended no development as set out in Classes A, AA, B, C, E of Part 1 of Schedule 2 to the Order, (or any subsequent Statutory Instrument which revokes, amends and/or replaces those provisions) shall be carried out within plot 44 without first obtaining a specific planning permission from the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the residential amenity of the adjacent properties are maintained in accordance with Policies D1 and D3 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan.

Condition 7

Prior to the first occupation of any dwellings hereby permitted, full details of gates and fences not annotated on landscape drawings shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority. Thereafter, the development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: to ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development and for the avoidance of doubt in accordance with Policy D1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan.'

36 Appeals

Audio recording – 58 minutes 49 seconds

The Principal Planning Officer provided an update on Planning Appeals and advised that:

- There had been 3 appeal decisions received, with 2 relating to Lutyens Cottage being dismissed.
- The Barkway Road appeal was allowed following the Public Inquiry. However, the associated costs application was refused.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Val Bryant
- Councillor Clare Billing
- Councillor Emma Fernandes
- Councillor Claire Strong

In response to questions, the Principal Planning Officer advised that:

- The Barkway Road inquiry demonstrated the level of precision expected by barristers and could inform Member training.
- The Barkway Road site now had outline permission supported by a unilateral undertaking.
- The developer would still be required to pay financial contributions.
- The Inspector found no unreasonable behaviour, so the Council did not have to pay the legal fees of the appellant.
- The Council would still be required to cover its own costs of the Inquiry.
- Reserved Matters applications were expected.

The Principal Planning Officer further updated Members:

- Two further appeals had been received, one relating to Benslow Lane, Hitchin and one for 36 dwellings at Senuna Park, Ashwell.
- The Ashwell appeal would proceed with written representations.
- The Ashwell application had been recommended for refusal and had four reasons for refusal.

In response to a question from Councillor Claire Strong, the Principal Planning Officer advised that the 'Fast Track' procedure was simply a quicker process for the Inspectorate to consider smaller appeals.

The meeting closed at 8.05 pm

Chair