

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

PLANNING CONTROL COMMITTEE

**MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES,
LETCWORTH GARDEN CITY, SG6 3JF
ON THURSDAY, 6TH NOVEMBER, 2025 AT 7.00 PM**

MINUTES

Present: *Councillors: Nigel Mason (Chair), Emma Fernandes (Vice-Chair), Clare Billing, Ruth Brown, Val Bryant, Ian Mantle, Bryony May, Caroline McDonnell, Louise Peace and Martin Prescott.*

In Attendance: *Amy Cantrill (Trainee Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer), Sam Dicocco (Principal Planning Officer), Sarah Kasparian (Senior Planning Officer), Susan Le Dain (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer), Tom Rea (Senior Planning Officer) and Stephen Reid (Locum Planning Lawyer).*

Also Present: *At the commencement of the meeting approximately 5 members of the public, including registered speakers.*

Councillor Paul Ward was in attendance as Ward Member.

79 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio recording – 1 minute 24 seconds

No apologies for absence were received.

80 MINUTES - 9 OCTOBER 2025

Audio Recording – 1 minute 28 seconds

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

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 9 October be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

81 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Audio recording – 2 minutes 13 seconds

There was no other business notified.

82 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio recording – 2 minutes 17 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.

83 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Audio recording – 4 minutes 54 seconds

The Chair confirmed that the registered speakers were in attendance.

84 25/01539/FP HOLBORN FARM, DANE END, THERFIELD, ROYSTON, HERTFORDSHIRE SG8 9RH

Audio recording – 5 minutes 18 seconds

N.B. Councillor Bryony May declared an interest in this item due to her husband being a Trustee for the Conservators of Therfield Heath and Greens. Councillor May advised that following advice received from the Locum Planning Lawyer, she would leave the Council Chamber for consideration of the item.

The Senior Planning Officer provided a verbal update on matters relating to Application 25/01539/FP and advised that Cllr May was correct and a letter had been received from the Conservators of Therfield Heath and Greens, requesting a £680 financial contribution towards signage and website project. This was based on the Therfield Heath Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Mitigation Strategy published in November 2022.

The Senior Planning Officer then presented the report in respect of Application 25/01539/FP accompanied by a visual presentation consisting of plans and photographs.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Dave Winstanley
- Councillor Louise Peace
- Councillor Tom Tyson
- Councillor Val Bryant
- Councillor Ruth Brown

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

- The objection received from the Highway Authority was based on the principle of a new dwelling in a rural area. This was contrary to the Local Transport Plan and it was also the same objection received in the previous application.
- The main difference between this application and the previous application was to build a larger car port and garage and to replace the lean-to with a single storey extension.
- The tree within proximity to the new building would be retained.
- This application did not meet the requirements for a Section 106 agreement.
- No response had been received from Therfield Parish Council.
- The footprint of the application was slightly larger than the previous application.

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

- The original objection to the planning application had been overturned in April 2024.
- This application was to build a forever home for the Applicant and his family.
- The planned renovations were sympathetic and would ensure the preservation of a listed building.

In response to a point of clarification from Councillor Ruth Brown, Mr Cassidy advised that the extra space was required to convert the property into a forever home for his family.

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

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor Ruth Brown
- Councillor Emma Fernandes
- Councillor Val Bryant

Points raised during the debate included:

- This application was on rural land which was not in the green belt.
- This was a sympathetic scheme which would safeguard a listed building and give it a new lease of life.

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

RESOLVED: That application 25/01539/FP be **GRANTED** planning permission subject to the reasons and conditions set out in the report of the Development and Conservation Manager.

N.B. Councillor Bryony May returned to the Chamber at 19:32.

85 25/01745/S73 LAND TO THE EAST OF FOXHOLES AND GAINSFORD HOUSE AND ON THE WEST SIDE OF CROW FURLONG, HITCHIN, HERTFORDSHIRE

Audio recording 30 minutes 46 seconds

The Senior Planning Officer presented the report in respect of Application 25/01745/S73 accompanied by a visual presentation consisting of plans and photographs.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Ruth Brown
- Councillor Dave Winstanley
- Councillor Louise Peace
- Councillor Val Bryant

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

- The substation would be located away from the houses in the northeast corner of the site.
- The spine road would have a footpath on one side of the road.
- The housing mix was the same as the original application, but the number of house types had increased.

- The footpath links would help the permeability of the site, with local residents being able to access the play area.
- This updated application sought to discharge conditions through a Section 73 agreement and was satisfactory.

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

- The Hill Group were an award-winning housebuilder.
- This site was allocated in the Local Plan and planning permission for 47 new homes was granted back in March 2024.
- This application proposed improved layout of homes and also improvements to the landscaping.
- The substation to the northeast of the site would help to achieve sustainability targets of the Council.
- All homes would have air sourced heat pumps and EV charging points installed.
- A Section 106 agreement was in place for £1.4 million and this application secured more bedroom spaces in the affordable homes.
- There had been no objections received from the Highway Authority about pedestrian access to Crow Furlong.

The following Members asked points of clarification:

- Councillor Martin Prescott
- Councillor Louise Peace
- Councillor Val Bryant

In response to points of clarification, Ms Houston advised that:

- Solar panels were not being installed in this development, as the aim was to be sympathetic to the surrounding rural countryside.
- In this application one of the two bedroomed properties had been replaced by a four bedroomed property.
- This site would be adjacent to an existing development of Hills.

In response to a point of clarification, the Principal Planning Officer advised that:

- The extra bedrooms provided in the affordable housing should be seen as a benefit.
- A slight change in the housing mix was acceptable.
- Each planning application was assessed on its own merits and it was not a necessity in planning terms to install solar panels on energy efficient homes.

In response to a point of clarification, the Locum Planning Lawyer advised that an additional point should be added to the recommendations to ensure that if required the Section 106 agreement were still complied with.

Councillor Nigel Mason proposed to grant permission as amended and this was seconded by Councillor Ruth Brown.

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor Ruth Brown
- Councillor Martin Prescott
- Councillor Louise Peace

Points raised during the debate included:

- This application was an improvement to the original application with benefits to landscaping and sustainability.
- If a new Section 106 agreement was required, it was incumbent on the Council to ensure there were no delays to the commencement of this development.
- Access to Crow Furlong had already been granted in the previous application.

In response to a point raised in the debate, the Locum Planning Lawyer advised that if a new Section 106 was required, legal services would expedite it.

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

RESOLVED: That application 25/01745/S73 be **GRANTED** planning permission subject to the following:

- a) Providing delegated powers to the Development and Conservation Manager to update conditions and informatives as set out in the report above.
- b) Conditions as set out in the report with the following amendments to Conditions 7 and 21:

'Condition 7

BNG Management Plan

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Net Gain – Landscape and Ecological Management and Maintenance Plan Rev C (October 2025) prepared by James Blake Associates unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To enhance biodiversity in accordance with the NPPF and the North Hertfordshire Local Plan Policy NE4.

Condition 21

Open Space Management and Maintenance

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the Open Space Management and Maintenance Scheme contained in the Biodiversity Net Gain – Landscape and Ecological Management and Maintenance Plan Rev C (October 2025) prepared by James Blake Associates. The open spaces provided shall be retained for their intended purpose and in accordance with the approved management plan unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure adequate open space and amenity provision as per NHLP Policy NE6.'

- c) Completion of a new Section 106 agreement if required in consultation with the Chair.

86 TPO/00221/(2025) LAND AT CROUCHGREEN WOOD AND CHURCH WOOD, THREE HOUSES LAND, CODICOTE

Audio recording 1 hour 5 minutes 15 seconds

The Senior Planning Officer provided a verbal update on matters relating to Application TPO/00221(2025) and advised that:

- The Applicant had objected to the original Tree Preservation Order under section 8.45 of the constitution.
- A letter had been received since the report had been published from a local resident in support of the Tree Preservation Order.

The Senior Planning Officer then presented the report in respect of Application TPO/00221(2025) accompanied by a visual presentation consisting of plans and photographs.

The Chair invited the Public Supporter, Nicholas Pellett to speak in support of the application. Mr Pellett thanked the Chair for the opportunity and provided the Committee with a verbal presentation, and highlighted the following:

- He was the representative for 30 local residents and other concerned parties which included some countryside experts.
- These woods had enjoyed a natural existence free from development.
- The natural habitat had taken centuries to evolve and was irreplaceable.
- The woodland had suffered the last two years from development in the area resulting in inappropriate drainage in the woodland.
- The subsequent raised ground level and flooding of the woods was detrimental to the trees.
- This Tree Preservation Order would provide effective protection for the future of the trees which were threatened by development.

In response to a point of clarification from Councillor Val Bryant, Mr Pellett advised that the woods were formerly part of the estate owned by Lord Brockett and were a local resource.

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

- He was in support of the Tree Preservation Order.
- He had been contacted in September 2024 by a local resident who was concerned about the impact on the woods from nearby properties.
- As a result of this, he met with residents and listened to their concerns.
- Following a visit to the woods, he could confirm his agreement with paragraph 4.3.2 of the report.
- This Tree Preservation Order was critical to protect the trees in the woodland.
- The high ecological status of the site and the scale of unauthorised works and damage that had already happened, it was imperative that the woodlands were protected for the community, as detailed in paragraph 4.3.7 of the report.

There were no points of clarification from Members.

The Chair thanked Councillor Ward for his verbal presentation and invited the Representative of the Applicant, Ms Sophie Cairns to speak against the application. Ms Cairns thanked the Chair for the opportunity and provided the Committee with a verbal presentation, and highlighted the following:

- This proposed Tree Preservation Order was neither justified nor proportionate.
- The trees were located on private land with no public rights of way.
- The current owners had developed good woodland management and were enhancing biodiversity.
- A Tree Preservation Order would only introduce hurdles to the management of any coppicing and thinning of trees.
- The Applicant was willing to cooperate by implementing a woodland management plan for the site.
- She urged the Council to withdraw the Tree Preservation Order and to work with the owners to create a woodland management plan.

In response to points of clarification, Ms Cairns advised that:

- A meeting was planned to discuss the longevity of the site and how to ensure best management in the future.
- Flooding in the woods came from the road and not just from the drainage works from the site.
- A woodland management plan would prevent the hurdles which resulted from a Tree Preservation Order.

In response to points of clarification, the Senior Planning Officer advised that:

- A woodland management plan could only be secured through a planning application or a Section 106 agreement.
- The view of the site could be accessed by members of the public from Three Houses Lane and therefore the site did have amenity value.
- There was concern around inappropriate tree species that had been planted on and around the boundary of the site which were not native species.

Councillor Nigel Mason proposed to grant permission, and this was seconded by Councillor Val Bryant.

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor Ruth Brown
- Councillor Louise Peace
- Councillor Clare Billing

Points raised during the debate included:

- Trees and the ancient ecosystem must be protected, as advised by CPRE Hertfordshire, Natural England and The Woodland Trust in paragraphs 4.3.3 and 4.3.6 of the report.
- The native species of trees in the woodland must be protected by ensuring no irresponsible planting happened.
- There were many bluebells in the woodland which needed to be protected.

In response to a point raised during the debate, the Senior Planning Officer advised that bluebells were protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act.

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

RESOLVED: That Tree Preservation Order (TPO/00221) be **CONFIRMED**.

87 APPEALS

Audio recording – 1 hour 35 minutes 37 seconds

The Principal Planning Officer presented the report entitled 'Planning Appeals' and advised that there had been two appeals which had both been dismissed.

The meeting closed at 8.38 pm

Chair