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NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

PLANNING CONTROL COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES,
LETCWORTH GARDEN CITY, SG6 3JF
ON THURSDAY, 20TH 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, Martin Prescott, Tom Tyson and Dave Winstanley.*

In Attendance: *Amy Cantrill (Trainee Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer), Faith Churchill (Democratic Services Apprentice), Shaun Greaves (Development and Conservation Manager), Alex Howard (Senior Planning Officer) and Stephen Reid (Locum Planning Lawyer).*

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

88 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio recording – 1 minute 14 seconds

There were no apologies for absence.

89 MINUTES - 23 OCTOBER 2025

Audio Recording – 1 minute 25 seconds

Councillor Nigel Mason, as Chair, proposed and Councillor Emma Fernandes seconded.

The following members commented on the minutes:

- Councillor Ruth Brown
- Councillor Nigel Mason
- Councillor Martin Prescott
- Councillor Tom Tyson

Councillor Ruth Brown commented on the Minutes and outlines that:

- The response of the Development and Conservation Manager to the public presentations should include that the Therfield Heath Mitigation Strategy was a material planning consideration.
- An email had been sent by the public objector at the meeting, Mr Richard Jameson, and these points should be included in the Minutes.

In response to points raised by Councillor Brown, Councillors Tom Tyson and Martin Prescott noted that the Minutes should be reviewed and returned to the Committee to consider, once the points raised had been addressed.

In response to points raised, the Trainee Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer advised that, in line with Council policy, draft minutes were published within 10 working days of the meeting, and that their approval, including any amendments, would be considered at the next scheduled meeting.

In response to points raised, the Chair advised that due to questions raised by the Committee, the approval of the Minutes of the meeting on 23 October 2025 would be deferred to a future meeting of the Committee.

90 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Audio recording – 8 minutes 35 seconds

There was no other business notified.

91 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio recording – 8 minutes 41 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 6 - 25/00886/FP had been withdrawn from the agenda.

92 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Audio recording – 10 minutes 47 seconds

There was no public participation at this meeting.

93 25/00886/FP Reed House, Jacksons Lane, Reed, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 8AB

Audio recording – 10 minutes 56 seconds.

The Chair confirmed that this item had been withdrawn from the agenda.

94 25/00571/FP Land North Of, Milksey Lane, Graveley, Hertfordshire

Audio recording – 11 minutes 13 seconds

The Senior Planning Officer provided a verbal update on matters relating to Application 25/00571/FP and advised a question had been asked by Councillor Louise Peace which would be addressed during the Member questions.

The Senior Planning Officer then presented the report in respect of Application 25/00571/FP accompanied by a visual presentation consisting of plans and photographs.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Louise Peace
- Councillor Val Bryant
- Councillor Dave Winstanley
- Councillor Tom Tyson
- Councillor Nigel Mason
- Councillor Emma Fenandes
- Councillor Ruth Brown
- Councillor Caroline McDonnell
- Councillor Dave Winstanley

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

- The Applicant and Agent for both application 23/00186/FP and application 25/00571/FP were the same. However, the landowner was different and therefore the two applications needed to be considered separately and would not qualify for 40% provision of affordable housing.
- A condition for landscaping had been included, as outlined at 4.3.26 of the report, to add additional screening in plots 1 and 2.
- The access to the site was expected to be before the speed limit change from 30MPH to 50MPH. Hertfordshire County Council Highways had provided a response to consultation and requested conditions, including that a Road Safety Audit be conducted, following which visibility splays and road speeds would be considered at the access point.
- The Council was signed up to a scheme with Natural England and, in certain areas, a scheme to mitigate against impact on great crested newts was required to be developed and countersigned by Natural England.
- The mitigation payment would go towards the prevention of damage to habitats of great crested newts.
- As part of the proposal new footpath links were proposed for the southwestern part of the development, which would lead onto existing footpaths in the village.
- At the time of the meeting no comments had been received from the Lead Local Flood Authority.
- The density on this site was considered against other schemes within Graveley, and, given the similarity of density, it was deemed appropriate development.
- The Parish Council had not made a formal request for an amount in Section 106 contribution and the amount £6300 was included as this was included in the previous scheme for 10 dwellings. This amount was noted as being subject to further review and indexation to inflate amounts both in terms of inflation and increase in units.
- Trees would be retained at the west of the site.
- As part of the Road Safety Audit included by condition, further consideration would be given to any changes required to the Highways.
- The inclusion of 24 swift bricks in the development was outlined under condition 17.
- Additional surveys had been requested in the response from the Ecology consultant, which would be completed ahead of development and reviewed by the Ecology team to ensure any further mitigations were put in place.
- Whilst additional surveys were completed, the Section 106 agreement would be progressed.
- Condition 14 outlined the requirement of an Environmental Risk Assessment to be conducted, which would ensure no contamination of the site existed.

In response to points raised during questions, the Locum Planning Lawyer noted that the Section 106 Heads of Terms currently outlined a figure required and was not indexed linked and was therefore no opportunity for the Parish Council to request further funds.

In response to points raised during questions, the Development and Conservation Manager advised that authority could be delegated to himself to agree the exact amount of Section 106 requested by the Parish Council.

Councillor Nigel Mason, as Chair, proposed to grant permission, with the additional delegation to the Development and Conservation Manager to agree the Section 106 contributions, and this was seconded by Councillor Emma Fernandes.

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor Martin Prescott
- Councillor Ruth Brown
- Councillor Emma Fernandes
- Councillor Caroline McDonnell
- Councillor Bryony May
- Councillor Tom Tyson
- Councillor Louise Peace
- Councillor Nigel Mason

Points raised during the debate included:

- Often housing designs in rural settings like these were not sympathetic to the area and were more urbanised in style.
- The number of dwellings on site should have been identified at the Local Plan approval stage, with the numbers increasing from 8 dwellings to 24. Therefore, there was concern that this development was not necessarily appropriate to the rural setting.
- Whilst the housing design was not ideal, there was still a generous spacing of properties, the site was sustainable from a transport perspective and would provide 8 affordable dwellings.
- Developments on the edge of existing villages which had their own specific access was not always appropriate for a village setting.
- Concerns remained about the speed limit on the existing highway, which would hopefully be addressed by the Road Safety Audit.
- There were only 2 objections received to the application from existing residents.
- There was a concern that the house design was more appropriate of a sub-urban site.
- The Parish Council had not objected to the plan.
- Housing design, styles and materials had changed in newer developments.

In response to points raised during the debate, the Conservation Manager advised that if objections were raised, in response to the outstanding consultations referred to in the recommendations, the application would return to the Committee for reconsideration. The outstanding items usually related to technical aspects, which were expected to be resolved by Officers, but there could be situations in which reconsideration was required by the Committee.

N.B. During the Debate, the Chair held a brief pause to allow a Member to resolve a personal matter. There were no further contributions during this pause and the meeting resumed at 19:54.

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

RESOLVED: That application 25/00571/FP be **GRANTED** planning permission, subject to:

- a) the completion of a S106 agreement in line with the agreed Heads of Terms, and delegation to the Development and Conservation Manager the negotiation and agreement

with the applicant a revised contribution towards improvements to the playground on Ashwell Close, following further correspondence with the Parish Council.

- b) A response of no objection and any relevant conditions from the Local Lead Flood Authority, to be delegated to the Development and Conservation Manager prior to any decision.
- c) A response of no objection and any relevant conditions from Hertfordshire County Councils LEADS (Ecology) following the carrying out of relevant surveys, to be delegated to the Development and Conservation Manager prior to any decision.
- d) A response of no objection and any relevant conditions from Hertfordshire County Councils LEADS (Archaeology) following the carrying out of a geophysical survey and trial trenching evaluation and consultation with HCC as appropriate, to be delegated to the Development and Conservation Manager prior to any decision.
- e) the agreement to an extension of time to the statutory determination date to allow time for (A), (B), (C), and (D) to occur; and
- f) the conditions laid out in the report.

N.B. Following the conclusion of this item, there was a break in proceedings and the meeting reconvened at 20.07

95 25/01658/RM 66 Park Lane, Knebworth, Hertfordshire, SG3 6PW

Audio recording – 1 hour 7 minutes 36 seconds

The Development and Conservation Manager provided a verbal update on matters relating to Application 25/01658/RM and advised that:

- Amended plans had been received, which now mirrored plot 7 with the other 3 bedroom plots.
- A change was proposed to the wording of condition 6 and outlined the new wording of the condition.

The Development and Conservation then presented the report in respect of Application 25/01658/RM accompanied by a visual presentation consisting of plans and photographs.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Ruth Brown
- Councillor Claire Billing
- Councillor Louise Peace
- Councillor Dave Winstanley

In response to questions, the Development and Conservation Manager advised that:

- Class E permitted development related to outbuildings and Class F to permitted development related to hardstanding. It did not mean works could not be conducted on these areas, but permission would be required from the planning authority. This had been included to protect the existing trees on the site.
- There would be some Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) from this development, and these had been outlined in the documents submitted as part of the application. However, due to the original application being before the BNG regulations came into effect, conditions relating to BNG could not be added to this application.
- The appearance of the acoustic fencing was similar to traditional fencing around a property, but was usually made from a denser wood.
- The Category A and B trees on the plot would not be under a Tree Protection Order (TPO) but a TPO could be added to the area either before or after the development took place, and this would be considered by Officers.

- The acoustic fencing would be between 1.8m and 2m in height, as outlined in the landscape plan provided.

Councillor Nigel Mason, as Chair, proposed to grant permission, including the amendment to Condition 6, and this was seconded by Councillor Emma Fernandes.

As part of the debate, Councillor Ruth Brown noted that this was overall a good scheme, with PV panels, air source heat pumps and large plots.

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

RESOLVED: That application 25/01658/RM be **GRANTED** planning permission subject to the reasons and conditions set out in the report of the Development and Conservation Manager, with an amendment to Condition 6 as follows:

'Condition 6

In the event that contamination not identified in the ground investigations to date is found at any time when carrying out the approved development, it shall be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment shall then be undertaken by a competent person, in accordance with BS10175:2011. A written report of the findings should be forwarded for approval to the Local Planning Authority. Following completion of remedial measures, a verification report shall be prepared that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out. No part of the development should be occupied until all remedial and validation works are approved in writing.'

The meeting closed at 8.39 pm

Chair