

## **26/00006/FP – LAND TO NORTH OF, STEVENAGE ROAD, HITCHIN, HERTFORDSHIRE**

### **Written Update**

The description of development sets out permission is sought for 50no. dwellings. For absolute clarity, planning permission is sought for the erection of fifty dwellings.

This publication seeks to update on the processing of the application and the reasoning behind refusal to accept updated documentation and determining the application within the statutory deadline.

There is no duty for the Local Planning Authority to accept updated documentation during the determination of any planning application. The department takes a bespoke approach on a case-by-case basis as to accepting amended details following submission. Considerations align to the below.

This application has been through two rounds of pre-application advice. In many parts, that advice has not been reflected in the supporting documentation in the application submission.

Updated details have been submitted in respect to noise and layout pursuant to responses from NHC Environmental Health and Place Services (Landscape) respectively.

The amendments in regards to the layout would be a material change which would require full re-consultation in order for interested parties not to be prejudiced, an exercise which could not be carried out within the statutory time limits for determination of the application. In addition, these details would only potentially overcome only one part of a wider reason for refusal.

The noise details also would leave the Council vulnerable to failure to meet the statutory deadline for determination.

Extending the deadlines for determination on applications puts the Council at risk. Extensions place the Council in a position of reliance on applicants ad-hoc agreement. In the event a later extension required by the Council to determine the application is not agreed by the applicant, the Council will fail to meet the deadline for determination of that application.

Ability of the Council to meet deadlines for determination are split between major and non-major applications. There are fewer major applications processed by the Council, so a few not determined in time can have a significant impact on reporting of major applications determined within the timeframe, and leave the Council open to special measures being imposed, relinquishing local control over applications.

There is a fundamental disagreement in this case regarding the site's status and contributions within the Green Belt, and harms thereto. Reducing the reasons for refusal

in regards to flooding or Highways would not result in an alternative recommendation (considering and factoring implications regarding Golden Rules if policy compliant affordable housing percentage were provided).

For the reasons given above, officers have made the determination not to accept amended details in the determination of this application, and to proceed to the Planning Control Committee with a recommendation in order to determine the application within the statutory deadlines prescribed.