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Response to Planning application from Hertfordshire County Council (T and CP GDP Order 2015)

Director of Planning
North Hertfordshire Council
Council Offices
Gernon Road
Letchworth Garden City
Hertfordshire
SG6 3JF

District ref: 26/01224/S73
HCC ref: NH/29247/2026
HCC received: 21 July 2026
Area manager: Matthew Armstrong
Case officer: Matthew Armstrong

Location
Land Adjacent Sewage Pumping Station, Ashwell Road, Bygrave, Hertfordshire,

Application type
Variation of Condition

Proposal
AMENDED PROPOSAL - SEE NOTIFICATION LETTER
Section 73 Application : Variation of Condition numbers 21 (External appearances): vary approved colour scheme. 26 (CTMP): vary amount of articulated lorry visits for no more than 4 weeks, and 29 (Enabling works): replace the wording "HGV movements" with "articulated lorry movements" of planning permission reference 22/00741/FP granted on 17.06.2024 for Ground mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) farm including battery energy storage; continued agricultural use, ancillary infrastructure, security fencing, landscaping provision, ecological enhancements and associated works (as amended by information received 29 January 2024

Recommendation
Notice is given under article 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 that Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority does not wish to restrict the grant of permission.

COMMENTS:

By way of an update, and to follow up on our previous formal consultation response of 23/7/2026, the Highway Authority has reviewed the latest submissions, including comments from the Parish Council and third parties.

The concerns raised by the Parish Council and others are acknowledged. Some of these concerns return to matters raised in the original planning application (which has been granted), whereas others focus specifically on the matter now in hand, i.e. the proposed increase from 2 to 3 articulated lorries

per day. The Highway Authority has carefully examined this latest proposal, with discussions taking place between our Development Management team, Network Management team, and Safety team. These are summarised below.

The Highway Authority acknowledges that our previous position was "an absolute maximum of 2 articulated lorry visits per day (i.e. a total of 4 two-way movements per day" (e-mail to the applicant 18/4/2023). Since that time, the applicant has approached us requesting an increase of up to 16 two-way movements (four times the approved level), which we rejected. However, there then followed a period of further discussions and we finally agreed to a small increase from 2 articulated lorries per day to 3. This was on the basis of extending the delivery times by a modest half an hour either side (see further details on this below), meaning that a maximum of 6 two-way articulated movements would be accommodated within a 6-hour delivery window – i.e. the equivalent of 1 articulated lorry movement per hour. Alongside the proposed additional mitigation measures (see further below), and bearing in mind the comprehensive assessment already undertaken which did not show any obvious accident patterns or clusters along the entire route for HGVs since our accident records began (more than 40 years ago), this is considered a reasonable and pragmatic approach.

The extended delivery times for articulated lorries changing from 9:30pm-2:30pm to 9am-3pm was again a decision made alongside discussions with our Network Management team and Safety team. For clarity the extended time relates to articulated lorries, with all other HGVs remaining within the 9:30pm – 2:30pm slot. The expectation is that HGVs must not be travelling on the immediate approach/departure route, i.e. Bygrave Road and Ashwell Road outside of the approved times (i.e. no articulated lorries on those roads before 9am and after 3pm, and no rigid lorries before 9:30am and after 2:30pm). The site operator will therefore have to carefully time deliveries such that departure does not extend beyond the approved hours, although it is noted that travel time from the site access to the London Road / Bygrave junction is approximately only 5 minutes under normal circumstances. In practice, under normal circumstances this could mean an articulated lorry can depart the site at 2:50pm, in order to comfortably clear the Bygrave Road and Ashwell Road part of the route.

The applicant proposes additional mitigation measures in their Addendum (V2) to Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) 15/07/2026. These primarily include enhanced traffic marshal presence as outlined in paragraph 4.2.4 and 4.3.2 of this document. As well as the site access, one marshal “will be stationed at the southern access to Bygrave and the second will be positioned in the ~80m layby along Great North Road. Marshal contact details will be provided to Bygrave Parish Council and circulated via the WhatsApp group prior to the commencement of articulated deliveries”. Paragraph 4.2.6 explains a layby on Great North Road has been identified as a holding area if needed, and Baldock Service Station can provide further holding space if necessary. However, the Highway Authority is of the view the layby banksmen would actually be better placed at the junction of the London Road / Bygrave Road junction throughout the delivery hours – and would request the applicant give consideration to this instead.

In terms of public communication / letter delivery, PACE do not specify how they will deliver to addresses, e.g. Royal Mail, by hand, by another postal service provider. However, the wording should be strengthened to say this is *received* by all identified properties, the Parish Council, the LPA and the Highway Authority, at least 5 working days in advance.

Turning to the matter of monitoring – The Addendum (V2) to Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) 15/07/2026 gives a commitment to keeping a daily Monitoring and Reporting log. The LPA will need to establish whether there is an expectation that a copy of this is submitted every week, but it should certainly be made available immediately upon request, and we recommended the LPA's enforcement team undertake a number of unannounced site visits to check this (and to generally check all other matters are being adhered to).

It is noted that the applicant is also requesting a further increase to up to 4 articulated lorries a day under "Exceptional Circumstances". Further consideration of this has resulted in a need to tighten the wording, and suggestions are shown below:

- Severe weather – when they pose a risk of amber or red impacts as defined by the Met Office. Details of specific weather condition(s) noted in log, e.g. snow, high winds, rain resulting in road flooding, etc, along with reduced articulated numbers clearly noted.

- Severe traffic incidents. Evidence provided of nature of incident (e.g. Google Maps traffic, news articles, OneNetwork website) and duration, along with reduced articulated numbers clearly noted.

- Mechanical breakdowns: Articulated lorry breakdown or inability to deliver due to vehicle fault. Evidence of fault to be provided, along with reduced articulated numbers clearly noted.

- Emergency works on delivery routes: Emergency works to roads in the UK are defined under the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 (NRSWA) as urgent repairs needed immediately to stop or prevent danger to people or property. Reduced articulated numbers clearly noted.

- Other unavoidable delay to a delivery: Any event that causes or is likely to cause danger to the life or health of people or animals, with specific cause recorded in daily movement log. Reduced articulated numbers clearly noted.

Finally, the Highway Authority is mindful the new NPPF 2026 has recently been released. This is notably different in some areas around Highway/Transport matters, ensuring sustainable transport provision follows a 'vision-led approach'. It also encourages closer ties with Local Transport Plans, LCWIPs, etc, and use of the government's connectivity tool. Better street design also has a bigger focus. However, all of this is not considered directly relevant to this application, which simply seeks to increase an already approved 2 articulated lorries per day to 3 for construction of a solar farm. They key tests of severity (capacity and congestion) and highway safety (both within TR6 of the NPPF 2026) remain the same as in the previous NPPF, albeit reworded somewhat.

Signed
Matthew Armstrong

21 October 2026