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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: 26/02154/PIP
HCC ref: NH/30574/2026
HCC received: 28 September 2026
Area manager: Manjinder Sehmi
Case officer: Paul Marshall

Location

Land Adjacent To Peartree Cottage, Smiths End Lane, Barley, Hertfordshire, SG8 8LH

Application type

Permission in Principle

Proposal

Permission in Principle : Erection of one dwelling

Recommendation

OTHER

The application seeks Permission in Principle for the erection of one dwelling. Smith's End Lane is a highway maintainable at public expense. It is an unclassified road that performs a local access function within the road hierarchy and is classified as a P2/M1 Residential Street.

There have been no recorded personal injury collisions within the immediate vicinity of the application site during the most recent five-year period for which data is available. No Public Rights of Way, as identified on the Definitive Map, cross or directly affect the application site, nor would they be impacted by the proposal.

POLICY REVIEW

The following documents have been used in the assessment of this application:

- Manual for Streets (2007)
- National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026)
- Hertfordshire County Council Local Transport Plan 4 (2018-2031)
- Roads in Hertfordshire Design Guide, 3rd Edition (2011)

- Cycle Infrastructure Design, DfT Local Transport Note 1/20 (2020)
- Government Connectivity Tool (July 2026)
- Hertfordshire County Council Residential Dropped Kerb Policy

PLANNING HISTORY

The application site has previous planning history.

DRAWINGS

The following documents have been reviewed:

- Existing Site Plan
- Location Plan
- Supporting Planning Statement

ACCESSIBILITY

The proposed access would be taken from Smith's End Lane, a narrow rural lane with limited carriageway width.

Should the proposal progress to a full planning application, the Highway Authority would have a number of concerns regarding accessibility and sustainability. The site is remote from services and facilities and offers poor opportunities for travel by sustainable modes of transport.

Pedestrians would be required to walk along a narrow carriageway with little or no refuge from passing vehicles. The route is unattractive for walking and cycling and would be particularly challenging during periods of inclement weather and reduced daylight. As such, it is considered that future residents would be heavily reliant on the private motor car for the majority of journeys.

Although several bus stops are available within walking distance of the site, they are located approximately 9 to 18 minutes away on foot. Given the characteristics of Smith's End Lane, it is unlikely that many residents would regularly choose to access public transport on foot.

VISIBILITY

The precise location of the proposed access has not been provided.

Notwithstanding this, visibility along this section of Smith's End Lane appears constrained and may not be capable of achieving the required standards appropriate for a road subject to a 30mph speed limit.

Should a full planning application be submitted, it should be accompanied by detailed visibility assessments, including visibility splays and a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit, to demonstrate that safe access can be achieved.

GOVERNMENT CONNECTIVITY TOOL

The Government Connectivity Tool gives the site an overall score of 27, placing it within the lowest 10% of locations nationally for non-car accessibility.

Whilst poor connectivity scores are not uncommon in rural locations, the results reinforce concerns regarding the site's dependence on private vehicle use. The findings should be considered alongside the site-specific assessment above, which indicates limited opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport use.

DRAINAGE

It is noted that there is a pond within the application site and a further pond on the opposite side of Smith's End Lane.

Any future application should be supported by a comprehensive drainage and flood risk assessment demonstrating that the proposal would not increase flood risk on-site or elsewhere.

The transport network must be resilient to the effects of climate change, including changing weather patterns and extreme weather events. Policy 5 of the Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan 4 seeks to ensure that development incorporates appropriate mitigation measures to minimise impacts on the transport network.

Hertfordshire County Council's Place and Movement Planning Design Guide states that surface water from private land must not discharge onto the adopted highway. The Government's flood risk mapping indicates that sections of the nearby highway may be susceptible to surface water flooding and this should be appropriately considered as part of any future submission.

EMERGENCY VEHICLE ACCESS

In accordance with paragraph 116(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework, development proposals should provide suitable access for emergency vehicles.

Relevant guidance is contained within Manual for Streets, Hertfordshire County Council's Place and Movement Planning Design Guide, and Approved Document B of the Building Regulations.

For a single dwelling, access for a pumping appliance should be provided within 45 metres of all parts of the dwelling.

RECYCLING

Provision for refuse and recycling storage should accord with the guidance contained within Manual for Streets.

Residents should not be required to move bins more than 30 metres, and collection points should generally be located within 25 metres of the adopted highway.

The applicant should also demonstrate that refuse collection vehicles can safely access and leave the site in a forward gear. Given the characteristics of Smith's End Lane, a refuse vehicle stopping on the carriageway may present a highway safety concern and this should be considered within any future submission.

CONCLUSION

The Government Connectivity Tool assigns the site an overall score of 27, placing it within the lowest 10% of locations nationally for non-car accessibility. This, together with the site's rural location and limited opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport use, indicates that future occupiers would be heavily reliant on private vehicle travel for most day-to-day journeys.

The August 2026 National Planning Policy Framework promotes a vision-led approach to transport planning, with sustainable transport considerations integrated at the earliest stages of the planning process. In this instance, it is difficult to identify how the development could effectively reduce reliance on private vehicle use given the site's location and accessibility constraints.

However, it is acknowledged that there are existing dwellings in the surrounding area, and this factor should be weighed in the overall planning balance.

Overall, the Highway Authority has significant concerns regarding the accessibility, sustainability and potential highway implications of the proposal. Based on the information currently available, it is likely that the Highway Authority would raise an objection should the proposal proceed to a full planning application unless these concerns can be satisfactorily addressed.

Signed

Paul Marshall

6 October 2026