

Land adjacent to Breachwood Green Industrial Park.

Applicant: Cora Investments Limited

Planning Statement April 2025

1. **Introduction**

This statement addresses the retrospective planning application for a car park with 28 spaces to serve the adjacent industrial area.

2. **The Site**

The site is approx. 0.01ha bounded on the north side by Pasture Lane, The farm gate access has been reused for access to the car park. Photographs of the site as pre existing and as existing are enclosed at Annex 1.

3. **The Proposal**

To retain this private car park. This application is made in preference to cars being parked on nearby highways and in the village. The parking area is lit by three lamps and has a pervious surface to allow the infiltration of rain water. As occurred in its pre existing condition.

4. **The Development Plan**

The North Hertfordshire Local Plan was adopted in 2022.

Breachwood Green was previously 'washed over' by the Green Belt. In the adopted Local Plan 2022 the village is now out of the Green Belt with a modest housing site proposed within the village envelope. The application site and industrial park remain in the Green Belt and the former is intimately linked to the industrial area.

5. Whilst the NPPF 2024 (the Framework) is not policy it may be described as *primus inter pares* as a material consideration.

Paragraph 154 addresses proposals affecting the Green Belt and exceptions thereto. 154(h) ii names 'engineering operations' and 154 (h) iii 'local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location.

In the matter of an engineering operation and having regard to S 55 of the principle Act the formation of the car park comes within this definition. This leaves the use of the car park, as opposed to its construction, to be addressed.

6. **Other Material Considerations**

Access to the site is long established with a farm gate being replaced with a stronger gate to prevent unauthorised access. Sufficient space is allocated to allow all vehicles to enter and leave in forward gear. The vertical and horizontal alignment of Pastures Lane means that south bound traffic has to reduce speed to negotiate a 90 degree LH bend. Traffic coming in the other direction also has to negotiate that part of the lane being a single carriageway with passing places. Given the nature of the carriageway it is estimated that traffic at the point of access travels at a speed of 20mph or less.

Breachwood Green has bus service provided by Red Eagle Buses route 88. The published timetable is at Annex 2. The earliest bus arrives travelling from Luton at 07:52 (in term time) and from Hitchin at 09:27. As the timetable reveals this is a two hourly service. The industrial park employees start at 07:00 and finish at 17:00.

Anyone living in the village may travel by active transport but all those beyond are car dependent. A recent survey revealed that all staff travelled by car and that the opportunity for car sharing is very limited. In this circumstance the car park is local transport infrastructure required to serve the industrial park.

The pre existing condition of the site was as farmland and it was a monoculture that only changed with crop rotation. There is sufficient space with the car park to enable a 10% increase in BNG and a condition to this effect would secure this. Also the areas not needed for parking and circulation may be planted to so that the only side without a planted boundary will be facing south across the fields where there is no public footpath.

There remains the use of the car park to be addressed. It is in use say 11 hours a day for five days a week. When vacant it makes no impact on the openness of the Green Belt. When occupied it makes a limited impact. But the fall back position, parking on the carriageways off site, would have an equal impact on openness.

In matters pertaining to lighting the carpark has three 3100mm tall down lighter LED lights, solar powered with battery back-up positioned (see drwg. LABrchwdG/FUL/25/02). The lights are activated when a person passes within 4-5m within the confines of the carpark area.

Last, I note that the expansion of Luton Airport has recently been consented. The application comprised the expansion of London Luton Airport from its current permitted cap of 18 million passengers per annum (mppa) up to 32 million mppa, including:

- new terminal capacity;
- additional taxiways and other transport infrastructure;
- the construction of landside support buildings;
- surface access adjustments;
- mitigation works and other associated development.

(Planning Inspectorate ref TR020001). The relevance of this is that the site lies immediately under the final approach to the airport's runway. The movement and noise of additional aircraft less than 200m above ground level will also impinge on openness and this has been found to be acceptable. Contrary to the Council's submission to the Examining Authority (ref 20040773).

7. **The Planning Balance**

This is essentially a matter of planning judgement. I am obliged to show very special circumstances since the car park is within the Green Belt. This is not a public car park but one to serve the industrial park. In a discrete location where openness cannot be enjoyed save for the farmer working the fields to the south. In the absence of this car park staff will park elsewhere. Reviewing the purposes of the Green Belt;

- A** the village is not a large built up area
- B** the site does not assist in preventing neighbouring towns from merging
- C** to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment
- D** the site does not preserve the setting of historic towns and
- E** the site does not assist with urban regeneration.

Returning to **C** to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, the industrial site generates vehicle movements for staff. Is safeguarding better achieved with this car park or without it? I suggest it better achieved with the car park and that a very special circumstance has been shown.

ANNEX 1

PRE-EXISTING ACCESS TO LAND - GOOGLE STREET VIEW 2009



PRE-EXISTING ACCESS TO LAND - GOOGLE STREET VIEW 2020



EVIDENCE OF PRE-EXISTING ACCESS GATE – 2025



AS-EXISTING ACCESS TO LAND – 2025



ANNEX 2



Luton - Hitchin

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MONDAY-FRIDAY

	Sch	SH				
Luton Station Interchange, Stand 5	0715	0730	1000	1230	1430	1705
Luton, Church Street, Stop C9	0717	0732	1002	1232	1432	1707
Luton, Park Square, Stop P3	0718	0733	1003	1233	1433	1708
Luton, Wigmore Lane, ASDA	0729	0742	1012	1242	1442	1717
Cockernhoe, Luton Rd, The Green	0734	0746	1016	1246	1446	1721
Tea Green, The Green	0740	0749	1019	1249	1449	1724
Breachwood Grn, Chapel Rd, Oxford Rd (S)	0752	0756	1026	1256	1456	1731
King's Walden, Church Road, opp Church	0759	0803	1033	1303	1503	1738
Preston, Preston Road, opp Red Lion PH	0809	0809	1039	1309	1509	1744
Gosmore, High St, opp Bird in Hand PH	0816	0814	1044	1314	1514	1749
Hitchin, St Mary's Square, Stop L	0822	0820	1050	1320	1520	1755
Hitchin Railway Station, Stop B	0826					
Hitchin, Fishponds Rd, opp Football Club	0829					
Hitchin, The Priory School, Grounds	0835					

Sch - Schooldays SH - School Holidays

MONDAY-FRIDAY

	Sch	SH				
Hitchin, The Priory School, Grounds	1545					
Hitchin, Fishponds Rd, Football Club	1548					
Hitchin Railway Station, Stop A	1552					
Hitchin, St Mary's Square, Stop L	1558					
Hitchin, St Mary's Square, Stop L	0900	1100	1330	1600	1600	1800
Hitchin, Bancroft, Stop G	0902	1102	1332	1602	1602	1802
Gosmore, High St, Bird in Hand PH	0908	1108	1338	1608	1608	1808
Preston, Preston Road, Red Lion PH	0913	1113	1343	1613	1613	1813
King's Walden, Church Road, Church	0919	1119	1349	1619	1619	1819
Breachwood Grn, Chapel Rd, Oxford Rd (S)	0927	1127	1357	1627	1627	1827
Tea Green, opp The Green	0934	1134	1404	1634	1634	1834
Cockernhoe, Luton Road, opp The Green	0937	1137	1407	1637	1637	1837
Luton, Wigmore Lane, ASDA	0941	1141	1411	1641	1641	1841
Luton, Church Street, Stop C5	0951	1151	1421	1651	1651	1851
Luton Station Interchange, Stand 5	0955	1155	1425	1655	1655	1855

Sch - Schooldays SH - School Holidays