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North Hertfordshire District Council
Planning Control & Conservation
Council Offices Gernon Road
Letchworth Garden City
Hertfordshire
SG6 3JF

Our ref: NE/2025/138594/01-L01
Your ref: 25/02260/FP

Date: 2 October 2025

Dear Melissa

**Northway filling station Great North Road Hinxworth Baldock Hertfordshire
SG7 5EX**

Temporary consent allowing for the erection of a detached food-to-go building (Greggs pod) and other associated minor site alterations including the formation of vehicle parking for a period of two years (development already commenced)

Thank you for consulting us on this application, we have reviewed the information submitted and have no objection to the proposals nor any conditions to request, we do have the following advice.

Flood Risk Assessment

To assist you in making an informed decision about the flood risk affecting this site, the key points to note from the submitted FRA, referenced NS_0178_02 and dated September 2025, are:

- A site-specific model of Cat's Ditch indicates that the site is not at risk of flooding during the 1% annual probability flood event, including a 19% allowance for climate change (i.e. the design flood event).
- A site-specific model of Cat's Ditch indicates that the site is at risk of flooding during a 0.1% annual probability flood event, with flood depths up to 0.7m predicted.
- There is a residual risk of flooding at the site in the event of a blockage of the culvert under the A1 and the model outputs show a maximum flood depth of 0.9m in such an event.
- The FRA demonstrates that safe access / egress is available.

We strongly recommend that the mitigation measures proposed in the submitted Flood Risk Assessment (FRA), referenced NS_0178_02 and dated September 2025, are adhered to. In particular, the FRA recommends that:

- A Flood Warning and Evacuation Plan is prepared for the development.
- Routine visual inspection of the culvert and open channel of Cat's Ditch along the northern boundary of Northway service station should be undertaken at least every six months and following any named storm events. Any debris or

fallen trees/branches within the channel or culvert should be promptly removed.

Sequential Test

What is the sequential test, and does it [apply](#) to this application?

In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 174), development in flood risk areas should not be permitted if there are reasonably available alternative sites, appropriate for the proposed development, in areas with a lower risk of flooding. The sequential test establishes if this is the case.

Development is in a flood risk area if it is in Flood Zone 2 or 3, or it is within Flood Zone 1 and your strategic flood risk assessment shows it to be at future flood risk or at risk from other sources of flooding such as surface water or groundwater.

The only developments exempt from the sequential test in flood risk areas are:

- Householder developments such as residential extensions, conservatories, or loft conversions
- Small non-residential extensions with a footprint of less than 250sqm
- Changes of use (except changes of use to a caravan, camping or chalet site, or to a mobile home or park home site)
- Applications for development on sites allocated in the development plan through the sequential test and:
 - the proposed development is consistent with the use for which the site was allocated; and
 - there have been no significant changes to the known level of flood risk to the site, now or in the future, which would have affected the outcome of the test

Avoiding flood risk through the sequential test is the most effective way of addressing flood risk because it places the least reliance on measures such as flood defences, flood warnings and property level resilience.

Who undertakes the sequential test?

It is for you, as the Local Planning Authority, to determine an appropriate area of search and to decide whether the sequential test has been passed, with reference to the information you hold on land availability. You may also ask the applicant to identify any other 'reasonably available' sites which are on the open market and to check on the current status of identified sites to determine if they can be considered 'reasonably available'. Further guidance on the area of search can be found in paragraphs 027-030 of the Planning Practice Guidance [here](#).

What is our role in the sequential test?

We can advise on the relative flood risk between the proposed site and any alternative sites identified - although your strategic flood risk assessment should allow you to do this yourself in most cases. We won't advise on whether alternative sites are reasonably available or whether they would be suitable for the proposed development. We also won't advise on whether there are sustainable development objectives that mean steering the development to any alternative sites would be inappropriate. Further guidance on how to apply the sequential test to site specific applications can be found in the planning practice guidance [here](#)

Flood risk issues not within our direct remit

The following issues are not within our direct remit or expertise, but nevertheless are important considerations for managing flood risk for this development. Prior to deciding this application, we recommend that consideration is given to the issues below. Where necessary, the advice of relevant experts should be sought.

- Adequacy of rescue or evacuation arrangements
- Details and adequacy of an emergency plan
- Provision of and adequacy of a temporary refuge
- Details and adequacy of flood proofing and other building level resistance and resilience measures
- Details and calculations relating to the structural stability of buildings during a flood
- Whether insurance can be gained or not
- Provision of an adequate means of surface water disposal such that flood risk on and off-site isn't increased

Flood warning and emergency response

We do not normally comment on or approve the adequacy of flood emergency response procedures accompanying development proposals, as we do not carry out these roles during a flood. Our involvement with this development during an emergency will be limited to delivering flood warnings to occupants/users covered by our flood warning network. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) states that, in determining whether a development is safe, the ability of residents and users to safely access and exit a building during a design flood and to evacuate before an extreme flood needs to be considered. One of the key considerations to ensure that any new development is safe is whether adequate flood warnings would be available to people using the development.

In all circumstances where warning and emergency response is fundamental to managing flood risk, we advise local planning authorities to formally consider the emergency planning and rescue implications of new development in making their decisions. As such, we recommend you refer to [‘Flood risk emergency plans for new development’](#) and undertake appropriate consultation with your emergency planners and the emergency services to determine whether the proposals are safe in accordance with paragraph 181 of the National Planning Policy Framework and the guiding principles of the PPG.

Flood Risk Activity Permit

The Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 require a permit to be obtained for any activities which will take place:

- on or within 8 metres of a main river (16 metres if tidal)
- on or within 8 metres of a flood defence structure or culvert **including any buried elements** (16 metres if tidal)
- on or within 16 metres of a sea defence
- involving quarrying or excavation within 16 metres of any main river, flood defence (including a remote defence) or culvert

- in a floodplain more than 8 metres from the river bank, culvert or flood defence structure (16 metres if it's a tidal main river) and you don't already have planning permission.

For further guidance please visit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-activities-environmental-permits> or contact our National Customer Contact Centre on 03702 422 549 or by emailing enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk The applicant should not assume that a permit will automatically be forthcoming once planning permission has been granted, and we advise them to consult with us at the earliest opportunity.

Final comments

Thank you for contacting us regarding the above application. Our comments are based on our available records and the information submitted to us. Please quote our reference number in any future correspondence. Please provide us with a copy of the decision notice for our records. This would be greatly appreciated

Yours sincerely,

Mr Kai Mitchell
Sustainable Places Planning Specialist

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