

CAVENDISH

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Statement of Community Involvement

Starwood House, Avenue One Letchworth SG6 2TS

Prepared for Letchworth Investment LLP

April 2025

Contents.

1.	Executive summary.....	3
2.	Summary of consultation.....	4
3.	The Site and local context.....	5
4.	Community engagement.....	7
5.	Review of comments.....	10
6.	Response to comments.....	13
7.	Post-submission engagement.....	14
8.	Conclusion.....	15
9.	Appendices.....	16

1. Executive summary.

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 Letchworth Investment LLP (the Applicant) is bringing forward a full planning application for the erection of two buildings for Flexible Use Classes including Eg (ii) (iii), B2, B8, including servicing, parking, landscaping, access at Starwood House, Avenue One Letchworth SG6 2TS.
- 1.1.2 This Statement of Community Involvement has been produced with the aim of clearly detailing the community consultation in respect of the proposals and includes data and responses received during the public consultation process.
- 1.1.3 The Applicant is committed to consulting with the local community regarding its planning application and communicating with members of the local community, community groups, local councillors and other relevant third-party stakeholders.
- 1.1.4 To assist with the community consultation and communications around the project, the Applicant appointed Cavendish Consulting, a specialist communications agency, to form part of its project team for the proposed development. Cavendish has produced this report to summarise the process that was followed and analyse the feedback received.
- 1.1.5 Engagement with the local community included an online consultation, hosted on a dedicated project website from 2 April to 22 April 2025. The consultation also included targeted engagement with key community and political stakeholders. The Applicant intends to update the website following the submission of the application.
- 1.1.6 Neighbours and stakeholders were given the opportunity to feedback regarding the proposals during the public consultation via several different channels. In addition to the feedback form available on the website, a freephone information line and email address were made available throughout the course of the consultation for interested parties to provide their feedback to the project team. These channels will remain open during the planning process.
- 1.1.7 This report documents the activities, findings and outcomes derived from the consultation process.

2. Summary of consultation.

Process followed

1.

The consultation process for this proposal comprised an online public consultation, including a dedicated website, advertised via a newsletter mailing to the local area. A freephone number and email address enabled residents to get in touch with the project team to ask questions or provide feedback.

2.

Initial engagement began by contacting key local stakeholders, including North Hertfordshire District Council leadership, ward councillors and the MP.

3.

A newsletter was distributed to **172 homes and businesses** who were invited to view the project website and comment on the proposals.

4.

The public consultation was held from **2 April to 22 April 2025**. The project website is available at letchworth.consultationonline.co.uk.

5.

During the consultation, access to a freephone enquiry line and email address was offered to those who wished to find out more about the proposals, or to register their comments via phone or email. The telephone number was in operation for voicemails to be left and responded to at the earliest opportunity to ensure information was readily available and questions or concerns addressed. The email address and freephone number used were detailed in all correspondence distributed to the local community.

3. The Site and local context.

3.1 Site context



Figure 1. Aerial view of the site

- 3.1.1 The site is located in Letchworth Garden City and currently comprises the vacant Starwood House, an industrial building with ancillary office space alongside a large area of hard standing previously used as a car park. It is bordered by Avenue One to the west, Third Avenue to the east, Second Avenue to the south and Stapleton Tyre Services to the north.
- 3.1.2 North Hertfordshire District Council has identified a large portion of the east side of Letchworth Garden City, in which the site lies, as a designated employment area.
- 3.1.3 The Applicant is bringing forward a full planning application comprising:
- Three units across two buildings comprising around 12,333 sqm GEA of flexible employment floorspace, including office space
 - New tree and greenery planting
 - The retention and improvement of the existing access point onto Avenue One
 - The retention and enhancement of the existing boundary trees, with further soft landscaping and planting around the site edges and the entrance of buildings

3.2 Policy context

- 3.2.1 The Applicant has complied with the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) which states that *"early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties."*
- 3.2.2 The NPPF also highlights that *"good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community."*
- 3.2.3 North Hertfordshire District Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (2023) states that *"the council cannot insist on pre-application discussions with applicants, but they are encouraged. Where major schemes are proposed, the council will encourage developers to engage with local interest groups and residents."*
- 3.2.4 The Applicant sought to incorporate these points into its engagement programme. Government guidance and the Council's SCI encourage pre-application discussions and community involvement at an early stage in the design process. Therefore, prior to submitting the formal planning application for the site, the Applicant undertook a programme of community consultation, as outlined in this Statement of Community Involvement.
- 3.2.5 The Applicant has adhered to the guidance provided by the Council and has delivered a comprehensive consultation which has sought to engage with a wide variety of stakeholders.

4. Community engagement.

4.1 Consultation process

- 4.1.1 The consultation process for this proposal comprised an online public consultation, including a dedicated project website. This was advertised via a newsletter mailing to the local area.
- 4.1.2 The virtual public consultation took place between 2 and 22 April 2025.

4.2 Stakeholder engagement

- 4.2.1 The Applicant has been committed to engaging with stakeholders through the pre-application consultation process.
- 4.2.2 Key political stakeholders were contacted via email with personal invites to meet the project team to discuss the proposals and answer any questions they may have.
- 4.2.3 Below are the stakeholders identified during the consultation process who were invited to the public exhibition:

Position / Organisation	Stakeholder
Leader of the Council & Interim Executive Member for Planning and Transport	Cllr Daniel Allen
Deputy Leader of the Council & Interim Executive Member for Community / Partnership	Cllr Val Bryant
Letchworth South East ward member	Cllr Sadie Billing
Letchworth South East ward member	Cllr Mick Debenham
Letchworth South East ward member	Cllr Tamsin Thomas
Baldock and Letchworth East division member	Cllr Michael Muir
Member of Parliament for North East Hertfordshire	Chris Hinchliff MP

Third-party group	Hertfordshire Futures
Third-party group	Hertfordshire Growth Board
Third-party group	Letchworth Garden City Society

4.2.4 Letchworth Garden City Society replied that it *“does not feel the need to make a formal response, although [they] are pleased that the site is being used at long last.”*

4.2.5 Contact will remain open with all stakeholders throughout the determination process.

4.3 Consultation website

4.3.1 A website was set up displaying about the proposals and is being updated throughout the public consultation and planning process. A copy of the website content can be found at Appendix C.

4.3.2 The website is hosted at letchworth.consultationonline.co.uk virtual exhibition with a feedback form between 2 and 22 April 2025.

4.3.3 The purpose of this website was to enable the local community to explore the Applicant’s proposals in detail and respond to them with their views, comments and suggestions.

4.3.4 The website address was printed on the invitation letter and relevant correspondence. The website includes the following tabs:

- Home page
- About us
- The site
- Masterplan
- Supporting Good Growth
- Design & Materiality
- Sustainability
- Access and transport
- Key benefits
- Have your say

4.3.5 Screenshots of the website can be found in Appendix C.

4.4 Invitation letter

4.4.1 An invitation letter was distributed via Royal Mail to 172 homes and businesses around the proposal site. The addresses to which the letters were sent were chosen due to their proximity to the site.

4.4.2 The invite letter contained the following information:

- Overview of the proposals for the site

- Information about the online consultation and how to provide feedback
- Contact details including the website, consultation email address and freephone enquiry line

4.4.3 A copy of the distribution area and the invite letter can be found in Appendix A and B respectively.

4.5 Feedback form

4.5.1 A feedback form was available online as part of the consultation website.

4.5.2 The feedback form comprised a range of questions designed to provide the Applicant with constructive feedback from the community on the proposals.

4.5.3 Over the course of the consultation, two feedback forms were submitted.

4.6 Freephone and email

4.6.1 Local residents and stakeholders could provide feedback or ask questions about the proposals by calling the project freephone line or emailing the project email address.

4.6.2 The freephone number and email address were detailed on the invitation letter and consultation website.

5. Review of comments.

5.1 Feedback received.

5.1.1 Two feedback forms were submitted during the public consultation.

1. Do you agree that the site is in need of investment and modernisation?



■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Oppose ■ Strongly oppose ■ Neutral

2. Do you agree that there is a need for new flexible employment space to support local jobs in this part of Letchworth?



■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Oppose ■ Strongly oppose ■ Neutral

3. Do you support the proposed design and layout of the new buildings?



■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Oppose ■ Strongly oppose ■ Neutral

Comments:

This industrial development looks very positive from eco viewpoint. It includes zero carbon / green roofs / solar panels/ ashps / 20% car charging / cycle sheds etc embedded in the proposal. It is even adding a green margin around the plot. And this is for an industrial site!!

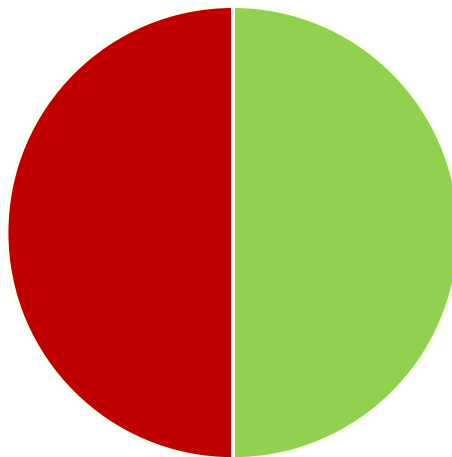
However, there is one number missing from the proposals, ie the number of parking spaces for employees and the factory vehicles. There is an ever-increasing parking problem in Avenue One and Avenue 2 etc. Already, some of these roads become single lanes due to over parking of both workers and factory vehicles.

The proposal includes electrical charging points at 20% of the parking spaces – that's good.

However, it also implies an inadequate number of on-site parking places. Between 200 to 320 employees are indicated which implies a parking need of 50 to 100 parking spaces plus the factory vehicles. This in turn implies there will be 10 to 20 or more charging points ie 20%. Will this site be able to power this number of charging points?

Before commending this proposal the optimum number of parking spaces should be established and made commensurate with the likely demand.

4. Do you support the proposed sustainable travel measures?



■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Oppose ■ Strongly oppose ■ Neutral

Comments:

See comments to Q3

Avenue One only has islands to help pedestrians cross at the roundabouts at either end. Employees walking to the new units would benefit from an island 'in the middle' of Avenue One and another at the junction of Second Avenue with Avenue One.

5. Do you have any further comments or questions regarding the proposals?

Comments:

Apart from the car parking issue it looks an excellent proposal.

6. Response to comments.

6.1 Applicant's responses to feedback received

Feedback received	Applicant's response
The number of car parking spaces is inadequate. There should be 50 to 100 parking spaces.	The proposals include 106 car parking spaces, based on a ratio of 1 parking space per 11m² of floorspace. The parking provision is in line with commercial standards and North Hertfordshire District Council planning policy. The application is accompanied by a Transport Strategy which provides further details on the proposed parking provision.

7. Post-submission engagement.

7.1 Ongoing engagement

- 7.1.1 The Applicant commits to ongoing dialogue with stakeholders and the local community with respect to these proposals. Stakeholders will be notified upon the submission and validation of the application.
- 7.1.2 Following submission, the consultation website will be updated to reflect the submitted scheme and a link to the application on the North Hertfordshire District Council planning portal so that local residents and stakeholders can easily participate in the Council's own consultation process.
- 7.1.3 The project team remains contactable via the details used during the public consultation.

8. Conclusion.

8.1 Concluding statement

- 8.1.1 Over the public consultation period, several opportunities were provided for local residents, businesses, and stakeholders to inform the Applicant's proposals, ask questions, provide feedback, voice concerns and have discussions with the project team.
- 8.1.2 Opportunities to provide feedback and engage with the project team were available online, by phone and by email.
- 8.1.3 Throughout the pre-application period, the Applicant has worked closely with North Hertfordshire District Council to ensure key officers and councillors are made aware of the proposed development, key consultation activities and outcomes to develop a holistic proposal which is of high quality and delivers significant benefits to the local community.
- 8.1.4 The Applicant would like to thank all members of the local community and others who have taken the time to participate in the consultation, ask questions and provide feedback. The Applicant will continue to engage with the local authority, local stakeholders, and surrounding community post-submission.

6.1.1

9. Appendices.

Appendix A – Distribution area



Appendix B – Invite Letter



2 April 2025

Information line: 0800 298 7040

Dear neighbour,

Proposals for the regeneration of land at Starwood House, Avenue One, Letchworth

I am writing on behalf of Wrenbridge in relation to the proposed regeneration of land at Starwood House, Avenue One, Letchworth. Wrenbridge is a leading UK property company founded in 1993, that has been successfully developing and investing in properties across the UK for over 30 years.

The Starwood House site is a tired, unfriendly and vacant industrial site in need of regeneration within the primary industrial area of Letchworth. Our proposals comprise the demolition of the existing building and the site's holistic redevelopment to create three new industrial warehouse units.

The redevelopment will provide high-quality flexible floorspace in a sustainable location, which has the potential for a range of uses, including light industrial, manufacturing and storage and distribution.

These innovative buildings will provide a range of jobs to local people and allow Letchworth to retain the important businesses that support the city's economy. Our proposed regeneration of the site will equally benefit the surrounding community and area, with a focus on encouraging sustainable transport and creating new jobs for local people.

Get involved in our virtual public consultation

We are hosting a virtual public consultation on our proposals to regenerate the site and are committed to engaging with the local community and stakeholders on our plans. The virtual exhibition will be open for comments via our project website to allow you to explore our plans in detail and respond to them with your views, comments and suggestions. The virtual public exhibition will be open for comments:

At: www.lechworth.consultationonline.co.uk

Between: **2 April 2025 – 22 April 2025**

You can leave feedback by:

- Submitting the feedback form on our project website
- Emailing our project team via feedback@consultation-online.co.uk with comments or questions
- Calling our freephone information line on 0800 298 7040 and leaving a message, and a member of our team will call you back.

We are keen to hear your thoughts on the proposals to regenerate this important site before we submit a planning application to North Hertfordshire District Council.

Wrenbridge is keen to ensure that as many members of the local community as possible are able to engage with our public consultation. If you do not have internet access, please contact us via our freephone information line – **0800 298 7040** – and a member of our project team will post the exhibition materials and a feedback form out to you, enabling you to view and comment on our draft plans.

If you have any questions or would like to give your feedback by email, post or telephone, please do get in touch by email on feedback@consultation-online.co.uk or contact us by phone at **0800 298 7040**.

Yours faithfully,

Hannah Anderson-Jones
On behalf of Wrenbridge

Wrenbridge, Mill House, Mill Court, Great Shelford, Cambridge, CB22 5LD
Wrenbridge Limited Register company number: 08774721

www.wrenbridge.co.uk

Appendix C – Consultation website

 WRENBRIDGE

Home About Us The Site Masterplan Have your say



Welcome

Wrenbridge is bringing forward proposals to regenerate land at Avenue One, Letchworth to provide a new, innovative and sustainable employment site.

Before submitting a planning application, we are keen to hear the thoughts of the local community.

Once you have had an opportunity to review our exhibition, we encourage you to provide us with your feedback on our proposals using the 'Have your say' on this website. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask us using the contact details provided.

Contact us

If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact the team at:

 0800 298 7040

 feedback@consultation-online.co.uk

Who are we?

Wrenbridge

Wrenbridge is a leading UK property company founded in 1993. The company has been successfully developing and investing in properties across the UK for over 30 years. Geographically, our emphasis is on London, East Anglia, and the South East. Wrenbridge's offices are located in Cambridge and London. The company has 30 different assets with a completed end value in excess of £1bn. Projects range across all sectors with a number of warehouse and industrial led projects around London and the South East. Currently, Wrenbridge have a development pipeline in excess of 1m sq ft of industrial and logistics developments. Wrenbridge prides itself on the design and build quality of its projects which are valued by their tenants, partners and neighbours. Wrenbridge's projects stand the test of time and have won numerous design and industry awards, including recently developing the first and only scheme to ever achieve a 100% BREEAM rating in the UK.

Wrenbridge's philosophy revolves around never letting people down, working hard and having fun. This enables us to maintain the reputation we have developed in the UK property market. Wrenbridge have a track record of working in partnership with occupiers, institutions and public sector bodies. Partners include Fiera Real Estate, Duke of Buccleuch, M&G Real Estate, LaSalle Investment Management, Railpen, Grosvenor, Legal & General, Morgan Stanley, Bridges Fund Management, Harlow Council and City of York Council. Wrenbridge take adding positively to the built environment with sustainable development very seriously in all of its projects and works very closely with its design team and stakeholders to bring forward projects that are both viable and sustainable to create modern high-quality next generation development. On this scheme, Wrenbridge have partnered with Bridges Fund Management. This is the fifth scheme that the joint venture has brought forward in the past few years.

Bridges

Bridges Fund Management invests in the transition to a more inclusive and sustainable economy. Its specialist property funds invest opportunistically in growth locations and sectors that are well-placed to benefit from changing demographics and societal needs, driving value through physical and operational improvements. Bridges is also a market-leader in implementing sustainability features that reduce costs, improve valuations and future-proof real estate assets.



The site currently comprises of the vacant Starwood House, which is an industrial building with ancillary office space in a poor state of disrepair. The building was formerly a data centre, owned by Tesco. The site also includes a large area of hard-standing, which was previously used as a car park.

The site is located on the eastern side of Letchworth within the designated industrial area, and is bound to the west by Avenue One, which also serves as the access point, to the east by Third Avenue, to the south by Second Avenue, and to the north by Stapleton Tyre Services.

The area is well serviced, with bus stops on Avenue One as well as the adjacent Third Avenue and Fourth Avenue with a service providing connectivity to Letchworth train station, just over a mile away. There are also excellent shared cycle and pedestrian footpaths around the site, which connect to the wider network into Letchworth town centre and the train station, making the site highly sustainable for travel.

There is also excellent connectivity to the A10M, enabling wider business connectivity to London, Luton, Stansted and beyond.

Our proposals for the regeneration of this site would see the demolition of the existing, tired building and its replacement with three new units that better meet market requirements.



The North Hertfordshire District Council Local Plan 2011 – 2031 notes that "Letchworth Garden City plays a significant role in the District's economy, with a major employment area centred on Works Road and Avenue One." It also notes that within the defined employment areas (including Letchworth Garden City), development will be supported for office, research and development, industrial processed, industrial, storage and distribution uses, in order to maintain an adequate level of employment land.



Masterplan

Wrenbridge is proposing the demolition of the existing Starwood House building and the erection of new high-quality industrial warehouse units to provide best-in-class flexible floorspace for a variety of key industries in Letchworth.

Our proposals include:

	Three units across two buildings comprising around 12,333 sqm of flexible employment floorspace, including office space, suitable for a range of employers
	New tree and greenery planting
	New sustainability measures on-site including photovoltaic panels, electric vehicle charging and new cycle parking with green roofs to create additional habitats on-site
	The retention and improvement of the existing access point onto Avenue One
	The retention and enhancement of the existing boundary trees, with further soft landscaping and planting around the site edges and the entrance of buildings



Supporting good growth

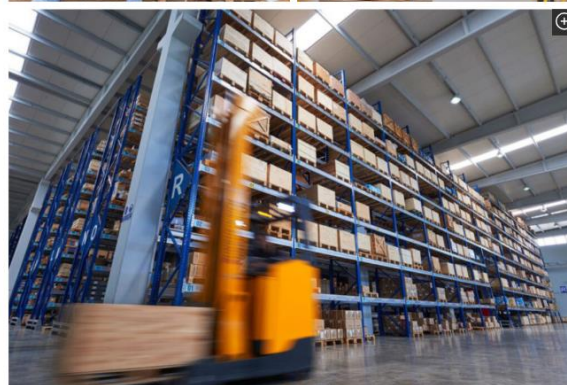
The proposed buildings are designed to have the flexibility to accommodate a range of uses for a variety of industries. This will enable many of the important businesses in Letchworth that are key to its economy to remain in the area rather than move outside of the city to find the floorspace they need for their operations.

Our proposals will create approximately 120-320 long-term jobs, depending on the future uses of the buildings. The wide range of potential uses means that these jobs will be suitable to all skill levels, creating employment opportunities for local people of all backgrounds.

By regenerating an existing industrial site, we can increase the amount of floorspace without taking away any from residential, office or leisure spaces, all of which are equally important in supporting Letchworth's growth.

The buildings will provide a diverse array of spaces for employers, including:

- Light industrial
- Manufacturing
- Storage and distribution



Design and materiality

Our proposed regeneration of the site at Avenue One will transform the site into a modern and innovative employment hub.

Design

The proposed new buildings have been designed in line with the other industrial buildings seen in the area, comprising predominantly of an open Warehouse space with a curved roof profile, with some open plan office space and first-floor level.

This creates visual interest and will meet a range of needs for small and medium sized businesses within the light industrial, manufacturing, storage and distribution sectors.

Materials

The proposed new buildings will feature materials to create a high-quality finish and contemporary appearance, with large areas of glazing, profiled metal cladding to add texture and variation as well as ribbed panel cladding.

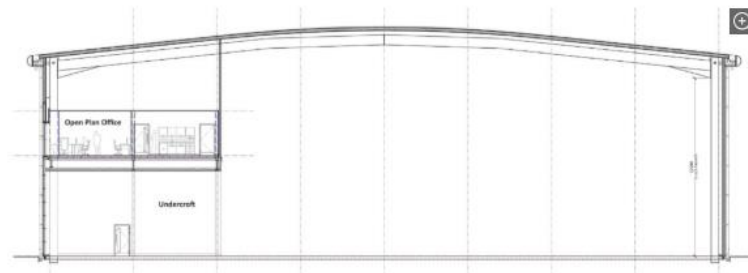
The entrances to the new offices areas for the buildings have been distinguished using contrasting materials (glazing and ribbed cladding) to create an active focal point for the buildings and provide separation with the wider warehouse.

The choice of material palette has also been driven by enabling the construction of panels off-site, to minimise the impact on the surrounding area and to speed up the construction process.

The panel system allows for greater flexibility for future occupiers to adapt to their needs, improving the longevity and reuse of these new buildings in the future.

Scale

The proposed new buildings will meet the typical height requirements for the industry standard for these buildings, with the internal height around 12 metres and the external ridge height at a maximum of around 15 metres. This will sit comfortably within the existing surrounding industrial units, creating a stepped effect between the Stapletons Tyre Services building to the north and the units to the south in Second Avenue.



Sustainability

Wrenbridge is committed to sustainable regeneration. We will ensure that the buildings have a low carbon footprint by using modern materials and state of the art technology.

To ensure that our buildings operate as sustainably as possible, we are proposing:



Carbon Net Zero in operation



Efficient insulation



PV panels on building roofs



Maximising natural daylighting



Energy efficient lighting



Targeting BREEAM 'Excellent' with aspirations to achieve BREEAM 'Outstanding' (this is the Building Research Establishment's method of assessing, rating and certifying a building's environmental sustainability)



Air source heat pumps



Cycle storage spaces with green roofs



Targeting EPC Rating 'A+' (an Energy Performance Certificate is the Government's measure of how energy efficient a property is)



Electric car charging points to 20% of all spaces, with provision for the remaining 80% to install further points on demand

Wrenbridge's commitment to sustainability is demonstrated by achieving high BREEAM and EPC ratings across its modern portfolio including recently becoming the first developer to ever achieve a 100% BREEAM rating.



Access and transport

Our proposals will create a safe and sustainable transport experience for employees and the wider community.

Sustainable transport

Our proposals will encourage users of the site to use sustainable modes of transport. The site is highly accessible on foot, by cycle and by bus, with Letchworth Garden City Railway Station providing wider accessibility. These provide extensive opportunities for sustainable travel to and from the site for visitors and employees.

A new link will be created from the site to Third Avenue to improve pedestrian connections from the site to nearby bus stops and through to the nearby shops located within Plinston Retail Park.

To further encourage sustainable travel to the site, the proposed buildings will have secure, covered cycle parking, in close proximity to the building entrances. Showers and changing facilities will also be provided. To maximise accessibility, the new internal routes throughout the site and into the main entrances of the buildings will be step-free. The external pavements will be a minimum of 1.5 metres wide, with dropped kerbs and tactile paving to provide assistance to those with reduced mobility and visual impairments

Access and traffic

The existing site access from Avenue One will be retained and improved to provide vehicle access for all users of each building. The internal layout has been designed to ensure that HGVs can enter, turn around and exit in forward gear to maximise road safety.

A total of 106 parking spaces are proposed with 5% provided as blue badge spaces, in line with North Hertfordshire District Council Car Parking standards. All parking spaces will be electric vehicle charging ready, with 20% of spaces having active electric car charging provision and the remaining 80% able to install further points on demand.

Dedicated car sharing bays will be provided close to the building's main entrances to encourage commuters to travel together.



Regenerating the industrial site for Letchworth.



Creating much-needed modern employment floorspace for Letchworth.



Providing approximately 120-320 new jobs for local people.



Improving operational carbon levels and sustainability.



Encouraging sustainable travel with cycle and pedestrian facilities.



Positive contributions to the local streetscape.



New greenery and tree planting, with a net gain in biodiversity.

Wrenbridge would like to thank you for visiting our virtual public exhibition on our proposals for Avenue One, Letchworth.

The project team hopes that you found these consultation materials informative. We welcome your feedback and encourage you to share your views on our proposals. You can do so by completing a feedback form at our exhibition or on our website. Once the consultation period has closed on **22 April 2025**, we will review all feedback received and take this into consideration before we submit a planning application to North Hertfordshire District Council later this month.

- **April 2025** - Consultation
- **Spring 2025** - Application submitted
- **Autumn 2025** - Planning committee
- **Winter 2025** - Construction starts

Contact the team



0800 298 7040



feedback@consultation-online.co.uk

Step 1 of 8

12%

Privacy Statement

By filling in this form you are agreeing that Cavendish Consulting ("Cavendish") can hold and process your personal data in relation to this public consultation exercise. Cavendish will only share your personal data with the project team for planning evaluation purposes. Your identifiable, personal data will not be used for any other purposes without your consent. Cavendish and the project team will use your data to:

- Send you updates about the project (where you provide us with your contact details).
- Develop a Statement of Community Involvement (or similar document) about this public consultation that will be submitted to the planning authority or similar body; this will be a publicly available document. Your comments will be anonymous, and we will only identify you in these reports with your express permission.

If you provide us with your contact details, we might also contact you to ask more about the comments you've made.

Cavendish acts on behalf of Wrenbridge to run public consultation activities.

NEXT

CAVENDISH