

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Tabitha Kaye.....

**APPLICATION
REFERENCE**

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF
DEVELOPMENT**

APPLICATION SITE

26/01918/PIP

Erection of two dwellings

Land Adjacent To 48

Hitchin Road

Weston

Hertfordshire

Submitted Plan Nos

PL02B PL03C PL11A PL01C PL21

1.0 Policies

SECN5

Meeting the challenge of Climate Change

SECN13	Protecting Green Belt Land
SECN14	Achieving well-designed places
SP2	Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Distrib
SP5	Countryside and Green Belt
D1	Sustainable design

2.0 **Relevant Site History**

- 2.1 **23/01698/FP:** Erection of one detached 4-bed dwelling to include garage in basement, landscaping and creation of vehicular access onto Hitchin Road. **Refused.**
- 2.2 **23/00949/FP:** Erection of one detached 4-bed dwelling to include garage in basement, landscaping and creation of vehicular access onto Hitchin Road. **Refused.**
- 2.3 **05/01596/1:** Outline Planning Permission for one dwelling (all matters reserved). **Refused.**

3.0 **Representations**

- 3.1 **Neighbour Consultation** – 1no. comment received in objection, including: 48 Hitchin Road. Comments supported reasons provided by Weston Parish Council.
- 3.2 **Weston Parish Council** – Objection – no objection in principle but would not support the part of the development which is within the Green Belt.
- 3.3 **Ward Cllr** – No comments received - Under the present scheme of delegation, the application was referred to the Ward Cllr following the Parish Council objection. No response was received from the Ward Cllr during the five working day period.

- 3.4 **NHC Environmental Health** – No concerns regarding local air quality, land contamination or noise/other nuisances. A subsequent Technical Details application should include a phased land contamination assessment and details of 1no. EV charging point per dwelling.
- 3.5 **Highways** – No objection. Details of access to be assessed as part of a subsequent Technical Details application.
- 3.6 **Waste and Recycling** – No comments received.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

- 4.1.1 The application site is situated between Longmeadow and no.48 Hitchin Road, Weston. Presently, the plot forms part of Longmeadow's residential curtilage and features several outbuildings.
- 4.1.2 The vast majority of the site is brushed over by the Green Belt, aside from a parcel of land to the south which is included within the Weston settlement boundary. Policy SP2 of the North Herts Local Plan 2011-2031 (NHLP) identifies Weston as a 'Category A' village. The site is adjacent to the WE1 land allocation, 'Land off Hitchin Road'.

4.2 **Proposal**

- 4.2.1 Erection of two dwellings.

4.3 **Key Issues**

- 4.3.1 Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) explains that permission in principle is an alternative way of obtaining planning permission for housing led development as part of a two-stage procedure. Permission in principle applications involve two stages. Stage 1 ('permission in principle stage'), is limited to the consideration of location, land use and the amount of development which, in the event of an approval, would leave the remaining matters to be considered in a technical detail application (Stage 2) (i.e. the 'technical details consent').
- 4.3.2 Therefore, the key issues for consideration are as follows: location, land use, and amount of development.

Location and Land Use

- 4.3.3 An indicative site plan has been provided, showing the provision of 2no. detached dwellings in a plot of land between Longmeadow and no.48 Hitchin Road, Weston. The

vast majority of the site is brushed over by the Green Belt, aside from a small parcel of land to the south which is included within the Weston settlement boundary. Policy SP2 of the NHLP identifies Weston as a 'Category A' village, where development is generally acceptable within the Weston settlement boundary. Given that the southerly positioned dwelling would be largely within the Weston settlement boundary, Policy SP2 remains as an important consideration. However, given that the majority of the site is within the Green Belt, assessing the appropriateness of the proposed development in the Green Belt forms the main policy consideration.

- 4.3.4 Policy SP5 of the North Herts Local Plan 2011-2031 (NHLP) states that development proposals in the Green Belt will only be permitted where they would not result in inappropriate development, or where very special circumstances have been demonstrated. Policy SP5 of the NHLP is commensurate with Policy GB7 of Chapter 13 of the NPPF 2026, which states that development within the Green Belt is inappropriate unless it falls within one of the exemptions, including:

g. Development where all of the following apply:

i. The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan;

ii. There is an evidenced unmet need for the type of development proposed;

iii. The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to policy TR3 of this Framework; and

iv. In the case of major development involving the provision of housing, the development proposed complies with policy GB8. (not applicable for this application).

Grey Belt Assessment

- 4.3.5 Grey Belt land is defined in NPPF 2026 glossary as:

Land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in policy GB2.

Previously developed land (PDL) is defined in the NPPF 2026 glossary as:

*Land which has been lawfully developed and is or was **occupied by a permanent structure** and any fixed surface infrastructure associated with it, **including the curtilage of the developed land** (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed). (my emphasis).*

The site currently forms part of the residential curtilage of Longmeadow, and features existing, permanent outbuilding structures. I therefore consider that the site is commensurate with the NPPF 2026 definition of PDL and, subsequently, the definition of Grey Belt land.

- 4.3.6 Policy GB7, paragraph (g)(i) of the NPPF requires a site to both “utilise grey belt land”, and “not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan”. The five purposes of the Green Belt are outlined by Policy GB2 of the NPPF:

- a. Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- b. Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
- c. Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
- d. Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
- e. Assist urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.*

The proposed site would be contained within the parcel of land between Longmeadow and no.48 Hitchin Rd to avoid encroachment into the countryside and the merging of settlements, as to satisfy (a)-(c). Weston is identified by Policy SP2 of the NHLP as a village, meaning that (d) is not applicable. The site is presently residential land, meaning that (e) is not applicable. Taken together, the proposal would not undermine the purposes of the remaining Green Belt.

Evidenced Unmet Need for Development

- 4.3.7 Policy GB7, paragraph (g)(ii) of the NPPF states that there must be “an evidenced unmet need for the type of development proposed.” Footnote 41 clarifies that, in the case of housing provision, an unmet need can constitute “the lack of a five year supply of deliverable housing sites ... or where the Housing Delivery Test result was below 75% of the housing requirement over the previous three years.”
- 4.3.8 North Hertfordshire District Council, as of August 2026, cannot evidence a five year supply of deliverable housing sites. Therefore, an unmet need for housing development has been evidenced in accordance with GB7 (g)(ii).

Sustainable Location

- 4.3.9 Policy GB7, paragraph (g)(iii) of the NPPF states that “the development would be in a sustainable location”. Policy SP2 of the NHLP identifies Weston as a ‘Category A’ village, and the site would be situated adjacent to the Local Plan land allocation WE1, ‘Land off Hitchin Road’. As such, the location is considered to be generally sustainable. The land immediately opposite the proposed access does not feature a footpath. However, a footpath is within close proximity to the site access, allowing for feasible access to village amenities. HCC Highways have raised no sustainability concerns.

Amount of Development

- 4.3.11 The indicative site plan shows 2no. dwellings, accessed from Hitchin Road. The dwellings are shown to benefit from driveways with front parking provision and rear amenity space. Given the well-proportioned plots of the indicative plan, the development would not result in over-development of the site.

Other Matters

- 4.3.12 Matters such as noise assessments, vehicular and pedestrian access, parking, scale, design and appearance, landscaping, relationship with neighbours and environmental matters such as land contamination, flood risk and ecological issues will be considered at the technical details stage should permission in principle be granted.

Procedural Matters

- 4.3.13 The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities sets out guidance (Gov.uk) on what is required in the determination of a 'permission in principle' application. No conditions can be attached to the grant of permission only confirmation of site location, the type of development and the amount of amount development (Paragraph: 020 Reference ID: 58-020-20180615).
- 4.3.14 The default duration of a permission in principle is 3 years therefore there is no requirement to specify the time limit (Paragraph: 014 Reference ID: 58-014-20180615).
- 4.3.15 Local Planning Authorities can inform applicants at what they expect to see at the technical details stage (Paragraph: 045 Reference ID: 58-045-20180615). It is recommended that this can be done by attaching an informative to the grant of permission in principle. In this case the following matters would be expected to form part of a technical details consent application:
- Scaled drawings showing all floor plans and elevations and slab levels of the proposed dwellings
 - External materials and details of hard and soft landscaping including boundary treatment
 - Preliminary Risk Assessment concerning land contamination
 - Noise Impact assessment and if necessary, details of mitigation
 - Provision of electric vehicle re-charging infrastructure
 - Pedestrian and vehicular visibility splays
 - Vehicle tracking to demonstrate safe and usable parking spaces
 - Construction management statement
 - Cycle parking
 - Drainage details
 - Details of refuse and recycling provision
 - BNG

4.4 **Conclusion**

4.4.1 In the absence of material planning reasons to the contrary it is my view that planning permission is **GRANTED**.

4.5 **Alternative Options**

4.5.1 None applicable.

5.0 **Recommendation**

5.1 That planning permission be **GRANTED**

Proactive Statement:

Planning permission has been granted for this proposal. Discussion with the applicant to seek an acceptable solution was not necessary in this instance. The Council has therefore acted proactively in line with the requirements of the Framework (paragraph 38) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Signed <i>S. Kasparian</i> Sarah Kasparian Determining Officer	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Date: 17 September 2026	