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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: 25/02064/OP
HCC ref: NH/26487/2025
HCC received: 8 January 2026
Area manager: Manjinder Sehmi
Case officer: Samuel Tearle

Location

Land Adjacent To 10, Hambridge Way, Pirton, Hertfordshire,

Application type

Outline

Proposal

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Outline Application : Erection of up to 50 dwellings including affordable housing, together with amenity space, landscaping and all associated infrastructure and works (all matters reserved except means of access).

Recommendation

Notice is given under article 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 that Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority recommends wishes to raise an objection until the following amendments are made:

- Update submitted drawing Drawing PL03 Rev A.
- Confirm S106 request to offset the impact of the application and support sustainable transport options for future residents.

Once the above details are submitted and found to be satisfactory, the Highway Authority will be in a position to raise no objection.

COMMENTS / ANALYSIS

Background

HCC previously responded to the planning application, dated 10th October 2025, highlighting that further information was required for the following:

- Undertake an audit of the suitability of footways, cycleways, and public transport;
- Spatial analysis of available local facilities and amenities and their accessibility from the site by walk, cycling and public transport;
- Provide PRow connection designs;
- Provide a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit;
- Provide swept path analysis; and
- Revisit the trip generation and inclusion of modal share.

The Applicant has submitted additional technical evidence, drawings and supporting assessments to address the matters previously raised by the Highway Authority. The list of documents provided by the Applicant of interest to the Highway Authority is as follows:

- Technical Note - Response to Highways Comment (Ref. 2210-050/TN/01) - November 2025).
- Road Safety Audit-1 Report (Appendix F, Technical Note).
- Swept Path Analysis of:
 - Large car- site access arrangement (Drawing ref: 2210-050 SP02).
 - 11.20m refuse collection vehicle-Site Access (Drawing ref: 2210-050 SP01).
 - 11.20m refuse collection vehicle-Hambidge Way (Drawing ref: 2210-050 SP04).
 - Fire Tender vehicle – Emergency Access (Drawing ref: 2210-050 SP03).
 - Fire Tender vehicle-Hambidge Way (Drawing ref: 2210-050 SP05).
- Personal Injury Collisions (Document ref: Appendix E, Technical Note).
- Revised TRICS Assessments (Document ref: Appendix C, Technical Note).
- Walking Isochrone Plan (Drawing ref: 2210-050 Fig 2.1).
- Cycle isochrone Plan (Drawing ref: 2210-050 Fig 2.2).
- Proposed Access Road Extension (Drawing ref: 2210-050 PL01 Rev A).
- Proposed Hambidge Way Emergency Access layout (Drawing ref: 2210-050 PL02).
- Proposed Pedestrian and Cycle Access (Drawing ref: 2210-050 PL04).

The new submission has been reviewed below.

Policy Review

The Applicant has provided an updated policy review in response to HCC's comments in October 2025. The following policy documents have been reviewed:

- National Planning Policy Framework (Dec 2024);
- Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan 4;
- North Hertfordshire Local Plan (2011–2031);
- Cycle Infrastructure Design (LTN 1/20);
- Inclusive Mobility (2021);
- HCC Place & Movement Design Guide; and
- Developer Infrastructure Contributions Guidance (2021).

The TN states that the internal road network will be determined at detailed design stage, which is accepted, and HCC would reiterate that the Applicant reviews the relevant policy documents, particularly the HCC Place & Movement Design Guide, when developing the internal layout.

Trip Impact

Trip Generation

The Highway Authority previously noted inconsistencies in the trip rates provided within the submitted Transport Assessment (TA) and recommended that Friday sites are excluded and the assessment include people trips and base modal share.

The Applicant has confirmed that the inconsistency is due to the naming convention being incorrect in the TA because the derived PM peak hour is 17:45-18:45 (the AM peak is 08:00 – 09:00). The Applicant has confirmed that in order to calculate the PM peak hour, which is not a standard hour, the trip rate for 17:00 has been divided by 4 to obtain a 15-minute trip rate and the 18:00-19:00 trip rate has also been divided by 4 and then multiplied by 3 to obtain a 45-minute trip rate. The two trip rates have been added together to obtain the rate of 17:45-18:45, as presented in the TA at Table 5.1 and Table 5.2

In addition, the Applicant has derived Total People trip rates using the TRICS database and utilised modal split based on Census 2011 MSOA 014, excluding Friday surveys from the TRICS assessment.

The Highway Authority considers the updated trip generation to now be suitable and mitigation to ensure a vision led sustainable development is provided as per the NPPF have been set out in the planning obligations section below.

Committed / Future development

The Applicant has undertaken a further review of HCC's planning portal. A planning application for 130 residential dwellings located to the north of the site with access from Holwell Road (Planning Ref: 25/01696/OP) has been submitted. The TN states that the site is yet to receive planning permission and has been excluded from the committed development flows, with committed development to remain as included in TEMPro background growth factors.

Whilst the Highway Authority would disagree with this comment, the Highway Authority are satisfied the proposals can be mitigated with the principle of the S278 works to enhance active travel connectivity and have also the required planning obligations as set out below.

Design Considerations

Pedestrian and Cycle Access

The Applicant has provided additional information, in response to HCCs comments in October 2025, in relation to pedestrian and cyclist accessibility. The TN includes a Walking Isochrone Plan (Drawing No. 2210-050 Fig 2.1, Rev -, dated November 2025), illustrating the key facilities within walking distance of the proposed development. This includes bus stops on Royal Oak Lane, Pirton Primary School and the local shop are located within 400m, 800m, and 1200m walking distances from the site.

A Cycling Isochrone Plan (Drawing No. 2210-050 Fig 2.2, Rev -, dated November 2025) has also been provided, demonstrating that Hitchin fall within a 20-minute cycle catchment with connections available via local roads and Bridleway 21, which forms part of the Icknield Way Cycle Trail.

The Highway Authority welcome the active travel connections as indicatively shown on submitted drawing PL04.

Mitigation to ensure the active travel network to Hitchin, where most amenities and facilities are located, has been set out in the planning obligations section below.

Vehicle Access

In response to the comments provided by HCC in the October 2025 review, which highlighted that the proposed site access does not comply with HCC Place and Movement guidance. The proposed vehicular access, from Cotman End, has been revised to HCC's Place and Movement guidance P2/M1 typology, with 5.5m carriageway and 2m footways and includes a controlled single lane

priority narrowing to give pedestrians priority across PRow footpath 5, as outlined on the Proposed Access Road Extension (Drawing ref: 2210-050 PL01 Rev A), which also provides dropped kerbs and tactile paving.

In addition, the Applicant proposes an emergency vehicle access onto Hambridge Way, approximately 30m east of the Elm Tree Farm Close access. The emergency vehicle access will be approximately 4.5m wide and include bollards to stop day-to-day vehicular access by local residents. The Highway Authority is satisfied with the vehicle access arrangements, noting that the Applicant should make sure that the access remains obstruction free (any tree / hedgerow vegetation / landscape proposals should not obstruct the visibility of the driver at the Cotman End / Walnut Tree Road junction and also at the main site access road extension). Measures to prevent surface water runoff onto the public highway will need to be demonstrated during detailed design stage.

Swept Path Assessment

In response to comments provided by HCC in the October 2025 comments, the Applicant has provided swept path analysis plans of a 5.079m large car, 11m refuse collection vehicle and 10.1m fire appliance using the proposed site access. The drawings included in the TN are:

- Large car - tracked on Drawing No. 2210-050 SP02, Rev -, dated 17.11.2025.
- Refuse vehicle – tracked on Drawing No. 2210-050 SP01, Rev -, dated 17.11.2025.
- Fire Tender – tracked on Drawing No. 2210 SP03, Rev -, dated 18.11.2025.

The swept path plans demonstrate that all vehicles likely to utilise the proposed site access, which includes the narrowing at the entrance, can comfortably access the site.

In addition, a swept path assessment has been carried out for a fire tender using the emergency access from Hambridge Way, which is provided on Drawing No. 2210 SP03, Rev -, dated 18.11.2025. HCC note that further work will be required at detailed design stage but are comfortable with the information presented that emergency vehicles can use the access point.

Within the TN, the Applicant states that all matters regarding internal layout will be addressed at the detailed design stage. HCC are in agreement with this comment.

The Highway Authority is satisfied that the applicant has demonstrated the suitability of the access arrangements for refuse collection vehicles.

Road Safety Audit

The Applicant has submitted a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit (RSA) (Ref: AC/TPA/1711251, dated 17/11/2025 produced by Alpha Consultants) including a Designers Response (Ref: 2210-050/DR/01, dated 18/11/2025 produced by Transport Planning Associates). The Audit has considered the following proposals:

- Proposed works on Cotman End, including provision of the main site access and pedestrian crossing point/priority narrowing.
- Proposed Emergency Access on Hambridge Way (to be utilised as pedestrian/cycle access at all other times).
- Proposed realignment and pedestrian crossing points at the Hambridge Way/Royal Oak Lane crossroads junction.

The RSA identified three problems including a recommendation to resolve the identified problems, which are as follows:

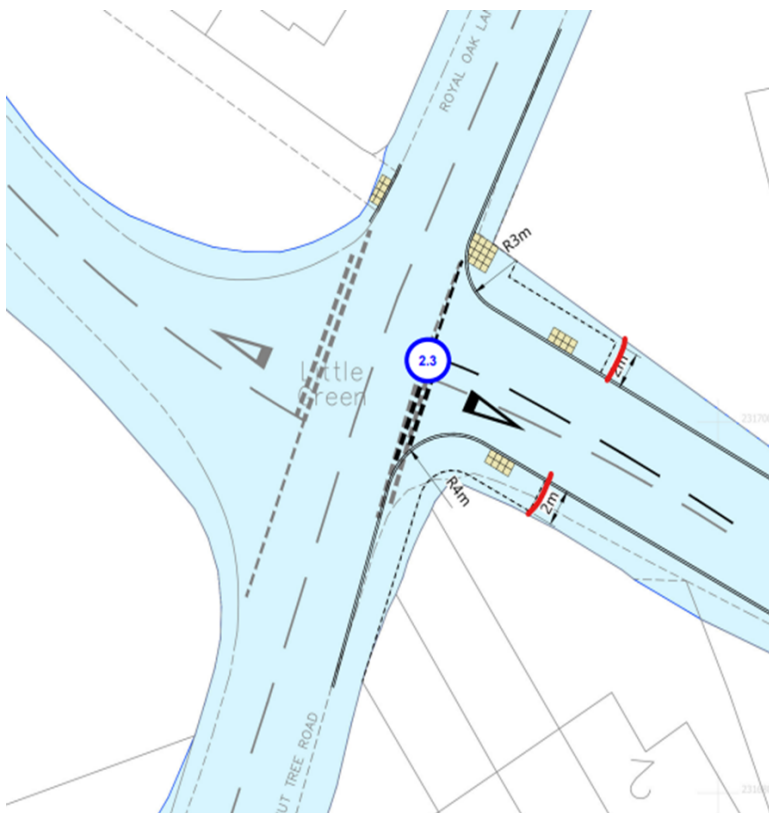
1. Problem 2.1 – Proposed crossing point / narrowing on Cotman End to 3.7m would mean one direction of traffic would need to give way to the other; however, lack of clear priority between opposing vehicles could be confusing for drivers. The Auditor recommends the arrangement is reviewed in light of the concern and it may be beneficial to widen the carriageway for vehicles to pass one another.
2. Problem 2.2 – Emergency access on Hambridge Way is narrow and safe access by larger emergency vehicles could be hindered if turning space is inadequate. The Auditor recommends a vehicle swept path assessment is undertaken to ensure the proposed arrangement is sufficient.
3. Problem 2.3 – Hambridge Way / Royal Oak Lane crossroads proposed narrowing / realignment to accommodate pedestrian facilities could make certain vehicle manoeuvres more onerous at the junction. The Auditor recommends a vehicle swept path assessment is undertaken to ensure the proposed arrangement is sufficient.

The Applicant has responded to the problems identified in the RSA by providing:

- Revisions to the access layout as per HCC Place and Movement Design Guidelines;
- The inclusion of swept path analysis for refuse vehicles and fire appliances;
- Widening of the emergency access to 4.5m; and
- Confirming pedestrian safety measures such as tactile paving and footway continuity.

HCC has reviewed the Designers Response and are comfortable with the proposals, noting that narrowing at the site access at Cotman End, identified in Problem 2.1, will require further detail at the detailed design stage and include mitigations such as signage to prioritise the movement along the road and to warn oncoming motorists.

In addition, swept path assessments have been provided in the TN, which demonstrate that Problem 2.2 and Problem 2.3 have been addressed. However the Highway Authority require Drawing PL03 Rev A to be updated to remove the section of footway that narrows (area annotated to the east of the red lines below) and avoids the unnecessary loss of on-street parking.



Construction Traffic Management Plan

HCC would require a full Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP), via planning condition, to ensure construction vehicles would not have a detrimental impact on the highway network. The CTMP would be required to provide adequate parking for construction vehicles on-site to prevent on-street conflict and impacts to highway safety.

Details submitted in respect of the method statement, incorporated on a plan, shall provide for wheel cleaning facilities during the excavation, site preparation and construction stages of the development. The method statement shall also include details of the means of recycling materials, the provision of parking facilities for contractors during all stages of the development (excavation, site preparation and construction) and the provision of a means of storage and/or delivery for all plant, site huts, site facilities and materials.

A construction management plan template may be found at:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/development-management/highways-development-management.aspx#managementplans>

Planning Obligations and Agreements

It is acknowledged that Pirton is not of a size to be 'self-contained' in terms of facilities and amenities, as highlighted by the poor DFT connectivity score of 32.



Therefore in order to make the Site acceptable in planning terms (NPPF, DfT Decarbonisation Plan, DfT Gear Change, HCC LTP) and offer future occupants realistic and suitable opportunities to travel sustainably for medium distance trips (and thus reduce car dependency), bus service contributions are sought.

The bus service contributions fall within Strand 1 of the HCC Highways Planning Obligations Toolkit and require contributions of £307k over a five-year period. At present, this contribution will link to service Bus Service 89 (HenlowCamp–Hitchin via Pirton), however, this will not be limited to this service due to the changes in bus franchising / operators and a stand alone service may be

required., or contributions towards Herts Lynx on demand bookable bus service
<https://www.intalink.org.uk/hertslynx>

Under Strand 2 of the HCC Highways Planning Obligations Schedule, contributions are sought for the delivery of active travel infrastructure. This is essential in order for the development to enable active travel trips in the area, with a focus on enhancing cycle connections (an area which the applicant has been unable to demonstrate and deliver a scheme which meets NPPF para 116 a & c). Under Strand 2 of the schedule, contributions of £9,861 per dwelling are required, which equates to a total of £493,050. This will be used for schemes including, but not limited to Improvements to LCWIP routes, specifically High Street and a scheme of PROW improvements to Hitchin where most major facilities and amenities are located, including Hambridge Way (PROW 21) and enhancements as far as Bedford Road, Bedford Road active travel scheme, PIRTON 006 / ICKLEFORD 019 (bridleway to the junction with Westmill Lane), PIRTON 005 (footpath along Westmill Lane), HITCHIN 001 (restricted byway along Westmill Lane), HITCHIN UCR1 (unclassified road along Westmill Lane to the settlement edge of Hitchin). Additionally contributions will be used for bus stop upgrades

These contributions and works are fundamental to mitigate the development's impact, support sustainable travel, and ensure compliance with national and local policy objectives. The Applicant is requested to confirm agreement to these obligations.

Conclusion

The Highway Authority wish to raise an objection until the minor drawing updates and S106 conformations are submitted.

Signed

Samuel Tearle

11 February 2026