

Peter Bull
North Herts Council
PO Box 7075
Manchester
M28 8JX

08/08/2026

Dear Mr Peter Bull,

**Re: Planning Ref: 26/01224/S73, Section 73 Application, Variation of Condition
number 26**

Ashwell Parish Council (APC) resolved in the ordinary meeting on 5th August to reject this application. APC considers that the proposal should also be assessed against the adopted Ashwell Neighbourhood Plan and the adopted North Hertfordshire Local Plan, both of which form part of the statutory Development Plan.

Ashwell Neighbourhood Plan – Policy ASH19: Accessible paths in the village and rural areas

Policy ASH19 requires development proposals to ensure safe pedestrian access and to take account of existing public bridleways and footpaths. The policy also supports walking and cycling routes which are physically separated from vehicular traffic.

This is particularly relevant to the proposed increase in HGV movements. The local road network is used by pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders, and the Parish Council is concerned that a significant increase in HGV traffic would increase the potential for conflict between large construction vehicles and vulnerable road users.

APC therefore considers that the applicant should demonstrate clearly how the proposed increase in HGV movements would maintain safe conditions for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians.

Policy ASH19(C) is also directly relevant. It states that:

“Development proposals which include highway solutions that mitigate the impact of traffic through the village centre will be supported.”

The Parish Council considers that this policy provides a clear planning-policy basis for seeking an alternative solution which reduces, rather than increases, the impact of construction traffic on the village and its residents.

Accordingly, the applicant should be required to investigate alternative HGV routing and access arrangements before the proposed increase in HGV movements is approved.

This should include consideration of whether construction materials could be transported by a route which makes greater use of roads suitable for HGV traffic and reduces the use of narrow rural roads through or close to the village.

The Parish Council also asks that the potential for a temporary construction access across **Farrs Farm land** be properly assessed as part of this exercise. The Parish Council recognises that such an arrangement would be subject to landowner agreement and appropriate planning, highway and environmental assessment.

Nevertheless, it should not be dismissed without a proper assessment where it could provide a means of reducing HGV traffic on the existing local road network.

North Hertfordshire Local Plan – Transport and Highway Safety

The proposal should also be assessed against **Policy T1 – Assessment of Transport Matters** of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011–2031.

The Parish Council considers that the proposed increase in HGV movements requires a robust assessment of its effects on the local highway network, including highway safety and the interaction between HGVs and vulnerable road users.

APC is particularly concerned that the existing rural roads contain narrow sections and restricted-visibility bends where HGVs may be unable to pass other vehicles safely. Increased HGV movements would consequently increase the potential for conflict with pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders, residents and other road users.

The Parish Council therefore considers that it has not been demonstrated that the additional HGV movements can be accommodated without creating unacceptable highway safety impacts.

The assessment should consider not merely whether individual HGVs can technically negotiate the proposed route, but whether the **increased frequency of HGV movements** creates unacceptable risks through interactions with other road users, particularly where the road is narrow or forward visibility is restricted.

APC also considers that the cumulative impact of the additional construction traffic should be taken into account, including the existing traffic conditions and the use of the roads by vulnerable road users.

Requirement to consider alternative access

In light of the above policies and concerns, Ashwell Parish Council considers that the applicant should investigate reasonable alternative means of transporting construction materials before any increase in HGV movements is permitted.

In particular, the applicant should assess:

- alternative HGV routes which avoid the most constrained sections of the local road network;
- routes which reduce HGV movements through or close to the village;
- opportunities to use roads more appropriate for HGV traffic;
- suitable traffic-management measures;
- whether construction deliveries could be consolidated to reduce HGV movements; and
- the feasibility of a temporary construction access across **Farrs Farm land**, subject to the necessary landowner, environmental and highway considerations.

The Parish Council considers that this approach would be consistent with the Ashwell Neighbourhood Plan's objective of mitigating the impact of traffic through the village and protecting safe access for pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users.

Conclusion

For these reasons, the Parish Council objects to the proposed increase in HGV movements in its current form.

The Parish Council considers that the application has not adequately demonstrated that highway safety would be maintained and that the impacts on vulnerable road users can be satisfactorily mitigated.

The Parish Council therefore requests that the proposed increase in HGV movements is **not approved until alternative HGV routing and access arrangements have been properly investigated**, including the potential for access across Farrs Farm land.

If the applicant can demonstrate that an alternative route or access arrangement would substantially reduce the highway safety risks to local residents, pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders, the Parish Council would be willing to consider such a revised approach.