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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: 25/01846/FP
HCC ref: NH/28035/2026
HCC received: 2 February 2026
Area manager: Manjinder Sehmi
Case officer: Senober Khan

Location

Land Adjacent 2 And 3 Wells Cottages, Smiths End Lane, Barley, Hertfordshire, SG8 8LJ

Application type

Full Application

Proposal

Full Planning Permission : Change of use of 2 two-storey commercial units to No.2 residential dwellings and erection of bike sheds

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 that permission be refused for the following reasons:

Until the above information is submitted, the HA is unable to confirm whether the proposal complies with the relevant national and local transport policies, nor can it be satisfied that the development would provide safe and suitable access for all users. In the absence of this evidence, the HA is not in a position to support or endorse the proposal on highway safety or policy compliance grounds.

Highways comments:

The Highway Authority (HA) has reviewed the submitted information for the proposed change of use from two commercial units to two residential dwellings, including associated vehicle and cycle parking and proposed access arrangements.

The HA's assessment focuses on matters relating to highway safety, access, parking operation, active travel, and compliance with relevant national and local transport policy.

The applicant has submitted proposed plans, including a proposed site layout showing:

- The existing access serving Unit 2
- A new vehicle access to serve Unit 1
- Notes indicating a slot drain to be installed on the highway boundary
- Notes indicating 2m x 2m pedestrian visibility splays on both sides of the new access

However, no Transport Statement, Design and Access Statement, Planning Statement, or technical justification has been provided to explain how the proposals comply with local or national guidance relating to transport and movement.

This omission significantly limits the HA's ability to adequately assess the development.

Key Missing Information

The following fundamental transport related matters have not been addressed by the applicant:

Policy Compliance

No evidence has been provided to demonstrate compliance with:

- NPPF (2025) - particularly sections on promoting sustainable transport, safe access, and creating well-designed places.
- HCC Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) - including modal shift objectives and the emphasis on active travel and reducing car dependency.
- Hertfordshire Place & Movement Design Guidance - regarding safe and inclusive access, street character, and movement hierarchy.
- Manual for Streets (MfS / MfS2) - visibility, access design, and street user intervisibility requirements.

The proposed new vehicular access:

- Has not been supported by any measurement based visibility assessment, forward visibility splays commensurate to the speed limit (or 85th percentile)
- Provides no AutoTrack swept path analysis, or details on how refuse vehicles will be accommodated
- Does not demonstrate that vehicles can safely enter and exit in forward gear
- Does not include sufficient evidence confirming pedestrian visibility splays will be achievable within land under the applicant's control

Active Travel and Accessibility

The applicant has not provided any assessment demonstrating that the development supports safe and sustainable travel. The submission lacks:

- Public transport accessibility analysis - No information on nearest bus stops, routes, walking distances, or service frequency.
- Connectivity to key destinations - No assessment of access to schools, shops, healthcare, local services, community facilities, or employment areas.
- Walking and cycling route assessment - No review of footway provision, crossing points, cycle routes, gradients, lighting, or safety to determine suitability for everyday journeys.
- Policy compliance justification - No explanation of how the development accords with:
 - o NPPF (2025): prioritising walking/cycling, promoting sustainable transport, and ensuring safe access for all users.
 - o HCC LTP4: supporting active travel, reducing car dependency, and ensuring inclusive, sustainable movement.
 - o Hertfordshire Place & Movement Design Guidance: applying the movement hierarchy and designing for people first.

Without the above information, the HA cannot determine whether the proposal provides safe, convenient, or policy compliant access by walking, cycling, or public transport.

Trip Generation and Change in Use

There is no assessment of:

- Existing and likely trip generation from the commercial units to proposed residential use

Drainage at Access

The submitted plan references a slot drain, but:

- No details of design, capacity, or connection have been provided
- No confirmation that runoff will not drain onto the public highway

Requirement for Additional Information

The HA emphasises that the onus is on the applicant to submit sufficient information to demonstrate how the development accords with:

- Relevant transport policies
- Highway safety principles
- Best practice design standards

The HA cannot make assumptions or attempt to interpret incomplete or unsubstantiated plans. Proper assessment requires clear evidence and structured justification.

Conclusion

At this stage, the HA is unable to determine whether the proposal is acceptable in highway terms.

The applicant must provide the missing transport related evidence outlined above, including but not limited to:

- A Transport Statement or transport focused Design and Access Statement
- Visibility splays with dimensions and supporting calculations
- Swept path assessments for access and parking
- Assessment of sustainable transport accessibility
- Details of pedestrian access arrangements
- Drainage details for the proposed access
- A policy compliance narrative referencing NPPF 2025, HCC Design Guidance, LTP4, and MfS

Recommendation:

Until the above information is submitted, the HA is unable to confirm whether the proposal complies with the relevant national and local transport policies, nor can it be satisfied that the development would provide safe and suitable access for all users. In the absence of this evidence, the HA is not in a position to support or endorse the proposal on highway safety or policy compliance grounds.

Signed

Senober Khan

23 February 2026