

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Henry Thomas.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
25/00536/S73	Removal of Condition 4 of planning Statutory Undertakers application reference 10/02085/1SU granted on 11.10.2010 for Platform extension to eastern end of 'down' line with 1.5 metre high looped fence to rear, situated at the rear of 17 - 27 (odds) Leete. (additional documents received 23.07.2025).	Royston Railway Station Kneesworth Street Royston Hertfordshire SG8 5AH

Submitted Plan Nos

RYS 002

1.0 Policies

2.0 **Site History**

- 2.1 **25/00183/SU** - Erect gating enclosure with a canopy cover at the secondary entrance of the Station located at the rear of Platform 2, comprising two standard-sized ticket gates and one wide aisle gate. Rail replacement bus facility at the existing parking bays in front of the lift at Platform 2, comprising two to three Macemain canopies as passenger waiting shelters and queuing barriers. Ancillary works including a side gate east of the proposed gatelines to segregate the refuse compound from the public area, and a side gate to the west for emergency access during non-operational hours of the Station. Other adjustments and improvements to the existing car park north to the Station, including widening the footpath to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) standards.

Prior Approval Given.

- 2.2 **22/00569/SU** - Erection of a replacement footbridge and installation of lifts on land at Royston Station
Prior Approval Given.

- 2.3 **10/02085/1SU** - Platform extension to eastern end of 'down' line with 1.5 metre high looped fence to rear, situated at the rear of 17 - 27 (odds) Leete Place.

Prior Approval Given.

- 2.4 **08/01364/1** - Extension of existing static car park to provide 205 additional spaces. Associated works.

Conditional Permission.

- 2.5 **89/01700/1** - Additional 65 car parking spaces.

Conditional Permission.

- 2.6 **86/01068/1** - Erection of building for MOT/Car servicing unit with associated car parking spaces

Refused.

- 2.7 **77/00985/1** - erection of new railway station building

Conditional Permission.

3.0 **Representations**

- 3.1 **Site Notice and Neighbour Consultation** – A total of 8 representations have been received from local residents, stating the following comments (summary):

- ☐ Noise nuisance; frequent and excessively loud announcements
- ☐ Loss of bird population

- 3.2 **Royston Town Council – Objection.** *“The noise has caused a nuisance and been extremely stressful for residents living in the area. It has also impacted on the health and wellbeing of*

residents and had a negative impact on their quality of life as it is intrusive and disturbing, whether working from home or trying to enjoy the environment they live in.

Condition 4 was agreed by the Local Planning Authority "To protect the residential amenity of existing residents". This situation remains the same so why should the condition be removed now? Condition 4 also states that "The public address system shall not be extended to serve the new platform, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority". The "system" has been extended without prior approval and far from removing the condition my view is that enforcement action should have been taken immediately it was known that the works were being carried out and that a clear breach of planning control had occurred."

3.3 **Environmental Health** – No objection subject to condition.

3.4 **Procedural Note**

The Parish Council has raised as objection as a statutory consultee. In accordance with

Paragraph 8.4.5 of the Council Constitution the ward councillors were written to on 21st May 2025 advising that the case officer was likely to have a contrary view to that of the Parish Council and therefore the letter sought whether the Ward Councillors were supportive of the Parish Council position. No comments were received by the deadline dated 28th May 2025. Accordingly, this application may be considered under powers delegated to the Development Control and Conservation Manager.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

4.1.1 The application site is a train station, running from east to west within a residential part of Royston. The site is accessed via Old North Road / Kneesworth Street. An extension to the platform was granted in 2010 and built in 2011, to the east of the site which runs in proximity to North Star Close and Leete Place to the North and Clark Road to the south.

4.2 **Proposal**

4.2.1 Planning permission is sought for the removal of Condition 4 of planning Statutory Undertakers application reference 10/02085/1SU granted on 11.10.2010 for Platform extension to eastern end of 'down' line with 1.5 metre high looped fence to rear, situated at the rear of 17 - 27 (odds) Leete. (additional documents received 23.07.2025).

4.2.2 Condition 4 of the planning application ref: 10/02085/1SU reads as follows:

"The public address system shall not be extended to serve the new platform, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect the residential amenity of existing residents."

4.2.3 Along this stretch of Platform 2, there are 10 speakers, 7 speakers preexisting before 2020 and 3 built on the platform extension after 2020 (Speakers 8-10). The noise assessment proposes

the following, however permission is only required for the speakers on the platform extension which are Speakers 8-10:

- 01, 02 & 03 – No changes.
- 04 & 06 – Turned back on (current switched off).
- 05 & 07 – To be decommissioned.
- 08 & 09 – Rotated to face east (current facing south).
- 10 – Retained in current position.

4.3 **Key Issues**

Planning Framework

4.3.1 The agent states that the parent application 10/02085/SU was determined under Part 17, Class A prior approval framework of the 1995 General Permitted Development Order, which was later superseded by Part 18, Class A of the 2015 iteration of the order. The agent therefore seeks determination under this framework.

4.3.2 Part 18, Class A of the GPDO 2015 states that:

“The prior approval referred to in paragraph A.1 is not to be refused by the appropriate authority nor are conditions to be imposed unless they are satisfied that—

(a) the development (other than the provision of or works carried out to a dam) ought to be and could reasonably be carried out elsewhere on the land; or

(b) the design or external appearance of any building, bridge, aqueduct, pier or dam would injure the amenity of the neighbourhood and is reasonably capable of modification to avoid such injury.”

4.3.3 In my view, I agree with the agent and therefore, the application and any conditions imposed must be assessed against the considerations above.

Siting of Development

4.3.4 The agent states that speakers in these locations are required for the general operation of Royston Train Station such as ‘near miss’ and ‘close call’ prevention system, passenger diversion, crowd control, customer welfare and delays. These operations are required for the safety and wellbeing of railway staff and users. This is required to comply with Network Rail’s standard NR/L2/TEL/30134 which sets out a minimum and maximum decibel level for announcements.

4.3.5 The S73 report states that in 2024 alone there were 19 near miss events and close calls recorded at Royston Train Station. Given that the speakers are required for public safety and the operation of public transport it would not be possible to site the speakers in an alternative location.

4.3.6 Given the above, I consider that the retention and reorientation would be required to ensure public safety.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

4.3.7 There is no objection to the design and appearance of the speakers, they would be similar to other speakers within the locality and would not have a detrimental effect on the character of the station.

4.3.8 Section 122 of the Railways Act 1993 provides a defence for a statutory authority against proceedings related to 'nuisance'. This is a legislative acknowledgement that railway operations can give rise to a degree of unavoidable noise and disturbance. However, this defence is not unqualified. If the complaint refers to noise from railway premises, the operator must demonstrate that they have used 'reasonable diligence' to control the noise.

4.3.9 The Leete Place Validation report states that:

"Train activity remained the dominant noise source, with arrivals, departures, idling, and non-stop pass-throughs producing levels above those recorded from manual announcements and ambient. Automated announcements were not audible during the exercise, consistent with previous findings, as their levels and settings have not been altered. These results suggest that following the adjustments made to speaker directionality and manual announcement input settings, manual announcements from the Platform 2 extension are unlikely to increase residential noise exposure by a significant amount."

4.3.10 During the course of the planning application, it was considered whether there were any control measures to reduce any potential impacts manual announcements. The agent has submitted a noise avoidance briefing in line with the noise assessment which limits when manual announcements can be made. I recommend a condition to ensure compliance with the briefing.

4.3.11 With regard to increasing the number of automated announcements, the agent has provided the following which I am minded to agree with:

"It is GTR's view that increasing the suite of auto messages would be a large and costly undertaking and would not remove the requirement of scheduling via the Three Bridges Rail Operating Centre, by which point the window for the required announcement may have passed. So, I do not believe this is practicable solution for minimising manual announcements further than what is proposed."

4.3.12 The proposal has been considered by the Environmental Health Officer who has raised no objections to the proposal which is given significant weight. Based on the information provided in the noise assessments and the recommended conditions, I consider that the retention of the speakers along the platform extension to be acceptable. It is considered that the proposal would not give rise to significant neighbour harm and is therefore compliant with Policy D3 of the Local Plan and section 12 of the NPPF.

Other Matters

4.3.13 With regard to the neighbour comment received regarding bird populations, ecological considerations would fall outside of the scope of the permitted development order framework, similarly this application is exempt from the mandatory 10% BNG.

4.4 Conclusion

4.4.1 The proposal is considered acceptable in planning terms and in accordance with the relevant local and national planning policies.

4.5 **Alternative Options**

4.5.1 N/A

4.6 **Pre-Commencement Conditions**

4.6.1 N/A

5.0 **Recommendation**

5.1 That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions.

1. (a): The existing public address system on Platform 2, including speakers RYS/P2//22/SPK/01, 02, 06 and 08 as indicated on Drawing RYS002, dated 12/11/2020, must be set to produce a minimum decibel level of 65 dB(A) or 10dBA above the ambient noise levels (not exceeding a maximum decibel level of 90 dB(A)) at the source for both manual and automatic announcements, in accordance with the Noise Monitoring Report undertaken by Encompass Engineering, ref: EESL-GTRN-REP-003, Revision 3 dated 20th February 2025.

(b) The speaker positions must be reconfigured and retained, and the office microphone noise input level must be set to between 0 and +5, and the roaming microphone input level must be set to between +5 and +10, as set out in System Settings Testing Report undertaken by Encompass Engineering, Revision 3, approved 1st July 2025.

(c): Use of the station microphones and speakers must be undertaken in accordance with the Noise Management Plan, produced by Govia Thameslink Railway, dated 23rd July 2025.

(d): All speakers removed to date, including RYS/P2//22/SPK/03, RYS/P2//22/SPK/05 and RYS/P2//22/SPK/07 must not be reinstated without prior permission from the Council.

Reason: To safeguard neighbouring amenity and to comply with Policy D3 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 to 2031.

2. The following standards for Obtrusive Light Limitations for Exterior Lighting Installations (from The Institution of Lighting Engineers "Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light", for Environmental Zone 2) shall not be exceeded, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority:-

Sky Glow Upward Light Ratio (Max%)	2.5%
Light Trespass (into windows) Ev (Lux)	5 (0.700hrs to 23.00hrs) 1 (23.00hrs to 0.700hrs)
Source Intensity I (kcd)	7.5 (0.700hrs to 23.00hrs) 0.5 (23.00hrs to 07.00hrs)

Reason: To protect the residential amenities of existing residents.

3. Notwithstanding the approved plans, the Lights (luminaires) shall be retained at 4 metre high and cowled, unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect residential amenities of existing residents.

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  Shaun Greaves Determining Officer	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Date: 9 March 2026	