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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: 26/01207/FP
HCC ref: NH/29269/2026
HCC received: 26 May 2026
Area manager: Manjinder Sehmi
Case officer: Paul Marshall

Location

Slip End Farm, Royston Road, Slip End, Baldock, SG7 6SG

Application type

Full Application

Proposal

Full Planning Permission : Erection of nine dwellings with associated hard and soft landscaping, parking, garaging, cycle storage and EV points and private gardens following the part-demolition of the existing grain store and full demolition of existing agricultural barns

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:

Recommendation

Hertfordshire County Council, as Highway Authority, recommends that planning permission be refused on the grounds of highway safety.

Highway Safety Objection

The Highway Authority has reviewed the submitted information, including the applicant's Transport Statement, and considers that the proposed development would result in unacceptable and severe impacts on highway safety.

Comment

The site is accessed via Cat Ditch Lane, a rural classified road subject to the national speed limit. While the site access itself lacks policy compliant visibility splays, the principal and most severe highway safety concern arises from the inevitable routing of development related traffic and the resulting reliance on the A505 / Cat Ditch Lane junction.

The applicant's Transport Statement acknowledges that almost all journeys generated by the development will use the junction of Cat Ditch Lane with the A505 and provides journey time evidence demonstrating that onward travel via the A505 is substantially quicker and more direct than alternative routes via the wider rural network. This evidence confirms that the majority of trips, including resident movements, deliveries, servicing, refuse collection and emergency access, will be routed via the A505 junction as a matter of normal and foreseeable driver behaviour.

Vehicles exiting the site would be expected to turn right onto Cat Ditch Lane, as travelling south would require vehicles to cross the A505, a manoeuvre that drivers would reasonably seek to avoid. However, despite avoiding this crossing movement, onward travel via Cat Ditch Lane involves significantly longer and less efficient journeys. As a result, the development would be functionally dependent on the A505 junction for the vast majority of trips.

The A505 is a high-speed strategic A road subject to a 70mph speed limit and classified as a Primary Distributor within Hertfordshire's Place and Movement network. The junction of the A505 with Cat Ditch Lane is formally identified by the Highway Authority as a Hazardous Site, with nine recorded personal injury collisions between 2019 and 2024, a matter acknowledged within the applicant's own submission.

Recent Collision Information

In addition to the recorded collision history at this location, the Highway Authority is aware of more recent incidents at the junction of the A505 with Cat Ditch Lane. This includes a fatal motorcycle collision on 21 November 2025 on the south westbound approach, and a further injury collision on 22 March 2026 on the north eastbound side of the junction. While collision records for the most recent period are still subject to ongoing validation with the Police, these incidents further reinforce the Highway Authority's concerns regarding the inherent safety risks associated with this junction and its sensitivity to additional traffic movements.

The junction operates as a complex arrangement involving multiple turning, crossing and merging movements across high-speed traffic flows, including movements across the central reserve and short deceleration lanes. The predictable concentration of additional development related traffic through this junction would materially intensify conflict points and increase the likelihood of further collisions.

Previous Applications

The Highway Authority is aware that previous planning applications have been approved on this site. However, those decisions do not remove the requirement to assess the current proposal on its own merits. The present application represents an additional and material intensification of use, and the Highway Authority's objection is founded on the predictable concentration of development related traffic through the A505 / Cat Ditch Lane junction, which is identified as a Hazardous Site with a documented collision history. Previous permissions do not demonstrate that the highway network can safely accommodate further development, nor do they mitigate or remove the existing safety risks associated with reliance on this junction.

Conclusion

The Highway Authority therefore considers that the proposal would result in severe residual cumulative impacts on highway safety, having regard to paragraph 115 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

No secured or deliverable mitigation is proposed within the application that would address or materially reduce the existing safety deficiencies of the A505 / Cat Ditch Lane junction, and any suggested future alterations fall outside the scope of the application and cannot be relied upon.

Signed

Paul Marshall

15 June 2026