

FAO: Mrs Sarah Kasparian
Development Management
North Hertfordshire District Council
Council Offices
Gernon Road
Letchworth Garden City
SG6 3FJ

Our ref: SRS/503/55/1/Phase1RMrevs2

Date: 30th March 2026

Dear Sarah

Re: Highover Farm, Hitchin – 25/02794/RM – Phase 1 Residential 2nd set of Revisions

Subsequent to our meeting with you on Tuesday 24th March and your written comments on the submitted revisions of 23 February, we have made some further revisions.

The revisions comprise the following documentation –

- This covering letter,
- Updated Documentation Table highlighting revisions to various plans,
- Updated layout plans,
- One updated house/apartment type plan (plots 104-109),
- Updated landscape plans
- Updated and a set of new tracking plans.

SPECIFIC RESPONSE TO YOUR WRITTEN COMMENTS

Housing Officer Comments on Affordable Housing

We acknowledge her further comments, but would re-iterate our position and explanation as set out in our cover letter of 23 February 2026.

As requested at our meeting, we have also supplied (via email on Wednesday 25th February 2026), information on the affordable housing strategy mix, etc for the remainder of the development – you will appreciate that this is provisional at this point in time, but it provides a reasonable indication as to how we will achieve the S106 affordable housing requirements. That email and its attached excel spreadsheet is not for public consumption at this stage and we would be grateful if it is not posted to the web site.

We believe what is being proposed within Phase 1 is acceptable in planning terms, and trust that you are of a like mind when considering the overall planning balance.

Plots B55-B66 – Newly Arranged Street - Affordable Housing Layout

We are pleased that the re-arrangement of the street is positively received. We confirm the commitment to it being permeable south to link with Phase 4.

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We acknowledge that the redesign has now inadvertently created an issue with both sides of the street being in affordable tenure. We re-iterate our thoughts and position on this as set out in the letter of 23 February 2026. We consider that the urban design aspect here is the principle matter, as not only does it look better in urban design terms, but it also provides the ability for active travel and permeability links to the south. Your tenure policy coming through in your district-wide design guide is not yet adopted and consequently it is unreasonable at this stage of the Phase 1RM to ask us to rework the entire affordable housing layout. A single instance in the context of 700 houses is immaterial and acceptable in the overall planning balance.

Apartment Block B117-128/EV Charging Points

As discussed we have replaced the boundary walls along the POS between plots 117-128/96-99 and 70-71 with brick piers and railings and hedging to provide more visual permeability whilst still maintaining a secure environment. A 2m ungated gap will be left in this boundary treatment to allow access into the parking court.

The EV charging points have been revised as suggested by Edward Leigh.

D66-67 New Pedestrian access to The Avenue

Positive comments and feedback noted.

D86 – Opposite BCP within Open Space

The bin collection point has been removed from the public open space.

Plot B36

This is a FOG rather than a house, but nonetheless, adjustments have been made to increase the external amenity space to the dwelling.

Missing Cycle Storage

This has been reviewed and incorporated where it was missing. In addition, the illustrated configuration of bikes has been revised.

Plots B7, B29, B33 and elsewhere

These rear access links providing pedestrian access to bins, and rear access to parking spaces have been reworked as discussed at the meeting.

Stotfold Road South-Eastern Suds Pathway

The Suds and active travel path linking to the toucan crossing are actually part of the Infrastructure RM. We are in the process of providing the landscape detail plans for this area as part of the discharge of conditions 2/3 of the Infrastructure RM. We will make sure that the path links in at an appropriate location and angle to the path within Phase 1 and also wherever the toucan crossing is eventually to be located.

Garages/Garden Areas

It was agreed at the workshop that garages would be 6.7m. We have provided this, brought garages forward as agreed/reduced on-plot car parking spaces on the 4 bed houses.

Disabled Car Parking Bays

We have provided disabled bays in accordance with Building Regulations Part M. Each space measures 2.5x5m plus the additional 1.2m access strip. We have re-arranged some spaces so the end bays are next to open space or carriageway rather than a wall, and made alterations as necessary in communal parking areas where access strips/zones can be shared by two bays.

Informal Streets

The diagonal dropped kerbs have been tightened to match the vehicle tracking of the refuse vehicles.

Landscaping Comments

The landscaping plans were all updated in the 23 February set of revisions.

A tree and some low level planting has been included within the verges to the northern loop road where this does not impact on visibility splays.

The buildouts at Plot 57 and 77 cannot incorporate a tree due to conflict with the position of the lighting column.

HCC Highways Comments

These principally relate to tracking drawings and requests for additional drawings to ensure sufficient space for passing cars and refuse trucks where we have tightened informal streets. These have been provided (additional new plans highlighted in red on the Documentation Table).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Further revisions to the Phase 1 RM layout submission have been made to bring it in accordance with the Design Code, as far as this is practicably possible. The Design Code allows for some minor deviations in any event. We believe the revisions made reflect what was discussed and worked through at the workshop and the meeting of the 24th March. The revisions represent compromise by both BDW and Officers.

Furthermore, in addition to the Design Code, the revisions made still ensure that the application is in accordance with adopted policy, the design principle of the strategic masterplan framework and approved parameter plans, the S106 and the outline planning permission. The planning balance is therefore in favour of approval of the reserved matters as now presented.

We believe we have responded and addressed all consultee matters.

We look forward to the application being able to be written up for approval and presented to Planning Committee on the 21 April.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah R Smith

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