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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: 26/00558/HYA
HCC ref: NH/28783/2026
HCC received: 9 April 2026
Area manager: Manjinder Sehmi
Case officer: Shamsul Huda

Location

Land At Pound Farm, Bedford Road, Ickleford, Hertfordshire, SG5 3RS

Application type

Full Application

Proposal

Hybrid Application : Hybrid application for a mixed-use development to provide a total of up to 230 dwellings, a residential care home (Use Class C2), an Independent Special School (ISS) and new sports pitch, with access from Bedford Road, landscaping, parking and SuDS comprising: Phase 1 Application for full planning permission for the erection of 100 dwellings, an ISS, new sports pitch and associated parking, landscaping, open space and SuDS; Phase 2 An outline application on the remaining part of the site for the erection of up to 130 dwellings, a residential care home (Use Class C2) and associated works with access from Bedford Road (all matters reserved apart from access).

Recommendation

OTHER

This application relates to a hybrid planning application for a mixed-use development comprising up to 230 dwellings, a Residential Care Home (Use Class C2), an Independent Special School (ISS), and a new sports pitch, together with associated access from Bedford Road, landscaping, parking, and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).

The proposal comprises:

Phase 1 (Full Planning Permission):

Erection of 100 dwellings, an Independent Special School, a new sports pitch, and associated parking, landscaping, open space, and SuDS.

Phase 2 (Outline Planning Permission):

Erection of up to 130 dwellings and a Residential Care Home (Use Class C2) on the remaining part of the site, with all matters reserved except access, served from Bedford Road.

The Highway Authority acknowledges receipt of a number of documents, including the Master Plan, Parking Plan, Refuse Plan, Transport Assessment (TA), Travel Plans (TPs), Stage 1 Road Safety Audit, and other supporting information.

However, the information submitted is insufficient to enable the Highway Authority to reach an informed recommendation. In the absence of critical technical details, the Highway Authority raises significant concerns regarding the potential impacts on highway safety, capacity, and convenience. Accordingly, the Highway Authority currently recommends refusal.

The development proposal, as illustrated on the Master Plan (Ref: 102, Rev -), is considered substandard due to the omission of several key information and supporting assessments.

Vision and Sustainable Transport:

Paragraph 1.1.3 of the Transport Assessment states that a 10% mode shift reduction has been applied to baseline vehicular trip generation. The Highway Authority considers this reduction to be insufficient to achieve LTP4 goals. To align with Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) objectives, the applicant should apply a minimum 15% mode shift reduction.

Access Arrangements:

a) Principle of Access

Paragraph 3.2.1 of the TA states that the proposed access from Bedford Road has been agreed in principle by the HCC Strategic Transport Infrastructure Board (STIB). However, no supporting evidence or detailed documentation has been submitted. The applicant is advised to provide full justification in accordance with LTP4 Policy 5f, which states that new accesses onto primary and main distributor roads will only be considered where special circumstances can be clearly demonstrated.

b) Access Geometry:

The proposed access radii differ on each side and do not adequately accommodate large vehicles. The access radii should typically be between 4.0m and 6.0m and could be considered larger radii justified by a swept path analysis.

c) Emergency Access:

Drawing (Ref: 34362-H-01, P2) fails to indicate the width of the emergency access connection to Bedford Road. Furthermore, the submitted fire tender tracking diagrams show vehicles overrunning pedestrian areas. A tighter junction radius with Bedford Road should be considered to improve pedestrian safety.

Clear signage and physical measures should be provided to indicate that this access is for emergency use only. The proposed north–south pedestrian and cycle route does not align with the desire line when crossing the existing bridleway.

Pedestrian and Cycle Provision:

Paragraph 3.2.5 of the TA states that a 3.0m wide shared footway/cycleway is proposed on the northern side of Bedford Road. The Highway Authority recommends increasing this to 6.0m to align with the proposed 3.0m pedestrian/cycleway and 3.0m bridleway adjacent to the existing bridleway.

Off Site Highway Improvements:

A comprehensive schedule of all off site highway works must be provided and illustrated on a separate General Arrangement drawing (with appropriate keys), to support a future Section 278 Agreement.

Public Rights of Way:

A separate drawing must be submitted showing the detailed design of all crossings and connections with Public Rights of Way (PRoWs) 15 and 16, ensuring continuity, safety, and accessibility.

Public Transport Infrastructure Improvement:

Given the scale of development and level of bus services operating along Bedford Road, the Highway Authority requests: An additional southbound bus stop outside No. 25 Bedford Road, located behind the existing hedge, to form a pair of stops at Ryder Avenue.

Relocation of the northbound bus stop to outside No. 13 Bedford Road.

The Highway Authority recommends that these stops include Littlethorpe–Hassocks timber shelters, Real Time Information (RTI), and Kassel kerbs, as appropriate to the local character.

The two proposed new bus stops further north on Bedford Road should also include similar Kassel Kerb, Shelters and RTI to ensure consistency and reduce the risk of public objection. The removal of laybys and provision of in line bus stops is recommended to assist with traffic calming.

Finally, bus stop locations should be agreed in consultation with the Public Transport Team to address concerns raised in the Stage 1 Road Safety Audit (Problem 2.4, Location D).

Pedestrian Crossings:

The proposed uncontrolled pedestrian crossing on Bedford Road is not considered acceptable. In the interests of safety, the Highway Authority requires a signal-controlled crossing, or at minimum a raised or Zebra crossing, to manage vehicle speeds and improve pedestrian safety, particularly on the approach to the 40mph speed limit.

Street Lighting and Highway Signage:

Several existing street lighting columns and highway signs are located near the proposed main site access. The Transport Assessment does not address their relocation or protection. A revised TA must identify and address these constraints.

Section 106 Contributions:

No financial contribution has been proposed towards sustainable travel infrastructure. The Highway Authority requires a contribution of £2,268,030.00 (230 dwellings × £9,861 per dwelling), indexed from March 2024

This contribution will fund active travel and public transport infrastructure improvements, with the detailed scope to be confirmed.

Car Club Provision:

No provision has been made for a Car Club. The applicant must provide dedicated Car Club parking spaces within the development, with the location, dimensions, surfacing, markings, signage, and lighting to be agreed with the Council. This requirement must be secured through a Section 106 Agreement.

Internal Road Layout (Phases 1 and 2):

All internal roads are currently designed as P3/M1 (Town Centre / Separate Street), which is not considered appropriate for this location. All internal roads should be redesigned as P2/M1 (Street) in accordance with the HCC Place and Movement Planning Design Guide (March 2024). Adequate visibility splays and tactile paving must be provided at all internal junctions.

Servicing and Refuse Collection:

No evidence has been provided of consultation with HCC Fire and Rescue Service. The applicant is advised to undertake such consultation.

Drawing (Ref: 3462 T 03, P1) shows refuse vehicles overrunning footways and verges, raising pedestrian safety concerns, likely due to inadequate internal road widths (4.8m). All internal roads should therefore be widened to 5.5m to meet P2/M1 standards.

Paragraph 3.6.4 of the TA refers to a refuse collection vehicle length of 11.4m, which does not meet current NHDC standards. A minimum 12.1m RCV must be accommodated.

A Delivery and Servicing Management Plan must be provided for both the Care Home and SEND School.

Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP):

The Transport Assessment does not adequately consider construction phase impacts. A robust Construction Traffic Management Plan must be submitted and secured by planning condition, demonstrating how disruption to the highway network, nearby school users, and adjacent land uses will be minimised.

Trip Generation

Table 5 -8 of the TA does not include trip generation associated with the proposed sports pitches. The TA must quantify trips associated with the sports facilities, including:

- Number of pitches and spectator capacity
- Opening hours
- Likely user groups
- Parking provision and management arrangements

Travel Plans

a) Residential Travel Plan

The Residential Travel Plan requires significant improvement. The proposed monitoring methodology is insufficiently robust, raising concerns regarding effective implementation and target delivery.

There is no statement from senior management confirming responsibility for implementing the Travel Plan should the developer dispose of the site. Accountability for Travel Plan delivery is unclear, with no measures identified to address underperformance and no proposed Travel Plan Steering Group.

The following additional measures are required:

- A sustainable mobility voucher of £100 per house and £50 per flat, secured via Section 106, enabling residents to access a range of sustainable travel options.
- Provision of high-speed broadband infrastructure to support home working and reduce travel demand.
- Multi modal travel surveys, as questionnaires alone are insufficient.
- Details of the Travel Plan Coordinator and a secondary contact must be provided to Hertfordshire County Council 3–6 months prior to first occupation.

b) Interim School Travel Plan

The Interim School Travel Plan is well structured and proportionate to the SEND school context, with a strong evidence base and appropriate focus on staff travel. However, several school specific operational requirements set out in HCC Travel Plan Guidance are missing or insufficiently detailed.

To be acceptable, the School Travel Plan must:

- Confirm named Travel Plan Coordinator details
- Include a statement of senior leadership commitment
- Commit to Modeshift STARS registration and accreditation
- Clarify annual monitoring and review arrangements
- Strengthen parking, taxi, and on-site management measures

Conclusion

In its current form, the application fails to demonstrate that the proposed development would operate safely or sustainably in highway terms. Substantial further information, revisions, and supporting evidence are required before the Highway Authority can reconsider its position.

Signed

Shamsul Huda

8 May 2026