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## **Response to Planning application from Hertfordshire County Council (T and CP GDP Order 2015)**

### **Director of Planning**

St Albans City & District Council  
St Peters Street  
St Albans  
Hertfordshire  
AL1 3JE

District ref: S62A/2025/0076  
HCC ref: SA/23660/2025  
HCC received: 22 January 2025  
Area manager: Rosemary Chatindo  
Case officer: Graham Burrell

### **Location**

Land at Colne Spring Villa, Colney Heath, St Albans, AL4 0PB

### **Application type**

Full Application

### **Proposal**

Erection of eco-village comprising 9 dwellings and community hub with associated access, parking and landscaping

### **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 reason:

The proposed residential development is considered unsustainable for the reasons detailed below and is therefore considered contrary to the NPPF and HCC's Local Transport Plan.

### **COMMENTS**

A Transport Statement (TS) dated November 2024 has been provided to support the application.

### **Site**

The site is accessed from Coursers Road. Coursers Road is a classified C road with a 60mph limit at this point. It is classified as a P1/M2 (e.g. Inter-urban Road) by Hertfordshire's Place and Movement Planning Design Guidance.

A public footpath (Colney Heath 033) provides a link between Coursers Road and Colney Heath, approximately 350 metres in length, roughly 45 metres north of the site entrance.

## **Policy Context**

The TS predates the latest version of the NPPF (December 2024). Paragraphs 115-117 of the NPPF are of especial relevance in considering the current proposal.

115. In assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that: a) sustainable transport modes are prioritised taking account of the vision for the site, the type of development and its location; b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users; c) the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code; and d) any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree through a vision-led approach.

116. Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios.

117. Within this context, applications for development should: a) give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second – so far as possible – to facilitating access to high quality public transport, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use; b) address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport; c) create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards; d) allow for the efficient delivery of goods, and access by service and emergency vehicles; and e) be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations.

Paragraphs 2.14 – 2.27 of the TS detail Hertfordshire's within its Local Transport Plan 4 (2018). This includes Policy 1 which establishes a hierarchy of transport users to support sustainable movements, Policy 5 which seeks to encourage sustainable transport modes, Policy 6 addresses accessibility "particularly regarding active modes and for people with reduced mobility" Policy 7 seeks to encourage and promote walking and policy 8 seeks a step change in cycling.

Hertfordshire's Place and Movement Planning Design Guidance (P&MPDG) was formally adopted in March 2024. It is intended as a supporting document for Hertfordshire County Council's (HCC) Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4), 2018, and replaces the previous design guidance "Roads in Hertfordshire".

## **Sustainability**

Hertfordshire's Place and Movement Planning Design Guidance states that "Traditionally, planning applications focused on road design requirements and provision for sustainable modes was a secondary consideration often leading to sustainable mode provision being compromised by land and budgetary constraints" ... "Planning for sustainable development needs to reverse this thinking, with sustainable modes being considered first, maximising opportunities for connecting to key destinations in a sustainable way before considering residual vehicle impacts so that resulting development is LTP4 compliant, without compromise".... "Given that sustainable modes are given the highest priority within the hierarchy of provision through Policy 1 of LTP4 it is vital that provision for them is considered and demonstrated in sufficient detail within planning applications."

The TS describes the immediate pedestrian environment (para. 3.12) as "typical of a Hertfordshire village location, with footways and footpaths intermittently present nearby." This description does not

accurately describe Coursers Road though which is outside the main part of the village of Colney Heath, has a 60 mph speed limit, and has no footways connecting the site to the village centre for about 300 metres north of the site (as far as a bridge over the River Colne). The part of Coursers Road in the vicinity of the site has no street lighting.

The applicant's TS and Design and Access Statement places a degree of reliance on the Colney Heath 033 footpath connecting the site to Colney Heath village to support sustainable connections for the proposed development. This offers a potentially useful link but is of limited value in considering the overall sustainability of the site. The TS notes that Colney Heath has a "small number of local facilities" (Para. 3.65). There is no footway provision between the site entrance and the footpath. No analysis is provided of the quality of this route. Paragraph 4.8 of the TS proposes to "clean" the path albeit that it would still be an unpaved unlit footpath. This would be an especially problematic route for people with mobility impairments. Nevertheless, if the application were to be approved there would need to be an identification of the extent of "cleaning" that the applicant would undertake. A condition is recommended in this respect.

Paragraph 4.5 of the TS accepts that "the limited number of local facilities will require a significant element of vehicular traffic to and from the site". It is noted that a shuttle bus service is proposed. For such a small development this is likely to be of limited utility in reducing vehicle trips.

It is considered that the current proposal is not a sustainable development. The lack of footways along a 60 mph road makes this an unattractive and potentially unsafe walking route. In respect to cycling, paragraph 3.15 of the TS notes that "The local section of the highway network is restricted to 60 miles per hour, which permits cycling by more experienced cyclists." The high-speed limit would make cycling an unattractive option for less experienced cyclists.

### **Road safety**

Paragraphs 3.40 – 3.42 of the TS examines the highway safety record in the vicinity of the site and notes a "low number of collisions".

### **Access**

The application proposes using the existing site access. Appendix H of the TS indicates that necessary sightlines are achieved based on the measured 85th percentile speed.

### **Trip generation**

The TS provide an indication of trips associated with proposed development based on an analysis of the national trip data-base (TRICS). The TS concludes (paragraph 5.22) that the "overall predicted traffic numbers are not high". No issues are raised in this respect.

### **Parking**

Parking standards (for cars and cycles) are set by the LPA. The LPA would need to determine whether their standards are met. Policy 8 of HCC's Local Transport Plan (2018) seeks to ensure secure cycle parking is provided. Paragraph 4.7 of the TS notes that this will be provided within the cycle sheds provided within each unit on the site. Paragraph 4.15 indicates compliance with building regulations in respect to electric charging points for cars.

### **Servicing**

The TS notes that bins would be moved by site management to the wide site access in line with current arrangements. This refers to the semi-circular entrance to the site which is behind the line of the carriageway. This could also be used by vehicles making deliveries. No highway objections are raised in this respect. St. Albans City and District Council are responsible for refuse collection and should be consulted on the details of the proposals for refuse collection.

Appendix I of the TS demonstrates the turning of a 8.3 metre long fire vehicle and a 10.98 metre long refuse vehicle within the site – the latter demonstrating that turn around can be achieved on site for larger service type vehicles.

## **Conclusion**

The proposed residential development is considered unsustainable for the reasons detailed above and is therefore considered contrary to the NPPF and HCC's Local Transport Plan. An objection is raised in this respect. If the Planning Inspectorate is minded to approve the application the following conditions and informatives are recommended.

## **CONDITIONS**

### **1. Provision of Visibility Splays – Dimensioned on Approved Plan**

The visibility indicated on the approved drawing number 52/SK02 shall be provided and maintained from the date of first occupation. The splay shall thereafter be retained at all times free from any obstruction between 600mm and 2m above the level of the adjacent highway carriageway.

Reason: To ensure that the level of visibility for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles is satisfactory in the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policy 5 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).

### **2. Construction Management Plan**

No development shall commence until a Construction Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the construction of the development shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved Plan. The Construction Management Plan shall include details of:

- a. Construction vehicle numbers, type, routing;
- b. Access arrangements to the site;
- c. Traffic management requirements
- d. Construction and storage compounds (including areas designated for car parking, loading / unloading and turning areas);
- e. Siting and details of wheel washing facilities;
- f. Cleaning of site entrances, site tracks and the adjacent public highway;
- g. Timing of construction activities (including delivery times and removal of waste) and to avoid school pick up/drop off times;
- h. Provision of sufficient on-site parking prior to commencement of construction activities;
- i. Post construction restoration/reinstatement of the working area;

Reason: In order to protect highway safety and the amenity of other users of the public highway and rights of way in accordance with Policies 5, 12, 17 and 22 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).

### **3. Highway Improvements – Offsite**

#### **A) Design Approval**

No on-site works above slab level shall commence until a detailed scheme for off-site highway improvement works - providing a footway between the site and the public footpath - has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority.

#### B) Implementation / Construction

Prior to the first use of the development hereby permitted, the improvement works referred to in part A of this condition shall be completed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure construction of a satisfactory development and that the highway improvement works are designed to an appropriate standard in the interest of highway safety and amenity and in accordance with Policy 5, 13 and 21 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).

#### 4. Rights of Way

##### A) Design Approval

No on-site works above slab level shall commence on site unless otherwise agreed in writing until a Rights of Way Improvement Plan for the public footpath has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

##### B) Implementation / Construction

Prior to the first occupation of the development the Rights of Way Improvement Plan works (including any associated highway works) referred to in Part A of this condition shall be completed to the written satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure construction of a satisfactory development and that the highway improvement works are designed to an appropriate standard in the interest of highway safety and amenity and in accordance with Policy 5, 13 and 21 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).

#### INFORMATIVES

In the event of the application being approved HCC as Highway Authority recommends inclusion of the following Advisory Notes (AN) / highway informatives to ensure that any works are carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Highway Act 1980:

AN1) Extent of Highway: Information on obtaining the extent of public highway around the site can be obtained from the HCC website:

[www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/changes-to-your-road/extent-of-highways.aspx](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/changes-to-your-road/extent-of-highways.aspx)

AN2) Storage of materials: The applicant is advised that the storage of materials associated with the construction of this development should be provided within the site on land which is not public highway, and the use of such areas must not interfere with the public highway. If this is not possible, authorisation should be sought from the Highway Authority before construction works commence. Further information is available via the County Council website at:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/business-licences/business-licences.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

AN3) Obstruction of highway: It is an offence under section 137 of the Highways Act 1980 for any person, without lawful authority or excuse, in any way to wilfully obstruct the free passage along a highway or public right of way. If this development is likely to result in the public highway or public right of way network becoming routinely blocked (fully or partly) the applicant must contact the Highway Authority to obtain their permission and requirements before construction works commence. Further information is available via the County Council website at:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/business-licences/business-licences.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

AN4) Debris and deposits on the highway: It is an offence under section 148 of the Highways Act 1980 to deposit compost, dung or other material for dressing land, or any rubbish on a made up carriageway, or any or other debris on a highway to the interruption of any highway user. Section 149 of the same Act gives the Highway Authority powers to remove such material at the expense of the party responsible. Therefore, best practical means shall be taken at all times to ensure that all vehicles leaving the site during construction of the development and use thereafter are in a condition such as not to emit dust or deposit mud, slurry or other debris on the highway. Further information is available by telephoning 0300 1234047.

AN5) Construction Management Plan (CMP): The purpose of the CMP is to help developers minimise construction impacts and relates to all construction activity both on and off site that impacts on the wider environment. It is intended to be a live document whereby different stages will be completed and submitted for application as the development progresses. A completed and signed CMP must address the way in which any impacts associated with the proposed works, and any cumulative impacts of other nearby construction sites will be mitigated and managed. The level of detail required in a CMP will depend on the scale and nature of development.

The CMP would need to include elements of the Construction Logistics and Community Safety (CLOCS) standards as set out in our Construction Management template, a copy of which is available on the County Council's website at:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/development-management/highways-development-management.aspx>

**Signed**

Graham Burrell

12 February 2025