

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
WEDNESDAY 15 APRIL 2026, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor S Watson (Chair)
Councillors R Buckmaster, V Burt, S Copley,
I Devonshire, J Dunlop, G Hill, S Marlow,
T Smith, T Stowe and J Thomas

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors V Glover-Ward

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Jackie Bruce	- Section 106 Programme Manager
Neil Button	- Interim Team Leader (Strategic Applications Team)
Peter Mannings	- Committee Support Officer
James Mead	- Planning Officer
Martin Plummer	- Assistant Director (Place Delivery)
Joanna Russell	- Principal Planning Officer
Sara Saunders	- Director for Place

404 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Councillor Estop.

405 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair reminded Members that a Development

Management Forum (DMF) was scheduled to take place in the Council Chamber, Wallfields, at 7.00 pm on Tuesday 21 April 2026, covering development at Old River Lane, Bishop's Stortford.

The Chair also reminded Members and Officers to use their microphones when speaking.

406 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Thomas declared that although he was employed by Hertfordshire County Council, he had no prior involvement in the pre-application or pre-planning process relating to application 3/24/0091/OUT.

407 MINUTES - 11 MARCH 2026

Councillor Devonshire proposed and Councillor Stowe seconded, a motion that the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2026 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2026, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

408 3/25/1097/FUL - LAND TO THE REAR OF HILL HOUSE, TOWER HILL, MUCH HADHAM, HERTFORDSHIRE, SG10 6DL

The Director for Place recommended that in respect of application 3/25/1097/FUL, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions set out at the end of the report.

The Principal Planning Officer presented a series of drawings, plans and visualisations of the proposed development. He summarised the details of application

3/25/1097/FUL and set out the location of the site.

Members were advised that the site comprised an undeveloped field with small pockets of trees in a location that was predominantly to the east of the village of Much Hadham, largely outside the village boundary.

The Principal Planning Officer explained that the majority of the site lies within the rural area beyond the Green Belt and he provided a summary of the existing development in the surrounding area. Members were advised that the applicant's transport statement identified a range of village facilities within walking distance, including a health centre, a local shop and post office, and the primary school to the north of the site.

The Principal Planning Officer advised that bus stops on Tower Hill provided access to the service operating between Hertford and Bishop's Stortford. It was also noted that Public Footpath 025 run along the southern boundary of the site, while Public Footpath 022 lies close to the north-western corner and was currently mapped as passing through the school grounds.

Members were advised that the proposal included the provision of new pedestrian connections to improve linkages and to provide an alternative east-west route between Tower Hill and Aldor Lane. The site was identified in the Much Hadham Neighbourhood Plan as a reserve housing site intended to meet potential future housing needs and was therefore subject to Policy MH10.

The scheme proposed a low density of 21.8 dwellings per hectare and the development would be concentrated within the central and southern parts of the site, with public open space located to the north.

Members were advised that the scheme would deliver 40% affordable housing (12 units), with a tenure split of 83% affordable rent and 17% shared ownership. The size and tenure mix has been informed by a local housing

needs survey, which identified a need for 17 affordable units within the parish.

Members were advised that no affordable housing had been delivered in Much Hadham in recent years and the site lies within Landscape Character Area 93 (the Hadham's Valley) and adjacent to Landscape Character Area 87 (the Middle Ash Valley).

The Principal Planning Officer said that the landscape and visual impact of the proposal, including effects on priority views identified in the Neighbourhood Plan, had been fully assessed within the committee report.

The site was located within the Much Hadham Conservation Area and in proximity to several listed buildings, including the Grade II listed Hill House and The Arms Houses on Tower Hill. The impact of the development on the conservation area and on the setting of these heritage assets had been assessed and was considered to be acceptable.

Members were advised that vehicular access would be taken from Tower Hill, with no objection raised by the Highway Authority. Parking provision was broadly in accordance with the Council's adopted standards.

The Principal Planning Officer said that the proposal would retain all high and moderate-quality trees, including the woodland area in the south-western corner of the site. Limited removal of low-quality trees would be offset by the planting of 129 new trees. The scheme would overall deliver a biodiversity net gain of 16.883%, primarily through new tree, shrub, and wildflower planting.

The Principal Planning Officer said that flood zones 2 and 3 extended into a small area of the site in the southeastern corner. The remainder of the site was within flood zone and was therefore at low risk of flooding. The surface water drainage would be managed through permeable paving, pipes, and attenuation basins, with

controlled discharge to the River Ash. Foul water drainage would connect to a diverted existing sewer.

The Principal Planning Officer set out in detail the policy considerations pertinent to the Much Hadham Neighbourhood Plan. He said that this plan was part of the development plan and sat alongside the district plan. Members were advised that the minimum housing target of 54 new homes for the village was out of date and was derived from an out-of-date district plan development strategy.

The report set out that the weight attributed to the strategy within the Much Hadham Neighbourhood Plan to meet the minimum housing target should be reduced. The Principal Planning Officer said that the proposed development complied with Policy MH10 when read as a whole.

Members were advised that no objections had been received from statutory consultees and that officers had considered comments received from the Parish Council and local residents.

The Principal Planning Officer said that, on balance, it was considered that the benefits of the scheme attracted significant positive weight, while the adverse impacts carried moderate negative weight, and that the harms did not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

Members were advised that, subject to conditions and the completion of a Section 106 agreement, Officers recommended that planning permission be granted. The Principal Planning Officer drew the attention of Members to the late representation summary.

Alexandra Willmore and Emily McKenzie were invited to address the committee in support of the application. They were asked questions by the committee.

Mr Ian Hunt addressed the committee on behalf of Much

Hadham Parish Council.

Members asked questions regarding the public rights of way and the Principal Planning Officer advised that the existing public right of way would not be affected or obstructed, as it did not run through the development site.

The Principal Planning Officer advised that the permissive footpath was not a public right of way and would be incorporated within the school grounds as part of the development.

Members asked about the conflict between the application and policy MH10 of the Neighbourhood Plan. They referred to paragraph 10.4 of the officer report and the principle of the development being supported by the Much Hadham Neighbourhood Plan. They also asked about the NPPF and paragraph 14.

The Principal Planning Officer said Officers considered that the proposals complied with policy MH10 of the Much Hadham Neighbourhood Plan and due to this compliance as a whole, paragraph 14 of the NPPF was not engaged.

The Interim Team Leader (Strategic Applications) provided a detailed explanation of the key elements of the MH10 policy for the committee. He said that the first part of the policy referenced in a table in the report set out that the development met the need for the provision of future additional market housing, and in particular affordable housing.

Members were advised that the submission of a planning application represented an equally appropriate means of bringing a site forward for development.

The Principal Planning Officer acknowledged the concern raised regarding the high demand for two- and three-bedroom houses within the district. However, Members were advised that the proposed housing mix accords with the identified need in Much Hadham, as set out in the

housing needs survey.

The Interim Team Leader (Strategic Applications) advised that the local housing needs survey was specific to Much Hadham and had identified a requirement for smaller units. Officers had afforded this more up-to-date evidence greater weight than the District Plan policy.

It was further noted that the second element of Policy MH10 requires development to preserve priority views and to ensure that any adverse effects on the landscape, the conservation area, and the historic environment were minimised.

The Interim Team Leader (Strategic Applications) confirmed that the proposed development would not fully preserve Priority View 6 and would lead to a degree of change to this view. However, having carefully reviewed the technical findings of the landscape assessment, officers concluded that the resulting effects on the wider landscape character and the historic environment of the conservation area would be acceptable in planning terms.

The Principal Planning Officer advised that a tree survey and arboriculture impact assessment had been submitted with the application. These identified a number of low-quality (Category C) trees and confirmed that higher quality trees would be retained.

The Interim Team Leader (Strategic Applications) referred to the nominations policy and the criteria for allocating tenants to affordable housing. He highlighted the housing needs survey and advised that location, alongside other criteria, was considered. He further advised that Planning Officers did not have the policy tools within the planning process to influence allocations, which are governed through the Section 106 legal agreement.

Members asked questions in relation to trees, surface water drainage, and parking provision, with particular reference to the Neighbourhood Plan and the Council's

parking standards.

The Principal Planning Officer advised that the development would provide for the planting of 129 new trees and confirmed that all higher quality Category A and B trees located centrally within the site would be retained. It was further noted that the surface water drainage strategy had been reviewed by the Lead Local Flood Authority and the Environment Agency, neither of which had raised objections.

The Principal Planning Officer also confirmed that the scheme would provide 70 off-street parking spaces, compared to a requirement of 71 spaces under the Council's parking standards. Members were shown the proposed garage layout, and it was noted that driveway parking had been incorporated into the scheme.

The Section 106 Programme Manager responded to a number of questions relating to the legal agreement, including childcare provision and the contribution from Hertfordshire County Council.

Members commented on the proposed boundary treatment for Hill House and Elm House, particularly in relation to the entrance road and its width. The Principal Planning Officer advised that the access arrangements complied with highway requirements, including the provision of a 5.5-metre-wide carriageway. It was also noted that the scheme included a footway, hedgerow, and new tree planting.

Officers considered that the proposed boundary treatment, together with the native hedgerow indicated on the submitted plans, was acceptable and would respect the rural character of the area while delivering biodiversity enhancements.

Members requested clarification regarding the status of the open amenity land and the education site. The Principal Planning Officer advised that the Section 106

Agreement secures the transfer of the education land to the school. It was further confirmed that the public open space will be publicly accessible and will be maintained by a management company responsible for the wider development.

The Legal Adviser said that Section 106 legal obligations run with the land and were binding on any successors in title and ownership. Any landowner including a management company were liable to adhere to the obligations for the lifetime of the development unless and until the obligation was varied by application to the local planning authority.

Councillor Thomas proposed and Councillor Dunlop seconded, a motion that application 3/25/1097/FUL be granted planning permission subject to the conditions set out at the end of the report. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that application 3/25/1097/FUL be granted planning permission subject to the conditions set out at the end of the report.

At 20:31 (8:31 pm) Councillor Watson proposed and Councillor Buckmaster seconded a motion that there be a brief adjournment for a comfort break. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that there be a brief adjournment for a comfort break.

409 3/24/0091/OUT - LAND TO THE EAST OF HIGH ROAD,
HIGH CROSS, HERTFORDSHIRE, SG11 1BE

The meeting reconvened at 20:37 (8:37 pm).

The Director for Place recommended that in respect of application 3/24/0091/FUL, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions set out at the end of the

report.

The Principal Planning Officer referred to the late representations summary and set out the late representations from Historic England and a letter from a local resident. She summarised the application in detail and set out the location of the site. She presented a series of slides, elevation drawings, parameter plans and visual representations of the proposed development.

The Principal Planning Officer set out the status of High Cross as a group two village and explained that the site was rural land beyond the green belt and that there were no landscape designations on the site - located in flood zone 1 with no protected trees on or around the site.

The Principal Planning Officer set out details of the proposed access, the public rights of way and the location of the bus stops. She set out the heritage constraints surrounding the site and presented some views of the site from various boundary viewing points.

The Principal Planning Officer set out the proposed building heights and the average densities in the context of the density dwellings on the High Road and Poplar Close. She said that the average density on site was 27 dwellings per hectare. Members were shown the location of SuDS features, the access road, the cycle and footways, allotment space, public open space and play spaces.

The Principal Planning Officer reminded Members that the application was in outline form for the principle of the proposed development and the access. She set out the proposed improvements to the High Road and provided some illustrative details of what was envisaged for the site.

Members were advised of the proposed upgrades to bus stops and upgrades to the existing footpaths. The Principal Planning Officer said that all of the

improvements were included in the conditions and as part of the Section 106 legal agreement.

The Principal Planning Officer reminded Members that as the council could not currently demonstrate a 5-year supply of housing, this application should be determined under paragraph 11 of the NPPF. Members were referred to paragraph 10 of the report, and the planning balancing exercise concludes that the adverse effects of granting planning permission would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

The Principal Planning Officer said that applying the NPPF presumption in favour of sustainable development, it was recommended that planning permission is granted subject to the conditions and obligations within the Section 106 legal agreement.

Kim Saban addressed the committee in objection to the application. Richard Martin addressed the committee in support of the application. He was asked questions by the committee.

Jacqueline Veater addressed the committee on behalf of Thundridge Parish Council. She was asked questions by the committee.

Members asked for some clarity in terms of the access linking the development to the existing community. The Principal Planning Officer said that there would be one vehicular access. She said that the proposed access would now become a shared cycle and footpath and there would be linkages through to the footpath on the High Street.

Members were advised that in terms of the highway assessment, the site was policy compliant in terms of the NPPF and the site being sustainably accessible to the village. The Principal Planning Officer referred to the capacity assessment carried out by the highway's authority.

Members were advised that the application included details of how footpaths would be improved by installing loose but hard material. The Principal Planning Officer confirmed that more work had been done, and the access had been widened to ensure it could accommodate emergency and refuse vehicles. Members were also advised that should the church not require the offered cemetery space, the likelihood is that this would revert to open space.

Members expressed a number of concerns regarding the proposed density and the sustainability credentials of the application. They referred in particular to the offered vouchers for public transport. The Principal Planning Officer said that the voucher system was a standard element of the travel plan by the highways' authority. She said that the intention was to encourage this use from the outset of the occupation of the development.

Members commented on the access for agricultural vehicles to the farm site. Concerns were expressed regarding the access for increasingly larger tractors. The Principal Planning Officer set out the position of the highway authority as the technical consultee in terms of volume and the passage of agricultural traffic.

The Principal Planning Officer gave a detailed summary of the flood situation in that the site was in flood zone 1 with the lowest risk of flooding. She said that a small amount of surface water flooding occurred at the southern end of the site. The flooding and drainage scheme indicatively agreed by the lead local flood authority took account of this and a more detailed scheme was required by the conditions.

Members were further advised that, due to the Council's lack of a demonstrable five-year housing land supply, the relevant local plan policies for the supply of housing were considered to be out of date. In those circumstances, the Council was expected to grant planning permission for

residential development unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

At this point in the meeting 21:50 (9:50 pm), Councillor Watson (Chair) proposed, and Councillor Thomas seconded, a motion that the meeting continue for 30 minutes past 10 pm, until 10:30 pm.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED - that the meeting continue for 30 minutes past 10 pm, until 10:30 pm.

Members raised concerns about the sustainability of the site and the potential archaeological impact of the proposed development. In particular, they queried the degree of negative weight that should be applied in relation to heritage impacts.

In response, the Principal Planning Officer advised that the County Archaeologist had indicated the site may contain heritage assets of archaeological interest. However, a geophysical survey had not identified any significant subsurface remains. As such, no indicative substantial harm had been identified, and the consultee advised that any potential impacts could be appropriately managed through planning conditions.

The Legal Adviser set out the position regarding the titled balance and referred to the legal framework that Members should apply when determining applications. She said that the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out at paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework, meant that the local plan policies were out of date due to the lack of a 5-year housing land supply.

The Legal Adviser said that the council was expected to

grant permission for residential schemes unless those adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies of the NPPF.

The Legal Adviser said that Officers had therefore advised that considerable weight must be afforded to the NPPF, the tilted balance considerations, and the acknowledged housing land supply shortfall when Members carried out the necessary weighting and balancing of the policy considerations.

Councillor Watson (Chair) proposed, and Councillor Dunlop seconded, a motion that application 3/24/0091/FUL be granted planning permission subject to the conditions set out at the end of the report, and subject to the following amendment regarding the wording condition 38:

38. Prior to first occupation, provision of facilities for cycle storage should include details of how power would be provided to the location of that cycle storage provision.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that application 3/24/0091/FUL be granted planning permission subject to the conditions set out at the end of the report, and subject to the following amendment regarding condition 38:

38. Prior to first occupation, provision of facilities for cycle storage should include details of how power would be provided to the location of that cycle storage provision.

410 ITEMS FOR REPORTING AND NOTING

RESOLVED – that the following reports be noted:

- (A) Appeals against refusal of planning permission / non-determination;
- (B) Planning Appeals lodged;
- (C) Planning Performance Information.

411 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

412 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC (IF REQUIRED)

There was no urgent part two business.

The meeting closed at 10.08 pm

Chairman
Date