

Development Management

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DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT FORUM (DMF) BRIEFING NOTE FOR MEMBERS

Time / Date of meeting: 19:00 21st April 2026

Venue: Council Chamber, EHDC offices, Wallfields, Hertford

Reference: 3/25/1949/FUL

Address: Land At Old River Lane, The Causeway, East Hertfordshire, CM23 2EN

Proposal: Full planning application for mixed-use development comprising up to 171 no. residential units (including 48 no. affordable units) (use class C3), community use (use class E / F2), retail and commercial (use class E) and Public Square (sui generis), the creation of new and improvements to existing streets, footpaths and cycle lanes, and associated works (including car and cycle parking, landscaping, drainage works)

Case Officer: Scott Hackner

Background:

The above application was submitted on 15 December 2025. Neighbour consultation letters and letters to statutory consultees have been sent out and a range of consultation comments have been received, including the petition which is the subject of this Development Management Forum (DMF). The petition is summarised below and can be viewed on the Councils website: [ePetition](#)

DMF Procedure:

The purpose of the DMF is a meeting where residents can present their views to councillors, planning officers and the applicant early in the planning application process prior to a decision on the planning application. The aim of the forum (as set out in the website link below) is to allow early, constructive discussion of the planning issues raised by residents and to explore the scope for building consensus and resolving concerns.

<https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/planning-and-building/development-management-forum>

The Forum is an informal meeting, and the forum does not determine the application. The decision on planning applications is determined by the Council's Development Management Committee or through delegation to officers.

Development Management Committee (DMC) and Local/County Council Members can use the meeting to listen and observe the discussions between residents, stakeholders and the developer team in order to:

- improve their understanding of the development, its background and the planning policy position and the relevance of the key planning policies and guidance. *[For DMC Members – this will enable them to gain a greater understanding of the planning context in advance of any subsequent planning committee].*
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- understand the planning issues ‘most’ important to local people.
- hear from the applicants and observe a presentation of the scheme.
- direct questions towards the developer as to how they have sought/are seeking to address the issues raised by the public, stakeholders or the planning authority as part of the planning process.

Members can seek advice from planning officers with regards to the processes and the planning policy background, and the content of any consultation responses submitted as part of the planning application. They are advised not to ask planning officers for a formal or binding view on the proposals.

Members should not use the Forum to undertake negotiations or appear to put undue pressure on the officers in relation to any future decision on the scheme. Members are however entitled to question developers, residents or planning officers to fully understand issues presented at the Forum.

Members of the Development Management Committee should be aware that if they wish to participate in any future Development Management Committee Meeting to determine the application, they should approach the debate within this DMF meeting with an open mind and avoid having a predetermined view on the application.

Site Description, Surroundings and Designations:

The application site is located within the town centre of Bishop’s Stortford. The site measures circa 1.27ha in area and comprises a Council operated carpark called the “Causeway Car Park” (closed since June 2022) and an extensive building known as Charrington House. The southern and eastern parts of the site are occupied by Charringtons House, which is an office complex and associated parking area. East Herts District Council previously occupied part of the Charringtons House, however this is now vacant and redundant.

The area surrounding the application site is characterised by typical town centre land uses, covering a mix of retail, offices/services, restaurants, and community facilities. South of the site is the Jackson Square Shopping Centre (currently under refurbishment and reconfiguration as it fronts the site), to the west traditional main street style shop fronts typify the built scale and character, and to the east (opposite side of Link Road) is Castle Gardens, Sworder’s Field and the River Stort. Coopers of Stratford Department Store occupies a prominent position at the site’s South-Western corner. Waitrose supermarket and associated parking also form the western boundary to the northern part of the site. The red line of the site incorporates a number of car parking spaces from Waitrose in order to reconfigure the car park and new access point. To the west of the site is the United Reformed Church Hall (a hall with additional rooms) that are used and hired for events and local groups.

The site is located in a sustainable location, with a range of services and facilities located within walking distance. Details of the key facilities are below:

- Coopers of Stortford (Home and Garden store) – opposite to the site;
 - Jacksons Square shopping centre – opposite the site;
 - Waitrose & Partners Bishops Stortford – adjacent to the site;
 - Castle Gardens sports and recreation facilities – 0.1 miles;
 - Bupa Dental Care – 0.1 miles;
 - A range of restaurants – within 0.1 miles;
 - Bishops Stortford Police Station – 0.2 miles; and
 - St Michael’s Church – 0.2 miles
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. The site is subject to the following designations:

- Within the designated Bishop’s Stortford Conservation Area;
- In proximity to a number of statutory listed building;
- Is in Flood Zone 2/3 (medium to high probability) and identified as being at risk of surface water flooding;
- Is covered by Bishop's Stortford Neighbourhood Plan Review for Silverleys and Meads Area Neighbourhood Plan;
- Within the Hatfield Zone of Influence;
- Within Areas of Archaeological Significance;
- In proximity to Historic Parks and Gardens;
- Within the Bishop's Stortford Article 4 Direction; and
- Within the Town Centre Boundary;

Relevant Planning History

Reference No.	Proposal	Decision	Decision Date
3/22/2571/OUT	Outline planning application (with all matters reserved apart from layout and access) for mixed-use development of 5 development plots and sub-plots comprising retail (use class E), commercial (use class E) and up to 225 no. residential units (including up to 75 no. extra care units) (all use class C3), along with an Arts Centre (comprising leisure, community, and ancillary uses and facilities) (sui generis), the creation of new and improvements to existing streets, footpaths and public spaces, and associated works (including car parking, landscaping, drainage works).	Application Withdrawn by Applicant/Agent	6th September 2023

Background and Planning Policies

The application site is located within the town centre of Bishops Stortford and defined settlement boundary. The site is allocated within the East Herts District Plan 2018 as Policy BISH8, which establishes a comprehensive masterplan to transform this town centre location into a vibrant, mixed-use extension of Bishop’s Stortford. This strategic framework prioritises design and integrating around 100 new homes with a central civic hub and a high-quality public square that bridges the gap between the historic high street and Castle Gardens. By focusing on sustainable connectivity and sensitive architecture within the Conservation Area, the masterplan aims to deliver essential community infrastructure—including potential healthcare and flexible workspaces—while revitalising the town’s cultural and evening economy and delivering positive transformational change.

The Old River Lane allocated site is undergoing comprehensive masterplanning designed to align with the Supplementary Planning Document whilst addressing site constraints and town-wide impacts. Following a June public consultation, the Steering Group refined the masterplan on the 12th May

2025 and 22 July 2025, reviewing feedback on key proposals that include circa 170 new homes, improved connectivity to Castle Gardens, and a pedestrian-prioritized public square.

Notes of the Steering Group meetings can be found here:

- [Steering Group Minutes - 12 May 2025](#)
- [Steering Group Minutes - 22 July 2025](#)

In addition, a Design Review Panel (DRP) convened on 27th August 2025 to evaluate the latest architectural proposals and masterplanning strategies for the project. During the session, the independent panel of experts scrutinised the design's alignment with local planning standards and sustainability goals, providing detailed feedback on the massing, layout, and integration of the proposed structures. The reviewers engaged in a structured dialogue with the project's design team, ultimately issuing a set of advisory recommendations intended to refine the scheme's quality and enhance its potential.

The following District Plan policies and guidance would also be relevant as part of any future application proposals:

- Policy BISH 8 can be view [here](#);
- Old River Lane SPD (2022) can be viewed [here](#);
- The adopted Bishop's Stortford Neighbourhood Plan Review for Silverleys and Meads Area Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the Development Plan can be view [here](#).

Key Issues:

The issues/comments which have been identified as part of the petition to be discussed at the DMF are summarised as follows:

- Housing Density;
 - Parking Pressures – namely providing a reduced level/car lite scheme;
 - Town and Visual Landscape Assessment viewpoints;
 - Heritage Impacts – Conservation Area, Listed buildings and Historic Parks and Gardens;
 - Drainage and flood risk position;
 - Aspects of design – including height, scale and massing;
 - Landscaping strategy – including changes to elements proposed in the Public Square;
 - Sustainable Transport – including access and movement and increasing pedestrian and cycle access and connectivity;
 - Financial Viability Appraisal - affordable housing shortfall;
 - Masterplan Endorsement – planning application policy compliant; and
 - The Development Management Committee should meet in Bishop's Stortford when it considers the application
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