
Planning Committee MINUTES

Of a meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on Thursday, 22 January 2026 from 7.30 - 10.00 pm

Present: Councillors Chris Whately-Smith (Chair), Elinor Gazzard, Oliver Cooper, Steve Drury, Philip Hearn, Chris Lloyd, Abbas Merali, Chris Mitchell, Debbie Morris and Tom Smith

Also in Attendance:

Parish Councillor Jon Bishop (Chorleywood Parish Council), County Councillor Paula Hiscocks (Rickmansworth West), Parish Councillor Kingsley Jolowicz (Croxley Green Parish Council), Parish Councillor Stephen Mander (Batchworth Community Council), Councillor Paul Rainbow, Councillor Ciaràn Reed and Councillor Narinder Sian

Officers in Attendance:

Matthew Barnes, Principal Lawyer - Planning
James Dale, Area Development Management Manager, HCC
Emma Lund, Senior Committee Officer
Matthew Roberts, Development Management Team Leader
Kimberley Rowley, Head of Regulatory Services
Claire Westwood, Development Management Team Leader
Claire Wilson, Principal Planning Officer

PC76/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Harry Davies, who was substituted by Councillor Tom Smith, and from Councillor Stephen King.

PC77/25 MINUTES

The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 11 December 2025 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

PC78/25 NOTICE OF URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

PC79/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Liberal Democrat Group declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda items 10 (18 Greenways, Abbots Langley), 11 (39-41 High Street, Abbots Langley) and 13 (10 Oak Green, Abbots Langley) as the agent is a member of the authority and a member of the Liberal Democrat Group.

Councillor Cooper stated, in relation to agenda item 9 (Three Rivers House, Northway, Rickmansworth), that the application was brought to the committee in large part due to a

complaint which he had made regarding the flying of flags and a subsequent request for enforcement action which he had made. Whilst these matters did not form part of the application before the committee, Councillor Cooper declared for clarity that he was considering the application with an open mind.

Councillor Lloyd declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 5 (Land to North of Little Green Lane, Croxley Green) as a governor at Little Green Junior School.

PC80/25 24/2073/OUT - OUTLINE APPLICATION: DEVELOPMENT OF UP TO 600 RESIDENTIAL DWELLINGS (USE CLASS C3(A)), CONSTRUCTION OF A 5-BEDROOM PROPERTY FOR CHILDRENS SOCIAL CARE AND SUPPORTED LIVING (USE CLASS C3(B)). TWO VEHICULAR ACCESS POINTS FROM LITTLE GREEN LANE AND FURTHER PEDESTRIAN / CYCLEWAY ACCESSES. A ONE FORM ENTRY PRIMARY SCHOOL (USE CLASS F1(A)) (PLUS EXPANSION LAND FOR A TWO FORM ENTRY PRIMARY SCHOOL). A MIXED USE LOCAL CENTRE INCLUDING PROVISION FOR NHS HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SERVICES (USE CLASS E(E)), COMMUNITY BUILDING (USE CLASS F2), RETAIL AND CAFE PROVISION (USE CLASS E(A-C)), CAR PARKING AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE. A COUNTRY PARK, AREAS FOR PLAY AND RECREATION, ALLOTMENTS, COMMUNITY ORCHARD AND LANDSCAPING WITH ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE INCLUDING SUSTAINABLE URBAN DRAINAGE SYSTEMS. (LAYOUT, SCALE, APPEARANCE AND LANDSCAPE AS RESERVED MATTERS) AT LAND TO NORTH OF LITTLE GREEN LANE, CROXLEY GREEN WD3 3SP

The application was an outline application for development of up to 600 residential dwellings (Use Class C3(a)), construction of a 5-bedroom property for children's social care and supported living (Use Class C3(b)). Two vehicular access points from Little Green Lane and further pedestrian / cycleway accesses. A one form entry primary school (Use Class F1(a)) (plus expansion land for a two form entry primary school). A mixed use local centre including provision for NHS health and social care services (Use Class E(e)), community building (Use Class F2), retail and cafe provision (Use Class E(a-c)), car parking and associated infrastructure. A country park, areas for play and recreation, allotments, community orchard and landscaping with associated infrastructure including sustainable urban drainage systems. (Layout, scale, appearance and landscape as reserved matters) at Land To North Of Little Green Lane, Croxley Green.

The Planning Officer reported that since publication of the agenda, eight further objections had been received. These had reiterated objections previously received and summarised in the committee report at section 4.1.5.

Ten further comments in support had been received. These had also reiterated comments previously received and summarised in the committee report at section 4.1.5.

One further comment had been received, which made recommendations to ensure that planning gain measures were secured in the long term. The Heads of Terms sought were summarised in the committee report; however, the S106 agreement would be prepared following the committee meeting in the event of approval.

The Planning Officer also reported that since publication of the agenda Hertfordshire County Council Growth & Infrastructure had provided further comments in relation to the following matters:

- Primary Education Contribution: a revision to the contribution from £5,883,141 as set out in the table at 7.20, to £6,289,830 was sought. HCC advised that this figure had been verified and was to reflect a bespoke cost for a 1FE primary school with nursery. The applicant was aware of, and accepted, the revised contribution.
- Provision of a Primary School: HCC had noted that the exact location and detailed design of the primary school site would be agreed at a later stage. Confirmation was provided

that HCC was satisfied that the land allocated was of sufficient size to deliver a school and raised no objection to the allocation of the potential school site identified within the parameter plan subject to it conforming to HCC's land specification requirements.

- Children's Home: HCC had clarified that the S106 should include the requirement that "The unit must be built at a location, and to a specification, that is to the satisfaction of the County Council".
- Waste Service Transfer Station contribution (item 5 in the table at 7.20.2): the figure should be index linked to BCIS 1Q2024 (not 3Q2024).

The Planning Officer highlighted that the application included a mixed use local centre which would include provision for NHS health and social care services. In order to ensure that it was used for this purpose only, an additional planning condition was recommended which would require that the building comprising the NHS health and social care services was not used for any other purpose and was occupied exclusively by a General Practice and/or Community Providers for the delivery of National Health Service General Medical Services and shall not at any time be used for private health uses or any other uses.

The Planning Officer summarised that the recommendation should be updated to include this additional condition, as well as amendments to the Heads of Terms table at 7.20 to include the revised primary education contribution and correction to the indexation relating to Waste Transfer Station.

A member of Croxley Green Residents' Association spoke against the application.

A speaker from Just Build Homes spoke in favour of the application.

Parish Councillor Kingsley Jolowicz of Croxley Green Parish Council spoke on the application.

Councillor Ciaràn Reed spoke on the application.

Councillor Paul Rainbow spoke on the application.

Matters raised by speakers against the proposal included: the lack of a viability assessment to protect the quality of the development; that the site location is Green Belt and not Grey Belt and would result in a harmful impact on the Green Belt; encroachment and urban sprawl and the impact of the scale of the development on Croxley Green; lack of compliance with the Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan; potential impact on the Whippendell Wood SSSI; lack of community satisfaction with the proposal as evidenced by the number of objections submitted; impact on the setting of Durrants House, a heritage asset; highways implications arising from the volume of traffic which the development would generate and a lack of assessment of current travel patterns from neighbouring areas; the unsustainable nature of the site location; and deficiency in the amount of on-site parking and the resulting likelihood of displaced parking.

Points raised by speakers in favour of the proposal included: the benefits which would arise from the provision of affordable housing and the high level of need for affordable housing within the district, and the benefits to be provided by the primary school, medical centre, country park, and childrens' social care facilities as well as other community amenities.

The Planning Officer provided responses and clarifications, which included:

- There was only a very small shortfall in the proposed level of parking (13 spaces from a total of 175) against the council's existing standard, but the parking provision exceeded the standard in the emerging Local Plan by 23 spaces. The site layout would be considered at a later date as part of the reserved matters application. The illustrative

masterplan which accompanied the application was only indicative of how the parking could be accommodated at the site.

- The Stage 4 Green Belt Review was a draft document. Whilst it was helpful in informing decisions at a strategic level, it had limited weight in relation to the site specific assessment. Whilst the site was currently free from development, it was bounded by Little Green Lane and the existing development of Croxley Green beyond that to the south, by Rousebarn Lane and Whippendell Wood to the east, and by ancient woodland to the north and north west. These were considered to be physical features in reasonable proximity which would contain and restrict development, and this had contributed towards informing the officers' assessment that the site met the NPPF definition of Grey Belt. The Planning Officer summarised other reasons for officers' judgement of the site as Grey Belt, which were set out in full in the officer report.
- In relation to heritage considerations, the report had identified that there would be less than substantial harm to the setting of the listed Durrants House. However, it was considered that the public benefits of the proposal outweighed the level of less than substantial harm, as set out in the report.
- In relation to any potential impact on the Whippendell Wood SSSI, Hertfordshire Ecology had requested conditions in order to make the development acceptable in planning terms. Subject to these, it did not object to the proposal.

Committee Members asked questions about the detail of the application which were responded to by officers. The Committee's discussions included the following:

- The council had a very limited supply of land for housing, and there was a significant need for housing. A Committee Member commented that housing had recently been delivered at a number of other sites, and further sites would also be coming forward.
- The existing public footpath at the site would be retained, although it would likely be subject to increased use. A financial contribution was being sought to mitigate this. The Planning Officer clarified that the site was an agricultural field and did not currently comprise publicly accessible open space. However, the application proposed an area of c.60% as open space, resulting in an increase in public accessibility.
- In relation to the proposed contribution of c£1m towards lifts at Croxley Underground Station to improve accessibility, the Planning Officer clarified that the overall cost of the project had been assessed by TfL as c£15m. The contribution being sought was 7.1% of this figure, as the development was expected to result in a 7.1% increase in usage. Several Committee Members considered that this contribution was too low, given both the overall cost of the lift replacement project and the additional stress which would be placed on the existing infrastructure at the station and the general underground network.
- Committee Members endorsed comments made by speakers that the site did not represent a sustainable location, particularly in relation to the distance from the station. Concern was expressed about the impact of traffic on neighbouring roads; the impact and risks of construction traffic, particularly where there was parking on the road; a recommendation that a 20mph speed limit should be implemented in Croxley Green on the Baldwins Lane side; how a bus service, if delivered, would be maintained going forward; assurance that the contribution towards the lift at Croxley Green station would be used as intended and that the project could be delivered in a timely way; and where bus stops would be located. The Hertfordshire County Council Development Management Manager responded to these and other points in detail. Points noted included that: (i) the bus service would be 'pump primed' for 5 years initially, with the intention that routes linking the new and existing communities would subsequently become commercially viable. Bus passes would form part of the residents' welcome pack with a view to encouraging use; (ii) it was acknowledged that there was generalised

traffic congestion, particularly at peak times. However, this was not unique either to the district or this site location. The NPPF required an assessment of the impact of development traffic rather than seeking to solve an existing situation. Whilst residents' concerns about an increase in traffic was understood, the levels predicted by the applicant had been assessed robustly and were considered to be accurate, and the widths of the existing roads were considered sufficient to accommodate it. Various traffic calming measures were being investigated in order to maintain the current low vehicle speeds; (iii) HCC was accelerating its 20mph strategy across the county and Croxley Green was on the list for consideration when funding was available; (iv) development of the bus service had been considered at a strategic level initially; details of how the service could operate to ensure maximum usage and the location of the stops would be determined once it was tendered; and (v) construction traffic routing would be subject to a planning condition.

- Additional comments made in relation to travel planning and transport included that assessment of the site as Grey Belt meant that 'necessary improvements to local or national infrastructure' were required rather than simply mitigation of harm; that too much weight was given to a modal shift towards people using buses or Beryl bikes; and that TfL's calculation of a contribution based on a 7.1% increase in usage should take account of the burden across the whole of the infrastructure, rather than only the step free access.
- A Committee Member commented that whilst the provision of First Homes was no longer an obligation, the First Homes scheme represented a better affordable housing proposal than shared ownership. The Planning Officer clarified that the proposal exceeded the requirements of Policy CP4 of the Adopted Core Strategy in relation to the amount of affordable housing and was also in accordance with the emerging Local Plan. The council's Housing Officer was satisfied that the tenure mix met the requirements of the district.
- The provision of a medical centre at the site, involving a centralisation of services and the closure of existing GP surgeries, was not considered by several Committee Members to represent a benefit. Whilst weight in support had been given by officers, a number of Committee Members considered that it would be harmful and would result in residents having to travel greater distances to access services.
- Committee Members also drew attention to concerns about the ability of the existing infrastructure to support the development (particularly in relation to water); and the impact (including to the sub-structure of trees) arising from more intensive use of the adjacent woodland.
- In relation to the issue of whether the site was Green Belt or Grey Belt, a Committee Member summarised that different tests needed to be applied in each case. In the event that the site were Grey Belt it would need to meet the tests set out at paragraph 155 of the NPPF. If these were not met then the proposal would comprise inappropriate development in the Green Belt. In debate it was considered that the proposal did not meet purpose (d) as set out at paragraph 155 of the NPPF, as the 'Golden Rules' requirements had not been met due to the lack of any improvement to infrastructure. In the event that the site were not Grey Belt it would by definition comprise inappropriate development in the Green Belt, to which great weight needed to be attached. Following debate Committee Members considered that the site made a strong contribution to purpose (a) of Paragraph 155 of the NPPF and that it constituted a Green Belt site on this basis; additionally, that the proposal would result in harm to openness and conflict with purposes (a) and (c) of the Green Belt.
- A Committee Member suggested that the following revised weightings should be given in considering the planning balance:

Need for housing – significant weight.

Need for affordable housing – significant weight.

'Golden Rules' – no weight, as the development would fail to improve local and national infrastructure.

A new 1FE primary school – limited weight, as existing primary schools within the area were currently under-subscribed.

New public open space and country park - limited weight, as there was already an open public right of way across part of the site.

Provision of NHS health and social care services - limited to no weight, due to the harm to the make-up of GP services in the area.

Provision of supported living for vulnerable children – the need for services within the county is accepted; however, the proposal may represent over-provision given the size of the development. It was therefore queried if moderate weight was appropriate.

Provision of a local centre - moderate weight. However, due to the distance involved and difficulty in travelling to it the benefit to those who did not directly live in the development would be limited.

Provision of sports facilities and play - limited weight.

Low carbon development – moderate weight may be appropriate if the development exceeded the requirements of the Local Plan.

Biodiversity net gain – it was queried whether moderate weight was appropriate, as it is a statutory requirement for a development of this size.

Delivery of sustainable and active travel options and a new bus service – limited weight.

Economic benefits – limited to moderate weight. Out of area contractors would likely be needed to deliver the project, and therefore the economic benefits would be dispersed.

The Planning Officer confirmed that the application exceeded the mandatory requirements for biodiversity net gain and the requirements of the Local Plan policies in relation to sustainable development; and that the level of provision of supported living for vulnerable children was supported by the County Council. On that basis Members agreed with the moderate weighting attached by officers to those considerations.

In debate, other Committee Members endorsed the revised weightings outlined above.

Councillor Drury moved, and Councillor Mitchell seconded, that the application be refused for the following reasons:

- (1) The development would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt, harms openness and conflicts with purposes (a) and (c) of the Green Belt. Very special circumstances would not exist to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and any other harm identified.
- (2) The intensification of use from the development would harm adjacent woodland.
- (3) In the absence of a S106 agreement, failure to secure infrastructure contributions.

The final refusal wording would be circulated to Committee Members separately.

On being put to the vote this was carried, the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED: that the application be refused for the following reasons:

- (1) The development would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt, harms openness and conflicts with purposes (a) and (c) of the Green Belt. Very special circumstances would not exist to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and any other harm identified.
- (2) The intensification of use from the development would harm adjacent woodland.

(3) In the absence of a S106 agreement, failure to secure infrastructure contributions.

PC81/25 25/0195/FUL: DEMOLITION OF EXISTING DWELLING AND CONSTRUCTION OF DETACHED BUILDING CONTAINING 5 RESIDENTIAL FLATS, WITH ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPING, PROVISION OF NEW VEHICULAR ACCESS, CAR PARKING, CYCLE AND REFUSE STORAGE AT 80 THE DRIVE, RICKMANSWORTH, HERTS WD3 4DU

The application was for demolition of existing dwelling and construction of detached building containing 5 residential flats, with associated landscaping, provision of new vehicular access, car parking, cycle and refuse storage at 80 The Drive, Rickmansworth.

The Planning Officer provided an update that officers had been in discussion with the applicant's agent through the application process in order to try to address concerns raised. Amended plans had been submitted and accepted by the Local Planning Authority (LPA). However, whilst some issues had been resolved officers remained concerned about the impact of the development on protected trees and therefore the application was recommended for refusal. An initial extension of time was agreed by the agent however this was not extended to accommodate the Planning Committee meeting.

Following publication of the agenda the LPA received notification that an appeal had been lodged by the applicant against its failure to give notice of its decision within the appropriate period.

The Planning Officer clarified that as an appeal against non-determination had been made the Council was no longer able to determine the application. However, in order for the LPA to provide its Statement of Case to the Planning Inspectorate in due course it was necessary for the Planning Committee to still consider the application and consider how it would have determined the application had an appeal against non-determination not been lodged.

Due to time constraints it was agreed to defer the item to a future meeting.

PC82/25 25/1671/FUL – VARIATION OF CONDITIONS 2 (PLANS) AND 25 (OBSCURE WINDOWS) PURSUANT TO PLANNING PERMISSION 22/1148/FUL TO ALLOW ALTERATIONS TO FENESTRATION DETAILING, OMISSION OF TERRACE BALCONIES, ADDITION OF AOV ROOFLIGHTS AND SUBMISSION OF HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPING DETAILS INCLUDING LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT AT BEESONS YARD, BURY LANE, RICKMANSWORTH, HERTS.

This item was deferred to a future meeting.

PC83/25 25/1722/RSP – PART RETROSPECTIVE: CONSTRUCTION OF TWO OUTBUILDINGS AND ALTERATIONS TO REAR LAND LEVELS AND LANDSCAPING WORKS AT 38 MOOR LANE, RICKMANSWORTH, HERTFORDSHIRE WD3 1LG

This item was deferred to a future meeting.

PC84/25 25/1754/ADV - ADVERTISING CONSENT: DISPLAY OF FLAGS AT THREE RIVERS HOUSE, NORTHWAY, RICKMANSWORTH, HERTFORDSHIRE WD3 1RL

This item was deferred to a future meeting.

PC85/25 25/1987/FUL - CONSTRUCTION OF PART-SINGLE, PART-TWO STOREY SIDE AND REAR EXTENSIONS AND SINGLE STOREY SIDE EXTENSION AT 18 GREENWAYS, ABBOTS LANGLEY, HERTFORDSHIRE WD5 0EU

This item was deferred to a future meeting.

PC86/25 25/2091/RSP – RETROSPECTIVE: CONSTRUCTION OF SINGLE STOREY REAR EXTENSION AT 39 - 41 HIGH STREET, ABBOTS LANGLEY, HERTFORDSHIRE WD5 0AA

This item was deferred to a future meeting.

PC87/25 25/2102/FUL - ERECTION OF A TIMBER PERGOLA AT CROXLEY GUILD BOWLS CLUB, THE GREEN, CROXLEY GREEN, RICKMANSWORTH, HERTFORDSHIRE WD3 3HT

This item was deferred to a future meeting.

PC88/25 25/2150/FUL - EXTENSION OF EXISTING CROSSOVER AND ALTERATIONS TO DRIVEWAY AT 10 OAK GREEN, ABBOTS LANGLEY, HERTFORDSHIRE WD5 OPG.

This item was deferred to a future meeting.

CHAIR