
Planning Committee MINUTES

**Of a meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on
Thursday, 10 September 2026 from 7.30 - 8.42 pm**

Present: Councillors Chris Whately-Smith (Chair), Elinor Gazzard, Oliver Cooper,
Stephen Cox, Chris Mitchell, Tom Smith and Reena Ranger OBE

Also in Attendance:

Parish Councillor Diana Barber (Batchworth Community Council) and Councillor Lisa Hudson

Officers in Attendance:

Emma Lund, Senior Committee Officer
Matthew Roberts, Development Management Team Leader
Kimberley Rowley, Head of Regulatory Services
Claire Wilson, Principal Planning Officer

PC173/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Debbie Morris, Krutika Patel (who had been expected as a substitute) and Raj Khiroya.

PC174/26 MINUTES

The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 20 August 2026 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

PC175/26 NOTICE OF URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

PC176/26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Liberal Democrat Group declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 6 (26/0885/FUL – Allotment Land, Newport Mead, South Oxhey) as the agent is a member of the authority and a member of the Liberal Democrat Group.

PC177/26 26/0520/FUL – ERECTION OF THREE BUILDINGS COMPRISING SIX NEW INDUSTRIAL UNITS (USE CLASSES B2/B8 E (G) (III) AT WOODCOCK HILL INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, HAREFIELD ROAD, RICKMANSWORTH

The application was for erection of three buildings comprising six new industrial units (Use Classes B2/B8 E (g) (iii) at Woodcock Hill Industrial Estate, Harefield Road, Rickmansworth.

The Planning Officer reported that a correction was required to paragraph 7.6.8 of the report, which should refer to a Section 278 agreement (not a Section 28 agreement). Additionally,

Condition 16 should be amended to update the reference number of the Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Condition 17 should be amended to require the soft landscaping scheme to be submitted prior to the first occupation of the buildings rather than prior to development taking place.

Councillor Lisa Hudson spoke on the application.

Parish Councillor Diana Barber of Batchworth Community Council spoke on the application.

Points raised by speakers against the application included the constrained nature of Harefield Road and access issues; impact on the character of the industrial estate which currently operates quietly and is located in a highly sensitive natural setting; concerns about delivery vehicle size, frequency of deliveries and intensification of use; concerns about hazardous material disturbance during development; lack of information regarding foul water or surface water drainage; lack of clarity about the proposed use of the buildings and their potential height; and parking issues.

In responding to points raised by the speakers, the Planning Officer confirmed that Hertfordshire County Council had been consulted on a number of occasions during the application process and had not objected to the proposal on highways safety grounds. Whilst Harefield Road was a narrow road, policy TR6.4 of the NPPF emphasised that applications could only be refused on highways safety grounds where there would be a severe adverse impact on the transport network. Officers did not therefore consider that there were grounds to substantiate refusal on the basis of highways safety. A pre-commencement Construction Management Plan would be conditioned, which Hertfordshire Highways would also be consulted on.

In relation to the concerns raised about contamination, the Planning Officer reported that the Environment Agency, Affinity Water, Environmental Health and Thames Water had all been consulted and had not objected to the application, subject to a significant number of conditions which were set out in the officer report and which would be discharged in consultation with those consultees in their capacity as the professional bodies responsible for managing contamination risk. Contamination risks were therefore considered to be satisfactorily managed.

In relation to the location of the site in the Green Belt, the Planning Officer clarified the site location was an established industrial site and was also enclosed. The buildings proposed within the application were not significantly high and were not considered to be out of character with the surrounding buildings which were generally of two storeys. There would therefore not be a substantial harm taking into account the wider site surroundings. The application was therefore considered to meet the test for falling within the exception for inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

With regard to the off-site highways works, the applicant would be required to enter into a Section 278 agreement with the Highways Authority with regard to details and implementation, and Condition 5 required these agreed details to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority before the commencement of works above slab level.

The Planning Officer also highlighted that the NPPF encouraged economic development, including in more rural locations. Given that there was a shortfall within the district, this was a further reason why officers were supportive of the application.

The agent spoke in favour of the application. Points raised included that the scheme fell within the previously developed land exception at policy GB 7.1 (e) of the NPPF and would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt; the scheme would deliver 6 new flexible industrial units and address unmet need for this type of space within the district; the buildings were of sustainable design; the proposal would offer employment opportunities, both in construction and following occupation; traffic at the site would comprise small vans and

cars, and not HGVs; and a suitable number of parking spaces reflecting the location and nature of the development were to be provided, with no opportunity for parking to be displaced outside the site.

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

- A Committee Member commented that several recent or current planning applications had sought to convert existing Class E or B2/B8 use to residential, which indicated that those landowners did not consider that there was a demand for buildings to accommodate those use classes. In light of this, officers were asked to clarify why it was considered that the application addressed unmet need for Class E or B2/B8 use. Officers responded that the Local Plan evidence work included a number of studies which demonstrated that there was an unmet need, and the scheme before the committee specifically proposed accommodation which would benefit smaller businesses. In addition, every site needed to be assessed in terms of its individual merits. Condition 22 specified the use class of the buildings and would prevent any future change of use without the grant of planning permission, and Condition 24 prevented the buildings being enlarged without the grant of planning permission. Another Committee Member commented that there had also been recent applications which had sought to provide Use Class E or B2/B8 accommodation, which was an indication that there was a demand for such buildings.
- In response to a question about hours of operation, the Planning Officer clarified that due to the length of time which they had been there, some of the units at the site did not have restrictions on operating hours. As the application before the committee offered the opportunity to condition hours of use for the new units, these were being proposed in order to allow a degree of control and to address concerns about potential disturbance to neighbouring residents. Proposed hours had been agreed with the applicant and were set out at Condition 23. Officers considered that a 10pm finish during the week was appropriate given the buildings' relatively small size, their location away from residential properties, and the woodland to the south of the site which would serve as a noise buffer for residential properties to the south. Hours of operation would be more restricted at weekends.
- In response to a question about parking, the Planning Officer clarified that the maximum shortfall was 4 spaces. Officers considered that looking at the application site as a whole and its wider setting, this would not result in sufficient harm to justify refusal. There would be no impact on the adjoining highway as there was no opportunity for overspill parking; a car parking management plan was conditioned; and no objections had been raised by Herts Highways in relation to highways safety.
- Committee Members considered that it would be beneficial if the applicant could tidy up the site as part of the development if granted permission, and that this should include removal of the boat and other paraphernalia at the site and on adjacent land.

Councillor Cox moved, and Councillor Whately-Smith seconded, that planning permission be granted subject to conditions and (i) amendment to condition 16 to update the reference number of the Arboricultural Impact Assessment and (ii) amendment to condition 17 to require the soft landscaping scheme to be submitted prior to the first occupation of the buildings.

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

RESOLVED:

That planning permission be granted subject to conditions and (i) amendment to condition 16 to update the reference number of the Arboricultural Impact Assessment and (ii) amendment to condition 17 to require the soft landscaping scheme to be submitted prior to the first occupation of the buildings.

PC178/26 26/0885/FUL - DEMOLITION OF EXISTING STRUCTURES AND ERECTION OF 1NO. DETACHED STORE/COMMUNITY BUILDING AND 2NO. POLYTUNNEL STRUCTURES FOR USE IN CONNECTION WITH EXISTING COMMUNITY ALLOTMENT AT ALLOTMENT LAND, NEWPORT MEAD, SOUTH OXHEY, HERTFORDSHIRE

Demolition of existing structures and erection of 1no. detached store/community building and 2no. polytunnel structures for use in connection with existing community allotment at Allotment Land, Newport Mead, South Oxhey.

It was noted that the application was before the Committee as the agent acting on behalf of the applicant is a Member of the Council, and the application site is owned by the Council.

The Planning Officer reported that there were no updates.

There were no speakers.

A Committee Member commented that the proposal would result in improvement to a currently unsightly area of community land.

Councillor Cooper moved, and Councillor Smith seconded, that planning permission be granted subject to conditions.

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

RESOLVED:

That planning permission be granted subject to conditions.

PC179/26 26/1064/FUL - INSTALLATION OF ONE SELF-SERVICE LAUNDRY KIOSK TO TESCO SUPERSTORE CURTILAGE AT TESCO SUPERSTORE, FROGMOOR WHARF, HAREFIELD ROAD, RICKMANSWORTH WD3 1LX AND 26/1065/ADV - ADVERTISEMENT CONSENT: INSTALLATION OF INTERNALLY ILLUMINATED FASCIA SIGN AT TESCO SUPERSTORE, FROGMOOR WHARF, HAREFIELD ROAD, RICKMANSWORTH WD3 1LX

The applications were for installation of one self-service laundry kiosk to Tesco Superstore curtilage and advertisement consent for installation of internally illuminated fascia sign at Tesco Superstore, Frogmoor Wharf, Harefield Road, Rickmansworth.

The Planning Officer reported that an amendment was required to Condition 3 of the planning application to remove the last line which referred to '*Any associated signage shall only be illuminated during these hours and shall be switched off at all other times*'. This was because control over signage illumination belonged within the advertisement consent. A separate condition was proposed to be added to the advertisement consent to control the timings of the illuminated signage to align with store hours. An additional condition was also suggested for the planning application to require the two benches which were currently situated where the kiosk was to be placed to be relocated prior to the first use of the kiosk.

Parish Councillor Diana Barber of Batchworth Community Council spoke on the applications.

Councillor Lisa Hudson spoke on the applications.

Concerns raised by speakers against the application included: visual impact and detriment to the street scene; noise nuisance for nearby residents; the setting of precedence by adding a further freestanding unit accommodating commercial activity on an already busy site; inappropriateness of the location of the kiosk, both in terms of the geographical location in Rickmansworth and also the location of the kiosk within the site itself; lack of supporting

documentation regarding regular maintenance or cleaning of the equipment; lack of benefit to residents; and light pollution arising from un-necessary illuminated signage.

In responding to the points raised, the Planning Officer clarified that Condition 3 permitted the operation of the machines at the kiosk between the hours of 06:00 and 23:00 Mondays to Saturdays, and 11:00 and 17:00 on Sundays and Bank Holidays. A programmable timer would prevent anyone from initiating a washing/drying cycle within 45 minutes of the store closure time, so that it would be completed in accordance with the permitted operating hours.

With regard to the illumined signage, it was clarified that the level of luminescence would be relatively low and that the signage would only be illuminated during store opening hours. Given that it would be located against the backdrop of a commercial setting with existing illumination and ancillary infrastructure, would be located underneath a canopy at a c55m distance from the properties opposite, and illumination would be limited to the store opening hours, it was not considered that it would be harmful to neighbouring amenity.

The agent spoke in favour of the application. Points raised included that it would provide a practical and accessible service for local residents, particularly those living in flats, rented accommodation, smaller homes or households without suitable washing and drying facilities; the machines could be used for larger loads such as duvets, blankets and other bulky items which may not fit in household machines; the proposed location was convenient, allowing customers to combine their laundry with an existing shopping trip; the kiosk was modest in scale, located within the established commercial car park and its design was appropriate for the setting; hours of operation and signage illumination would be aligned with the established activity and opening hours of the existing supermarket; use of the kiosk was not expected to generate significant additional traffic or attract groups of people congregating on the site; and recent noise tests had shown that the noise impact on nearby residents would be negligible given the distance of 50m to the closest residential properties.

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

- A Committee Member expressed concern about the relocation of the benches which would need to be moved in order to accommodate the kiosk. It was considered that were the benches to be sited adjacent to the kiosk, this may increase the likelihood that users may congregate, or sit and chat, thereby increasing noise levels.
- A Committee Member questioned whether there may be scope to locate the kiosk further to the west, so that it would not be visible either from the street or the houses on Harefield Road. However, it was noted that there were constraints arising from the site, including the narrowing of the pavement beyond the zebra crossing, and the crossing itself, which prevented this. Officers commented that from the applicant's perspective it was more beneficial from a commercial viewpoint for the kiosk to be visible, and that it was not considered to be unacceptable in the proposed location.

Councillor Whately-Smith moved, and Councillor Gazzard seconded, that planning application 26/1064/FUL be approved subject to conditions and with amendment to Condition 3 to remove the last line which referred to '*Any associated signage shall only be illuminated during these hours and shall be switched off at all other times*'.

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

Councillor Whately-Smith moved, and Councillor Mitchell seconded, that advertisement consent 26/1065/ADV be approved subject to conditions and with the addition of a condition to control the timings of the illuminated signage to align with store hours.

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

RESOLVED:

- (i) That planning application 26/1064/FUL be approved subject to conditions and with amendment to Condition 3 to remove the last line which referred to '*Any associated signage shall only be illuminated during these hours and shall be switched off at all other times*'; and
- (ii) That advertisement consent 26/1065/ADV be approved subject to conditions and with the addition of a condition to control the timings of the illuminated signage to align with store hours.

CHAIR