



Mark Youngman
Development Management Group Manager
Hertfordshire County Council
Postal Point CHN115
Farnham House
Six Hills Way
Stevenage
SG1 2ST

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

Director of Planning

Three Rivers District Council
Three Rivers House
Northway
Rickmansworth
Hertfordshire
WD3 1RL

District ref: 25/1020/OUT
HCC ref: TR/25536/2025
HCC received: 17 July 2025
Area manager: Alan Story
Case officer: Graham Burrell

Location

Land East Of Oxhey Lane, Oxhey Lane, Carpenders Park

Application type

Outline

Proposal

Outline planning application for up to 256 homes (C3 use class) (including affordable and self/custom build housing), housing with care (C2 use class), a children's home (for looked after children) (C2 use class) together with associated access (including off-site highway works), parking, open space and landscaping (appearance, layout, landscaping and scale as reserved matters)

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 reasons:

REASONS AND COMMENTS

Objections are raised against approval of this application for the following reasons:

- i. No audit has been provided on the quality of cycling and walking routes in the vicinity of the proposed development. The sustainability of the proposal has therefore not been properly evaluated. This is considered contrary to paragraphs 109-118 of the NPPF and Policies 1, 5, 6, 7 and 8 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan, 2018.

- ii. The lack of bus services in the vicinity of the site has not been addressed. This further questions the sustainability of the proposal. This is considered contrary to paragraphs 109-118 of the NPPF and Policies 1, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan, 2018.
- iii. Trip generation, distribution and assignments provided in the TA are not acceptable. This is considered contrary to paragraph 118 of the NPPF which requires a vision-led transport assessment so that the likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed and monitored.
- iv. No safety audit has been provided in respect to the two proposed new accesses. This is considered contrary to paragraph 118 of the NPPF which requires a vision-led transport assessment so that the likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed and monitored.
- v. No assessment has been made on the impact of the development on street trees. This is considered contrary to paragraph 118 of the NPPF which requires a vision-led transport assessment so that the likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed and monitored.
- vi. The TA does not provide a gradient profile for the proposed new road onto the A4008. This is considered contrary to paragraph 118 of the NPPF which requires a vision-led transport assessment so that the likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed and monitored.
- vii. Visibility splays from the junction are not provided in the TA. This is considered contrary to paragraph 118 of the NPPF which requires a vision-led transport assessment so that the likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed and monitored.
- viii. The proposed access onto the A4008 is considered contrary to policy 5(f) of HCC's Local Transport Plan, 2018.

Background

The application is for outline planning application for up to 256 homes (C3 use class) (including affordable and self/custom build housing), housing with care (C2 use class), a children's home (for looked after children) (C2 use class) together with associated access (including off-site highway works), parking, open space and landscaping (appearance, layout, landscaping and scale as reserved matters). A Transport Assessment (TA) has been provided to support the application.

As noted in the TA, HCC provided pre-application comments to the applicant earlier this year. These comments included the recommendation that "a scope for the TA is agreed with the highway authority prior to its preparation as part of its pre-application process". This was not however taken up by the applicant and no scope for the TA was agreed.

It is noted that the TA includes an "Illustrative Masterplan" for the site. No commentary is provided on this. This would be a matter for consideration as reserved matters post any approval of the current Outline application.

Policy

Relevant policy considerations include the NPPF and HCC's Local Transport Plan (LTP) 4 (2018).

LTP 4 Policy 1 (Transport User Hierarchy) considers that "To support the creation of built environments that encourage greater and safer use of sustainable transport modes, the county council will in the design of any scheme and development of any transport strategy consider in the following order:

- Opportunities to reduce travel demand and the need to travel

- Vulnerable road user needs (such as pedestrians and cyclists)
- Passenger transport user needs
- Powered two-wheeler (mopeds and motorbikes) user needs
- Other motor vehicle user needs."

LTP 4 Policy 5 (Development Management) states that 'The county council will to work with development promoters and the district and borough councils to:

- Ensure the location and design of proposals reflect the LTP Transport User Hierarchy and encourage movement by sustainable transport modes and reduced travel demand.
- Ensure access arrangements are safe, suitable for all people, built to an adequate standard and adhere to the county council's Highway Design Standards.
- Consider the adoption of access roads and internal road layouts where they comply with the appropriate adoption requirements and will offer demonstrable utility to the wider public. Where internal roads are not adopted the county council will expect suitable private management arrangements to be in place.
- Secure developer mitigation measures to limit the impacts of development on the transport network, and resist development where the residual cumulative impact of development is considered to be severe.
- Require a travel plan for developments according to the requirements of 'Hertfordshire's Travel Plan Guidance'.
- Only consider new accesses onto primary and main distributor roads where special circumstances can be demonstrated in favour of the proposals.
- Resist development that would either severely affect the rural or residential character of a road or other right of way, or which would severely affect safety on rural roads, local roads and rights of way especially for vulnerable road users.
- Ensure new developments provide facilities for charging plug-in and other Ultra Low Emission vehicles, as well as shared mobility solutions such as car clubs.

HCC LTP Policy 6 seeks to address accessibility. Policies 7 and 8 address walking and cycling respectively with policy 8 seeking a step change in cycling. Policy 9 seeks to promote and support bus services to encourage reduced car use.

Hertfordshire's Place and Movement Planning & Design Guidance was formally adopted in 2024 as a supporting document for HCC's Local Transport Plan.

Site

Oxhey Lane (A4008) is considered to be a P2/M2 road under P&MPDG, albeit this is queried by the applicant in the TA. It is categorised as a Main Distributor Road. It has street lighting and a 40mph speed limit. The TA states that "northbound 85th percentile speeds range from 34.4mph to 40.0mph, and southbound between 34.6mph and 41.3mph" with southbound and northbound 85th percentile speeds of 37-38 mph at the Automatic Traffic Counter (ATC 1) situated just south of Carpenders Avenue.

A public right of way – footpath Bushey 025 – starts opposite Carpenders Avenue in Oxhey Lane and provides a link to Merry Hill. Separate comments will be provided by HCC's Rights of Way team. Section 3.8 of the TA details casualty data in the area for the last five years one involving a cyclist. Two serious and two slight injury incidents are noted. Two incidents involving injury took place in Carpenders Avenue, and two in Oxhey Lane.

The TA states that "The two serious PIAs were both caused by driver error. One of these involved a speeding vehicle travelling east on Carpenders Avenue over the brow of a hill, and crashed into a vehicle heading west as they did not react in time due to irresponsible speeds. The other serious PIA occurred when a driver failed to look properly when pulling out of Carpenders Avenue onto Oxhey

Lane, resulting in sudden braking of a motorcyclist and a collision.” The TA further notes that “there does not appear to be any existing highway safety concern close to the site, that the proposed development traffic would be exacerbating”.

The site is about 1km from Carpenders Park railway station which has shops including a supermarket and pharmacy in its vicinity. Buses currently route via Carpenders Park railway station as indicated below.

Carpenders Avenue which links the site to the railway station is identified as a Key Walking Route in the LCWIP for this area.

Sustainability

Table 3.3 and Image 3.5 sets out the location of local facilities including a post office and food store at 800 metres. The applicant however appears not to have carried out a formal audit of the quality of local routes for cycling and walking in the vicinity of the site. This is a standard requirement for larger developments of this size. There are various methodologies for such an audit. HCC would not seek to be prescriptive in this respect. HCC’s P&MPDG states “An example of good practice is the Active Travel Zone methodology developed by TfL.”

The TA does reference the LCWIP identification of Carpenders Avenue as a key walking route with a suggestion of this being a potential planning obligation. It does not however provide any information on what it regards as necessary interventions in this respect. As noted below any such obligations need to be considered as Strand 1 obligations (HCC Guidance on Planning Obligation refers).

In respect to public transport, the TA notes that Carpenders Park railway station is about 1km from the site. It also notes that “the nearest bus stop is circa 700m.” HCC’s P&MPDG states an expectation all occupied parts of development should be within 400m walking distance of a bus stop or transport hub by public walking route”. The TA does not address this shortfall in bus accessibility.

In summary, the TA is considered inadequate in assessing the sustainability of the site. It does not provide a formal audit of the quality of cycling and walking routes in the vicinity of the site. The TA also notes excessive distances to access bus services but offers no possible interventions to address this. This is considered contrary to paragraph 118 of the NPPF which states a requirement for a “vision-led transport statement or transport assessment so that the likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed and monitored.” It is also contrary to Policies 1, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 of HCC’s Local Transport Plan 2018. An objection is raised in this respect.

To assist the applicant in their consideration of the bus stop accessibility HCC’s bus service team has noted a possible way of addressing bus service provision related to the proposed development. This might be useful for the applicant to consider. They have suggested a service to complement Service 328 from South Oxhey to Watford, extending it to the new site. The new service could operate from the site via A4008 and B4542 down to Prestwick Road, then via a variation of the current 328 into Watford. There could be an option of extending this up to Watford Junction. This is offered as one possible solution for the applicant to consider. Alternative proposals are welcomed and will be considered by our public transport team.

Access

A vehicular access is proposed directly onto the A4008. As noted above Policy 5(f) of HCC’s Local Transport Plan 2018 states that HCC as HA will “Only consider new accesses onto primary and main distributor roads where special circumstances can be demonstrated in favour of the proposals”. In this respect the proposal was considered by HCC’s Strategic Transport Infrastructure Board (STIB)

on 5 March 2025. The view of STIB was that on the basis that this site does not have Local Plan designation it should not be deemed to have special circumstances at the current time.

The TA states that “this policy must be taken in the context of the NPPF, whereby developments should be assessed against the four key tests as noted above.” Paragraph 2.4.1 of the TA states that “The NPPF identifies four key transport tests which can be summarised as follows:” This includes “Will the site layout comply with design guidance?”. In this respect, Hertfordshire’s Place and Movement, Planning & Design Guidance, 2024, clearly references policy 5(f).

The TA does not set out any special circumstances. An objection is therefore raised as the applicant has failed to demonstrate special circumstances; the application for an access onto the A4008 is therefore considered contrary to policy 5(f) of HCC’s Local Transport Plan, 2018.

In addition to the above, an emergency service access into the site from Oxhey Lane is proposed to the south of the existing care home.

No road safety audit (or Designer’s Response) has been provided. This is contrary to advice provided at pre-application stage and contrary to HCC’s P&MPDG. This is a necessary requirement. For this site, the TA also notes departures from standards in respect to intervisibility, which raises specific safety concerns.

The pre-application comments also drew especial attention to the need to consider whether any street trees would be affected by the applicant’s proposal. This appears not to have been addressed in the TA. HCC’s street tree strategy is located here:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/highways/plans-and-strategies/highway-tree-strategy-and-guidance-document.pdf>

Visibility splays from the proposed new junction are also not provided in the TA.

The gradient profile of the proposed new road onto the A4008 has not been provided.

Modelling of the proposed new junction arrangement is provided in the TA. The methodology for the trip generation, distribution and assignment for the proposed site was not agreed with HCC. The methodology used in the TA is not considered acceptable for the reasons stated below. The modelling is therefore regarded as premature.

It is noted that Hertfordshire’s Fire Service have provided separate comments on the proposed accesses and have not raised any issues at this stage.

Trip generation, distribution and assignment

The TA does not use the national standard trip data-base, TRICS, to provide a predicted number of trips by car. The TA justifies this by stating that “the site is unique in that it is not within the Greater London boundary, yet it has access to a regular London Overground service linking it to key destinations within Central London and Watford. There are very few sites within TRICS database with similar characteristics, and therefore a representative level of multi-modal trip rates may not be obtained from any multi-modal TRICS outputs.”

It is not accepted that the site’s location c.1km from a London Overground station “but not in London” makes this a unique site. Neither is it accepted that there are no TRICS sites with similar characteristics. It is noted that the railway line in question became a London Overground station in 2007 and prior to that offered a service to the capital like many other railway lines radiating out from London, which is still its function. The TA does not state why the change of this line from a

“Silverlink” service” to a “London Overground” service makes the applicant’s site “unique” or excludes an exercise in identifying sites with similar characteristics. As noted, HCC as highway authority encouraged the applicant to engage with it on the scoping of the TA prior to its preparation. This was not pursued by the applicant.

The TA goes further in its claim for the unique status of this site stating (in paragraph 6.4.1 that “the excellent public transport connections are of a different character to sites outside Greater London” requiring “bespoke multi-modal trip rates for this site.” The suggestion of “excellent public transport connections” is not though established in the TA. The railway station at 1km from the site entrance is in excess of 800 metres, a distance often defined as the distance for a “Walkable Neighbourhood”. Bus services are currently not available within the 400 metres detailed in HCC’s P&MPDG. It is difficult to see how the applicant considers the site to have “excellent public transport connections”. Reference to “excellent public transport” is often aligned to a PTAL rating of 6. If the applicant is making this specific claim, evidence should be provided to support this.

The “unique” status of this site claimed by the applicant is not considered as an acceptable basis for not deriving multi-modal trip rates from the industry standards TRICS database.

For noting, the trip generation set out in the TA pursues a route whereby total trips are derived from TRICS sites and then applying a TEMPro for modal split and trip purpose data. The view of HCC as highway authority does not accept a departure from the standard process of establishing vehicular trips directly from TRICS on the basis of proximity of a London Overground station. Further, the use of 2011 Census Journey is still considered to offer the best means of considering Journey to Work data, once account is taken of developments since 2011 and planned developments. The basis for dependence on what the TA terms “bespoke” multi-modal trip rates is not accepted.

The applicant should provide trip generation figures based on a methodology agreed with HCC as highway authority. The applicant might wish to validate this against their TEMPro and National Travel Survey approach.

Paragraphs 7.55 – 7.59 and Table 7.3 indicate the basis for trip distribution proposed by the applicant. This should be validated against traffic counts available showing trip distribution for traffic entering and leaving Carpenders Avenue which provides a hyper-local view of likely trip distribution.

Travel Plan

A Framework travel plan has been submitted as part of the planning application. This has been assessed by HCC’s travel plan team. Initial comments are provided below. At this stage the framework travel plan is not considered acceptable.,

The team notes that there is no mention within the Travel Plan or Transport Assessment of improvements to bus accessibility – either infrastructure or services. The closest bus stop is 700m away (according to the Travel Plan) which is over the recommended accessibility criteria that we use. Discussions with our Integrated Passenger Transport Unit should take place to ascertain suitable measures to improve bus accessibility and attractiveness at the site. Without improvement, Travel Plan targets may not be achieved. Whilst there is a rail station within walking/cycling distance this only provides access to destinations accessible via the rail network.

This Travel Plan is good in some areas, although will require more detail and clarity before we can approve, in particular in relation to duration of the residential Travel Plan, management structure for the residential Travel Plan and any other on-site Travel Plans, and greater clarity over targets, monitoring frequency, methods and plan review.

Individual Full Travel Plans will need to be produced for the residential element and also for the housing with care. No. of beds is not given for the children's home but that will require a Travel Plan Statement if it has between 30-50 beds and a Full Travel Plan if over this.

Detailed comments on the draft framework travel plan follows:

Travel Plan Management

- Travel Plan Co-Ordinators will be required for each Travel Plan. Contact details of the Travel Plan Co-Ordinator and that of a secondary contact in case of personnel changes should be made available to HCC on appointment. Time allocated to role and frequency on site should be given once known.
- A residential Travel Plan is expected to be in place until 5 years post full occupation, 5 years from first occupation for C2 land uses.
- Detail should be given as to the management structure – eg land use specific Travel Plans with their co-ordinators and a site-wide Travel Plan Co-Ordinator with overall responsibility for delivery of Framework Plan, and a mechanism for these individuals to liaise with each other and relevant stakeholders – eg a forum/steering group where site-wide issues can be discussed.
- We require a statement of management commitment from a suitable member of senior management - this demonstrates commitment to the robust implementation of the Travel Plan. This should be provided prior to occupation of the site.

Measures

- These are generally appropriate and should be further tailored to the land use in question when individual Travel Plans are prepared.
- We require provision of residential travel vouchers (see paragraph 4.14-4.15 p13 of our Travel Plan Guidance (see www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/travelplans) to the value of £50 per flat, £100 per house (index-linked to RPI from May 2014). These ideally should be redeemable against multiple sustainable modes to maximise uptake (public transport and cycle equipment is mentioned in the Travel Plan but not walking equipment). Vouchers towards bus services should be discussed with our Integrated Passenger Transport Unit. We would also expect discounts to be made available as measures within the C2 land uses in any individual Travel Plans for those uses (eg Cycle to Work scheme, season ticket loans).
- Promotion of our Intalink website for bus information (<https://www.intalink.org.uk/>), our cycling webpages (<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/health-in-herts/keep-active/hertfordshire-cycling.aspx>), and Hertfordshire Health Walks (<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/recycling-waste-and-environment/countryside-management/hertfordshire-health-walks/hertfordshire-health-walks.aspx>) should be included.

Targets, monitoring and action plan

- The vision for trip reductions from the site (5.1.2) only applies to trips associated with local schools and commuting, whilst the target that is given later within the same section (5.1.4, 5.2.8 and 5.2.11) - a 10% reduction does not specify particular trips. Modal shift proposed is on a par with what we would require - we require a min 10-15% mode shift (percentage change) for a Travel Plan in place for 5 years. However targets and measures should apply to all trips. We acknowledge that there is greater potential for mode shift in certain trip types than others given opportunities at the site – this is true of all sites.
- Text about monitoring frequency is muddled with some paragraphs appearing to suggest annual monitoring, others alternate year monitoring and from different start points. The Action Plan is clearer, but only suggests traffic survey in alternate years, questionnaires annually for 5 years, and a monitoring report in years 1,3, and 5. We will accept the suggestion of monitoring starting at 50% occupation, but do require annual TRICS SAM standard monitoring and questionnaire surveys for a site of this scale. We often find that questionnaires do not achieve a high response rate.

Traffic counts if done as well provide a more adequate level of data on which to review the measures and targets. Review of the Travel Plan will be required annually.

HCC will seek Support and Evaluation fees of £6,000 index linked by RPI to May 2014 for both travel plans, i.e. a total index linked figure of £12,000.

Planning obligation

Planning obligation in respect to travel plans are noted above.

Three Rivers District Council has adopted a CIL. Any additional planning obligations would therefore need to be Strand 1 obligations. This could potentially include measures to address the quality of local walking and cycling routes including measures along the “Key Walking Route” and bus service improvements. None of these issues have yet been evaluated by the applicant.

Conclusion

Objections are raised against approval of this application for the following reasons:

- i. No audit has been provided on the quality of cycling and walking routes in the vicinity of the proposed development. The sustainability of the proposal has therefore not been properly evaluated. This is considered contrary to paragraphs 109-118 of the NPPF and Policies 1, 5, 6, 7 and 8 of Hertfordshire’s Local Transport Plan, 2018.
- ii. The lack of bus services in the vicinity of the site has not been addressed. This further questions the sustainability of the proposal. This is considered contrary to paragraphs 109-118 of the NPPF and Policies 1, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 of Hertfordshire’s Local Transport Plan, 2018.
- iii. Trip generation, distribution and assignments provided in the TA are not acceptable. This is considered contrary to paragraph 118 of the NPPF which requires a vision-led transport assessment so that the likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed and monitored.
- iv. No safety audit (or Designer’s Response) has been provided in respect to the two proposed new accesses. This is considered contrary to paragraph 118 of the NPPF which requires a vision-led transport assessment so that the likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed and monitored.
- v. No assessment has been made on the impact of the development on street trees. This is considered contrary to paragraph 118 of the NPPF which requires a vision-led transport assessment so that the likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed and monitored.
- vi. The TA does not provide a gradient profile for the proposed new road onto the A4008. This is considered contrary to paragraph 118 of the NPPF which requires a vision-led transport assessment so that the likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed and monitored.
- vii. Visibility splays from the junction are not provided in the TA. This is considered contrary to paragraph 118 of the NPPF which requires a vision-led transport assessment so that the likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed and monitored.
- viii. The proposed access onto the A4008 is considered contrary to policy 5(f) of HCC’s Local Transport Plan, 2018.

HCC as highway authority recommends that the planning application is not approved for the reasons detailed above.

Signed

Graham Burrell

6 August 2025