



Datchworth

PARISH COUNCIL

SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF DATCHWORTH, BULLS GREEN, BURNHAM GREEN & HOOKS CROSS

North Herts Council
North Herts Planning Dept
Council Offices,
Gernon Road,
Letchworth Garden City, SG6 3JF

Parish Clerk
c/o Datchworth Village Hall
52 Datchworth Green
Datchworth
Hertfordshire
SG3 6TL

By email

Date 12th November 2025

Subject: North Hertfordshire planning reference: 23/01552/OP

Dear Chair,

Outline planning permission for up to 200 dwellings (including affordable housing), structural planting and landscaping, informal public open space and children's play area, surface water flood mitigation, vehicular access point and associated ancillary works. All matters reserved except for means of access.

Land of Watton Road, Knebworth

Datchworth Parish Council takes this opportunity to comment on the revised planning application relating to the above-mentioned proposed development. Many of those previously consulted have received letters informing of the revisions and the opportunity to comment further.

Datchworth Parish Council is seriously concerned with the manner and procedure adopted, and would highlight serious flaws which need to be relayed to the planning committee.

1. Our initial strong objections were forwarded to you by way of letter dated 28th July 2023. A copy of our letter has been scanned by yourselves, elements redacted and is shown on your website. Notwithstanding this fact, our comments were not relayed in the written report which was prepared by the planning officer and presented for consideration at the NHDC Planning Committee meeting on 17th July 2025. Whilst verbal reference to this omission was made at the meeting itself, members of the Committee were not able to fully consider our comments nor were members able to properly digest the points made in the Parish Council's submission. The Parish Council does not believe its views have been properly communicated.
2. The planning application was deferred at your meeting on 17th July, 2025 and the following reasons for deferral are minuted in the Council records:

- (1) *To explore potential modifications to the scheme to have further minimal impact to Swangleys Lane Gateway junction.*
- (2) *To request an amended Transport Assessment with up-to-date traffic surveys to have a true reflection of the current traffic flows as members felt an up-to-date surveys would assist them in making their decision.*

We do not consider these reasons for deferral properly reflect the reasons given by members of the planning committee during debate at that meeting. District Councillor Prescott specifically asked for information as to why the previously shown roundabout option for Swangleys Lane was dropped in favour

of stopping-up of vehicular traffic. This query is not addressed in the reasons for deferral, nor has it been addressed in the applicants' new submission documents.

3. Notwithstanding the receipt of revisions by NHDC and subsequent re-consultation of interested parties including Knebworth Parish Council and neighbouring and nearby third parties, Datchworth Parish Council has not been notified of the revisions, nor has it been formally invited to comment. Once again, we feel let-down and somewhat ignored in the manner which the North Herts Council planning process has adopted.
4. Turning to the applicants' new submissions, these documents do not address the fundamental points made by Datchworth Parish Council in its original objections relating to highway matters, nor do the new submission refer at any point to the clear and precise points made by Councillor Prescott during the planning committee meeting concerning the roundabout option. In fact, of the five new drawings submitted by the applicants, three relate to details of the access to Watton Road which has nothing to do with the reason for deferring the planning application, whatsoever. The remaining two new drawings do actually relate to Swangleys Lane but are limited to the introduction of retractable bollards at the Swangleys Lane point of closure, for access by emergency vehicles only. This in no way addresses the deficiencies previously identified by Datchworth Parish Council and District Councillor Prescott, namely that this closure to general vehicular traffic is deleterious to Datchworth residents and disastrous for enabling access to community and retail facilities. Therefore, Datchworth Parish Council reiterates its strong objection on the highway-related matters as detailed in its original objection letter of 28th July 2023.
5. It is acknowledged that the revised 268-page Transportation Assessment (TA) as now submitted, includes up-to-date trip rates, traffic flows and capacity assessments in the local area. The conclusion reached in the TA is that there is minimal difference between the 2019 and 2025 figures and therefore no change is proposed to the new highway arrangements in principle. However, Datchworth Parish Council's position remains the same in that highway impact, traffic flows, convenience travel, highway capacity, environmental highway impact and accessibility for residents and businesses in the broader local area including Datchworth, has not been considered as part of the Transportation Assessment. Consideration of issues surrounding impact and accessibility have been considered only within the constrained local area. This remains a serious failing in the submitted documents.

In conclusion, we are disappointed with the seemingly poor level of involvement offered to our Parish Council by NHDC planning department, the disregard it has shown to our Parish Council, the apparent inaccurate minutes of the previous planning committee meeting, the failure of the applicants to address the concerns of key members of the planning committee in deferring the planning application and lost opportunity in making a new housing scheme better and more suitable for both existing and new residents.

Kind regards

Andy Short
Clerk on behalf of Datchworth Parish Council