

Minutes of the Meeting of Planning and Transport held in Rickards Hall on 23 February 2026 at 6:45 pm

Present: Cllrs. Jon Aldridge (*Chairman*), Angela Baker, Alan Layland, Margot McArthur, Angela Read (*Vice-Chairwoman*), Jeff Streets, Bob Todd
In attendance: Town Clerk; and four members of the public. There were no representatives from the press.
18:45 Meeting opened.

1 To Receive Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received, noted, and accepted, from Cllrs Compton, Gemmell Smith, McGregor, and Stockdale.

2 Declaration of Interests or Predetermination, including interests not already registered

None.

3 Public Questions and Statements

18:48 *The Chairman closed the meeting.*

Representations for application 26/00107/FUL were received from two residents, raising concerns for the proposed six dwellings on Green Belt land at Hilders Lane.

Resident One objected to the application on the grounds that the site is agricultural Green Belt land currently used for haymaking and grazing, and not underutilised or of low value. He considered that the proposal would increase urban sprawl, reduce the openness of the countryside and fail to safeguard it from encroachment. Whilst acknowledging the need for additional housing in Edenbridge, he stated that the proposed six large dwellings represented an upmarket development unlikely to meet local housing needs.

He raised concerns regarding traffic generation on Hilders Lane, noting that each dwelling would be provided with a garage and three parking spaces, and therefore questioned the conclusions of the Transport Assessment that the impact on traffic would be negligible. He referred Members to paragraph 3.14 of the Transport Assessment, which he stated identifies the distance to Edenbridge station as approximately 1.1km (around a 12-minute walk), and contrasted this with statements elsewhere in the Planning Statement indicating a distance of 740m and walking times of 8–10 minutes and 2–4 minutes by bicycle. He advised that he had measured the route himself and considered the longer distance to be accurate, adding that footpath SR597 is unsuitable for cycling and, in his view, difficult to use for much of the year.

Reference was also made to paragraph 5.21 of the Planning Statement in relation to the emerging NPPF and the 800m “default yes” criteria, which he considered the site would not meet. He further commented that developments in the Green Belt would normally be expected to provide a proportion of affordable housing.

The resident also drew attention to references within the application to a 640m long, 2m wide permissive path across adjoining fields to the west of Hilders Lane. He stated that this path does not currently exist on the ground and forms the subject of a separate application which has not yet been submitted. He expressed concern that, although shown on various plans, it is not part of the current application and there would be no obligation for it to be delivered if permission were granted. Finally, he suggested that approval of this proposal could set a precedent for further applications on the adjoining fields to the west, resulting in additional infill development along the south side of Hilders Lane.

Resident Two objected to the application on the grounds that the site lies within the Green Belt and that inappropriate development should not be permitted except in very special circumstances. He stated that, in his view, the applicant had failed to demonstrate such circumstances and had sought to downplay the value of the land. He emphasised that the field is actively grazed, including by a local butcher, and forms part of the town’s

agricultural setting and community character. He noted that grazing land on the opposite side of Hilders Lane had already been lost to development and expressed concern that approval of this application would lead to further development of the remaining land to the south of the lane, gradually eroding the Green Belt and changing the character of Hilders Lane into a continuous residential street.

He further suggested that, should the District Council be minded to grant permission, consideration should be given to securing a legal undertaking to prevent future development of adjoining land. He referred to restrictive covenants already in place affecting land to the north side of the lane and suggested similar protection should be sought in respect of remaining Green Belt land.

The resident also raised concerns regarding biodiversity net gain, stating that the application did not meet the required uplift and that any mitigation should be secured on land to the south through long-term planting and landscape enhancement, rather than through a financial contribution elsewhere. In addition, he requested that permitted development rights be removed for the six dwellings, noting that such a restriction had previously been recommended in relation to the Hilders Farm development but was not ultimately imposed, thereby allowing additional outbuildings and extensions which, in his view, further urbanised the area.

18:58 The Chairman reopened the meeting.

4 To receive, approve and sign the minutes of the Planning and Transport Meeting held on 9 February 2026 (pages 2023-124/1-2).

Resolved: to adopt the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 09 February and that they be signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record, 124/1-21.

5 Matters Arising Not Covered Elsewhere

None.

6 Planning Applications to Be Considered

6.1 26/00107/FUL - Land West Of Kettle Cottage Hilders Lane Edenbridge Kent TN8 6LG

Recommendation: Members objected to this application on the following grounds:

1. Inappropriate Development in the Green Belt

- The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt. The proposal constitutes inappropriate development under Section 13 of the NPPF and is, by definition, harmful. No Very Special Circumstances have been demonstrated that would clearly outweigh the identified harm to the Green Belt.
- The development would result in encroachment into the countryside and a reduction in openness, contrary to NPPF paragraph 143(c). Members consider that the site forms part of the remaining open agricultural land along the south side of Hilders Lane and contributes positively to the rural setting of the town.
- Granting permission would, in Members' view, creates pressure for further incremental development of adjoining Green Belt land, leading to cumulative erosion of openness and gradual urbanisation of Hilders Lane

2. Conflict with the Development Plan and Emerging Local Plan

The site is not allocated for development within the emerging Local Plan. Approval would therefore represent piecemeal development in the Green Belt, undermining the plan-led approach and contributing to cumulative encroachment along Hilders Lane.

3. Highways and Access Constraints

Hilders Lane is a constrained rural road, with:

- A single-lane railway bridge.

- A restricted-visibility junction at the crossroads with the B2026.
- Limited or absent footways along sections of the route.

Members are not satisfied that the Transport Assessment fully reflects existing constraints or cumulative impacts from other recent developments in the area. The scale and likely occupancy of the proposed dwellings would generate additional vehicle movements along a lane already experiencing capacity and safety concerns.

4. Sustainability of Location

Whilst proximity to Edenbridge railway station is referenced, the walking distance exceeds 1km via the highway network and includes sections without pavements. The alternative route indicated via a permissive footpath that is not an existing public right of way and does not currently exist on the ground. As it does not form part of the application proposals, it cannot reasonably be relied upon in assessing the site's sustainability credentials.

5. Biodiversity Net Gain

Members are not satisfied that the application clearly demonstrates compliance with the statutory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain requirement. Given the Green Belt location, any BNG requirement should prioritise meaningful on-site enhancement, including retention and reinforcement of existing trees and hedgerows, secured for the long term.

If the District Council is minded to grant permission the Town Council requests that the following be secured by condition and/or legal agreement:

- Removal of permitted development rights to safeguard openness.
- A robust Construction Management Plan appropriate to a constrained rural lane.
- Delivery and long-term securing of any proposed permissive footpath prior to occupation.
- On-site Biodiversity Net Gain measures secured.

19:10 Four members of the public left the meeting.

6.2 25/03416/MMA - Town Station Coal Yard Station Approach Edenbridge Kent TN8 5LP

Members noted works were pending issues raised with surface water and existing drains, but had no additional comments to submit.

Recommendation: No further comments.

6.3 26/00216/MMA - New Barns Farm Greybury Lane Marsh Green Kent TN8 5QP

Mummers had no further comments, and agreed,

Recommendation: to support the amendment.

7 For Information

7.1 26/00381/W5DAY - 2 Eden View High Street Edenbridge Kent TN8 5FE

Noted.

8 SDC Planning Decisions

8.1 25/03400/HOUSE - Woolston Cottage Crouch House Road Edenbridge Kent TN8 5EE

Noted.

8.2 25/03434/HOUSE - 25 Coomb Field Edenbridge Kent TN8 5HZ

Noted.

- 8.3** **25/03456/CONVAR - Four Oaks Swan Lane Edenbridge Kent TN8 6BA**
Noted.
- 8.4** **25/03420/HOUSE - 2 Skinners Lane Edenbridge Kent TN8 6LW**
Noted.
- 8.5** **25/02468/DETAIL - Stanholm Residential Care Home Mill Hill Edenbridge Kent TN8 5DB**
Noted.
- 8.6** **25/02469/DETAIL - Stanholm Residential Care Home Mill Hill Edenbridge Kent TN8 5DB**
Noted.
- 8.7** **25/02470/DETAIL - Stanholm Residential Care Home Mill Hill Edenbridge Kent TN8 5DB**
Noted.
- 8.8** **25/02472/DETAIL - Stanholm Residential Care Home Mill Hill Edenbridge Kent TN8 5DB**
Noted.
- 9** **Planning Applications Considered Outside of A Meeting**
None.
- 10** **Consultations**
None.
- 11** **Other Planning Business**
None.
- 12** **Press Release**
None.
- 13** **Date of Next Meeting 2nd March 2026**
Noted.

19:15 Meeting closed.