

Minutes of the Meeting of Planning and Transport held in Rickards Hall on 8 June 2026 at 7:30 pm

Present: Cllrs. Jon Aldridge (*Chairman*), Angela Baker, Michael Gemmell Smith, Alan Layland, Margot McArthur, Stuart McGregor, Angela Read (*Vice-Chairwoman*), Michael Stockdale, Jeff Streets, Bob Todd

In attendance: The Planning officer, no members of the public and no members of the press.

1 To Receive Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr V Parker.

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

None.

3 Public Questions and Statements

None.

4 To receive, approve and sign the minutes of the Planning and Transport Meeting held on 18 May 2026 (pages 2023-138/1-3).

Resolved: the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 18 May 2026 be duly signed by the Committee Chairman as a true and accurate record of the meeting held on 15th December; (pages 2023-138/1-3).

5 Matters Arising Not Covered Elsewhere

None.

6 Planning Applications to Be Considered

6.1 25/03235/FUL - Land North Of Warsop Trading Estate Hever Road Edenbridge Kent TN8 5DJ

Recommendation: *Members objected to this application and commented:*

- The proposal is, on the evidence of the application itself, the same scheme as application 23/02183/FUL, which Sevenoaks District Council refused, and which the Planning Inspectorate subsequently dismissed at appeal on 25 November 2024 (Appeal Ref APP/G2245/W/24/3340877, Inspector David Smith BA(Hons) DMS MRTPI). It is the same floor area and the same plan numbers, re-submitted within 2 years of the previous decision.
The Inspector upheld four distinct harms: loss of Green Belt openness, harm to the character and appearance of the area, net loss of biodiversity, and harm to users of the public rights of way. The applicant has attempted to address only one of these four — biodiversity — by adding a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) metric calculation and re-describing part of the scheme as a "habitat creation area". The Green Belt, character and public-rights-of-way objections appear to have not been addressed, and the appeal decision on those three grounds applies with undiminished force. The Edenbridge Planning Committee does not accept that the new BNG material overcomes the biodiversity objection either.
 - The site lies wholly within the Metropolitan Green Belt, which begins immediately outside the urban confines of Edenbridge. The proposal is **inappropriate development by definition**, to which substantial weight must be given. Beyond the harm in principle, the Inspector found a **significant loss of openness** — one of the essential characteristics of the Green Belt. The building would have an internal floor area of 428 sq m over two storeys and is "fairly substantial"; sited away from other

buildings, it would intrude significantly into the unspoilt fields on the periphery of the town and would encroach into the countryside, undermining a core purpose of the Green Belt (NPPF, the five purposes of the Green Belt).

- The Inspector concluded that the development would have a **major urbanising impact** on its immediate surroundings and would seriously erode the intrinsic qualities of this attractive area of countryside. The building, hard surfacing, parked cars and associated paraphernalia would be visible from footpaths SR612 and SR613, and the new access would require removal of roadside hedging, "opening up" views from Hever Road. The boundaries do not follow existing features and would "carve up" the land in an unnatural manner. It would also directly impact these Key Views explicitly identified ("views of the fields and river... should be retained") in the Edenbridge Character Assessment. This harm conflicts with Policy EN1 of the Allocations and Development Management Plan, which requires development to respect the character of the site and surroundings, and with Core Strategy Policies SP1, SP5 and SP7. The site also sits within the Eden Valley Landscape Character Area and immediately east of Character Area C3.4 of the Edenbridge Residential Character Area Appraisal, whose guidance emphasises respecting building lines, the sense of enclosure and the open views across the fields — none of which this isolated, set-back, flat-roofed building respects.
- The site lies directly **within the River Eden Local Wildlife Site (SE20)** and within the Medway and Low Weald Greensand & Gault Biodiversity Opportunity Area. Surveys identified breeding birds, hedgehogs, badgers, invertebrates, foraging and commuting bats, and the potential presence of otters and water voles. The Inspector accepted that the scheme would cause a **net reduction in biodiversity**: the applicant's own Feasibility Study indicated a 66% loss in the biodiversity value of the site's area habitats, and although a large percentage gain in hedgerow was claimed, the new hedgerows would not replicate the value of the scrub to be lost. The applicant has, for this application, submitted a Biodiversity Net Gain metric calculation. The Town Council does not accept that this overcomes the objection, against the direct, permanent loss of part of a designated Local Wildlife Site and the qualitative fact that replacement hedgerow does not carry the same ecological value as the established scrub it displaces. Therefore there would be a conflict with Policy SP11
- Two public footpaths are affected. SR612 runs directly through the site, on the very line of the proposed building, and would require diversion; SR613 runs adjacent to the proposed access road. The Inspector found that any diversion would run tight against the building and car park and would cross the access road, so that the **experience of footpath users would be "totally changed"** from a pastoral setting to one dominated by built development. He treated this as a further, distinct objection to the scheme.
- Further concerns of the Town Council
 - The site is known to be susceptible to **periodic fluvial flooding** from the immediately adjacent River Eden. Even if the building can be elevated above this, floodwaters would isolate residents from the town.
 - The edge-of-town location for this facility and close proximity to the river. **Young vulnerable people would be cut off from Edenbridge Town and the district.**
 - **Access to the site from Hever Road would be from a bend on a narrow road.** Hever Road is already heavily parked-on, and additional junction and demand would require road improvements that have not been forthcoming.

- The proposal is to house vulnerable young people exiting the care system. The Town council expressed concern that
 - This site is fundamentally not suited to housing vulnerable young people due to the size and limited facilities of Edenbridge itself. The limited public transport options would place additional burdens on young residents.
 - Housing vulnerable people in an isolated facility susceptible to flooding is ill-considered.
- An Article 4 Notice was served on the site in 2020.

6.2 **26/00819/HOUSE - Leydens Cottage Hartfield Road Edenbridge Kent TN8 5NH**

Recommendation: *Members supported this application.*

6.3 **Town & Country Planning Act 1990 Town & County Planning (Tree Preservation) (England Regulations 2012) Tree Preservation Order TPO No.03 of 2026**

Recommendation: *Members agreed that the Planning officer would write to SDC supporting this application.*

7 **For Information**

7.1 **26/01249/DETAIL - 2 High Street Edenbridge Kent TN8 5AG**

Recommendation: *Members did not agree with the Access Plan as the site is on a busy corner at the end of the High Street. The developer should take into account that the site is close to a popular parking area for high street users, and parents as it is near to a school. Safety of the school children going to school should also be a consideration.*

7.2 **26/01250/DETAIL - 2 High Street Edenbridge Kent TN8 5AG**

Noted.

7.3 **26/01251/DETAIL - 2 High Street Edenbridge Kent TN8 5AG**

Noted.

7.4 **26/01055/DETAIL - 2 High Street Edenbridge Kent TN8 5AG**

Noted.

7.5 **26/00306/FUL - Stanholm Residential Care Home Mill Hill Edenbridge Kent TN8 5DB**

Noted.

7.6 **26/00307/LBCALT - Stanholm Residential Care Home Mill Hill Edenbridge Kent TN8 5DB**

Noted.

8 **SDC Planning Decisions**

8.1 **25/03056/CONVAR - Doggettes Cottage 1 Lingfield Road Edenbridge Kent TN8 5DR**

Noted.

9 **Planning Applications Considered Outside of A Meeting**

- 9.1** **26/00865/VAR106 - Land South Of Marsh Green Road Marsh Green Edenbridge Kent**
Ratified.
- 9.2** **26/00953/HOUSE - 72 Hever Road Edenbridge Kent TN8 5DJ**
Ratified.
- 9.3** **26/00306/FUL - Stanholm Residential Care Home Mill Hill Edenbridge Kent TN8 5DB**
Ratified.
- 9.4** **26/00307/LBCALT - Stanholm Residential Care Home Mill Hill Edenbridge Kent TN8 5DB**
Ratified
- 10** **Consultations**
- 10.1** **Kent Downs National Landscape Management Plan Consultation**
Recommendation: *The Town Council had already published this consultation on the website and members agreed to submit their own individual responses.*
- 11** **Other Planning Business**
Update on Sevenoaks Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)
Cllr Layland reported that Edenbridge Town Council should have had a site visit from the LCWIP team and that SDC believed that this had happened. Cllr Layland wished to minute that no one had visited Edenbridge regarding the Cycling and Waling Plan for Edenbridge.
- 12** **Press Release**
None.
- 13** **Date of Next Meeting 29th June 2026**