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14th August 2025

Ben Glover
Senior Planning Officer
North Hertfordshire District Council
Council Offices
Gernon Road
Letchworth Garden City
Hertfordshire
SG6 3JF

Dear Mr Glover

Reference: 25/01708/OP Land Opposite Heath Farm Briary Lane Royston Hertfordshire

I write in connection with the above planning application. I have examined the plans and I know the site well. I wish to object strongly to the development of houses in this location.

Royston is already currently contributing a significant number of houses towards the NHDC 5 year housing land supply and this development is not identified in existing plans. The application should also be refused because the location is problematic, the site will cause huge engineering problems due to access constraints, steep land and the protective covenants which cannot be ignored.

In 2018 and 2020/21 planning applications were refused because the development will have a strong, negative impact on the area, creating a marked change in character of the local area and to visual receptors. The same reason for refusal should therefore still apply to the current application. The proposals conflict with the **NPPF and Policy CGB1, SP5, SP12, NE1 and NE6 of the NHDC Local Plan.**

No consideration has been given to how the proposed access to the site will directly impact Echo Hill. Echo Hill is a lovely quiet road which will be massively spoiled by this proposal. Therefore this proposal will be contrary to the general landscape protection policies of the **NPPF(including paragraph 135), policies NE1 of the adopted Local Plan.**

The houses surrounding the site, particularly the ones neighbouring the house that would be demolished will be massively impacted in a negative way. During the last application, the issue of these resident's living standards being significantly and detrimentally affected was failed to be appropriately addressed.

The roads around that area will be unable to support all the site traffic and definitely not all the new traffic from the new houses. The hill is very steep and the roads narrow. Having large vehicles or an increased volume of traffic will not only cause massive hold ups and congestion but will also be incredibly dangerous. The site is fundamentally unsustainable due to its location to local amenities such as services and the local school. For example there are not enough Heath providers to cover the new dwellings. A recent response from the Cambridge and Peterborough Integrated Care System, Property Service for land off

Barkway Road and North of Flint Hall, Barkway Road, Royston (Application 21/00765/OP) states **“GP practices show a significant health infrastructure deficit, and existing surgeries do not have capacity to absorb any additional residents”**. This all conflicts with **paragraphs 108,109 and 110 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Policy T1 of the Local Plan** plus guidance from **Roads in Hertfordshire A Design Guide**. The Transport Assessment by gta (June2015) states the revised site access arrangement is supported by a safety audit by EC Road Safety. The safety audit however has not been consulted on with the approving authority of Hertfordshire County Council Highways, before the final design. It is obvious that the access has been contrived with little regard to existing users of Echo Hill, Sun Hill and Briary Lane.

There are many reasons that this proposal should not go ahead for ecological concerns, that others, who have more knowledge, will have already laid out for you. It will have a huge impact to at-risk species, as specified in the UK's Biodiversity Action Plan and the RSPB red list. There are records of protected species using the area up to the present day, however these have not included in the ecology report.

The current proposals will likely to have an adverse effect on Therfield Heath SSSI and neighbouring LWS. **Paragraphs 193b of the NPPF states “development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in a combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest”**. I think we can clearly see that the proposed development would not outweigh this.

It is not clear whether an EIA screening Opinion has been requested or obtained or not for the application. Also no Environmental Statement has been submitted. Both previous applications raised concerns about the significant environmental impact on the area. The site poses a risk to the SSSI and definitely be subject to an EIA screening Opinion.

In addition to all the above objections the proposed development site will mean the loss of high-quality agricultural land.

To summarise, in considering all the above points, I strongly urge the council to reject this damaging and unsustainable planning proposal.

Yours Faithfully,
K Bayley