

Development Management

Central Bedfordshire Council

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Your Ref
Date 9th March 2026

Dear Shaun Greaves,

Application No: CB/25/03634/OAC
Location: BA1(Land East Of North Rd And North Of Railway Line); BA10(Land Between Railway Line And Royston Rd); BA3 (Land West Of A505); BA2 (Land South Of Clothall Rd); Walls Field; Urban Open Land West Of A505, And Land West Of North Rd, Baldock
Proposal: Other Authority Consultation: 25/02571/OP - Growing Baldock
Development Site: Outline planning application with all matters reserved except for means of highway access into the development from the A505/Royston Road, North Road and Clothall Road for: up to 3,200 homes, up to 16ha of employment, waste and leisure infrastructure, a mixed use local centre, up to 1 secondary school, up to 2 x primary schools, up to 1 SEND school, health hub, green infrastructure (including parks, formal sports provision, play, habitat areas, informal open space and structural planting), internal street network, access junctions and railway crossing, public transport infrastructure, pedestrian/cycle network (including PRow diversions, active travel routes, mobility hubs and crossing of the railway), utilities and drainage infrastructure (including diversions of existing and provision of new infrastructure, pumping stations, sustainable drainage, primary substations, rising main/strategic sewer and renewable energy infrastructure), ground remodelling/earthworks and any necessary demolitions.

I am writing in response to your letter dated 11 November 2025 regarding the planning application referenced above. Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) has strong reservations to the proposed development for the following reasons.

Although the site is located outside Central Bedfordshire, the A1(M) serves as a primary route for external traffic to and from the area. The main junctions on the stretch north of Baldock, which are under the jurisdiction of National Highways, disproportionately affect Central Bedfordshire due to the local road connections being managed by CBC. Therefore, CBC has a vested interest in any major development likely to increase traffic flows on the A1 north of Baldock.

The proposed development is described as a mixed-use, residential-led initiative covering several parcels, with Parcel BA1 being the most significant. This parcel is expected to accommodate approximately 2,800 of the total 3,200 proposed homes, along with essential local amenities and primary education facilities.

The development aims to promote sustainable travel by enhancing access for pedestrians, cyclists, and public transport users. While CBC supports these sustainable aspirations, there are concerns that the traffic modeling results may be unduly optimistic regarding the anticipated vehicle trip generation.

The Transport Assessment utilizes a range of overlapping assumptions to determine the net external trip rate. It references a downward trend in daily trip generation based on the TRICS 'Decide and Provide' principles, leading to an overall trip rate reduction of 7.5%. However, the trend data reported in TRICS 8 is only available in five-year increments, with the most recent data influenced by surveys conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, this data may be skewed, and applying a blanket reduction could result in overestimating trip reductions.

Additionally, significant internal trip generation rates are proposed, yet the justification for these levels remains unclear. The Transport Assessment indicates that internalization factors were calculated on a site-by-site basis, isolating Development Area BA1 and excluding trips between different parcels. According to Tables 7.3 and 7.4, Parcel BA1 is predicted to have 45% of AM peak hour trips and 43% of PM trips generated internally. However, only the primary schools appear likely to drive significant internal trips, particularly in the AM peak, making the 43% PM internalization rate difficult to substantiate.

Furthermore, the baseline for sustainable transport is currently car-dominated, as noted in the Transport Assessment, which identifies limited provisions for pedestrian and cycling access and a notably low modal share for public transport. Although the proposed enhancements are positive, projecting exemplary levels of sustainable transport usage against this limited existing provision may be overly ambitious.

The access proposals for Parcel BA1 involve modifying the junction at the A505 and creating a new northern bypass running east-west between North Road and the A505. While this may alleviate traffic in Baldock Town Centre, it could also make the route between North Road and the A1(M) faster and more attractive for drivers, as acknowledged in the Transport Assessment.

This proposal will likely make the A1(M) more accessible for future residents of northern Baldock, given its close proximity. The development phases suggest that early phases will rely primarily on car access to the A1. Even with trip reduction assumptions in place, forecasts indicate a projected increase of over 13% in traffic flow on the A1(M) north of Junction 10, as detailed in Appendix 4.6 of the submitted transport documents. The analysis also predicts a significant proportion of external trips routing to and from the A1(M) via North Road.

CBC questions the assessment findings for Junction 10 of the A1(M), reported to operate within capacity under all scenarios. Previous assessments related to the CBC Local Plan identified potential congestion at this junction, emphasizing the need for a thorough re-evaluation of its capacity, particularly given the anticipated impacts from the Baldock development.

Additionally, the Transport Assessment's approach to background growth relies solely on modified (reduced) TEMPRO factors and does not adequately account for major committed developments or significant infrastructure changes, such as the A428 Black Cat DCO, expected to elevate traffic flows on the A1. Moreover, the optimistic assumptions regarding mitigation impacts appear misplaced, as they primarily address direct connectivity to Baldock and do not adequately reflect potential impacts on broader strategic routes.

Therefore, CBC requests a more comprehensive assessment of Junction 10 using updated baseline forecast assumptions, as referenced in the forthcoming COMET modeling analysis. CBC fully supports further phases of assessment to capture, review, and mitigate impacts on northern areas and Central Bedfordshire.

While we acknowledge the initial optimistic assumptions, even they indicate a significant increase in traffic on the A1(M) north of Junction 10. Besides concerns about Junction 10, CBC is apprehensive about the effect on the grade-separated junctions north of Junction 10, where increased A1 traffic will undoubtedly impact their operation.

CBC previously identified capacity constraints at Biggleswade South, Biggleswade North, and

Sandy, which are expected to become more severe in the future, as outlined in the A428 Black Cat DCO and various recent planning applications. Thus, it is reasonable to expect that a considerable share of traffic from Baldock will affect these junctions, given the limited number of intervening junctions. It may also be necessary to analyze junctions on routes such as the A507, depending on how development traffic dispersed beyond the strategic road network.

Accordingly, CBC requests the following:

- A wider impact assessment of the development using the COMET Model.
- Active engagement with CBC regarding the extent of assessment and the growth assumptions relevant to our area.
- An evaluation scenario incorporating more moderate trip generation, internalization, and modal share assumptions.

In light of these concerns, the Central Bedfordshire Council Public Transport Team raises additional issues regarding sustainable transport provision to and from this site, particularly access to the north into Central Bedfordshire. The evidence regarding public bus services is limited, mainly acknowledging that current local bus service provision is insufficient. The proposals primarily link to Baldock and North Hertfordshire; however, given the development's proximity to the Central Bedfordshire border, adequate public transport provision to the north should also be addressed in any planning approval and Section 106 agreement.

The ongoing development of Symmetry Park warehousing south of Biggleswade is significant, already employing staff from Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, and Hertfordshire. Additionally, the A1 Retail Park in Biggleswade attracts considerable traffic with various well-known retailers. Therefore, it can be reasonably assumed that substantial traffic will flow from the development site toward Biggleswade. Given concerns about the capacity of the A1M junction at Baldock, establishing a high-quality public bus service operating from Letchworth, through the development site, and heading northward would be a prudent mitigation strategy.

While sustainable transport links to Baldock Railway Station offer access to Cambridge and London, northbound services on the East Coast Main Line (ECML) are more challenging, requiring transfers at Hitchin for travel toward Peterborough or other longer-distance destinations. This inconvenience could lead residents to choose private car travel instead, further exacerbating congestion at nearby junctions.

Despite being only six miles (or about 10 minutes) from the development site, Symmetry Park and Biggleswade Retail Park are not easily accessible by public transport without convoluted journeys that may discourage all but the most dedicated public transit users. Most people will likely revert to using private vehicles or taxis.

A well-designed public bus service could connect all these locations, providing swift access to employment opportunities in Biggleswade, as well as to ECML services via Biggleswade Railway Station. Emphasis should be placed on shift change times at Symmetry Park and peak shopping times at the Retail Park.

Additionally, we recognize demand from Stotfold for connections to Biggleswade, as they face similar issues in accessing nearby employment and retail opportunities without a regular bus service. Thus, it may be advantageous for future bus service provisions to operate through Stotfold, enhancing its patronage and commercial viability. This approach could reduce the need for extensive developer contributions and allow for a funding agreement that adapts based on expected service usage growth.

The Central Bedfordshire Public Transport Team is committed to supporting future public bus provisions and welcomes discussions regarding these proposals.

In the absence of the additional assessments mentioned above, CBC have strong reservations to the application on the grounds that the broader impacts of the development have not been thoroughly evaluated or mitigated.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Davie MRTPI
Service Director Development & Economy