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North Hertfordshire District Council
Planning Control & Conservation
Council Offices Gernon Road
Letchworth Garden City
Hertfordshire
SG6 3JF

Our ref: NE/2025/138722/01-L01
Your ref: 25/02571/OP
Date: 14 November 2025

Dear Justin,

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

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 prowl 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.

Thank you for consulting us on the above application. As part of the consultation, we have reviewed the following:

- SG. Preliminary Risk Assessment. Issue V1 – July 2022
- SG. Ground Investigation Interpretive Report – BA1 Area. Issue V2 – February 2025
- SG. Ground Investigation Interpretive Report – BA3 Area Issue V2 – February 2025
- SG. Ground Investigation Interpretive Report – BA3 Area Issue V2 – February 2025
- SG. Ground Investigation Interpretive Report – BA10 Area Issue V2 – February 2025
- AKTII. Drainage Strategy Report Rev D. September 2025

Site-specific Information

The proposed development site is located upon principal and secondary aquifers within Source Protection Zones (SPZs) 2 and 3. The previous land use is predominantly agricultural.

Environment Agency Position

Based on a review of the submitted information, we have **no objection** to the proposed development, **subject to the inclusion of the enclosed planning conditions**. We believe that without these conditions, the proposed development may pose an unacceptable risk to the environment.

We are satisfied with the submitted contamination information as it relates to controlled waters, at the outline application stage. The previous agricultural land use of the site is unlikely to present a high contamination potential, and the submitted investigations, including laboratory chemical analysis of soils, have not shown evidence of widespread or gross contamination likely to pose an unacceptable risk.

The submitted drainage strategy report indicates that the proposed development may make use of infiltration SuDs. Further details of the finalised design will be required together with risk assessments demonstrating that the scheme complies with relevant standards and guidance and does not pose an unacceptable risk to controlled waters.

The foundation design for the proposed development has not been specified. If the detailed design calls for piled or other foundation designs undertaken using penetrative methods, then further details will be required together with a risk assessment demonstrating that the proposed methods will not pose an unacceptable risk to controlled waters.

Proposed Planning Conditions

Condition 1 - Previously Unidentified Contamination

If, during development, contamination not previously identified is found to be present at the site then no further development (unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority) shall be carried out until a remediation strategy detailing how this contamination will be dealt with has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The remediation strategy shall be implemented as approved.

Reason(s)

To ensure that the development does not contribute to and is not put at unacceptable risk from or adversely affected by unacceptable levels of water pollution from previously unidentified contamination sources at the development site. This is in line with paragraph 180 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Policy NE11 (Contaminated land) of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan (2011-31).

Condition 2 - Infiltration of surface water into ground

No drainage systems for the infiltration of surface water to the ground are permitted

other than with the written consent of the local planning authority. Any proposals for such systems must be supported by an assessment of the risks to controlled waters. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason(s)

To ensure that the development does not contribute to and is not put at unacceptable risk from or adversely affected by unacceptable levels of water pollution caused by mobilised contaminants. This is in line with paragraph 187 of the NPPF and Policies NE11 (Contaminated land) and Policy NE8 (Sustainable drainage systems) of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan (2011-31).

Condition 3 – Piling/Foundation Works Scheme to be agreed

Piling, or other foundation designs, undertaken using penetrative methods, shall not be carried out until such time as a scheme has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. The scheme shall be based on the information submitted as part of the application and, where necessary, incorporate:

- foundation works risk assessment.
- conceptual site model.
- specification of the type, number and depth of piles/foundations.
- a detailed groundwater monitoring programme including a schedule for submission of interim and final monitoring reports.
- a contingency action plan including the list of potential mitigation measures that will be implemented, should unexpected changes in groundwater quality be noted as a result of piling/foundation works.
- timing/phasing arrangements.

The scheme shall be fully implemented and subsequently maintained, in accordance with the timing/phasing arrangements contained in the scheme, or any details as may subsequently be agreed, in writing, by the local planning authority.

Reason(s)

To ensure that piling/foundation works do not harm groundwater resources, in line with paragraph 187 of the NPPF.

Advice to Local Planning Authority

The control of emissions from Non-Road Going Mobile Machinery (NRMM) at major residential, commercial or industrial sites.

Where development involves the use of any non-road going mobile machinery with a net rated power of 37kW and up to 560kW, that is used during site preparation, construction, demolition, and/ or operation, at that site, we strongly recommend that the machinery used shall meet or exceed the latest emissions standards set out in [Regulation \(EU\) 2016/1628](#) (as amended). This shall apply to the point that the machinery arrives on site, regardless of it being hired or purchased, unless agreed in writing with the LPA.

This is particularly important for major residential, commercial, or industrial

development located in or within 2km of an Air Quality Management Area for oxides of Nitrogen (NO_x), and or particulate matter that has an aerodynamic diameter of 10 or 2.5 microns (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}). Use of low emission technology will improve or maintain air quality and support LPAs and developers in improving and maintaining local air quality standards and support their net zero objectives.

We also advise, the item(s) of machinery must also be registered (where a register is available) for inspection by the appropriate Competent Authority (CA), which is usually the local authority.

The requirement to include this may already be required by a policy in the local plan or strategic spatial strategy document. The Environment Agency can also require this same standard to be applied to sites which it regulates. To avoid dual regulation this informative should only be applied to the site preparation, construction, and demolition phases at sites that may require an environmental permit.

Non-Road Mobile Machinery includes items of plant such as bucket loaders, forklift trucks, excavators, 360 grab, mobile cranes, machine lifts, generators, static pumps, piling rigs etc. The Applicant should be able to state or confirm the use of such machinery in their application to which this then can be applied.

Advice to applicant

General advice on Land Contamination Assessments

We expect land contamination assessments to follow the tiered approach laid out in our [Land Contamination Risk Management \(LCRM\)](#) guidance. The preliminary risk assessment (PRA) should include historical plans of the site, an appraisal of the environmental setting (including geology, hydrogeology, groundwater and surface water receptors, potential contaminants of concern and source areas), an initial conceptual site model (CSM) describing possible pollutant linkages for controlled waters, and identification of potentially unacceptable risks. Land contamination investigations should be undertaken by suitably qualified and experienced professionals and in accordance with BS 5930: [Code of practice for ground investigations](#) and BS 10175: [Investigation of potentially contaminated sites – code of practice](#). Soil and water analysis should be fully MCERTS accredited.

Investigation, demolition, remediation, or construction works must not create new pathways or linkages to controlled waters. Clean drilling techniques may be required for boreholes that penetrate contaminated ground.

Sustainable Drainage System (SuDs)

Soakaways and other infiltration SuDs must comply with statements G1 and G9 to G13 within [The Environment Agency's Approach to Groundwater Protection](#) and should be constructed in line with relevant standards and guidance including the [National Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems](#) standards, the [CIRIA C753 SuDS Manual](#) and the [Susdrain website](#). They must not be constructed in contaminated ground where infiltration could re-mobilise contaminants to pollute groundwater. All infiltration SuDS should be designed to maintain a minimum 1.2m clearance above peak seasonal groundwater levels. We do not consider deep infiltration systems (>2.0m below ground level) to be routinely acceptable. Only clean roof water can be directly discharged to infiltration SuDs; systems for the discharge of surface water from hard-standing, roads and impermeable vehicle parking areas

must incorporate appropriate pollution prevention measures and a suitable number of SuDs treatment components in line with the environmental sensitivity of the receiving waters. An oil separator/interceptor (or equivalent device) may be required to treat water draining off hard surfaces with a risk of oil contamination.

Management of Waste during construction

Developers should ensure that all contaminated materials are adequately characterised both chemically and physically, and that the permitting status of any proposed on-site operations are clear. Excavated materials recovered via a treatment operation can be re-used on-site under the CL:AIRE Definition of Waste: Development Industry Code of Practice subject to certain conditions being met. However, contaminated materials that are / must be disposed of are waste and therefore subject to waste management legislation which includes: Duty of Care Regulations 1991, Hazardous Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2005, Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010, The Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011. If the total quantity of waste material to be produced at or taken off site is hazardous waste and is 500kg or greater in any 12 month period the developer will need to register with us as a hazardous waste producer.

We recommend that developers:

- Refer to our [Groundwater Protection](#) webpages, which include our [Groundwater Protection Position Statements](#).
- Refer to our [Land Contamination Technical Guidance](#), including our [Land Contamination Risk Management \(LCRM\)](#) guidance, when dealing with land affected by contamination and for the type of information required in order to assess the risks to controlled waters. The Local Authority can advise on management of risks to human health.
- Consider using the [National Quality Mark Scheme for Land Contamination Management](#) which involves the use of competent persons to ensure that land contamination risks are appropriately managed.
- Refer to British Standards BS 5930 [Code of practice for ground investigations](#) and BS 10175 [Investigation of potentially contaminated sites – code of practice](#)
- Refer to [‘Piling and Penetrative Ground Improvement Methods on Land Affected by Contamination: Guidance on Pollution Prevention’](#) published by CL:AIRE, March 2025.
- Refer to [Position Statement on the Definition of Waste: Development Industry Code of Practice](#)
- Refer to our [Good Practice for Decommissioning Boreholes and Wells](#)

Refer to our [Dewatering building sites and other excavations: environmental permits](#) guidance when temporary dewatering is proposed.

Water Efficiency Advice

Increased water efficiency for all new developments potentially enables more growth with the same water resources. Developers can highlight positive corporate social responsibility messages and the use of technology to help sell their homes. For the homeowner lower water usage also reduces water and energy bills.

We endorse the use of water efficiency measures especially in new developments. Use of technology that ensures efficient use of natural resources could support the environmental benefits of future proposals and could help attract investment to the area. Therefore, water efficient technology, fixtures and fittings should be considered as part of new developments.

Residential developments

All new residential developments are required to achieve a water consumption limit of a maximum of 125 litres per person per day as set out within the Building Regulations 2010. We recommend that wherever possible and in areas of serious water stress (as identified in our report Water stressed areas - final classification) a higher standard of a maximum of 110 litres per person per day is applied. This standard may already be a requirement of the LPA. A higher standard may be required in future by some LPAs and these should be complied with where applicable.

Commercial/Industrial developments

We recommend that all new non-residential development of 1000sqm gross floor area or more should meet the BREEAM 'excellent' or the latest equivalent standards for water consumption. We recommend you contact your LPA for more information.

Pre-Application Advice

Regarding future applications, if you would like us to review a revised technical report prior to a formal submission, outside of a statutory consultation, and/or meet to discuss our position, this will be chargeable in line with our planning advice service. If you wish to request a document review or meeting, please contact our team email address at HNLsustainableplaces@environment-agency.gov.uk.

Further information on our charged planning advice service is available at: [Planning and marine licence advice: standard terms for our charges - GOV.UK](#)

Final comments

Thank you for contacting us regarding the above application. Our comments are based on our available records and the information submitted to us. Please quote our reference number in any future correspondence. Please provide us with a copy of the decision notice for our records. This would be greatly appreciated.

Should you have any queries regarding this response, please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Mohammad Ahmed
Planning Specialist

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