

Michael Bailey
South House
Royston
Herts

16 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 am writing to formally object to the planning application referenced above. I'm a frequent visitor to Therfield Heath plus my family and I live adjoining it. I firmly believe that this proposed development would be entirely inappropriate and detrimental. Below are my primary objections.

- **Housing Supply and Local Plan:** The site is not designated in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan (2011–2031) and is situated outside Royston's defined settlement boundary. Royston is already contributing significantly to the District's 5-year housing supply. Additionally, the site presents considerable engineering challenges due to limited access, steep gradients, and existing covenants, rendering it unsuitable for development. Consequently, this proposal contradicts the Local Plan and should be rejected. Landscape and Visual Impact Previous refusals (2018 and 2020/21) highlighted unacceptable harm to the landscape and visual character, concerns that remain pertinent. The site's elevated position, steep topography, and proximity to Therfield Heath SSSI would result in permanent damage to local character and cherished views. The proposed access arrangements would adversely affect the setting of Echo Hill, violating NPPF Paragraph 135 and Local Plan Policies CGB1, SP5, SP12, NE1, and NE6. Furthermore, the impact on neighboring properties (nos. 23 & 25) would be significant, leading to overshadowing, loss of privacy, and construction-related disruptions, contrary to Policy D3.
- **Highways and Transport:** The site is poorly situated, being distant from local amenities and schools. The proposed access road is impractical and unsafe, disregarding nearby junctions, blind bends, and existing drop kerbs. The applicant has not provided sufficient details regarding gradients, levels, or safety for pedestrians and cyclists. The Travel Plan underestimates the steep terrain and exaggerates

sustainable transport options, resulting in continued reliance on cars. This violates NPPF Paragraphs 108–110, Policy T1, and the Hertfordshire Design Guide.

- **Ecology and Biodiversity:** Surveys have overlooked key protected species present in the area. The Biodiversity Net Gain calculation indicates a deficit, depending on ineffective offsite mitigation. The proximity to Therfield Heath SSSI means that residents would inevitably exert pressure on this protected site. Therefore, the scheme fails to meet the 10% BNG requirement and conflicts with NPPF Paragraph 193b.
- **Flood Risk and Water Quality:** The steep slopes of the site heighten the risk to the already strained drainage system on Echo Hill. The proposals for surface water management lack thorough safety assessments and downstream protections. Additionally, the site is located above a Major Aquifer and Source Protection Zone 1, raising serious concerns about groundwater contamination. Royston sewage works are already operating beyond capacity, posing a threat to local chalk streams. This directly contravenes Policy NE7g and the NPPF. Environmental Impact Assessment No EIA Screening Opinion or Environmental Statement has been submitted, despite the site's proximity to the SSSI and prior acknowledgment of potential significant environmental effects. An EIA is clearly warranted.
- **Health and Community Capacity:** Local GP practices are already overwhelmed, with no capacity for expansion. The Integrated Care System has previously indicated that new residents cannot be accommodated in Royston surgeries. This undermines Policy SP7 and NPPF Paragraphs 55–58. In the proposal from Gladman there is mention of the existence of a local hospital to add to the heath care provision. This cottage hospital established in the early years of the C20th now offers a limited range of patient provision and has in any case been under threat itself from development for many years.

Conclusion For the reasons outlined above—non-compliance with the Local Plan, unacceptable environmental and visual impacts, highway and drainage risks, and inadequate community infrastructure—I strongly urge the Council to reject this application.

Kind regards,

Michael Bailey