

12 Royse Grove,
Royston,
Herts,
SG8 9EP

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

16 August 2025

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.

The development site is not identified in the existing Local Plan for North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC) and is outside the settlement boundary identified in the plan. Royston is already contributing a significant number of dwellings towards the NHDC 5-year housing land supply. The development of this site would present a significant engineering challenge due to the constrained access, steep topography and the protective covenants in place (which are to be enforced), the site is therefore unable to contribute to the NHDC 5-year housing land supply. The application should also be refused for its problematic location; its negative impact and its failure to comply with the adopted local plan (NHDC Local Plan 2011-2031).

*The reasons for refusal of the 2018 and 2020/21 planning applications, for landscape and visual impact still applies, as follows; the prominent position, the topography, the significant localised adverse impacts on the character of the area, the negative impact to visual receptors (which are unchanged), the marked change in the character of the immediate locality and wider valued landscape, such as Therfield Heath (SSSI). 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.***

There has not been any consideration to the direct effects of the access proposals on the character of Echo Hill which would be harmed by the proposed access arrangements. The proposals would therefore be contrary to the general landscape protection policies of the **NPPF (including Paragraph 135), Policies NE1 of the adopted Local Plan.**

The development site is fundamentally unsustainable due to the location of the site in relation to services, constrained access route to the local primary school, undeliverable proposed site access and constrained nature of the highway network including Echo Hill, Sun Hill, Coronation Avenue and Briary Lane. This conflicts with **paragraphs 108, 109 and 110 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Policy T1 of the Local Plan** and local planning guidance of the **Roads in Hertfordshire A Design Guide**. The development site is fundamentally unsustainable due to the location of the site in relation to services, constrained access route to the local primary school, undeliverable proposed site access and constrained nature of the highway network including Echo Hill, Sun Hill, Coronation Avenue and Briary Lane. This conflicts with **paragraphs 108, 109 and 110 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Policy T1 of the Local Plan** and local planning guidance of the **Roads in Hertfordshire A Design Guide**. Add a paragraph with your views on the potential ecological impact ([click here for details](#))

There is no capacity within the local health providers to accommodate speculative development. 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 reference 21/00765/OP) states the “**GP practices show a significant health infrastructure deficit, and existing surgeries do not have capacity to absorb any additional residents**”. Therefore, this site and other speculative development in Royston and surrounding villages, are likely to significantly and adversely affect health services in the area. Whilst funding is mentioned as mitigation, the GP practices are all land locked and unable to provide the additional space and facilities needed. Suitable infrastructure to support any expansion, especially speculative, should be considered a significant risk to the health, care and wellbeing of existing residents of Royston. The site would therefore conflict with **Policy SP7 of the NHDC Local Plan and 55 to 58 of the NPPF**.

The development site lies above a Major Aquifer, this area is also classified as a “Source Protection Zone 1” due to the high risk to groundwater contamination, making the site far less suitable for development.

The existing sewerage treatment for Royston, is located in South Cambridgeshire District Council, operated and maintained by Anglian Water. The treatment works discharges into a local watercourse, which is associated with a chalk stream catchment, a nationally important and protected ecosystem. Residents have found evidence to show regular exceedance of the permit in place at the treatment works. There is little evidence provided by Anglian Water which shows they are competent, nationally, at determining the treatment works has sufficient capacity to accept additional flows and therefore significant concerns they are fit to approve any additional flows from development in the area. Further evidence must be supplied to reassure residents there is sufficient capacity and water quality will be kept to within the existing permit levels, without detriment to the watercourse and local chalk stream catchment.

It has not been made clear if an EIA screening Opinion has been requested or obtained for this application and no Environmental Statement (ES) has been submitted. NHDC has previously proceeded on the assumption that this is not EIA development. However, the 2018 Application was concluded to likely have a significant environmental impact; a view which was agreed by the then

Planning Officer and the Planning Committee. The 2020/21 Application also had concerns raised regarding potential impact with an objection from the Conservators of Therfield Heath and Greens (Conservators), who is a key stakeholder for Therfield Heath (SSSI). The site was also refused at Planning Committee for its landscape and visual impact to Therfield Heath. Therefore, the site poses a risk to the SSSI and should be subject to a detailed EIA Screening Opinion, with justification provided on any omission of an ES.

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

Yours faithfully,

