

Officer Liz Anderson – Ecologist  
Date 27/08/2025

Ref: 25/01708/OP  
Att: Ben Glover

**Land Opposite Heath Farm, Briary Lane, Royston, Hertfordshire,  
Erection of up to 84 dwellings with public open space, landscaping and sustainable  
drainage system (SuDS) following demolition of No. 24 Echo Hill with all matters  
reserved save for access.**

Having read through the submitted documents I am concerned that some species surveys are still outstanding. The June 2025 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) states that protected species surveys are currently underway to inform an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) of the scheme. The presence of a protected species is a material consideration and the results of these surveys should be available for comment prior to determination.

The submitted Statutory Metric shows a loss of more than 27 Habitat Units equalling 45%. I see no reason why a greenfield site should not be delivering at least 10% BNG on site, off-site provision would not be supported.

The site is located within 60m of Therfield Heath SSSI and LNR and is within the known Natural England Zone of Influence. Given the sensitivity of this site it is surprising that the applicant is seeking to develop field F2 at all when leaving hedgerow 5 intact and avoiding development adjacent to Briary Lane would save the loss of habitat units from a more floristically diverse field whilst retaining ecological connectivity along the hedgerow and also add a further buffer to the SSSI.

The draft Herts LNRS identifies the site as being within an area that could become of particular importance for biodiversity (ACIB) with the core focus of the area being chalk grassland and heath so opportunities to support habitat delivery should be explored.

However, as it currently stands there's insufficient information available for me to make fully informed comments.