

Tom Gosbee

45 Echo Hill

Royston

Hertfordshire

SG8 9BB

Ben Glover

Senior Planning Officer

North Hertfordshire District Council

Council Offices

Gernon Road

Letchworth Garden City

Hertfordshire

SG6 3JF

Date: 05/08/2025

Dear Mr Glover,

Planning Application Reference: 25/01708/OP – Land Opposite Heath Farm, Briary Lane, Royston

I'm writing to object to the above planning application. I've looked through the plans, and I know the area well – I recently moved into the road I am shocked and have serious concerns about what's being proposed.

To start with, the site isn't included in the Local Plan and doesn't need to be developed to meet housing supply targets. North Herts already has enough land allocated to meet housing demand, so this feels like an unnecessary and speculative attempt to build on land that should stay undeveloped.

The location is really sensitive in terms of how it looks and fits into the landscape. Building here would completely change the character of this part of Royston – currently it's open countryside and a clear edge to the town. If houses go up, it'll have a big visual impact, especially from the public footpaths nearby. It would just sprawl out into the countryside.

I'm also worried about privacy. If two-storey homes go up opposite existing houses, people living nearby will be overlooked, especially in their gardens. It's a quiet, private spot right now and that would change overnight.

Traffic is another concern. Briary Lane and the surrounding roads already get busy, especially at peak times, and adding a load more cars from this development will make things worse. The access road isn't suitable for the extra traffic, and it could be a safety issue for pedestrians and cyclists. Working in the transport industry I can honestly say trucks and heavy machinery are not going to be able to access the road without mounting kerbs, causing obstructions or damaging the verges that currently exist.

There are environmental concerns too. This site supports local wildlife, and I along with other residents have plenty of evidence of this. With so many species under pressure, any new development should be going above and beyond to boost local nature – this one doesn't.

There's also the pressure it'll put on local services. GP surgeries and other NHS services in Royston are already struggling to meet demand. Adding a load more residents without boosting services just isn't sustainable. This coupled with the fact local schools and nurseries are already at full capacity with no solution in full sight.

We would like to make you aware of restrictive covenants which are in place in Echo Hill and which we as a resident(s) of Echo Hill have the benefit of, and we reserve the right to take enforcement action if these covenants are breached.

The covenants were wrongly dismissed by NHDC planning during the previous determination of planning application 20/00744/OP.

The enforcement of the covenants would be a lengthy legal process possibly taking several years to be resolved. A tribunal action would therefore significantly delay the deliverability of the development. This factor therefore means that the possibility of a lengthy delay to implementation will become a material planning consideration in the decision-making process.

You are aware from the previously refused applications for this site the strength of feeling against this development from the community of Royston and the significant impact this development will have directly to the residents of Echo Hill. A letter from an Appointed Solicitor was issued to both Gladman and Number 24 Echo Hill during the previous application of 20/00744/OP, regarding the breach of the covenants and the intention for enforcement action, this remains the case for this latest application and Echo Hill residents will pursue this going forward for this latest application.

In addition, if the community is successful with enforcing the covenants and preventing the demolition of Number 24, both the construction traffic and main site access would not be able to enter the site via Echo Hill, the alternative would be to use the bridleway and therefore the reasons for refusal in the 2018 application associated with the negative impact to the neighbouring SSSI would still stand.

Therefore, due to the protective covenants in place, which residents of Echo Hill will enforce, it cannot be guaranteed that Gladman will be able to deliver this site and therefore this site cannot contribute towards the 5-year NHDC housing supply.

Lastly, this land is good-quality farmland – once it's built on, that's it, it's gone. In a time where we're being told we need to protect resources and grow more food locally, it doesn't make sense to lose land like this when other sites could be used instead.

Overall, I think this development would do more harm than good – to the landscape, to the community, and to the environment. I hope the council will take all these concerns on board and refuse the application.

Yours sincerely,

T. Gosbee