

Biodiversity threats: Objections with respect to:

Land North-East of Great Ashby Ref. 25/03080/HYA submitted by Picture Estates Limited, received by the Council on 15 January 2026.

Sent to

planning.control@north-herts.gov.uk

11th March 2026

Dear NHDC,

I have been advising the local badger group and Herts Wildlife Monitors over the last 12 months and am writing to strongly object to this application on the following grounds:

I refer to a series of simple principles that were prepared in May 2025 and provided to the applicant's representative, for which not reply was received (Annex 1).

By now the following elements should have been the subject of detailed discussions and in-principle agreement, but they are not. For this reason, there is no confidence that protective measures will be put in place and if that is the case the application should be refused.

1. Detailed planting and fencing strategy

This to include all aspects including promised habitat between Nine acre and Newbury Grove woods, beyond hedgerow protection.

2. Build duration and stages

There are still no detailed plans with spreadsheet of anticipated milestones and stages are still lacking although a -stage process has been mentioned with no detail.

3. Protection during 'Build' plan

There is still lack of an ecology driven plan of how existing and created interest will be protected from construction work including intrusions, noise and lighting.

4. Timing of edge and corridor creation

There is still no insight into how the nature protection provisions will be timetabled alongside building work, the building of passages and guide fences much of which should begin from the start of development. A report and indicative plan showing all measures should be available by now for the application for such a big project.

5. Protection of hedges and setts

Location of temporary protective fences, signage and screening in sensitive locations.

6. Maintenance objectives are clearly established

By now and for the application, there should be draft a management prescription for woodland and grassland management and for habitat creation. It should have a forecast of establishment and maintenance actions, aims and objectives for each land parcel and protection from public pressure with sufficient detail on bats and badgers.

7. Management of suitable ring-fenced budget is established

By now, and from point 6. (above), a provisional costed plan based upon an annual cycle and woodland management options and compartment objectives, fence repairs, planting establishment, and hay cutting. Deer management and wardening of people-pressure. The size of budget is provisionally estimated for each area over a realistic time period and source of funds clearly established.

In fact, none of the above appears to have been progressed at all over the last six months. Local stakeholders are locked out and there is no comfort that any of the above will materialise in a manner that will ensure wildlife interests are protected and maintained.

A lack of confidence in the intent and procedures, beyond the bare minimum statutory undertakings that leave detail to be decided means that the Council can have no faith in the delivery of the objectives. For what reason would any of the above elements not require detailed attention for monitoring procedures; a baseline against which all future actions could be monitored?

I trust that your Council will defer the application until such time as adequate information is included as a part of the undertakings.

Yours sincerely,

Tom Langton

Tom Langton FRSB, C Biol., BSc. Ecol,

Director and principal consulting ecologist



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<https://hciuk.co.uk>



Herpetofauna Consultants

International Ltd.

GA 2 and Area Wildlife Protection Group

Establishing 8 GA2 development principles

1. Detailed planting and fencing strategy

This to include all aspects including promised habitat between 9 acre and Newbury Grove woods, beyond hedgerow protection.

2. The forecast build duration and stages are clear

How will the site be developed, what are the stages and likely delegated control options? Provision of detailed plans with spreadsheet of anticipated milestones and stages

3. A 'Protection during Build' plan is provided

An ecology driven plan of how existing and created interest will be protected from construction work including intrusions, noise and lighting

4. The timing of edge and corridor creation is programmed

Exactly how the nature protection provisions will be timetabled alongside building work, building of passages and guide fences. A report and indicative plan showing all measures.

5. Protection of hedges and setts

Location of temporary protective fences, signage and screening in sensitive locations.

6. Maintenance objectives are clearly established

A draft a management prescription for woodland and grassland management and for habitat creation with a forecast of establishment and maintenance actions, aims and objectives for each land parcel and protection from public pressure with most detail on bats and badgers.

7. Management of suitable ring-fenced budget is established

From 6., a provisional coasted plan based upon an annual cycle and woodland management options and compartment objectives, fence repairs planting establishment and hay cutting. Deer management and wardening of people pressure. The size of budget is provisionally estimated for each area over a realistic time period and source of funds clearly established.

8. Wildlife Protection Group given significant access and involvement