

With reference to the letter from Sean Graves in respect of the subject application. I should like to comment as follows. **Ref 24/01883/RM**

As you may know, I served as District Councillor for Ermine Ward which includes the village of Barkway for 13 years standing down in May of this year. I have been replaced by District Councillor Martin Prescott Prescott, who will no doubt be writing to you separately.

Some background information in respect of this application.

As you may also know in December 2020, it was intended to omit the site BK3 by the person responsible for developing the NHDC Local Plan, Nigel Smith NHDC Strategic Planning Manager. Happy to supply background information if you wish, or you may wish to check with Nigel.

This was supported by Ian Fullstone NHDC Development Manager and Anne McDonald NHDC Senior Planning Officer, however, as you may also know the Inspector was told to retain all sites within the Emerging Local Plan, because it would be too controversial to remove any. Therefore, in spite of the sites unsuitability it remained.

I am sure you also know that the public are rather cynical concerning consultations/request for comments because these are usually not taken into account and do not normally affect the decision-making process. Indeed within the Local Plan, there were no land changes in spite of thousands of comments by the public and reputable organisations. This the lack of changes was confirmed to me by Nigel Smith in his email to me dated 26th November 2018.

I will now endeavour to be brief in that most of the salient points were contained within my comments concerning the earlier outline application. However, there still remain several unresolved serious issues.

I note that the proposed convenience shop has been omitted because the developer Redrow say they cannot find an operator. The lack of an operator is hardly surprising, and as pointed out previously, the shop was only introduced to try and make the development appear more palatable. Surprise surprise it won't be happening.

Within the earlier outline planning approval the condition was included that building work should not commence until the sewage treatment plant had the capacity to deal with the excess sewage. This condition was introduced for sensible environmental reasons. I note that the developer is now wishing to change this. Presumably having very little concern for our environment. Hardly "presumption in favour of **sustainable** development".

The existing sewage treatment plant regularly discharging raw sewage into the special chalk stream/river Quinn. Barkway has the highest raw sewage discharge rate into a river within North Hertfordshire. Whilst the excerpt below is dated 2020 the situation is now far worse with many new houses, having been built in the village See the attached link.



[Friends of the Rib and Quin](https://friendsoftherib.wordpress.com)
friendsoftherib.wordpress.com

Untreated Sewage Spills

Discharges of raw sewage in our catchment

		Incidents	Hours
Therfield	2019	0	0
STW	2020	33	274
Buntingford	2019	11	16
STW	2020	20	61
Standon	2019	4	4
STW	2020	0	0
Chapmore End	2019	92	80
STW	2020	25	57.5
Barkway	2019	17	175
STW	2020	43	548
Braughing	2019	0	0
STW	2020	0	0

preventing new and existing development from contributing to, *being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of* soil, air, *water* or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans;

NHDC decision sheet planning control committee, Thursday 1st December 2022 see below

6 18/01502/OP Land Between Royston Road And, Cambridge Road, Barkway, Hertfordshire

RESOLVED: That application 18/01502/OP be **GRANTED** planning permission subject to the reasons set out in the report of the Development and Conservation Manager, with an amendment to Condition 9 to read:

"Prior to the commencement of development, a development and infrastructure phasing plan is to be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA which must be agreed with the Local Authority in consultation with Thames Water. This plan is to set out the measures / works required to ensure that the local infrastructure has the capacity to serve the development and to allow the development to be occupied. Where a development and infrastructure phasing plan is agreed no occupation shall take place other than in accordance with the agreed development and infrastructure phasing plan.

Thursday, 1st December, 2022

Reason: Sewage Treatment Upgrades are likely to be required to accommodate the proposed development. Any upgrade works identified will be necessary in order to avoid sewage flooding and/or potential pollution incidents."

I would imagine that Newsells Park Stud will comment separately however, they have already explained many times of the threat to their business because of the vast **quantum** of people that would then use the North/South bridleway/green B17 route and that it was a condition of the adopted Local Plan that **mitigation** should be included within any development of BK3. I cannot see that any serious mitigation has been included. Planning approval should not be given if it is likely to harm the local economy. Newsells Park Stud is the largest local employer.

Public bridleway B-17 is also a **Green Corridor**. NHDC employed CAG Consulting, and this point was highlighted by them. Also, see below highlighted excerpt from Local Plan. Propose Submission, October 2016. It is proposed that this B17 North/South bridle way/green route be bisected by a road. Incorporating B-17 means just that and not bisecting it. Whatever crossing is proposed. Wildlife does not know how to operate a Pegasus or any other road crossing.



BK2	Land off Windmill Close	20 homes
	- Part of the site to be retained as open space; and - Archaeological survey to be completed prior to development	
BK3	Land between Cambridge Road & Royston Road	140 homes
	- Development should be set back from the road; - Lower density housing would be appropriate on the eastern part of the site; - Incorporation of footpath Barkway 017 as a north-south green corridor through the site; - Appropriate treatment of northern boundary to maintain alignment and integrity of Bridleway Barkway 018 - Explore opportunities for connecting road from Royston Road to Cambridge Road having regard to heritage considerations (below); - Sensitive integration into existing village, particularly in terms of design, building orientation and opportunities for pedestrian and cycle access; - Provision of local convenience shop; - Site layout designed to integrate with any future use of adjoining reserve school site; - Development should include extensive tree planting, maintenance of the existing boundaries and hedgerows. - Sensitive design to respect setting of Cokenach Registered Park and Garden and listed buildings within Newsells estate to include: - Reinforcing of hedgerows and landscaping along site boundaries; and - Access arrangements designed to minimise harm to heritage assets	
Total allocated sites		173 homes
Completions and permissions		31 homes
Total allocated, completed and permitted		204 homes

Economy

13.38 The visible economic activity of the village is limited to a petrol filling station/garage, soft furnishings business and car repairs business. Barkway Park Golf Club is also located near to the edge of the village. 10

Infrastructure & mitigation

13.39 The existing first school site in Barkway is constrained and is considered difficult to expand. Hertfordshire County Council hold a reserve school site in the village, lying between sites BK1 and BK3. This will be retained providing the opportunity to respond to the increase in the number of dwellings for the village.

The submitted designs are of the poorest, standard. No regard for the local character of the area. No consideration of the local **vernacular**. The housing design is reminiscent of monopoly board houses, not anything that anybody could be proud and contrary to NHDC paragraph for strategic policies, SP1 sustainable development in North Hertfordshire below.

Off-the-shelf housing design with inappropriate names, like Richmond, Hampstead and Leningrad is hardly sensitive design. Wouldn't happen in Cambridge, why should it happen here?

The proposal does not provide the required infrastructure.

The development does not respect and improve surroundings.

The proposal disregards the Barkway/Nuthampstead Neighbourhood Plan.

4 Strategic Policies

Sustainable Development

Policy SP1: Sustainable development in North Hertfordshire

This Plan supports the principles of sustainable development within North Hertfordshire. We will:

- a. Maintain the role of key settlements within and adjoining the District as the main focus for housing, employment and new development making use of previously developed land where possible;
- b. Ensure the long-term vitality of the District's villages by supporting growth which provides opportunities for existing and new residents and sustains key facilities;
- c. Grant planning permission for proposals that, individually or cumulatively:
 - i. Deliver an appropriate mix of homes, jobs and facilities that contribute towards the targets and aspirations in this Plan;
 - ii. Create high-quality developments that respect and improve their surroundings and provide opportunities for healthy lifestyle choices;
 - iii. Provide the necessary infrastructure required to support an increasing population;
 - iv. Protect key elements of North Hertfordshire's environment including **biodiversity**, important landscapes, heritage assets and green infrastructure (including the water environment); and
 - v. Secure any necessary mitigation measures that reduce the impact of development, including on climate change; and
- d. Support neighbourhood plans and other local planning initiatives where they are in general conformity with the strategic policies of this Local Plan.

New Ref	Old Ref	Site	Place	Type	Summary of evidence and reasoning	Conclusion
n/a	22	Land east of Royston Road	Barkway	Housing	This is a large site relative to the size of Barkway, located on the edge of the existing village. Development in this area of the village already has a less linear pattern and would be less likely to impact on the character and appearance of the historic linear core of the village. Major upgrades to foul sewage network for development of this size, requiring further investigation; may require site to be phased later. It may be the case that development on this scale would look to Barley more than Barkway for facilities such as shops, doctors etc. The site is well screened from Cambridge Road. The site would close the gap between the existing village and Newsells Estate. The site is currently Grade 2 agricultural land. Site specific issues may be able to be addressed, but would lead to level of growth above district average for this modest village, with no coherent plan for improving facilities on offer.	Do not allocate site.
n/a	23	Top Fields.	Barkway	Housing	This site is opposed by English Heritage on the grounds that it	Do not allocate

I have always mentioned that the "light touch" of NHDC has encouraged, poor design, abuse of the planning system, and encouragement of others to do the same. It is clear to me that this experienced developer wants to provide the minimum that they believe would be acceptable.

Redrow covering letter dated 19th August 2024. Paragraph section 41, integrated Swift/bird nesting brick for every home built on the development is rather mean. Anyway, swifts nest in groups, not one per house.

Streetlighting, I have not been able to establish whether or not this is to be included. As you may be aware, Barkway is a **dark sky**, village and street lighting should not be included. Recent application for housing in another Ermine Ward village nearby Therfield. Street lighting was removed for the same reason.

NPPF, Paragraph 2 Achieving Sustainable Development.

Dumping more raw sewage into a quite rare chalk stream is hardly sustainable.

Fostering well designed beautiful and safe places. Hardly beautiful.

Not exactly protecting and enhancing our historic environment.

NPPF. Paragraph 12 achieving well designed and beautiful places.

Paragraph 131 hardly beautiful. Paragraph 132. Local considerations have been ignored. No consideration for the local character (**vernacular**).

Archaeology.

Originally landowner did not own the east part of the site known as McIntyre Field. This was owned by a lady living in Monte Carlo. Therefore, the east part of the site was not physically archaeologically investigated. A desktop study which is no doubt what will be proposed is not acceptable. Physical archaeological investigation needs to be properly undertaken.

It appears that a Design and Access statement is missing from the application.

Should this application unfortunately come before the planning control committee would you kindly recommend refusal.