

Date: 13 August 2025
Our ref: 522176
Your ref: 24/01013/HYA



Shaun Greaves
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BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Mr Greaves

Planning consultation: Hybrid Application : Hybrid application for residential development of up to 325 dwellings comprising (a) full planning application for Phase 1 comprising 102 dwellings and associated infrastructure including access from Newmarket Road, emergency and pedestrian/cycle access from Burloes Hall Drive, internal highways, public open space, landscaping and drainage and b) outline application for up to 223 dwellings and associated infrastructure with all matters reserved apart from primary means of access and emergency and pedestrian/cycle access from Burloes Hall Drive,

Location: Land Surrounding Burloes Cottages, Newmarket Road, Royston, Hertfordshire.

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 04 August 2025, which was received by Natural England on the same date.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

SUMMARY OF NATURAL ENGLAND'S ADVICE: NO OBJECTION - SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATE MITIGATION BEING SECURED

We consider that without appropriate mitigation the application has potential to damage or destroy the interest features for which Therfield Heath Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Local Nature Reserve (LNR) has been notified.

This application falls within the 5.8km zone of influence (Zol) for recreational pressure impacts to Therfield Heath SSSI/LNR and will therefore be expected to deliver a package of mitigation measures and/or financial contributions in accordance with North Hertfordshire Council's Therfield Heath SSSI Mitigation Strategy. We are broadly satisfied with the applicant's proposed outline mitigation measures subject to these being detailed in a revised Recreation Mitigation Strategy and delivery secured through an appropriate planning mechanism.

Recreational Disturbance to Therfield Heath SSSI/LNR

Natural England welcomes the additional information provided by the applicant in response to advice provided in our letter dated 21 June 2024 (ref. 477005). We requested further consideration of green space/landscape design with regard to the Therfield Heath SSSI/LNR Mitigation strategy

and/or evidence of securing a financial contribution to onsite mitigation/management on Therfield Heath SSSI/LNR.

Natural England has reviewed the applicant's Planning Statement Addendum (July 2025), and is broadly satisfied with the outline mitigation measures proposed. These include delivery of >3ha of on-site open space, dog waste bins, signage, on-site management and maintenance plan, a proposed circular 2.7km permissive path to be secured in perpetuity plus an appropriate financial contribution to the onsite mitigation/management on Therfield Heath SSSI/LNR, all of which will be secured through the s106 agreement. Subject to details of these mitigation measures and their long-term management being set out in a revised Recreation Management Strategy, for agreement by the LPA and other interested parties, including Natural England, and delivery secured through the s106 agreement, we are satisfied that the proposed development is unlikely to have a significant adverse impact on Therfield Heath SSSI and we have no objection to the application.

Natural England advises that permission should not be granted until such time as these mitigation measures and their long-term management have been detailed in a revised Recreation Management Strategy and delivery secured through the appropriate means. We will be pleased to review the applicant's draft revised Strategy through Natural England's [Discretionary Advice Service](#).

Please note that if your authority is minded to grant planning permission contrary to the advice in this letter, you are required under Section 281 (6) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) to notify Natural England of the permission, the terms on which it is proposed to grant it and how, if at all, your authority has taken account of Natural England's advice. You must also allow a further period of 21 days before the operation can commence.

For advice on other matters within our natural environment remit, please refer to our previous response.

This concludes Natural England's advice at this stage which we hope you will find helpful.

Please consult us again once the information requested above, has been provided.

If you have any queries relating to the advice in this letter please contact Betsy Brown via consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Should the proposal change, please consult us again.

Yours sincerely

Betsy Brown
Sustainable Development – West Anglia Team