

10 Cromwell Way, Pirton SG5 3RD

Ms. N. Reynard.

Senior Planning Officer

NHDC

Letchworth Garden City

20 September 2026

Dear Ms Reynard,

RE: 25/01696/OP Land East of Holwell Road Pirton

I write in reply to the Council's consultation dated 21 August 2026.

1. I confirm my previous objections to this application made on 20 August 2025 and 18 January 2026. Whilst there is a new NPPF against which this application falls to be considered. my previous points remain valid both in terms of Local and Neighbourhood Plans, and in terms of the new NPPF 2026.
2. The tilted balance of the previous NPPF no longer exists. My comments concerning the achieving of sustainable development objectives now in Para17 of the 2026 NPPF(economic, social and environmental) remain valid.
3. In terms of the new test, the benefits are substantially outweighed by the adverse effects of development of up to 130 dwellings on this site.
4. The site is outside of the Pirton Development Boundary and so S5 of the 2026 NPPF is engaged. However, S5(j)(i) comes into play. The Applicant has not demonstrated compliance with the tests. Anglian Water and Highways maintain their objections. The education contributions needed are disputed by the Applicant. There is no provision on site for leisure and sport and play to a degree that will meet the needs of nearly 400 men, women and children; current facilities within Pirton cannot cope, and Pirton has no land on which to expand sport fields, or village hall capacity. If residents turn to Hitchin for recreation, they will use cars and undermine any argument regarding sustainability. The site is not physically well related to an existing settlement, unless the narrow access from Comice Meadows is meant to stand for "well -connected". This is a field out in the countryside. The location is not sustainable within the meaning of 2026

NPPF TR3- see previous comments of the Planning Inspector in 2019, then considering an application for 99 dwellings on this site.

5. Character and Landscape: I can do no better than to copy what I previously wrote.

"Adverse Impact on the Character and Setting of Pirton in the Landscape> This site lies within the Pirton Lowlands Landscape Character Area (LCA). The Inspector for the Appeal against refusal of planning permission for 99 dwellings in 2018 concluded that the site is visually much more part of a wider landscape rather than of the village fringe, notwithstanding the development of Comice Meadows. The Character Assessment which defines the Pirton Lowlands that there may be scope for carefully located and small scale developments within the LCA but the application for 99 dwellings did not fall within the definition. Neither will an application for 130 dwellings. An overwhelmingly large development in the countryside, a planned large development, is out of character for Pirton; will adversely affect the symmetry of the village, and urbanise this side of the village. There will also be an adverse impact on Hambridge Way and the many recreational users of this section of the ancient Icknield Way. A significant adverse impact (agreed by the Inspector) will be the loss of views across arable land to the Stondon Ridge along with the urbanising of the landscape and noise.

Furthermore, views from Holwell Road on leaving and entering the village will be compromised, and further north on Holwell Road, the development will very visible despite the existing trees and planned extra planting. There would be, as the Inspector noted, a clear perception of development extending out in to the countryside. The Inspector that the proposal would have long term adverse effects, both on the character of the landscape and on its appreciation by users of local roads and footpaths. This would particularly so because the proposed housing would inevitably be seen in conjunction with Comice Meadows. This is even more so given the proposals for access through Comice Meadows and the reliance placed on access across to Comice Meadows' open space and children's play area."

6. Sustainable Travel: the Applicant relies on a (possible) "hail and ride" bus stop on Holwell Road outside of Comice Meadows. This idea, and it is no more than that, is presumably an acknowledgement of the difficulty of persuading new residents to walk along Holwell Road past "the 12 Apostles" to the bus stop in Royal Oak Lane. Currently very few residents of Comice Meadows make use of the bus. The idea of bus stop or bus shelter was rejected by the bus company in relation to Comice Meadows. I attach a photograph taken on Saturday 19th September to demonstrate the normal state of this part of Holwell Road. Nor, as far as I am aware, do many, if any, residents of Comice Meadows walk or cycle to Hitchin for their shopping or evening entertainment; schools or work. Undoubtedly many do use Hambridge Way and the public bridleways and

footpaths for leisure; as well as some for walking their children to school in Pirton. The use of the Public Right of Way network for travel in place of the car in the light of lived experience is fanciful.

7. I have read the response by Michael Campbell to this consultation and support his analysis of the 2026 NPPF and its application to this planning application. I have also read the response by Chris Shellard and support his comments, particularly in relation to the NHDC Design Code.
8. This remains a highly speculative application that does not meet the tests in the 2026 NPPF, the current Local Development Plan or current Neighbourhood Plan. Nor is there evidence of compliance with the NHDC Design Code. It should be rejected as were previous attempts to gain outline planning permission.

Yours sincerely,

Diane Burleigh OBE





