

Justin Booij
Senior Projects Officer (Major Sites)
North Herts Council
Gernon Road
Letchworth Garden City
SG6 3JF

3rd October 2025

Dear Justin

Planning Portal Ref:
PP-14325165

Our Ref: UAC092

GROWING BALDOCK - OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION

I am pleased to enclose an outline planning application (OPA) for the proposed development known as '*Growing Baldock*', on behalf of our clients Urban&Civic Limited Baldock North Ltd (U&C) and Hertfordshire County Council (HCC). The OPA seeks consent for a sustainable urban extension (SUE) to the north and east of Baldock.

This covering letter outlines the context of the proposed Growing Baldock development, explains the planning strategy and provides a summary of the proposals and the application.

Background

The Growing Baldock site is allocated for development as a strategic housing site in the adopted North Hertfordshire Local Plan (2022), under a series of site allocations, which is also required to deliver supporting education, employment, health and mixed uses.

In 2021, the landowner HCC appointed U&C as development partner, and to act as master developer, to take the project forward through design, planning and delivery.

Subsequently, the applicant team has prepared the Growing Baldock Strategic Masterplan (SMP) which was approved on 16 June 2025, articulating a design framework for the proposed development that has directly informed this OPA.

U&C and HCC are committed to the delivery of the Growing Baldock development and the submission of this OPA represents a crucial milestone, moving one step closer to commencing construction of this important scheme that will meet significant housing and employment needs in the District.

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Outline Planning Application

Outline planning permission (OPP) is sought for the following description of development:

'Outline planning application with all matters reserved except for means of highway access into the development from the A505/Royston Road, North Road and Clothall Road: for up to 3,200 homes, up to 16ha of employment, waste and leisure infrastructure, a mixed use local centre, up to 1 secondary school, up to 2 x primary schools, up to 1 SEND school, health hub, green infrastructure (including parks, formal sports provision, play, habitat areas, informal open space and structural planting), internal street network, access junctions and railway crossing, public transport infrastructure, pedestrian/cycle network (including PRow diversions, active travel routes, mobility hubs and crossing of the railway), utilities and drainage infrastructure (including diversions of existing and provision of new infrastructure, pumping stations, sustainable drainage, primary substations, rising main/strategic sewer and renewable energy infrastructure), ground remodelling/earthworks and any necessary demolitions.'

All matters are reserved for later determination except for the design of four specific access junctions. Detailed approval is sought for the following junctions:

- North Road Junction(s) – all modes and bus only;
- Royston Road Junction; and
- Clothall Road Junction.

The submitted Development Specification and Parameter Plan set out the parameters of the proposed development that have been tested by the accompanying Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The Environmental Statement (ES), the report of the outcomes of the EIA, submitted in support of this application, has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the NHC scoping opinion received in September 2025.

The red line boundary for this application is shown on the Site Location Plan (drawing reference: UAC092-001 Rev F) and has a site area of 219.84 hectares. The Growing Baldock site comprises of land to the east of North Road and north of the railway, land between Royston Road and the railway, land to the south of Royston Road, east of Clothall Common and west of the A505, including the Urban Open Land, and land to the south of Clothall Road. The site also includes parts of Walls Field, to the west of the Urban Open Land, and a small parcel west of North Road, adjacent to the Ivel Springs Local Nature Reserve.

Pre-Application Consultation

The OPA has been the subject of extensive pre-application meetings as agreed in a Planning Performance Agreement with NHC. This has involved fortnightly meetings with NHC planning officers, a series of design, education, infrastructure and transport focused working groups with NHC planning, design, transport and HCC highways, education and GIU officers. In addition, a series of topic specific sessions with a wider set of stakeholders have been undertaken, including:

- Public Rights of Way (HCC PRow team, British Horse Society);
- Biodiversity Net Gain, Ecology (NHC Ecology, RSPB);
- Employment (NHC Economic Development, Herts Futures);
- Stewardship (NHC Open Space);
- Housing (NHC Housing);

- Station Improvements and Rail Crossing (Network Rail);
- Sustainability (NHC and HCC Sustainability);
- Sports Provision (NHC Policy, Sports England);
- Waste (NHC and HCC Waste);
- Drainage and Flooding (LLFA, Affinity Water);
- Archaeology (HCC Archaeology, Historic England);
- Transport (NHC Transport, HCC Highways, National Highways)
- Active Travel (Active Travel England); and
- Green Infrastructure (NHC Open Space and Ecology).

In addition, a comprehensive community engagement process including 3 public consultation events and numerous stakeholder and community engagement sessions has also been undertaken prior to submission to share and shape the SMP and the OPA proposals. These are detailed in the Statement of Community Involvement and Design and Access Statement submitted in support of the OPA.

Tiered Application Structure

U&C's delivery of strategic sites via the master developer model is predicated on a now tried and tested approach to planning, that allows for the approval of the appropriate level of detail at the appropriate time, cascading down from site wide (high level) to parcel wide (more granular detail). The U&C model engages bespoke planning conditions alongside the S106 agreement to establish a tiered approval regime. This inserts an additional approval stage (Tier 2) into the planning process between outline consent (Tier 1) and reserved matters applications (RMAs) (Tier 3).

This Tier 2 'Framework' submission and approval shapes phases and development at a level of detail that gives the master developer and LPA a high level of control over implementation. A Design Code is produced supported by other technical delivery documents e.g. relating to biodiversity and construction management. The approach substantially lifts the burden off individual parcel developers, that follow through with parcel RMAs and enables the LPA to deliver a joined up and comprehensive approach to development management.

This structure is proposed to be adopted at Baldock, with bespoke variations to reflect the intended early delivery of BA2 as a first phase, and to respond to the fact that the land use mix within BA3 will not be agreed until later in the development programme. The proposed planning approach is explained further in the Planning Statement.

Outline Planning Application Content

The OPA includes the following documentation, as detailed in the table below. Appendix A further identifies where each document required by NHC's validation checklist is provided within the application.

As agreed with NHC and HCC, the Transport Assessment (TA) submitted with this OPA has been prepared using internal spreadsheet transport modelling. During the course of determination of this OPA, an Addendum to the TA will be prepared using COMET model runs

(HCC's strategic transport model) to verify the original TA and makes any changes necessary to the proposed interventions and associated trigger points.

A Viability Assessment is not submitted with the OPA at this stage but is anticipated to be required during the course of its negotiation, to help inform and shape the S106 agreement. An assessment will be prepared once consultee responses have been received on the OPA and the scale of S106 requirements is more clearly defined.

The requirement for a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) in support of the OPA has been discussed with NHC officers during the course of the pre-app and ES scoping stages of the OPA preparation. It has been agreed that the interrelationships between health and the proposed development can be articulated in the Socio-Economic and Health chapter of the Environmental Statement and supported by principles for healthy and active design in the Design and Access Statement and Sustainability and Energy Strategy. Accordingly, a HIA does not form part of this OPA submission.

Table 1: Submitted OPA Documentation

Submitted documents	Reference / Comment
Formal Documentation	
Application form	Dated 3 rd October 2025
Ownership Certificate C and Notices	Dated 3 rd October 2025
Application fee	£205,943 – maximum OPA fee. Paid via Planning Portal
Covering letter	
Development Specification	
Application Plans	
Site Location Plan	UAC092-001 Rev F
Parameter Plan	UAC092-002 Rev Q
Development Site Accesses – North Road Junction(s)	PC7029-ITP-CE-GB-DR-D-0150 Rev P01
Development Site Access – A505/Royston Road Junction	PC7029-ITP-CE-GB-DR-D-0151 Rev P02
Development Site Access – Clothall Road Junction	PC7029-ITP-CE-GB-DR-D-0152 Rev P02
Supporting Reports	
Planning Statement	(including Affordable Housing Statement, Town Centre Assessment, Stewardship Statement and S106 Heads of Terms)
Design & Access Statement	
Green Infrastructure Strategy	(including Open Space Assessment)
Sustainability and Energy Strategy	(including Sustainability checklist)
Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment	

Submitted documents	Reference / Comment
Biodiversity Net Gain Metric	Metric included in PDF and Excel formats
Ecological Mitigation Plan	(including outline Habitat Management Plan)
Employment Strategy	
Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan	
Arboricultural Planning Statement	Including Tree Survey
Statement of Community Involvement	
Environmental Statement	
<i>Volume 1 (Text), Volume 2 (Figures and Appendices), Volume 3 (Non-Technical Summary)</i>	
Chapter 1: Introduction	
Chapter 2: Proposed Development	
Chapter 3: Policy Context	
Chapter 4: Transport	
Chapter 5: Noise & Vibration	
Chapter 6: Air Quality	
Chapter 7: Landscape & Visual Impact	
Chapter 8: Built Heritage	
Chapter 9: Archaeology	
Chapter 10: Hydrology & Flooding	
Chapter 11: Ecology	
Chapter 12: Ground Conditions	
Chapter 13: Socio-Economics & Health	
Chapter 14: Waste	
Chapter 15: Lighting	
Chapter 16: Utilities	
Chapter 17: Climate Change	
Chapter 18: Conclusions	

Conclusion

The application has been submitted to you electronically via the Planning Portal. A WeTransfer link has also been provided including the full OPA documentation (complete documents as PDFs and also divided into 10MB sections where required). If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me or my colleague Katrina Hordern at khordern@davidlock.com. As you are aware, HCC and U&C are committed to the swift delivery of the development and an expedited start on site. To achieve this, the OPA programme is predicated on approval of the application by Autumn 2026. This challenging timeframe requires collaborative working between all parties, to resolve issues as they arise and engage

in S106 discussions from the outset. We therefore look forward to working with you towards this common goal over the next year.

Yours sincerely,



HELEN ARMES

PARTNER

Email: 

Cc: Paul Mumford, Kitty Eyre, Urban & Civic
Mike Evans, HCC

Appendix A: Validation Checklist

Requirement	Where in this application / comments
National Validation Requirements	
Application Form	Electronically completed via Planning Portal. Separate PDF also provided for upload to NHC website
Ownership Certificate & Notices	Certificate 'C' completed in the application form. Notice served on known landowners / tenants (refer to schedule). Newspaper advert duly published in The Comet and Royston Crow on 02.10.25, prior to submission.
Correct Application Fee	Maximum application fee (£205,943) paid via Planning Portal
Design & Access Statement	Standalone submission document
Location Plan	Standalone submission drawing
Site Plan(s) of the Proposed Development	The submitted Parameter Plan is a standalone formal drawing which constitutes the 'site plan' at this outline stage. 3 no. detailed and standalone access plans are also submitted in relation to the site access junctions.
Local Validation Requirements (detailed matrix)	
Covering Letter	Standalone submission document
Statutory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Metric	Standalone submission document – BNG Assessment and Metric
Affordable Housing Statement	Included in the Planning Statement
S106 Heads of Terms	Included in the Planning Statement
Vehicular Access Design	Standalone detailed access design plans
Viability Assessment	To be submitted later in OPA process
Tree Survey	Standalone Tree Survey and Arboricultural Planning Statement
Sustainability Statement	Standalone Sustainability and Energy Statement
Energy Statement	Standalone Sustainability and Energy Statement
Daylight and Sunlight Test	N/A – Scoped out of Environmental Statement
External Lighting Survey	Appended to chapter 15 of the Environmental Statement
Waste Management Details	Chapter 14 of the Environmental Statement
Statement of Community Involvement	Standalone Statement of Community Involvement
Structural Survey	N/A – not relevant for OPA
Town Centre Assessment	Included in the Planning Statement
Transport Assessment	Appended to chapter 4 of the Environmental Statement
Green Travel Plan	Appended to chapter 4 of the Environmental Statement

Open Space Assessment	Included in the Green Infrastructure Strategy
Noise Impact Assessment	Appended to chapter 5 of the Environmental Statement
Air Quality Assessment	Chapter 6 of the Environmental Statement
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment	Appended to chapter 7 of the Environmental Statement
Heritage Impact Assessment	Appended to chapter 8 of the Environmental Statement
Site Archaeological Report	Appended to chapter 9 of the Environmental Statement
Flood Risk Assessment / Drainage Assessment	Appended to chapter 10 of the Environmental Statement
Ecological Survey/ Assessment	Appended to chapter 11 of the Environmental Statement
Preliminary Risk Assessment	Appended to chapter 12 of the Environmental Statement
Contaminated Land Study/ Contaminated Land Risk Assessment	Appended to chapter 12 of the Environmental Statement