

14 October 2025

Dear Sarah Kasparian,

RE: 24/01013/HYA: Land Surrounding Burloes Cottages Newmarket Road Royston Hertfordshire

As ward councillors for the proposed development site, we wish to submit the following comments as part of the current consultation.

We accept the principle of development on this site – it has had outline planning previously approved, and the site is in the Local Plan. We also recognise the need to meet local housing needs within the district. Despite some improvements since the documents published last summer, several concerns persist. We would like to seek further reassurance on these points to ensure that the impact on existing residents in the nearby area is acceptable.

Factual errors in the revised Travel Plan, and projected traffic volumes

We note that the applicant submitted “Technical Note TN01: Response to the Highways Consultation Response” on 26 September. Enclosed within this Note at Appendix E is a revised Travel Plan.

We are concerned that the travel plan contains factual errors which materially impact projected traffic flows. This is disappointing since these errors were highlighted in a letter from Cllr Barnes in June 2024.

The most important of these errors is the inclusion of Morrisons as a food retail outlet. This is also included on the Isochrones diagrams within the technical note (Figure 2.5)

Morrisons closed in 2021 and has recently been demolished. Furthermore, Icknield Stores and Tesco Express (also listed under Food Retail in Appendix E, Table 2.1) are small convenience stores and cannot serve the food retail needs of a development of this size.

Since Morrisons closed, the food retail market in Royston is served primarily by the large Tesco Extra, as well as Aldi and M&S at Royston Gateway. These stores are approx. 2.5km away from the proposed development - outside of the recommended 2km maximum walking distance.

We are concerned that this error means the revised travel plan and traffic analysis may have under-estimated the increase in vehicle traffic generated by the development.

We ask that further reassurance be provided on this point and where necessary further analysis be undertaken on the various junctions to provide that reassurance.

Other factual errors in Table 2.1 include the names of the middle/senior schools (which changed in 2019) and Lloyds Pharmacy (which closed and reopened in 2024). These errors are not significant, except that they indicate a lack of due care and attention by the report writers.

It is also doubtful whether children from this development will be likely to attend Icknield Wak First School given current admissions data, distance to the school and the continuing build out and occupation of the Hoy development which is closer to the school. It is more likely that they will be admitted to Studlands Rise school instead.

Safety of the Newmarket Road / A505 junction

We are concerned about the safety impact of increasing the volume of traffic turning right out of Newmarket Road onto the A505, which involves crossing two lanes of westbound traffic to a middle island, before joining the eastbound lanes.

The road safety assessment included in the Technical Note (2.5) indicates that there have been two serious incidents within the past 4 years at this location under current traffic conditions. This development will inevitably increase the number of vehicles using the junction, and given the concerns listed above this impact may be higher than is currently estimated. We are therefore sceptical that no further mitigation is required at this junction.

We would like further reassurance to be provided on this point and reconsideration of the further mitigation options at this junction.

Safe integration with existing foot/cycle way

It is important that the development is well connected to existing walking and cycle routes. We support the measures outlined in the HCC consultation response in relation to footpath widening, to the extent possible without impacting on trees, as well as movement of the lower speed limit further east and improved crossings at Icknield Walk and Poplar Drive.

In particular, it is important that the cycle and walking routes along Newmarket Road are of an acceptable width where cars are travelling in excess of 40mph as they come off the A505 and onto Newmarket Road.

We would also like to confirm that the proposed pedestrian/cycle link across the recreation ground will connect to the section of Newmarket Road outside houses 80-86, and not to Newman Avenue as it is described in places. We would also like to confirm that the existing small car park near to the entrance of the recreation ground will be unaffected.

We would like the proposals in this area to be clarified before we can assess whether they are acceptable or not.

Protection of trees and buffer space

We support the connection to Aintree Road to encourage walking and cycling to/from the development, however it is important that the existing treeline and habitat on the Bury Plantation is preserved as much as possible.

Similarly, we are keen to ensure that there is adequate area around the existing trees in the middle of the site to protect the tree roots.

We have some concerns about the use of the 12m buffer zone as a surfaced access route to houses, when a buffer should be open space.

We also note in the Ecology officer report concerns about the reduction of the buffer zone to 6m on the southern edge of the site. On a hill where there are tall trees, this limited buffer will result in diminished light and heat for properties built at this location.

Affordable housing

We understand that the topography of the site creates viability challenges and welcome the increase in affordable housing to 25% vs. earlier iterations of the plans. We are however concerned that this does not become a benchmark for other sites and that the 40% expectation within the Local Plan is retained.

Sports provision

We note the updated Sports England response and would like to understand what provision is being included for each of the identified sports' needs.

Therfield Heath SSSI mitigation & open space provision

We note the response from the Conservators of Therfield Heath and Greens and would like to understand what provision is being included for this, and how this has been agreed.

Furthermore we would like to highlight section 5.4 of the Council's Therfield Heath SSSI Mitigation Strategy, which states that there is *"a lack coherent north-south links in the rights of way network to the east of Royston as well as a general under provision of alternate natural and semi-natural open space"* and seek clarification over to what extent the possible measures outlined in that strategy (5.5.10-12) are being delivered upon through this development.

We understand that there is also a contribution being made towards Newmarket Road recreation ground and would like to understand what that is intended to fund.

Healthcare contributions

We note that Cambridgeshire and Peterborough ICB have not yet responded to the most recent consultation, however they have recently produced an updated analysis for a similar site in Royston (21/00765/OP), which outlined both a change of local strategy towards a new facility and an increase in required contributions.

We would like to ensure that the ICB has been properly consulted on the latest plans and that the appropriate financial contributions towards healthcare can be secured.

Conclusion

As stated, we accept the principle of development on this site but maintain some reservations about the specific aspects outlined above. We would like further reassurance on these points before the plans are put before the planning committee.

Yours respectfully,

Cllrs Matt **Barnes**, Ruth **Clifton** and Tim **Johnson**