

Andrew Webb
22 Briary Lane
Royston
SG8 9BX

Ben Glover
Senior Planning Officer
North Hertfordshire District Council
Council Offices
Gernon Road
Letchworth Garden City
Hertfordshire
SG6 3JF

17th August 2025

Dear Mr Glover,

Reference: 25/01708/OP Land Opposite Heath Farm Briary Lane Royston Hertfordshire

I write in connection with the above planning application. Having examined the plans and being very familiar with the site as a local resident, I wish to object strongly to the development of houses in this location.

As a resident of Briary Lane, I have particular concerns for the safety of pedestrians using the narrow footpaths in Briary Lane, Echo Hill and Sun Hill. Briary Lane has significant on-street parking, creating a narrow, one-way flow of traffic. This restricts access for emergency vehicles; furthermore, wider vehicles often have to mount the narrow pavement making it extremely unsafe for those using the footpath. Another concern is that the distance and gradient of the proposed site is such that it is highly unlikely residents will walk to local facilities, increasing car use and traffic on all access roads to the proposed site.

The proposed development is on a site not identified in the existing Local Plan. It is outside the adjusted settlement boundary and has not been allocated by the Council. This particular application site is located in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt and should therefore be refused for its location and failure to comply with the adopted local plan.

The refusal of the 2018 and 2020/21 applications in terms of the visual and landscape impact still applies. The prominent position and topography of the site remain the same and there would be a marked change to the character of the immediate locality and wider valued landscape.

The ecological impact on Therfield Heath and the SSSI cannot be ignored. 'At risk' species, including ground nesting birds such as the Skylark, and many other flora and fauna will have their natural habitat destroyed or will be displaced not only during the construction period but post-construction when the houses are occupied.

The gradient of the site raises flooding concerns. During particularly heavy rain Briary Lane effectively becomes a river with excess surface water. The increased volume of surface water generated by the

proposed access road to the existing highway drainage infrastructure within Echo Hill has not been adequately addressed and could be a potential flood risk to existing residents.

The ability of local health services to accommodate the increased demand created by speculative housing developments is also a serious concern. There is a significant health infrastructure deficit in Royston and the surrounding villages and I believe this site will have a significant adverse impact on the health services in the area, to the detriment of the health, care and wellbeing of the existing residents of Royston.

I hope you will take these concerns into consideration when reviewing the application.

Additionally, I have made a summarised objection via the NHDC Planning Portal – however, at time of writing, my objection and comments do not appear to have been uploaded, so please find these reproduced below:

Comments: Having reviewed the plans, technical documents, and being familiar with the site as a resident of Briary Lane, I strongly object to this development for the following reasons

Housing Supply & Local Plan

- Site not identified in NHDC Local Plan 2011-2031; outside settlement boundary.
- Royston already contributing a significant number of dwellings towards 5-year housing land supply.
- Severe engineering/access constraints; site cannot contribute to 5-year housing land supply.

Landscape & Visual Impact

- Prominent position and steep topography harm the setting of Therfield Heath (SSSI).
- Reasons for refusal from 2018 & 2020/21 remain.
- Proposal conflicts with NPPF (incl. para 135) & Local Plan Policies CGB1, SP5, SP12, NE1, NE6.

Highways & Transport

- Unsafe, constrained access; blind bends and narrow carriageways.
- Safety audit has not been consulted on with approving authority of HCC Highways.
- Steep gradients, poor public transport; high car dependence.
- Site is contrary to NPPF paras 108-110 and Policy T1 of the Local Plan, and Roads in Hertfordshire A Design Guide.

Ecology & Biodiversity Net Gain

- Adverse impact on at-risk and protected species; incomplete surveys.
- Fails to comply to the 10 % BNG; off-site mitigation risks SSSI/LWS integrity.
- Conflicts with NPPF para 193b; Therfield Heath mitigation strategy not a substitute.

Flood Risk & Water Quality

- Increased risk of flooding to Echo Hill and surrounding areas.
- Site in Source Protection Zone 1 over a Major Aquifer.
- Concerns over sewage capacity and impact on chalk stream catchment.
- Not in accordance with SuDS Manual and in conflict with the NPPF and NE7g of the Local Plan.

Environmental Impact Assessment

- Not clear if EIA Screening Opinion has been requested; no Environmental Statement has been submitted, despite likely significant impacts.

Health Service Capacity

- GP surgeries over capacity; landlocked sites prevent expansion.*
- Funding alone cannot mitigate infrastructure deficits.*
- Conflict with Policy SP7 of the NHDC Local Plan & NPPF paras 55-58.*

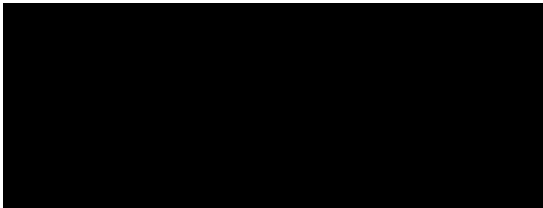
Agricultural Land

- Loss of high quality farmland.

Given the significant policy conflicts, environmental harm, and infrastructure concerns, I strongly urge the Council to reject this unsustainable and damaging application.

Many thanks for your attention to this matter and consideration of this objection.

Yours sincerely,

A large black rectangular box redacting the signature of Andrew Webb.

Andrew Webb