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Ben Glover
Senior Planning Officer
North Hertfordshire District Council
Council Offices
Gernon Road
Letchworth Garden City
Hertfordshire
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16/08/2025

Dear Mr Glover,

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

I write with regard to the above planning application, as a resident of Echo Hill, I wish to object strongly to the development of houses in this location. I know the area well and have reviewed the plans. I am also aware that this planning application sits outside of the approved local plan.

If approved, this development will significantly and adversely impact my family development and our lives in Royston. We moved to Echo Hill specifically because of its situation as a Cul-de-Sac. My three children (aged 5, 3, and 2) play in the street regularly. They play with other children of similar ages on the street and this socialisation and experience through play is a crucial part of their healthy development. By approving this application, particularly by granting access through the demolition of No. 24 Echo Hill, the very nature of Echo Hill will change fundamentally and irreversibly. The increase in car traffic, due to the road no longer being a Cul-de-Sac, will make it impossible for my children to play safely in the street with other children from Echo Hill (so important post the covid pandemic and its proven negative impact upon children) thus impacting their development in a negative way.

This development will also impact the ecology of the surrounding area and will adversely impact the SSSI of Therfield Heath. Standing at the top of Lankester Hill (on Therfield Heath), the current view from this vantage point is fields. Much of Echo Hill is now obscured by mature Sycamore trees and thus barely seen. Any new development on the land above Echo Hill will stand out significantly from the view on Lankester Hill and negatively impact the SSSI.

Furthermore, a significant amount of wildlife lives in the hedgerows which would be removed due to the development. Residents of Echo Hill have photographic evidence of Badgers, Deer, Hedgehogs, and other mammals living on the proposed development site. We also have bats living in our eaves and it is likely that the development will disturb this.

I have already mentioned my concerns regarding the increase in traffic upon the children who play on Echo Hill but there would also be significant access issues for emergency service vehicles and resident's vehicles should this plan be approved. Echo Hill is a steep and narrow road, many cars park on the bend of the road and as a result, can sometimes obscure the view for drivers. Increasing the flow of traffic on Echo Hill to access the proposed development would significantly increase the risk of vehicle collisions and injury.

I also have concerns regarding accessibility for new residents should this site be approved. The elevation of any new access route (currently proposed through No. 24) would be very steep with no room for a footpath. Disabled or elderly residents would therefore be unlikely to access the new development on foot or wheelchair without significant physical strain or without a footpath.

As this development sits outside of the remit of the local plan, it is also likely to place additional strain on GP services and school places outside of those increases already forecast.

I am also sure that you are aware of the restrictive covenants in place on Echo Hill that we as residents have the benefit of, and we reserve the right to take enforcement action if these covenants are breached.

The covenants were wrongly dismissed by NHDC planning during the previous determination of planning application [20/00744/OP](#).

The enforcement of the covenants would be a lengthy legal process possibly taking several years to be resolved. A tribunal action would therefore significantly delay the deliverability of the development. This factor therefore means that the possibility of a lengthy delay to implementation will become a material planning consideration in the decision-making process.

You are aware from the previously refused applications for this site the strength of feeling against this development from the community of Royston and the significant impact this development will have directly to the residents of Echo Hill. A letter from an Appointed Solicitor was issued to both Gladman and No. 24 Echo Hill during the previous application of [20/00744/OP](#), regarding the breach of the covenants and the intention for enforcement action, this remains the case for this latest application and Echo Hill residents will pursue this going forward for this latest application.

In addition, if the community is successful with enforcing the covenants and preventing the demolition of No. 24, both the construction traffic and main site access would not be able to enter the site via Echo Hill, the alternative would be to use the bridleway and therefore the reasons for refusal in the 2018 application associated with the negative impact to the neighbouring SSSI would still stand.

Therefore, due to the protective covenants in place, which residents of Echo Hill will enforce, it cannot be guaranteed that Gladman will be able to deliver this site and therefore this site cannot contribute towards the 5-year NHDC housing supply

To summarise, in considering all the above points, I strongly urge the council to reject this damaging and unsustainable planning proposal.

Yours sincerely,

Madeline Jux-Blayney