

**Standing up for Hertfordshire's countryside**

David Snell  
Neighbourhood Services  
(Development Control)  
East Hertfordshire District Council  
Wallfields  
Pegs Lane  
Hertford SG13 8EQ

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

13<sup>th</sup> September 2017 (by email)

Dear Mr. Snell,

**Application No. 3/17/1811/OUT.**

**Outline application for all matters reserved except for access comprising: i. Up to 400 dwellings (C3). ii. 2.0 hectares of land for Use Class B1 employment. iii. Formal and informal open spaces including children's playspaces. iv. Structural landscaping and internal roads. v. Formation of a new junction on the A10. vi. Surface and foul water drainage infrastructure at Land Off Luynes Rise (to The West Of Buntingford) Buntingford Hertfordshire**

This application is essentially a modification of Application No. 3/14/2304/OP, extended to include use class B1 employment in place of the school site previously proposed. CPRE Hertfordshire remains opposed to this development. I refer you to our letters to Hazel Izod dated 4 February 2015, 27 February 2015 and 20 April 2016 respectively relating to that earlier application, which apply equally to this.

As we have previously pointed out, since those letters there have been material alterations to the planning status of the site to which this application refers:

The Council has now published the Submission District Plan. As noted in the Council's statement dated 19 October 2016, increased weight can now be assigned to the Submission District Plan. In that Plan policy BUNT1 outlines where development will be acceptable within Buntingford and refers to the Policies Map. Sheet A Inset 1 of the Policies Map covers Buntingford and this site is not included as an area for housing or B1 employment development. Consequently it is no longer sustainable for the applicant to claim that "*The site provides a suitable location for development.*" The site remains clearly within the Rural Area Beyond The Green Belt and, as such, is covered by the existing Local Plan policies and those contained in the Submission District Plan, relating to that designation. As a result development of the nature proposed in this application would be inappropriate.

The Buntingford Community Area Neighbourhood Plan was 'made' in May 2017 after a referendum in March 2017. It now forms part of the development plan and consequently

carries full weight in determining planning applications. The site subject to this application falls outside the settlement boundary of Buntingford, as defined by the Neighbourhood Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan states that outside the settlement boundary of Buntingford residential development consistent with policies HD2 to HD7 and other policies of the Plan will be permitted only if they are (i) small scale infill development within or immediately adjoining significant existing clusters of development; (ii) affordable housing on rural exception sites to meet an identified local need which cannot be met in any other way; or (iii) development for which there is a demonstrable need for a location in the countryside. This proposal meets none of those criteria.

The Applicant continues to argue their own interpretation of 5 year housing land supply and the methodology of calculation. (The bulk of the planning statement is devoted to this.) We have covered this point in the previous letters referred to above and the recent Supreme Court judgement (*Suffolk Coastal DC v Hopkins Homes Ltd. (2017 UKSC 37)*) has clarified that existing Local Plan policies still retain substantial weight despite lack of a 5 year housing land supply.

In the case of Buntingford itself, the Neighbourhood Plan makes the point that designated sites South of Buntingford (BUNT2) and North of Buntingford (BUNT3) and other sites within the town provide 493 dwellings in accordance with the strategic policy for housing numbers within East Herts District as a whole in the submitted District Plan. This figure of 493 compares with more than 1,290 that have already been approved on sites within the newly defined settlement boundary in the Neighbourhood Plan. This means that the allocation for Buntingford planned for 2011 to 2031 in the Submission District Plan has already been exceeded by around two and half times.

Consequently we continue to oppose this application and urge the Council to reject it.

Yours sincerely,

David Irving