

Standing up for Hertfordshire's countryside

David Rushing
Stevenage Borough Council
Daneshill House
Danestrete
Stevenage
SG1 1HN

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

2nd October 2019 (by email)

Dear Mr. Rushing,

Application No. 19/00552/SCO

EIA Scoping Opinion Request in respect of development comprising the construction of approximately 1,350 dwellings in addition to 10,000m² of commercial floorspace, a local centre, a primary school, community facilities, open space and associated highway and drainage infrastructure on Land West of A1(M), Stevenage Herts SG1 4DE

This application is for an EIA Scoping Opinion for site allocation HO2 in the Stevenage Local Plan. We have no comment to make on the range of proposed topics for EIA or the methodologies to be used. However, we do wish to comment on the timing of this application.

Policy HO2 makes the development of this site dependent on the outcome of the current Examination in Public into the North Herts Local Plan. Criterion (a) states that development proposals will be permitted where "*The applicant can demonstrate that development can be expanded beyond the Borough boundary in the future, into safeguarded land within North Hertfordshire.*" Recent comments from the Inspector in the North Herts EIP has thrown doubt on the future safeguarding of the Green Belt land within North Herts. Specifically the Inspector has stated that "*I have reservations about the demonstration of exceptional circumstances in relation to the land to the West of Stevenage currently in the Green Belt that is proposed to be identified as 'safeguarded land'.*" Should the Inspector subsequently determine that the land in North Herts must remain in the Green Belt, that will have significant implications for the masterplanning of the HO2 site. By extension, that will impact on the assumptions being made in the EIA, potentially rendering the assessment invalid.

Consequently, in our view, the EIA for the HO2 site should be deferred until after the conclusion of the Examination in Public of the North Herts Local Plan.

Yours sincerely,

David Irving