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Standing up for Hertfordshire's countryside

Ben Glover
North Herts Council
PO Box 10613
Nottingham
NG6 6DW

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

14th November 2025 (by email)

Dear Ben Glover,

Planning application no. 25/02064/OP
Land adjacent to 10 Hambridge Way, Pirton
Erection of up to 50 dwellings including affordable housing, together with amenity space,
landscaping and all associated infrastructure and works
(all matters reserved except means of access).

I write with regard to the above planning application to which CPRE Hertfordshire objects for the following reasons.

1. The use of land identified for this proposed development is affected by the adopted North Herts Council Local Plan: Policy CGB1 (Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt) which is identified on the Proposals Map. Paragraph 6.1 of the Local Plan CGB1 states: "These areas do not meet the necessary criteria to be designated as Green Belt, but it is still necessary to impose restraints on development to prevent inappropriate schemes".
2. Policy CGB1 identifies six categories of development where:
"planning permission will be granted where the development:
 - a. is infill within the built core of a Category B village;
 - b. meets a proven local need for community facilities and services or rural housing;
 - c. is strictly necessary for the needs of agriculture or forestry;
 - d. relates to an existing rural building;
 - e. is a modest proposal for rural development or diversification; or
 - f. would provide land or facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and cemeteries that respect the generally open nature of the rural area."
3. Clearly, the proposed speculative residential development satisfies none of the above criteria and should be regarded as inappropriate. The Planning Design and Access Statement (PDAS) notes that the Council is "currently undertaking the preparation of a new Draft Local Plan" (paragraph 1.4) and then states that a review of the Local Plan is taking place (paragraph 1.5). The latter statement is correct and indicates that the Local Plan is current and should be regarded as providing appropriate policy guidance.

CPRE is working nationally and locally for a beautiful and living countryside

CPRE Hertfordshire is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation

President: Sir Simon Bowes Lyon, KCVO

Chairman: Peter Waine, OBE

Registered Charity 1162419

CPRE Patron: His Majesty The King



4. The Applicant quotes a housing land supply of 3.9 years as a reason to involve the 'tilted balance' toward sustainable development (PDAS paragraph 1.19). Notwithstanding the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) regarding maintaining a five year supply, the North Herts Local Plan is presently being reviewed and any further allocations of land for development in the Rural Area should be made following robust application of criteria rather than through speculative development applications.
5. The site lies outside the settlement boundary of Pirton which is a Category A village and constitutes a clear extension of the built-up area. The proposed development is not an allocation in the Local Plan and, in our view, the provision of 3.9 years housing land supply is appropriate at this stage of the Local Plan process.
6. The PDAS notes that the site comprises Grade 3 agricultural land constituting Best and Most Versatile land. There is increasing concern regarding national food security and the use of productive agricultural land for development purposes should only take place in exceptional circumstances. CPRE Hertfordshire believes that the present use of the land for agriculture should be maintained in line with NPPF paragraph 187 b) and footnote 65 whereby planning decisions should recognise the 'economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land'.
7. There is very significant local community opposition to this proposed development on land in agricultural use and widely used by local people for walking and informal recreation. We support fully the concerns raised by Pirton Parish Council in their response to this application which highlights the impact of 50 additional dwelling units on the village in several respects.
8. We also note policy guidance in the Pirton Neighbourhood Plan which restricts proposed developments to a maximum of 30 units. A proposal of this magnitude will impact the rural character of a well established historic village.
9. Hertfordshire is under unrelenting pressure for development and the value of the open countryside that remains increases for local communities and visitors, together with the wider environmental benefits relating to the amelioration of the effects of climate change, maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity, and physical and mental health.

We urge the Council to refuse permission for this highly inappropriate speculative development.



Yours sincerely,

Chris Berry
Planning Manager

NOTE: We would request that this letter is published on the Council's website as a document relating to this application and should be grateful if you would notify us of the date of the appropriate meeting if it is to be determined by planning committee.