

## Hannah Albans

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**From:** Clare Buddle  
**Sent:** 17 March 2022 20:43  
**To:** Bedford Filing  
**Subject:** H258/9 Buntingford West 0317 CB to LPA DRP Request

**Clare Buddle BSc(hons) PGDipTP MRTPI MSc**  
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**From:** Clare Buddle  
**Sent:** 17 March 2022 20:41  
**To:** karen.page  
**Cc:** sara.saunders, Hannah Albans  
**Subject:** H258/9 Buntingford West

Dear Karen

I write further to your previous correspondence with my colleague, Hannah Albans, at the end of last year.

Our client is keen to progress the development potential of the Buntingford West site, which they consider offers a sound opportunity for a mixed-use development to support the town.

In accordance with adopted Local Plan Policy DES1, we are keen to progress a masterplan for the site to ensure that the associated development is delivered with a considered design. As part of this fundamental process, we are keen to collaborate with stakeholders, most notably East Herts Council, on the masterplan. We note that DES1 applies to all significant development proposals, not simply permissions/allocations. Furthermore, the LPA's Statement of Community Involvement (2019) states masterplans must involve collaboration including with East Herts District Council.

To secure early, independent scrutiny, we are seeking a design panel review of the design proposals to date. This approach accords with NPPF Paragraph 133 and Planning Practice Guidance: processes and tools, as well as the recommendations of the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission. We are seeking to commission Hertfordshire Design Review Service to undertake this work and we understand that East Herts Council are a partner in this organisation.

Hertfordshire Design Review Service will only undertake design reviews of proposals where both the project design team and LPA are present. The purpose of the meeting will not be to discuss planning principles (which would be relevant at planning application/allocation stage) but rather progressing high quality design (a key sustainability objective of the planning process, for example NPPF Paragraph 8b and 126). We would therefore encourage East Herts Council, as a key stakeholder, to engage in the design review process to ensure well designed, locally appropriate development.

We are looking to undertake this event during the week commencing 11 April and thus *please could you provide some dates when either yourself or one of your colleagues would be able to engage in the design review event.*

Whilst we appreciate the pressures on LPA resources at present, NPPF Paragraph 39 highlights the opportunity offered by preapplication discussion to make an efficient use of resources. Furthermore, we accept that in many cases it is necessary for the LPA to charge a fee for the preapplication service to cover staff costs. As emphasised by Hannah, LPAs have a key role to play in encouraging pre-application discussions: the future of the site should not simply be seen in the context of the Local Plan but also what it could offer to the community in the future and thus the importance of pre-application dialogue on this site. *We would therefore urge you to reconsider your willingness to engage in pre-application dialogue on this site.*

*We note your reference to the Local Plan review and would be grateful if you could confirm the proposed timetable for this.*

We trust you will consider the above and look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards

Clare

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