

By Email Only

Richard Freeman
Interim Development Management Team Leader
East Herts Council
Wallfields
Pegs Lane
Hertford
SG13 8EG

9th June 2023

Dear Richard

Land East of The A10 Buntingford, Hertfordshire

Outline planning application (with all matters reserved except for access) for up to 350 dwellings, up to 4,400 sqm of commercial and services floorspace (Use Class E and B8), and up to 500 sqm of retail floorspace (Use Classes E) and other associated works including drainage, access roads, allotments, public open space and landscaping.

Thank you for the meeting with you and Karen on the 24th May, following my letter to Sara Saunders of the 2nd May.

We confirmed our intention to submit a new outline application for the site based on our previous hybrid application. The application will be submitted in the context of the District being unable to demonstrate an adequate supply of housing, which is currently acknowledged by the Council.

You asked us to pause our submission of the application to allow for a community and stakeholder masterplanning exercise, with reference to Local Plan Policy DES1. It was agreed that Policy DES1 is aimed at allocated sites with the intention that the resulting masterplan would be endorsed by Members. You explained that as a result, our masterplan for the unallocated site would not be endorsed by Members and the extent to which stakeholders and the community would engage is doubtful.

We have considered this request and have decided not to delay the submission of the application. You are not able to offer any certainty that the proposed masterplanning exercise would be supported and if, ultimately, there would be sufficient benefit.

There have been previous planning applications, including the planning application last year. All the applications were subject to pre-application public consultation and consultation during determination. We are therefore confident that we already have an in depth understanding of the opportunities and constraints of the site. Furthermore, we will be undertaking a further public consultation for the new outline planning application which will be detailed in the Statement of Community Involvement.

You will also recall, following the Council's refusal to engage with the pre-application process last year, we commissioned our own Design Review Panel which focussed on the masterplanning for the site. The

parameter plans for our outline application will be based on our response to the recommendations of the Design Review Panel and consultation on the previous application.

In addition to the masterplanning exercise, you also said that further work was required in relation to the following first and second reasons for refusing the last application:

1. The proposal would encroach into the rural area beyond the settlement boundary to the detriment of the character, appearance, and distinctiveness of the area contrary to Policies DES1, DES4, GBR2 of the East Herts District Plan (2018), Policy ES1 of the Buntingford Community Area Neighbourhood Plan and the NPPF.
2. The proposals represent an unsustainable form of development and residents would be heavily reliant on the private car to access employment, main food and comparison shopping elsewhere and the harm demonstrably and significantly outweighs the benefits. The proposal would be contrary to Policies DSP2, INT1, BUNT1 and TRA1 of the East Herts District Plan (2018) policy HD1 of the Buntingford Community Area NP and the NPPF.

We are confident that the site, which is the remaining parcel within the line of the A10, can be developed sensitively and relate to the character of the existing settlement, without adversely impacting on the rural area.

We also consider the location of the site, in relation to the existing services and also the mix of the proposed development, is highly sustainable.

These matters will be fully addressed by our documents supporting the planning application.

We were pleased that you agreed that the previous technical reasons for refusal can be addressed by the outline nature of the application and through clarification and agreement with officers.

Our intention is therefore still to submit the planning application around the end of this month.

I hope you can appreciate our reasons for wishing to proceed with the submission of the application, which will help address the need for additional housing in the District. We would welcome further constructive engagement with you as a continuation from our last meeting.

Please let me know if you have any questions in the meantime.

Yours sincerely



Jonathan Porter MRTPI
Strategic Planning Manager

CC. Karen Page
Sara Saunders