



Planning Policy Team

Planning Policy Observations

To: Development Management
From: Laura Guy
Date: 1/10/25
Ref: 3/24/0966/OUT

Land north of A507 and West of A10, Buntingford

Outline planning approval for the construction of up to 600 dwellings (C3), elderly accommodation (C3), Mixed Use Local Centre (including flexible use E, F and Sui Generis), First School, informal and formal open space, associated works and infrastructure including a new access from the A507 and pedestrian bridge over the A10, with all matters reserved except access.

Proposal:

- 1.1 The proposed mixed-use outline application consists of 600 dwellings, up to 60 elderly accommodation units, a first school, a local centre, 24ha of green infrastructure (public open space, sports pitches and community growing space) and associated infrastructure, including a pedestrian bridge over the A10.

Location:

- 1.2 The site comprises 50 hectares of agricultural land to the north of the A507 and to the west of the A10. It is adjacent to the town's settlement boundary, although separated by the A10, and located within the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt. Throcking Lane borders the site to the north.

Relevant Policy and Observations:

Previous advice

- 1.3 Previous comments on this application were submitted in September 2024, but further information has now been submitted. This response should be considered in conjunction with the previous comments.

Principle of development

- 1.4 Having reviewed the additional information the planning policy team maintains its objection to the principle of this proposal, for the reasons set out in our previous response. It is a clear departure from District Plan policies DPS2, BUNT1 and GBR2 and the concerns about the sustainability of the location remain. Despite the applicant's amendments to improve connectivity, the site remains segregated from Buntingford's existing urban form by the A10, with limited pedestrian and cycling links into the town. The policy team is concerned that car dependence will be high, and the development will function as a disconnected extension rather than an integrated part of the town.

Playing Pitches

- 1.5 Since our previous comments, the Council has been updating our sport and open space evidence. We have commissioned Knight, Kavenagh and Page (KKP) to undertake a Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy and Action Plan (PPOSS), Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy and Open Space Assessment. It is anticipated that the PPOSS will be reported to Executive for agreement in November 2025 and the Indoor Sports and Open Space studies will be finalised in early 2026.

- 1.6 The draft Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy and Action Plan is now at an advanced stage and has been developed in conjunction with Sport England and the sport governing bodies. Given the proposed pitch provision, the study is of relevance to this application. The emerging PROSS supports the provision of new pitches in the town, and the planning policy team welcomes the applicant's engagement with Sport England on the provision. Notably the emerging PROSS identifies a particular demand for youth football pitches, so it is suggested that the applicant considers provision of mini or junior pitches on the outfield of the cricket field.

Housing land supply and delivery update

- 1.7 In December 2024, the Government published a new methodology for calculating local housing need. Using this requirement, the Council published an interim 5YHLS supply in February 2025, which suggests the housing land supply calculation is between 3.4 and 3.7 years. The Council is currently reviewing its land supply trajectory to take account of the latest supply and the new affordability ratios. This will be published in due course.
- 1.8 The most recent housing delivery test is now for 2023, which states that East Herts delivered 115% of its requirement, clearly demonstrating the Council is still delivering housing effectively.