Cottered & Throcking Parish Council

Clerk: Sarah Kubica E: clerk@cotteredpc.org.uk [redacted]

Planning
East Hertfordshire District Council

By email only: planning@eastherts.gov.uk

12 August 2024

Dear Planning

Re: PLANNING APPLICATION: 3/24/1255/OUT: Land South Of A507, West Of A10 Buntingford

The area falls within the Buntingford Community Area Neighbourhood Plan (BCANP) which forms part of the East Herts District Plan (EHDP).

Cottered and Throcking Parish Council objects on the following grounds:

The road infrastructure is inadequate and unsafe, construction traffic and the resultant permanent increase in traffic volume from commercial vehicles and visitors attracted to the site, are at odds with the planned weight restriction for the A507, which recognises its unsuitability for use by large, heavy vehicles approaching Cottered, a small, ancient village already blighted by an excess of traffic with a narrow, sharp bend at the Baldock side, where two large vehicles cannot pass each other easily and where traffic passes only feet away from the living spaces of homes. Neither would the route through Throcking, a tiny village with a narrow rural lane, unlit, with no pavements and popular with pedestrians, dog walkers, hikers and cyclists, be appropriate for new access, weighted vehicles or increased traffic. Incidents of damage caused by large vehicles and excess traffic passing through Throcking already include: burst water main, crushed sewage pipe conduit, verge erosion, damage to gardens, collapsed banks on both sides of the road and road surface damage because the road, characteristic of the rural nature of the area it serves, is inadequate for high volume vehicle usage and in many places too narrow for cars to pass each other. This and the number of fatalities and accidents on the A10 and A507 are in conflict with Policy TRA2 of the East Herts District Plan (EHDP) and paragraph 115 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in terms of highway safety.

The proposed development does not accord with the sustainability principles set out in the NPPF as the location has limited services and amenities and is in a water-stressed area, regarding drinking water and wastewater requirements (INFRA4 and INFRA5 of the BCANP refer).

Site development would be in direct conflict with paragraph 196 (c) of the NPPF and would neither enhance the defining local characteristics of the area or improve its distinctiveness. East Herts District Landscape Character Assessment 141 advises restoration of ground flora

and woodland and it should be noted that this application borders the Thistley Vale Brook in a landscape underlain by chalk. Assessment 141 describes the site as 'visually sensitive to changes in built form' and the application site, proposed on an elevated plateau, would be highly exposed in the landscape.

Development resulting in the loss of greenfield space would not contribute to or protect the valued landscape which is a requirement of chapter 15 of the NPPF. Photographs in Appendix 1 (BCANP, particularly the view North-North-West from Point E) clearly demonstrate the open quality of the land, which is an important characteristic of East Hertfordshire's rural settlement pattern as recognised in chapter 10 of the EHDP and VILL2.

In accordance with EHDP policies GBR2 and DES3 and BCANP's BE1, 2 and 3, the urban appearance of the proposed development would be incompatible with the character and appearance of this rural area and would not improve upon or respect the existing agricultural nature of the site or retain the countryside resource as a habitat. The potential harm to species or loss of biodiversity would be of material concern and conflict with EHDP policy NE3 and ES1 of the BCANP and guidance in the NPPF.

If permission is granted, consideration should be made regarding section 106 payments, and making permission subject to the improvement of the highway infrastructure, wastewater treatment and to fund local nature recovery.

Yours faithfully



John Wiblin Chairman Cottered & Throcking Parish Council

pp Clerk Cottered & Throcking Parish Council