

# NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL



## Town and Country Planning Acts

### DECISION NOTICE

**Correspondence Address:**

Mr Booth  
JWPC Ltd  
1B Waterview  
White Cross  
Lancaster  
LA1 4XS

**Applicant:**

Beck Homes (UK) Ltd

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#### PARTICULARS OF DEVELOPMENT

**Application:** 17/01406/1

**Proposal:** Residential development of 46 no. dwellings, children's play area, two new sports pitches, pavilion building and associated infrastructure.

**Location:** **Land Development Off, Station Road, Ashwell**

**Refused Plan Nos:** 8120/P/001 - 067 & 100 - 109

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#### PARTICULARS OF DECISION

In pursuance of its powers under the above Act and the associated Orders and Regulations, the Council hereby **REFUSE** the development proposed by you in your application received with sufficient particulars on 07/06/2017.

The reasons for the Council's decision to refuse permission are:

- 1 By reason of its siting beyond the built limits of Ashwell, the location within open farmland in landscape character area 226 - Steeple Morden Plain Area and the heavy use of planting to screen the site, the development proposal would fail to positively enhance the wider landscape setting of the village, nor would it improve the character and quality of the Rural Area and, as such, would afford significant and demonstrable harm to the intrinsic beauty of the countryside. This harm is considered to clearly outweigh the benefits of providing new dwellings on the site. The proposal is therefore contrary to the provisions of saved Policies 6 of the North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No. 2 with alterations and, Paragraph 17, 109, 116, 156 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The development would also be contrary to Policy CGB1 of the North Hertfordshire Emerging Local Plan 2011 - 2031.
- 2 In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority due to the location of this planning application site, separated from the main body of Ashwell village, the proposed development for 46 dwellings and sports pitches would have a heavily urbanising


impact on the character and appearance of the rural area, against the pattern and grain of existing development and poorly integrated with Ashwell village. Such a piecemeal form of development would as a result harm the character and appearance of the locality. The proposal therefore conflicts with saved Policy 57 of the North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No. 2 - with Alterations, Policy D1 of North Hertfordshire Submission Local Plan (2011-2031) and paragraphs 57 and 64 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 3 Given the lack of essential services in the vicinity of the site, in particular a lack of primary education provision to serve the needs of this development, the occupiers of the proposed dwellings would be heavily dependent on services provided outside of the immediate area, giving rise to a significant reliance on private transport. In addition to this, the land on which the site is located is Grade 2 agricultural land, which constitutes the best and most versatile land. As well as being harmful to the natural environment, this would amount to development of the land which is both environmentally and economically unsustainable. In the absence of any realistic measures or other reasons which may offset this unsustainable impact, the proposal would be contrary to the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework, generally and specifically Paragraphs 14, 49 and 112, and to Policies SP1 and SP6 of the Emerging Local Plan 2011 - 2031, and to Planning Practice Guidance - Natural Environment para. 026.
- 4 The submitted planning application has not been accompanied by a valid legal undertaking (in the form of a Section 106 Obligation) securing the provision of 40% affordable housing and other necessary obligations as set out in the Council's Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (adopted November 2006) and the Planning obligation guidance – toolkit for Hertfordshire: Hertfordshire County Council's requirements January 2008. The secure delivery of these obligations is required to mitigate the impact of the development on the identified services in accordance with the adopted Planning Obligations SPD, Policy 51 of the North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No. 2 - with Alterations (Saved Policies 2007) or Proposed Local Plan Policy HS2 of the Council's Proposed Submission Local Plan (2011-2031). Without this mechanism to secure these provisions the development scheme cannot be considered as a sustainable form of development contrary to the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 5 The proposed development lies within an Area of Archaeological Significance. Records in close proximity to the site suggest it lies within an area of significant archaeological potential. Given this and the large scale nature of the proposal, this development should be regarded as likely to have an impact on significant heritage assets with archaeological interest, some of which may be of sufficient importance to meet NPPF para 139. This could represent a significant constraint on development. In the absence of a geophysical survey or archaeological field evaluation, there is insufficient information to determine the importance of any archaeological remains on the site. The proposal will be contrary to Section 12 of the NPPF.
- 6 The application fails to adequately demonstrate that there is a proven need for the proposed sports facilities. In addition the proposal fails to demonstrate that the development would not occasion harm to either existing residents in the vicinity of the site or future occupiers of the proposed dwellings in terms of noise, the impact of access arrangements on residential amenity and the management and operational arrangements for the sports pitches. As such the application would be contrary to saved Policy 57 of the North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No. 2 - with Alterations, Policy D1 & D3 of North Hertfordshire Submission Local Plan (2011-2031) and paragraphs 57 and 64 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Framework.

### **Proactive Statement**

Planning permission has been refused for this proposal for the clear reasons set out in this decision notice. The Council acted proactively through early engagement with the applicant at the pre-application stage. This positive advice has however been ignored and therefore the Council remains of the view that the proposal is unacceptable. Since the Council attempted to find solutions, the requirements of the Framework (paragraphs 186 and 187) have been met and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

  
Development & Conservation Manager

**Signed:** Development Management  
North Hertfordshire District Council  
Council Offices  
Gernon Road  
Letchworth  
Herts  
SG6 3JF

**Date:** 17 October 2017

### **NOTES**

- 1 If you are aggrieved by the decision of your local planning authority to refuse permission for the proposed development or to grant it subject to conditions, then you can appeal to the Secretary of State under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

If you want to appeal against your local planning authority's decision then you must do so within 6 months of the date of this notice.

Appeals must be made using a form which you can get from the Planning Inspectorate at Suite C, 4th Floor, Spectrum Building, Bond Street, Bristol, BS1 3LG or online at [www.planningportal.gov.uk/planning/appeals](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/planning/appeals)

The Secretary of State can allow a longer period for giving notice of an appeal, but he will not normally be prepared to use this power unless there are special circumstances which excuse the delay in giving notice of appeal.

The Secretary of State need not consider an appeal if it seems to him that the local planning authority could not have granted planning permission for the proposed development or could not have granted it without the conditions they imposed, having regard to the statutory requirements, to the provisions of any development order and to any directions given under a development order.

In practice, the Secretary of State does not refuse to consider appeals solely because the local planning authority based their decision on a direction given by him.

### **Purchase Notices**

If either the local planning authority or the Secretary of State refuses permission to develop land or grants it subject to conditions, the owner may claim that he can

neither put the land to a reasonably beneficial use in its existing state nor render the land capable of a reasonably beneficial use by the carrying out of any development which has been or would be permitted.

In these circumstances, the owner may serve a purchase notice on the Council (District Council, London Borough Council or Common Council of the City of London) in whose area the land is situated. This notice will require the Council to purchase his interest in the land in accordance with the provisions of Part VI of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.