

West of Buntingford Planning by Bovis: Objections sent to East Herts Council and copied to Planning Minister by Sir Oliver Heald MP

I wish to object to the Planning Application 3/14/2304/OP and the Phase 1 Full Application.

An over-development

In the emerging Local Plan, Buntingford is supposed to have 490 new homes in the period 2011 to 2031. Council resolutions relate to the two sites (Pigeon and Sainsburys) identified by the Council and meet the target and decisions of planning inspectors have already grossly exceeded this.

The current plethora of applications including this one and the appeal would lead to a doubling of the size of the town.

It is time to look at the overall scale of development in Buntingford and the extent to which the will of local elected representatives concerning the overall development of Buntingford as a town is being considered.

This application is unwelcome and unacceptable to local people. It would amount to an over-development of a small market town.

Sustainability

Access up Luynes Rise – Phase 1

This is no doubt an attempt to get some development, even if the proposal for a roundabout on the A10 does not go ahead. The idea of hundreds of lorry movements up Luynes Rise is appalling. This is a suburban road full of children playing, going to and from school and the like. Luynes Rise has a Community Centre, children's play area and football playing pitches to the north of Luynes Rise. The only way to access this site responsibly would be off the A10, but this should be determined first. Without access from the A10, this site is not viable. To even suggest the access for the development up Luynes Rise is deeply uncaring of local residents' well-being.

40 per cent affordable housing

Buntingford is not a centre of employment or an economic engine of growth and EHDC's own "Wessex" report makes clear the need for employment land with any housing expansion. Buntingford's expansion needs are more than adequately catered for with existing, approved developments, which is identified by the District Plan as being 490 dwellings.

Children and Education

This development is pitched as providing for young families. But, there are few jobs and there is no easy commuting. The site might be more likely to attract pensioners, but there are no suitable facilities.

This is described as suitable for young families, but the amenity land is next to the sewage works.

The developer is prepared to offer land for a “First” School (not building a school or providing funds) sited right next to the sewage works. No doubt, this is land is not commercially developable as housing land.

This seems inadequate and to show a lack of a sense of community.

Health

There is not adequate GP provision in Buntingford. Nothing is suggested to help provide necessary extra facilities.

Transport

Buntingford has no railway and the nearest provision of a railway network is west at Stevenage via the hazardous B1037 or south via Ware/Hertford with serious congestion and parking issues or north to Royston which has congestion problems of its own with calls for an A10 by-pass north to south.

Bus services are not frequent and are the subject of a consultation on reductions.

The walk to the nearest bus stop from the furthest dwellings would be over half a mile.

The 2011 Census shows Buntingford has one of the highest car ownerships at 2.7 per household in a County with very high car usage.

The car parks in Buntingford will not provide sufficient car places even in non-peak times; already parking is difficult.

The High Street has been the cause of local concern with parking. Most roads have many parked vehicles reducing the navigable road to one lane. The extra cars from this development cannot be catered for.