



Hunsdon Parish Council

**Letter by email to:**

For the attention of Adam Halford  
Planning Dept.  
East Herts Council  
Wallfields  
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Hertford  
SG13 8 EQ

**email to Adam.Halford@eastherts.gov.uk**

**cc: Councillor Eric.buckmaster@eastherts.gov.uk**

**Ref. No: 3/19/1045/OUT; No: 3/19/1051/FUL; No: 3/19/1049/LBC**

**OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION FOR GILSTON PARK ESTATE VILLAGES 1-6 And the Gilston Park planning detailed applications for the two access routes SUBMITTED BY PLACES FOR PEOPLE**

The Parish Council, as a sponsor of the joint Hunsdon with Eastwick and Gilston Neighbourhood Plan Group, endorses the responses produced by the Group and accordingly appends them to this letter as part of its submission.

There are several key issues in the response that the Parish Council would like to underscore and amplify as part of its objections. These have emerged from discussions within the council and residents and following public consultations organised by The Hunsdon Area Neighbourhood Plan Group. We trust that all concerns will be clarified and refined through engagement by both the applicants and the East Herts Council with our joint Neighbourhood Plan Group over the coming weeks.

**Traffic Impact**

The route through the centre of Hunsdon from the A414 via Church Lane, Acorn Street the High Street and B180 Widford Road is widely used in both directions as a rat run to avoid congestion in Sawbridgeworth. This increases traffic through the village centre and in particular past the school. The submission is all but silent on the impact the Gilston Area will have on the route, though the EIA noise section, Table 11.4.2 appears to suggest that traffic in Church Lane will more than double on average. Apart from a need for greater clarity of what would be the implications for noise and safety our community

would like to know how rat runs are going to be discouraged and/or controlled firstly under the interim arrangements for access to village 6 and then looking to the wider impact as Village 7 is developed.

The proposed roundabout junction for the A414/Village 6 facilitates convenient access and egress to and from the west potentially putting pressure on Church Lane as a route to the north avoiding Eastwick Roundabout or the new Central Crossing, Sawbridgeworth and Harlow.

Clearly, the full integrated traffic impact of the Gilston Area proposals cannot be ascertained until the application for Village 7 has been submitted. (Please see comments on Infrastructure Delivery below). In their pre-application consultations, Briggens Estate 1 put forward plans for the signalisation of the Church Lane /A414 junction with the addition of cycle and footpath crossings which will make it a highly complex traffic junction which massively concerns our residents.



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The Parish Council therefore contends that any decision on the outline planning application cannot be made until a detailed analysis of the likely impacts on the above has been made and mitigation commitments identified.

In the wider context, the uncoupling of Village 7 from Villages 1-6 through the planning process also presents problems with the phasing and funding of supporting infrastructure threatening the visions for the Gilston Area and compliance with Policy GA1 .We reiterate the NPGroup's response that Village 7, if it is to proceed, cannot be a separate application as that fails to provide a unified vision, coherent landscape structure and governance strategy for the entire policy area. Should this not be possible Village 7 should not be permitted in this plan period.

Indeed there is much to commend that, given that a sister company of the owners of the Village 7 area have put forward a scheme for designation of the adjoining area to the west of it be scheduled for the extraction of minerals. Until that proposal has been withdrawn or turned down (or if permitted until the extraction has been completed and the land restored), no housing should be permitted next to the mineral quarry.

### **Sustainable Movement Commitments**

Our community in Hunsdon would welcome a commitment to include the local villages in the sustainable transport strategy rather than confine the strategy to the Gilston Area alone. There is no public transport connecting Hunsdon and Widford to Harlow which presents great difficulties for those without private transport wishing to use hospital services and shopping for example.

### **Airfield Park**

The community welcomes the applicant's commitment to early wins including enhancement and regeneration of the Airfield Park and the nearby Woodlands Park and looks forward to engagement with the applicants (through the Neighbourhood Plan Group) to develop the masterplans for the conversion of the airfield to parkland and the phasing plans for implementation. In particular, the community is most anxious to secure the cessation of industrial and business activities on the airfield and adjoining premises under the control of Places for People that have led to environmental nuisance and inappropriate traffic on our country lanes. The retention of agriculture across a significant part of the Airfield is an unambitious use of the land which could with better landscaping become a major community feature for years to come .

Recently heavy storms have caused flooding in and around the village. These frequency and intensity of storms is likely to increase with climate change. The airfield drains to the west through ditches and culverts in Drury Lane and under Acorn Street. The Parish Council are anxious to secure a permanent solution to the threat of flooding through the installation of surface water attenuation systems on the airfield. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with the applicants and agree a committed drainage strategy.

### **Infrastructure Delivery**

#### **Village 6/7 Access**

Under this item it states that the highway authority has requested that there is only one vehicle access to the west of the Gilston Area and that development triggers will ensure that both Village 6 and Village 7 (all vehicle) accesses are not operational concurrently. However, Briggens Estate 1 have exhibited outline proposals showing Village 7 straddling Church Lane and connected to the A414 at a signalised junction mentioned above. They have not exhibited any proposals for a separate junction. As Church Lane junction will always be operational, the highway authority condition implies that Village 6 has to be connected via the spine road to Village 1 until Village 7 is built. The proposed roundabout on the A414 therefore seems superfluous unless it is intended for construction traffic only.



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This in turn may have a bearing on the feasibility of the proposed Quarry at Olives Farm to the detriment of our community.

Whatever the interim arrangement and triggers, the spine road will, in the long term, connect to Church Lane within Village 7 and the full impact of potential movements generated by the whole of the Gilston Area, attracted northwards through Hunsdon, Widford and Much Hadham has to be assessed and mitigation devised to protect our villages.

### **Trigger Points**

The Parish Council accepts that the delivery of infrastructure is partly geared to cash flow from the development though there is a greater need to capture the land value gain for the public benefit and with a development of this size to respect the principles on which it is based by ensuring that infrastructure projects come first and are there before houses are occupied in the interests both of new residents and the existing ones in our Parish. We are concerned that in general that trigger points are in terms of 'prior to the occupation of x homes'. Apart from derogating from the principle of "Infrastructure First" we believe that this leaves a risk that the trigger may be indefinitely postponed by artificial manipulation of completions and targets. These risks may well be beyond the plan period, but we suggest safeguards are applied to ensure that the full infrastructure package is delivered on time and as promised.

Yours sincerely

**Carole Page**  
**Clerk to Hunsdon Parish Council**