

Representations for Housing Options Growth Levels and Locations 2011-2031

<u>Ref.</u>	<u>Rep No.</u>	<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Agent</u>
LDF/0025	36	Sustainable Places ,Environment Agency	

Document Section: Ashwell

Comment

Representation:

Ashwell springs is a chalk fed SSSI. Groundwater levels to the south east side of Ashwell are around 50mAOD though vary considerably seasonally. To mitigate the effects of PWS pumping in the vicinity on spring flows at Ashwell springs we pump water from an abstraction borehole at Redlands farm to a recharge borehole just to the East of site OO3(claybush hill).

This has to implications for the sites proposed:

- 1) The housing may affect the adjacent recharge borehole. There must be no groundwater pollution in the vicinity of recharge borehole.
- 2) There exists a pipeline between the Redlands abstraction borehole and the recharge borehole on claybush hill. In 2006 when sewerage was put in for the Caravan site at Ashridge farm this pipe was severed causing pollution and water leakage. It should also be noted that the proposed sites around Ashridge farm are on lower lying land 50-55mAOD than the site on claybush hill (hence water table in principal chalk aquifer likely to be closer to the ground surface)

LDF/0206	10	Radwell Parish Meeting
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Document Section: Ashwell

Comment

Representation:

Here again there are traffic issues - the narrow roads approaching the village are already over-used.

The primary school is not currently full, but it is very close to it (within one or two pupils) in all save two year groups, and those two are probably statistical anomalies which may not be repeated. Again, you would have to be sure that HCC has the resources for an enlargement of the school, or face the distress caused when parents living in the village cannot get their children into the school. Historically, Radwell children have gone to Ashwell. If the school were full with Ashwell 'locals', the obvious next choice for Radwell parents is schools in Baldock, which would increase the pressure there.

The comments about water supply refer to this case also.

LDF/1016	22	Hertfordshire Biological Records Centre
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Document Section: Ashwell

Comment

Representation:

Recognised ecology sites within Sites : No

Recognised sites adjacent / close to Sites: No

Other features: Hedgerows, loss of trees in A/r01; loss of ruderal habitat within 003

Protected species: Bats in area; reptiles potential in 003

Opportunities: Retention of trees in A/r01; hedgerows in 003.

Ecological sensitivity:

A/r01 - locally mod /high if requires all tree removal;

002 - low;

007 - low;

003 - locally low / moderate.

Fundamental ecological constraints: No.

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LDF/1508	6	Lee	

Document Section: Ashwell

Comment

Representation:

Ashwell is a nuclear and already densely developed village community. It has experienced some 700 years of development and over the last 100 - 150 years much of this has taken the form of infill. Housing density is high in many streets. The roads and footpaths within the village are narrow with little or no opportunity for widening. Cars already cause congestion at busy times, even in the High Street, and impede access for farm vehicles which need to be able to negotiate the roads. The congestion already causes damage to verges and street furniture apart from the hazard to people. We believe that Ashwell is close to saturation already.

Ashwell is possibly atypical in its housing density compared with many other villages, and its ability to absorb additional housing is therefore more limited than many other villages.

LDF/1552	2	Chimes
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Document Section: Ashwell

Object

Representation:

As an Ashwell resident for 20 years, I am writing to express our concerns about the proposed building of more new houses in our village. In our view, the building of more new houses will put a very considerable burden on the infrastructure of the village, as well as spoiling areas of natural beauty and a number of views too.

LDF/2166	14	Hertfordshire County Council - Property & Services
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Document Section: Ashwell

Comment

Representation:

Non-strategic sites (priority 1, 2 and 3) = Up to 61 dwellings
0.1FE
No infrastructure requirements

LDF/2959	78	English Heritage
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Document Section: Ashwell

Comment

ADOC

Additional document attached

Representation:

Site A/r01 is situated within Ashwell Conservation Area and near to a number of listed buildings, including the Grade II* Forrester's Cottage on the High Street. The buildings within the site should be assessed for their contribution to the significance of the conservation area before any decisions are made regarding their future. A development brief to guide proposals and/or site-specific policy requirements in the Local Plan may be appropriate.

Site 7 is on the edge of the conservation area, so could potentially impact on the significance of this heritage asset and its setting. This will need to be taken into account regarding any decisions on this site. We note that Site 5, which is also on the edge of the conservation area, failed one of the SHLAA tests so presumably will not be taken forward for allocation.

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<u>Ref.</u>	<u>Rep No.</u>	<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Agent</u>
LDF/3802	10	Ashwell Education Services	

Document Section: Ashwell

Object

Representation:

With the development at Whitby Farm, next to Moules Yard and the potential of development at 61 Station Road, Ashwell has more than enough development. In the past 30 years there has been development at Bacon's Yard, Colbron Close, John Sale Close, Walkdens, Moules Yard, Westbury Barns, Farrows Farm not to mention individual houses in Ashwell Street, Newnham Hill, Westbury, Dixies, High Street, Swan Street, Back Street, Lucas Lane, Gardiners Lane and Hodwell. There are two being renovated in Kingsland Way at present next the two that were renovated last year. The despicable sale of a plot in Dixies Close by North Herts Homes reduces the possibility of another social house.

Further development will put a strain on the sewers and school. The sewers already regularly overflow in Station Road and Hodwell and there has also been some recently in Claybush Road. The system cannot take more unless major work is completed by the water company.

Ashwell Primary School is full. Already there is at least one child in Ashwell who has to be driven to Sandon each day because the child could not get into Ashwell School. After recently spending over £1m at Ashwell School it would seem unlikely that Hertfordshire county council will spend more money on the site. Not that there is space for a larger school.

If the above two objections to further development are overcome and development were to be allowed the character of the settlement has to be enhanced. Development up Claybush Road would not do this to the important entrance to Ashwell from Bygrave.

LDF/7154	12	Reddaway	
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Document Section: Ashwell

Comment

Representation:

I approve of all these applications, with the possible exception of the highest 20-30% of Ref 3, west of Claybush Rd, as these will be the most prominent in certain views. Houses on most of this site are behind houses on Claybush Rd and Ashwell St, and so will hardly be seen from most nearby public roads.

I consider that Ashwell should build more houses over the twenty years. A target of 100-120 houses is reasonable, and still below the average % for NHDC. This average of 5-6 houses pa could be front-loaded to help keep house prices and rents down. Ribbon development should not be allowed, but Ashwell covers quite a big area, and there is scope for in-filling and higher housing density.

LDF/7191	1	Crawley	
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Document Section: Ashwell

Object

Representation:

As a village site, Ashwell is unsuitable for anything but incremental growth without changing the nature of the village completely. Formerly a market town in medieval times, Ashwell's charm is as a rural development clustered around the church, and increases gradually in density on all sides as one approaches the centre. Over time, the farm plots within the village have all been developed into housing, and so one can now conclude that the village is full, except if the village boundaries are expanded to accommodate construction into the surrounding farmland. This is contrary to the village plan, would stretch all the existing facilities including parking density (the high street is becoming difficult to navigate already), sewage, schools, doctors and there are long-standing objections including access issues to most of the proposed sites. The only real positive is to the village commercial services who would gain business from the new residents, although this may be offset by reduced tourism if the character of the village is impacted. I

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think when considering the number of homes and impact on a village, one must look at the percentage increase rather than just the absolute number of homes proposed - 33 (the current proposed site, ref 3) is a huge ask of the village and I personally would recommend against any of these developments in Ashwell beyond those that are already in progress.

LDF/7232	1	Collinson	
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Document Section: Ashwell

Comment

Representation:

I am expressing my concern at the proposed building of over 50 new houses in Ashwell. I recognise the need for extra housing in north herts however I wonder how the infrastructure of the village will cope when it seems already under pressure. I can only comment from own observations but these are:

Traffic congestion (1)At certain times of day the High Street is almost at a gridlock. With parking along most of its length there is often only one lane for traffic, and due to limited visibility cars are often head to head before they can pull in at a convenient spot. This necessitates much shuffling and reversing. I particularly notice this in the mornings when the children are going to school, making the High Street dangerous to cross. (2) I live at the junction of the High Street with Kingsland Way and with so many cars parked around that area buses or long vehicles have great difficulty turning into or out of Kingsland Way. (3) Again due to parked cars along High Street drivers often use the pavement as an extension of the road. On occasion vehicles have scraped past my property and that of my neighbour. I have seen vans drive at speed along the pavement.

With extra housing the amount of traffic passing through and parking in the village will only increase. Emergency vehicles getting through the village at congested times will be severely hampered.

School places (1) I am aware that Ashwell primary school is already at maximum capacity in some years. The school itself has only limited outdoor space for pupils to play in.

(2) The local secondary school has already changed its admissions criteria because it feared that siblings of pupils from Ashwell would not get a place in future years.

How will the schools accommodate the increased number of pupils inevitably arising from increasing the housing stock?

LDF/7378	1	Carswell	
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Document Section: Ashwell

Support

Representation:

My wife and I support the development of all three proposed housing sites for Ashwell, Refs A/r01, 3 & 7. As far as we can see their development would be in keeping with the general character of Ashwell. A/r01 is welcome since it removes some derelict land and buildings near the village centre. Continued development of the village is important, especially to provide opportunities for younger people as the local population ages, so both of the larger projects in particular (Refs 3 & 7) should also be approved.

LDF/7459	1	Wray	
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Document Section: Ashwell

Object

Representation:

Ashwell does not have the infrastructure to take this number of new homes. Traffic is a huge problem in and through the village. There is no bus service and the station is miles away so these houses will have to have transport, and will probably have 2 cars each. The school cannot take more children. The doctors surgery is full & you have to wait 2-3 weeks for a non-emergency appointment. PLEASE DO NOT BUILD THESE HOUSES IN ASHWELL.

LDF/7476	1	Ashwell Primary School	
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Document Section: Ashwell

Comment

Representation:

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I am the headteacher of Ashwell Primary School and I understand that there is currently a consultation process about some plans to build new houses in Ashwell. I thought it would be helpful if I were to give you an update on our school numbers as we are the only primary school in Ashwell.

Ashwell School has a published admission number of 38. This was raised from 30 a few years ago and the County built a four classroom extension to accommodate the extra pupils. I doubt that the admission number will be raised again as, even if the County could afford to build more classrooms, the school dining hall and playground are already rather small for our current school roll of 260.

From September 2013 we expect our year group numbers to be as follows:

Spaces

Year 6: 37 1

Year 5: 38 0

Year 4: 38 0 two children on waiting list

Year 3: 38 0

Year 2: 25 13

Year 1: 21 17

Reception: 38 0 46 children have applied, but places have not yet been allocated by County.

Nursery: well over 30 - parents are applying currently.

As you can see, we only expect to have spaces in two age groups. The number of 2 year olds in the village, who are currently at playgroup and will presumably come to our Nursery in 2014, is also quite large, I understand.

I hope this information is useful. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you would like to know more. I am sending a similar email to Ashwell Parish Council..

LDF/7941	2	Moynihan
Document Section:	Ashwell	
Representation:		<i>Object</i>

The non-strategic sites Ashwell worry me.

Ashwell can cope with slow development which will, help to keep the village vibrant, but the School is already full (I understand that there is already one child being schooled in Sandon as the Ashwell school has no places). The School site has for many years been below the recommended area for the numbers of children there. That was before the latest classrooms were built upon the site. With the numbers of pre-school children in the village now and the known numbers of current pregnancies there will need to be a serious look at the provision of Primary places in the village without the proposed new development. One solution would be to build a new school within the village and sell off the present site for some of the new housing required.

In a similar way the other infrastructure provision in the village is inadequate. The Sewerage system, the main pipework to the Treatment Plant was initially installed in 1906 when there were only two flush toilets in the village! I note from the Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule, table 1, that the costs of Sewage Treatment Works is 'not known' so no figure has been put in! There is difficulty in some parts of the village with Mains Water pressure, and the Electricity supply has a reputation for frequent faults. Equally there is no high speed Broadband connection available. Ashwell High Street is already carrying a lot of traffic, particularly at commuting periods morning and evening. The on-street parking helps to make this safer by slowing it down but there are frequent grid locks which will only increase with more cars in the village.

I would strongly object to any development of the site 003. Previous proposals have all been rejected by the Planning Department as being too obtrusive on the skyline. Any form of building here would seriously detract from the character of Ashwell's Conservation status.

LDF/8005	7	Long
Document Section:	Ashwell	
Representation:		<i>Object</i>

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<u>Ref.</u>	<u>Rep No.</u>	<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Agent</u>
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Overall housing additions of 61 are too low over a 20 year period to sustain the community. There are errors in the map; the village settlement boundary is incorrectly shown; there are 3 sites with extant permission for 6 homes not shown, bringing the priority 2 numbers to 32. The need for housing in the village is well documented and is for retirement and starter homes. This has not been taken into account in overall numbers. The Landscape Character Assessment of 2012 argues against building on areas of visual importance such as Claybush Hill. Other sites are available without green field development outside the village settlement.

LDF/8162	1	Thorton
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Document Section:	Ashwell	
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Object

Representation:

I live in Ashwell and am writing in response to the development consultation for North Hertfordshire. I attended the March Ashwell Parish Council ('Ashwell PC') meeting in which the consultation was discussed by Herts CC, North Herts DC and Ashwell PC. I am concerned that development is going to increase existing traffic, sewerage and schooling problems in Ashwell and traffic and schooling problems in Baldock.

Herts CC, North Herts DC and Ashwell PC confirmed in the March Ashwell PC meeting that the proposed development of 61 properties in Ashwell included building approximately 32 properties which had already been granted planning permission. Please could you explain why permission for these properties was already granted without consultation? As these properties are to be included in the consultation, I am concerned that the consultation process is not fair. Please could the planning permission granted for these 32 properties be reconsidered and reversed so that they can validly be included in the consultation?

In the Ashwell PC meeting, the 3 Councils claimed that this consultation is for 10 years, yet the published development plan is for 20 years. I am surprised that the general public were allowed to be so misled. Herts CC, North Herts DC and Ashwell PC should guarantee that no more properties can be built in the areas within the plan within this 20 year period.

The consultation document says 'There are insufficient 'non-strategic' sites to make the [housing] target [created by Herts CC]. The main purpose of this consultation is therefore to help the council make decisions as to which of the 'strategic sites' to use.' This implies that, regardless of the consultation, development for the 'non-strategic sites' will go ahead and that North Herts DC are not considering the views of anyone concerned by the 'non-strategic sites'. This is clearly biased and unfair.

Furthermore, the consultation document states that there is 'nil rate migration' so there is no real need for additional housing. 1,000 houses to be used for affordable housing are proposed, however, and it seems that, as 'nil rate migration' exists, North Herts DC should not to permit any development at all when there is no need for it but, as a compromise, I would agree to North Herts DC allowing 1,000 affordable houses to be built. I believe North Herts DC should also focus on ensuring empty properties are inhabited rather than unnecessarily permitting new properties to be built.

Ashwell and Baldock are rural areas and I believe they should remain so. Towns such as Hitchin, Luton and Letchworth should be developed (if development does really have to take place, which I am sceptical of) rather than Ashwell and Baldock as the former are better structured to deal with increases in traffic and demand for school places and do not suffer the sewerage problems that Ashwell does.

Traffic, personal injuries and vehicles crashing into houses - Ashwell

Ashwell's roads are already too busy. The village must have trebled in size since the 1920s and its roads are subsequently already stretched to capacity. Parking is increasingly a problem and the village cannot cope with more vehicles (especially as many vehicles unfortunately use Ashwell as a cut-through to get from the A1 to Royston). Any development in Ashwell (and particularly development at Angel Farm, Whitby Farm, Station Road and Claybush Road) would mean more vehicles travelling along Silver Street/Back Street as drivers often choose this route to avoid using the High Street (which is two-way but often problematic to drive down due to cars parked on the road) or for families to drop their children off at Ashwell junior school and then drive down Back Street as the easiest way to exit the village.

2 children have already been injured due to vehicles running the children over (1 broken arm, 1 I believe other injuries requiring hospital attention) recently in Silver Street/Back Street. Back Street does not have suitable pavements (or any at all in places), vehicles travel down it far too quickly to be safe to themselves and pedestrians and pedestrians are in danger.

My house has Back Street on one side and West End on the other. On the Back Street side, reckless driver(s) have driven into my house (which is listed!) damaging the

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		brickwork and thatch and, prior to us living there, knocked down our property's wall. Other houses on Back Street/Silver Street and Ashwell have suffered similar damage due to vehicles driving into them. An increase in traffic due to development in Ashwell would mean even more property damage and personal injuries suffered unless something is done in advance of development taking place to calm traffic.	
		To rectify the above, please introduce a much needed pavement from Ashwell Junior School all the way along Back Street and implement a 20 mph limit and speed bumps along this stretch. So many young children and parents with babies have to walk along Back Street (e.g., for the children to go to school) but cannot do so safely and it is only a matter of time before a fatality occurs along this stretch of road. Back Street was not designed to cope with the current level of traffic and certainly could not cope with any more. There are times of the day when Back Street is busier than High Street (e.g. when parents drive to drop their children off at school and then travel along Back Street to exit Ashwell) as most of the village and other drivers use Back Street rather than High Street to travel from one side of Ashwell to the other. I believe tackling the safety of Back Street and its users should be considered a higher priority than developing Ashwell.	
		Schooling (overcrowding) √ Ashwell Ashwell Junior School cannot be extended and I believe there is already at least one child living in Ashwell who did not get a place at Ashwell Junior School because it was full. This is absurd given that Ashwell is a rural village. Development would mean more children living in Ashwell, greater pressure on Ashwell Junior School and more children not being able to attend their village school. Ashwell should not be developed whilst schooling remains an issue. One of the reasons we chose to live in Ashwell was because Ashwell Junior School has a good reputation. If there was no guarantee children living in Ashwell could attend Ashwell Junior School, this would detract families from Ashwell and mean that facilities used by families such as the pharmacy and shop would suffer financially.	
		Schooling (overcrowding)- Baldock Ashwell is currently in the catchment area for Knights' Templar school. If any development took place closer to Knights Templar than Ashwell, Ashwell would be likely to fall outside the Knights Templar catchment area and children have to instead attend another secondary school. Unfortunately, other secondary schools in the area are an unreasonable distance away and there is not a direct bus from the village to close to those schools (unlike the bus which travels from Ashwell to Baldock and which many Knights Templar pupils use every school day). If any development occurs in the village or surrounding areas, the Council should build a new secondary school to support the increase in numbers of children of school-attending age.	
		Residents of intended new properties √ retirees The Councils should consider who is likely to live in the intended new homes. There are many retired persons living in large houses in Ashwell (which families could not afford!) who realistically would not be willing to move from their homes into smaller new build houses e.g., because the new build houses would not be built to a high standard as per their current houses, because, when they die, they would like their current house to be owned by their children or because the new houses would not be in as convenient location. Ashwell does not need additional housing for retired persons and Ashwell is not a suitable location for retired people who have no connections to the village e.g., due to pavement problems and because of the limited communications between Ashwell and elsewhere (e.g., the bus service has just been cut and you cannot get back from Royston on the bus if you go there on the 2pm service).	
		Residents of intended new properties √ retirees and strain on Ashwell Doctors' Surgery Retirees typically require more costly and more NHS treatment than non-retirees. Ashwell already has a high percentage of retirees and, due to retirees' ailments requiring greater GP assistance than non-retirees, it is already difficult to get a doctor's appointment at Ashwell Surgery. Building more housing for retirees would unduly stretch Ashwell Surgery to beyond capacity. As a mother, I am concerned that my young child would not be able to obtain a doctor's appointment because of retirees taking up many appointments.	
		Residents of intended new properties √ affordable housing If the logic behind suggesting this development is to increase the amount of affordable housing available, the Councils should only permit affordable housing being built and not build other types of housing as there is not a need in North Herts for other types of housing. I understand that, although additional housing may be thought to be required in other areas of the country, e.g., to house immigrants, that North Herts does not need such additional housing. There is, therefore, no justifiable reason why developing rural areas such as Ashwell, Baldock and surrounding areas is required.	
		Housing targets The East of England housing target was 15,800 (now no longer relevant) and previous Hertfordshire target was 5,900 additional houses. I was wondering whether the Herts DC figure of 10,700 new houses to be built 2011-2031 had proper justification. It appears to just be a figure in between the East of England and the Hertfordshire housing targets.	

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		<p>This is especially since the consultation document indicates that only 1,000 affordable housing new homes are really needed as there is 'nil rate migration' in North Herts. I would, therefore, argue that current empty properties should be used to provide housing, that 1,000 affordable housing new homes are granted permission to be built if need be but that housing targets and proposed housing targets are disregarded without any further development being permitted other than development of such empty houses and affordable housing.</p> <p>Traffic - Baldock traffic lights</p> <p>The Baldock traffic lights on the A507 are at a busy junction and often cause traffic to queue for perhaps a mile back up to the A1 services, especially in rush hour. The junction cannot cope with any increase in traffic which developments in Ashwell, Norton etc. would bring. Alternative roads would need to be built. The junction needs to have a mini roundabout for traffic to flow better, as per the other end of Baldock Road/B565 as a minimum. This should be resolved before any development in Baldock, Ashwell and surrounding areas is approved.</p> <p>Traffic ↘ A1</p> <p>The A1 would need to be widened at Stevenage and surrounding areas if any development took place ↘ the Stevenage junctions are those frequently congested and thought as to how development traffic joined the A1 would be needed.</p> <p>Sewerage</p> <p>Several houses in Ashwell currently suffer sewerage problems and it is well known that the drains and sewerage system in Ashwell cannot sufficiently cope with current demand, let alone any increase. A close friend, for example, with a one year old baby had raw sewage covering her back garden in the summer due to the inadequate sewerage system and another Ashwell resident has had raw sewage in his family's garden but the authorities appear reluctant to remedy these problems.</p> <p>Community Infrastructure Levy</p> <p>The level of the community infrastructure levy proposed is far lower than is reasonable, especially given the value of development land. The level should be raised to a more appropriate level, wherever any development is granted.</p> <p>Focusing on habiting empty properties</p> <p>It would be more cost-effective and mean that more areas of countryside could be kept undisturbed if currently empty properties were used for affordable housing/housing (and compulsorily purchased by the Council if needs be) rather than new properties be built. I believe the Councils should focus their attention on achieving this rather than ignore the negative impact on the environment and wildlife and destruction of the countryside that developing the countryside would bring.</p> <p>Concern over North Herts DC agreeing proposed developments for 20 years and requirement to guarantee no further developments will be permitted</p> <p>I strongly believe that traffic calming measures, new pavements, new schooling facilities and improvements to the sewerage system need to be made in Ashwell and the surrounding areas/Baldock before any development should take place in Ashwell/Baldock and, if the planning permission for the 32 houses already granted in Ashwell is not revoked, that we should see what effects that development has before permission for any further new houses is even considered. I am also concerned that the development plan fixes the maximum amount of development that can take place in the next 20 years but that Councils within this 20 year period decide that additional development above the proposed levels is passed regardless of this consultation. The Councils need to guarantee that no additional development not consulted upon now will be passed within the 20 year period and face a high penalty if this guarantee is breached.</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>I have strong concerns that development in and around Ashwell will (and has already been) be permitted without sufficient traffic calming measures, new pavements, new junior and secondary schooling facilities and sewerage system improvements having been made and this this will cause serious problems for residents of Ashwell, Baldock and the surrounding areas. North Herts is a 'nil rate migration' area and such proposed development is unnecessary. I am also concerned that North Herts DC will not guarantee that further development will not take place over the next 18 years and that the consultation process has not been conducted fairly with regard to 'non-strategic sites'.</p>	

LDF/8314	1	Greenbank	
Document Section:	Ashwell		
Representation:		<i>Object</i>	

I know that there are issues of infra structure which I am sure you will take into account. My concern apart from this is for the preservation of the nature of the village. Ashwell is



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Agent

a wonderful place to live and part of that feeling is to do with its size. We have lived here for 8 years and I guess we know about 200 people. Almost everyone we encounter in the streets greets us even if we don't know their name. You don't say "good morning " to everyone in London. It's this sense of belonging which is at the heart of the sense of community in Ashwell. There is a point beyond which this sense is lost and the village becomes a dormitory town.

I know that it's a privilege to live here and I wish that everyone could have the opportunity to enjoy the sense of community which thrives here but please be aware of the danger of losing something precious in your zeal for number crunching.

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LDF/4235	2	Mynott	

Document Section: Ref. 2 r/o 67 Station Road, Ashwell Street

Comment

Representation:

We write in support of the proposed residential allocation for up to three dwellings on land to the rear of 67 Station Road, Ashwell Street, Ashwell. We can confirm that the site is deliverable and there are no constraints that would impact upon the viability of development on the land. We are not aware of any significant ecological, archaeological or drainage issues associated with the site. Access would be off Ashwell Street, which is already used by a number of dwellings and a caravan park location further along the lane. The site is well screened with existing vegetation, and development of the land would not impact upon any important views or landscape. The land is currently located just outside the village envelope but given that a resolution to grant planning permission was agreed on 17 January 2013 for the development of 20 dwellings on the adjacent land (61 Station Road) (application reference 12/02079/1), we would suggest that the village boundary should now be altered through the local plan review process to include land at 61 Station Road. Since the land at 61 Station Road wraps around land to the rear of 67 Station Road, once this alteration to the village boundary has been made, land to the rear of 67 Station Road will therefore also be within the village boundary.

We have noted that in the North Hertfordshire December 2010 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) Update, land to the rear of 67 Station Road is shown as a Priority 2 site, identified for delivery between 2016 to 2021. However in the December 2012 SHLAA, the timescale for delivery of the site is now 2021 to 2026 and there is no information contained within the SHLAA (or any other background technical document) to explain or justify why the site is no longer suitable for delivery in the early part of the plan period. The SHLAA does advise that sites identified for development in the later stages of the plan are more complicated or require release from the Green Belt. However neither of these reasons is applicable on land to the rear of 67 Station Road, which is not within the Green Belt and which comprises greenfield land with no constraints to development.

We can confirm that development to the rear of 67 Station Road could be delivered earlier than the suggested 2021-2026 and would suggest that a more appropriate timescale would be 2011 to 2016 given the unconstrained nature of the land in all aspects, including planning policy, the need to deliver housing within the District and the recent resolution to approve 20 dwellings on land at 61 Station Road which wraps around the site.

LDF/4437	12	Hare	
Document Section:	Ref. 2 r/o 67 Station Road, Ashwell Street		

Support

Representation:

We would support the buildings on the The land rear of 67 Station Road, Ashwell

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<u>Ref.</u> LDF/0852	<u>Rep No.</u> 15	<u>Applicant</u> Gurney Family	<u>Agent</u> Savills (L&P) Ltd- on behalf of the Gurney Family
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Document Section: Ref. 3 Land West of Claybush Road
Representation: *Support*

MAP Map/plans attached

On behalf of our client Mr E.J.Gurney we would like to welcome the identification of land at Claybush Road, Ashwell (Ref: 003) as a potential future housing allocation in the village. The identified land is consists of 4.36 acres and is in the sole ownership of Mr Gurney who has indicated that he would like to see the site come forward for housing development. The North Hertfordshire villages need to be given adequate land for housing growth to ensure that local people have the opportunity to buy houses in their village and to allow local services to retain viability through appropriate increases in new population within the village. My client therefore supports the identification of housing growth for Ashwell and other villages of a similar size as part of the overall suggested 10,700 housing target for North Hertfordshire during the plan period. Whilst it is recognised that the majority of housing growth will be delivered through strategic allocations located at the primary settlements, this should not be at the expense of allocating housing land at the villages. It is however important that any housing allocations in village locations are deliverable during the plan period. The site identified is in the ownership of my client however, an agreement may be required with Affinity Water in respect of forming a wider point of access alongside the adjoining reservoir site onto Claybush Road is the entire site is to be developed. Discussions in respect of forming a wider access have already taken place. For the purposes of the identified allocation this access route should also be identified as shown on the attached Land Registry Plan.

The site meets the three tests set out in the original SHLAA assessment of sites as identified at (Par 3.2) in that it is:

- 1) Suitable √ The site is unconstrained and well related to the existing village settlement boundary with primary road frontage and a short walking distance to the school.
- 2) Available √ As the site is green field it is available for delivery in the short term. The landowner has confirmed that he is willing to see development on this land.
- 3) Achievable √ It is likely that a scheme of circa 34 units would be financially viable in this location given that there are no major infrastructure costs and the site has no constraints.

We would suggest that the proposed site should be identified as Priority 1 for the village given that the identified Priority 1 and 2 sites already benefit from planning permission and therefore should not be recognised as future housing allocations as they are already existing commitments (Ref Station Road 12/02079/01 & Silver Street 12/00812/01). Site 003 will be fully deliverable in the short term with no existing uses or constraints on the land.

Our own investigations into site capacity have identified that the site can accommodate up to 34 dwellings √ See Sketch Layout - without creating any detrimental impact on the existing adjoining properties. We would therefore welcome the site being provisionally identified with a capacity to deliver 34 units. The site can also provide a cycle link/pedestrian link through to Ashwell Street for the benefit of the future residents. This route will provide a better link for future residents to access the village centre and a quicker route for children to get to the nearby Primary School.

We consider that Ashwell has sufficient services to support the growth of the additional 34 units within the plan period and we consider that Site 003 is the most appropriate location to accommodate this new growth. There appears to be limited other sites available in the village to support residential growth and we support the deletion of those sites ruled out by the Council through the site assessment exercise

LDF/0981	7	Angus
Document Section:	Ref. 3 Land West of Claybush Road	
Representation:	<i>Object</i>	

My wife and I, in common with other residents in Ashwell, do not appear to have been kept informed of the manner in which these proposals have been put forward. In view of the absence of consultation we wish to bring forward to your attention the following:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Has it been determined whether these houses will be sold to private buyers or whether the council will keep control of them letting them out? | |
| 2. What category of occupant will occupy these houses? Will they for example be young people necessarily working in Ashwell itself. What proportion are expected to be in need of housing assistance? Will some use be made for single-parent families or | unable to get onto the housing ladder, or in some kind of occupation not |

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Plan. This states that any new development should be discreetly sited and should not intrude on the landscape.

This increase of 33 houses would also put even more strain on our creaking infrastructure, not to mention our school, drains, sewage and the water supply to name but a few. It is already difficult to obtain a decent water pressure at peak times for our showers. For these and many more reasons I for one would not be in favour of this development.

LDF/1508	2	Lee	
Document Section:	Ref. 3 Land West of Claybush Road		

Representation: *Object*

We are writing to oppose any possibility of the site between Claybush Road and Ashwell St (West) being developed for housing. Our reasons against use of the site for housing development are as follows:

Breaches the Village Boundary

The site in question, if developed, would breach an existing village boundary outside of which residential building is not currently permitted.

If the site were developed, then where would residential building be allowed next? Would it be allowed to extend progressively until Ashwell joined up with Bygrave, and then on to Baldock?

The Village Boundary has been agreed and accepted as a limit for development with the aim of preserving Ashwell as a village. There is a size beyond which a village becomes a town and loses many of the characteristics that make the village a community of choice for its residents.

Conflicts with Village Design Statement criteria

'New housing development should be smallscale, unless it meets a specific, identified local need. Policy 29.' A development of 33 houses is not small scale. A specific local need for 33 houses has not been identified and agreed within the community.

'The scale of the proposal should be in keeping with existing buildings in the area.' A development of the scale of 33 houses would not be in keeping with the mix of individual houses/bungalows on the Southern edge of the village. It would dominate the approach to the village from Bygrave.

'Important vistas must be protected, particularly those which allow views of the countryside from within the village. Where possible, new vistas should be created. Policy 57 (G1)'. A development in the location under consideration would eliminate views of the Western side of the village and the countryside beyond to the North and West as one approaches and enters the village from Bygrave.

'There is a need for more public open space, particularly at the western end of the village. Schemes to address this problem will be supported. Policy 57 (G8)'. A development in the location under consideration would remove open space, and set a precedent for further development. This could lead to reduced access to and the possible integrity of the Arbury Banks Ancient Monument site.

Loss of potentially productive farmland

The site in question has been actively farmed until recent years when the existing landowner ceased farming. When one looks at the shape and position of the 1.7 acre area it forms a 'dogleg' in the adjacent, larger field which is owned and actively farmed by a different farmer. It would improve the efficiency and yield of the adjacent field if the 1.7 acres in question were incorporated into it, thereby eliminating the unproductive corners around the current 'dogleg' which are inaccessible to large modern farming machinery. Just because the existing owner may choose not to offer it for sale as agricultural land is not a reason for allowing it to be used for housing.

Infrastructure impact

A development of 33 houses in addition to additional housing approved in the last 12 months would place a severe burden on many aspects of the village infrastructure. The potential for an additional 60+ cars, 50 or more children, 100+ residents would impact on water supply, sewerage, school capacity, medical resources, and roads. Such development would not necessarily increase employment within the village, or use of the existing village businesses.

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Non-Strategic Development

It is noted that the North Herts District Council has included the site in question in the category of 'Non-Strategic Sites'.

This indicates that the site does not fulfil strategically justified criteria. Presumably the site is under consideration simply because it has been put forward by the landowner. Surely that does not provide any justification for serious consideration.

Potential breach of Community wishes

The Coalition Government's proposals for Neighbourhood Planning Regulations was launched as a policy for 'Giving people more power over what happens in their neighbourhood'. Within the proposals it is accepted that 'A fundamental principle of neighbourhood planning is that it is community-led. This means that the community is kept fully informed of what is being proposed and is able to make their views known throughout the process.'

In the context of Ashwell we would argue that the neighbourhood in question is Ashwell village, and all residents should be given the opportunity to make their wishes known about this site being considered for housing.

We would argue that there has been no neighbourhood or community-wide communication of this issue. It is buried within the North-Herts website and one has to know exactly what one is searching for to even find it on the website.

It would be much more democratic to have a direct link to the Ashwell Parish Council website on all Ashwell based housing plans or planning applications and for a formal procedure within Ashwell Parish Council to be established whereby developments of a certain size or a change of land use are publicised well in advance of any decision-making date, and procedures established for holding petitions or referenda on such matters.

Ashwell has already increased its housing close to capacity within the village boundary. We feel it has made a significant contribution to house building in recent years and cannot support a further development of this size and location.

LDF/1508	3	Lee	
Document Section:	Ref. 3 Land West of Claybush Road		

Object

Representation:

Further to our letter of 24 February we would like to add a further reason why the above site would be unsuitable for housing development. That is the unsuitability of the Claybush Rd / Bygrave Rd for taking additional traffic.

We have obtained data from the Hertfordshire Traffic Management Unit showing collisions on each of six arterial roads leading into / out from Ashwell over the last 10 years. The road in question has experienced a total of 11 collisions between Ashwell and the A507, of which one was fatal. Compared with the number of collisions on the other roads it makes the Claybush Rd approach to Ashwell one of, if not the most dangerous roads used to access Ashwell.

A development of the above site with access onto the Claybush Rd would surely increase the traffic using this road between Ashwell and Baldock.

The reasons why this is a particularly dangerous road are evident to anyone who uses it. It is so narrow in certain stretches that even two cars travelling in opposite directions are unable to pass safely without using passing places. In other areas one has to drive with the nearside wheels travelling on the road / verge margin where the road surface is often broken and potholed. In addition there are numerous blind corners some of which have reverse camber. Cars are becoming larger which is also exacerbating the above factors.

I hope this additional evidence will be useful in your determinations.

LDF/1512	3	Hodson	
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<u>Ref.</u>	<u>Rep No.</u>	<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Agent</u>
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Document Section: Ref. 3 Land West of Claybush Road

Representation: *Object*

Firstly, the approach to the village, from Claybush Road is of great visual attraction, the eye being led over the open county side across the village outskirts, straight to the exceptionally fine west tower of St Mary's church. Viewing the site from several points along Claybush Road, I am of the view that a development of thirty three houses would form an unsightly incursion into the attractive open land that rises southwards from the village.

The land is elevated and houses would ruin the look of the whole village. Views from Arbury Banks - a place of beauty and an important historic site - would be destroyed.

Additionally the hill feeds Ashwell Springs: if you build on it there will be a run-off down the hill. It is important to note too, that there is no safe access point to the site & cars travel at some speed along that point.

I note that North Herts District Council have stressed that they want to prevent developments scarring the county's countryside and I applaud this. Building on this hill also goes against the the Ashwell Design Plan, which was drawn up to protect the character of the village (www.ashwell.gov.uk/AVDS.pdf). It specifically says that large developments are not wanted.

The Ashwell Parish Council opposes any houses on this field and are in favour of an extension to the Walkdens.

Furthermore, the housing plan omits to recognise that there are many houses which have new planning permission. Together with the twenty houses being built on Site 007, I am sure that the quota for the village is already satisfied. Indeed, Ashwell has been very developed in comparison with villages of similar size.

Building 61 houses will impact on an oversubscribed primary school. The school's recreational area is tiny; OFSTED inspectors have remarked on the postage-stamp size of the playground. There is no room for expansion. Parents are already frustrated with the overcrowding.

Additionally traffic is mounting on the country lanes leading into the village, with grass verges eroding away. As a parent, I now feel worried about my children cycling along these roads. The lanes are narrow and windy and some children choose to cycle to school, when they have after school clubs to go to.

I believe the need to conserve one of Hertfordshire's most beautiful historic villages make the proposal of building on site 003 an untenable one. There is wide spread opposition to such a proposal in Ashwell, particularly among parents of young children who are concerned about large class sizes and road safety.

LDF/4257 **2** **White**

Document Section: Ref. 3 Land West of Claybush Road

Representation: *Object*

Any additional development on this site/area that is an important entrance route to the village would be visibly obtrusive and detrimental to the view in a Northerly direction across Ashwell showing the magnificent church tower. A suggested development such as this is not in keeping with character of Ashwell and would be outside the existing settlement boundary of the village and thus require extension to a new settlement boundary: this is neither desirable nor acceptable and would be contrary to the Ashwell/Village Design Plan.

LDF/4437 **4** **Hare**

Document Section: Ref. 3 Land West of Claybush Road

Representation: *Object*

ADOC

Additional document attached

The land west of Claybush Road, Ashwell marked 003 on your plan is (a) outside the curtilage of the village and therefore contrary to our Local Plan and (b) has in the past been refused planning permission on numerous occasions. The Department of the Environment and The Department of Transport viewed the land in question and concluded:-

(a) The approach to the village from Claybush Road, Ashwell is "of great visual attraction, the eye being led over the open countryside across the village outskirts, straight to the exceptionally fine west tower of St. Mary's Church".

(b) Nothing has changed since the Minister's Representative came to this conclusion, the land is still the same, the church is still in the same position, and in our opinion to build on the land proposed would have a profound detrimental visual impact on the approach to Ashwell via Claybush Road. This view was supported by the Minister's

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representative when he refused any building on appeal.

(c) The parcel of land in question has had planning permission refused several times since we came to live at No.12 Claybush Road, Ashwell. The applications have been refused for a variety of reasons namely (i) the detrimental visual impact on the village, (ii) the inability to construct a suitable access to and from the site that would comply with Highways Regulations bearing in mind that the proposed access road is currently a shared access with the owner of No.14 Claybush Road which would have implications. I have been advised that the number of sites identified for Ashwell in the Local Plan document 2011-2031 page 47 is incomplete and does not take into consideration other areas of land in Ashwell that have been given permission recently. We realise it is very important to provide sufficient homes for local people that wish to remain in the village as they have family and friends close by to help out in times of need. The Parish Council has stated that the number of dwellings already identified excluding the land west of Claybush Road would be sufficient for the village's need for now and in the future. It would therefore be pointless to destroy the visual approach to Ashwell via Claybush Road just for the sake of it. To provide more low cost/social housing than is needed by local people could cause social problems as the occupants would have little or no support from families. This together with poor transport links and limited activities would exacerbate the situation. It is well documented both at the NHDC and Ashwell Parish Council that the infrastructure of Ashwell is at best creaking and at worst inadequate i.e.

(a) mains water pressure in Claybush Road only just complies with the statutory minimum of 8 litres per minute and at peak times of demand it is less than the minimum.

(b) Sewerage capacity is inadequate at present with an occasional spillage into the local dykes and steams. (Letter received from the Water Company acknowledging a spillage).

(c) School up to capacity even after a substantial extension has been completed. No doubt the increase in children wishing to attend the school from those houses already approved will cause some concern.

(d) Doctor's surgery up to capacity.

(e) The transport system i.e. Local Bus service is very poor which has been identified in the Ashwell surveys, with infrequent provision. The use of a car is very important to anyone living in Ashwell.

Whilst the improved additional dwellings would have a significant impact on the infrastructure and services a further 33 dwellings as proposed to be constructed on the land to the west of Claybush Road would I feel be the straw that breaks the camel's back. I would therefore ask you to consider the points raised and FAIL this land for development.

LDF/4488	2	Canning
Document Section:	Ref. 3 Land West of Claybush Road	

Representation: *Object*

I understand planning permission has been made for 33 houses off Claybush Road.

As I am a resident in Claybush Road I felt it necessary to write to object to the above. There are a couple of issues which worry me regarding this development. I feel the village hasn't the infrastructure to cope with a development on this scale as the school is already oversubscribed and traffic in the village is also a major issue. I also feel that the traffic on Claybush Road would increase significantly and this would make the road even more dangerous than it is already. There are no paths along this road and it also has a T Junction at the bottom where there have been several accidents.

LDF/4892	3	Banner
Document Section:	Ref. 3 Land West of Claybush Road	

Representation: *Object*

Such a large housing development would have an extremely negative impact on the village. It would represent a hugely adverse aesthetic, not only upon entering the village but for the whole representation of the village.

The land is outside the boundary of the village and would be contrary to the Plan for Ashwell.

There is insufficient access to the site.

It would place a very large burden on services such as sewerage, water supply and the primary school; all of which are in a fragile position to take on such a huge increase in

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demand. The increase in commuter traffic would exacerbate problems with our country lanes in and out of the village. In these times of escalating fuel costs people need to live close to their work and not be positioned in a remote spot in the country. For whatever the current Government position is, brownfield sites should always be chosen ahead of greenfields. Land for agriculture will be an increasing necessity in the future. Our Parish Council has already identified sufficient housing expansion for the village's need without this proposal. The land has a diverse wildlife and owls are known to use this space. This land has had a long history of failed planning applications, including inspections by the Department of the Environment and the Department of Transport. There is not pressing reason for the rejection of development on this land to change.			

LDF/5205	2	George
Document Section:	Ref. 3 Land West of Claybush Road	

Object

Representation:

The site is currently Greenfield and we understand the proposal would be extend the village boundary into greenbelt to build a further 33 houses on the site. In general we do not support rapid growth of the village as we are anxious about the village's infrastructure and facilities ability to cope with such proposed growth and the potential change in the village's character. However if there is to be extra development to be carried out in the village (and there is, in any case, a considerable amount of development already currently underway and several other sites we are aware of that are likely to be developed in the future) then the farmers field behind the Claybush road seems to us to be a very inappropriate location to choose.

Our concerns in relation to the village infrastructure are as follows ∩

We think the existing current core infrastructure is already overstretched and struggling to cope. This is demonstrated by:

School ∩ the school already has year groups at maximum capacity and others that are too big for the classrooms therefore requiring split classes. A development of this size will mean significant numbers of children moving into the village who will not be able to attend their local primary school.

Doctor's surgery - is already extremely busy. Trying to get to see a doctor on the same day you are ill is almost impossible other than being asked to wait for long periods of time for an emergency appointment.

Public Transport ∩ this is limited to either a restricted bus service or the train station which is 2 miles away. The majority of residents in the village require the use of a car as a result.

Sewers ∩ the current sewer system in the village is already under pressure with drains backing up and would need significant upgrade and improvement to support the additional demands this site would place on it.

All of the above concerns are valid for the proposal for 33 new houses regarding site 003 on their own. However, we understand that planning permission has already been given for 28 houses on 2 other sites. We are concerned that 61 new houses being built would totally overload an already struggling infrastructure as outlined above. We do not consider that the proposed site is suitable for development because:

Extension of the Village Boundary ∩ the village has a boundary for many purposes, and this site is outside of that. This proposal is clearly building on green belt ∩ it is not infill or brownfield ∩ it would extend the village

Degradation of village entry ∩ Ashwell has a reputation for being a scenic village, which draws significant numbers of tourists and visitors, most of whom then contribute in some way to the village economy. In particular when approaching the village from the North whilst the historic church spire is visible the rest of the village is not being mostly downhill. The field proposed would be the highest part of the village and would be visible for miles from the north ∩ probably being an eyesore which the village would regret and resent.

Water run off ∩ the site is elevated and at the top of a slope. The rainfall currently absorbed by the field would be significant and have to be managed somehow without impacting the existing housing directly below. Water management in the village is poor and this would only make the situation worse.

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<p>Traffic volumes ζ the site is located on one of the busier roads into the village. Given that most residents will need to have cars to be able to travel outside of the village this will become even more of an issue.</p> <p>National speed limit next to the site entrance /exit ζ the site entrance / exit is at the point where the road changes from the national speed limit to 30 mph and on a bend. Having a junction there will be dangerous.</p> <p>Lack of pavement between the site and the village ζ the busy road leading from the site into the village does not have a pavement which is dangerous for users, especially children walking to and from the school. Adding traffic volumes onto the road will make the situation even worse.</p> <p>Elevation ζ the site is situated approx 35 meters above the level of the village high street. This is a significant climb for anyone who is either elderly or has some form of physical impairment.</p> <p>Wildlife ζ this field has not been intensively farmed for a considerable time and is host to a number of wildlife species, including badger, deer, pheasant and other mammals. In addition, the summer months allow an abundance of wild flowers that attract a wide variety of bird and insect life.</p> <p>For all of the above reasons, the proposal to allow 33 more houses (in addition to the 28 already approved) to be built in a village that does not have the infrastructure to support them, and on such a poor site simply makes no sense.</p> <p>It makes even less sense when you consider the other alternatives that are available to the council such as local market town developments (Baldock, Letchworth and Hitchin). This has (to some extent) already been recognised by the allocation of the lowest priority for any site considered even vaguely suitable for development.</p>			

LDF/5528 **6** **Reddaway**
Document Section: Ref. 3 Land West of Claybush Road

Object

Representation:

I think that the sites with priorities 1 & 2 should go ahead. Ref 3 - land west of Claybush Hill should not, in my opinion be developed further. Many years ago the planners declared this one of five areas of high visual importance in the village and said that the skyline should be protected. (In practical terms this means all land south of Ashwell Street) Nothing has changed - development in this field would be very conspicuous from several approaches to the village. I realise that we would need to find some more sites but think 50 houses over 20 years would be sufficient. In any case WE DO NOT NEED any more 5 bedroom executive homes, and only a limited no. of 4 beds. We need social housing, small bungalows(for the elderly), units for single occupancy and modest starter homes for our young people in order to keep a more balanced social structure. These types of housing need less land - so maybe more houses could be fitted on the sites identified as priorities 1 & 2 if bigger houses (and gardens) are not allowed.

LDF/6352 **2** **Ten Hove**
Document Section: Ref. 3 Land West of Claybush Road

Object

Representation:

Proposals to build on Claybush Hill have been resisted before for reasons which have not changed; the visual impact of this approach to Ashwell would be ruined by any development here. We should not build outside the 'village envelope'. If we do a precedent will be set and there will be no limit to building on greenfield sites. Ashwell already has a parking problem - even people with garages/parking spaces don't use them for various reasons; the current proposal of 28 new properties will aggravate this problem but an additional 33 will turn Ashwell into one large car park! Not every Ashwell street is paved - cars parked on every available roadside are already a danger to pedestrians especially children; more housing means more inappropriately parked cars. How will Ashwell's infrastructure and services cope with so much development? How many of the 28 properties already approved are 'social housing'? We need 'social housing' in the village in order to provide affordable accommodation for our young people. 28 additional properties in the village are sufficient for Ashwell to absorb; NHDC should not be asking us to accept more.

LDF/7176 **1** **Holmes**
Document Section: Ref. 3 Land West of Claybush Road

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<u>Ref.</u>	<u>Rep No.</u>	<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Agent</u>	
		<i>Object</i>	ADOC	Additional document attached

Representation:

I am writing with regard to the proposed housing development site on Claybush Hill in Ashwell. I have read and understood that this site has been given a priority 3 grade. The fact that it has been proposed as a site to build 33 houses when permission has been declined on at least five previous occasions (for much smaller developments) is a complete turnaround and I would like to register my opposition to any development on this site.

Enclosed is a letter commissioned by the then Secretary of State for the Environment which was used to dismiss the appeal by the property developer after his first attempt to get planning for buildings on this land, everything in it still applies to the intrinsic importance of this open land today.

Throughout this time the land owner has repeatedly tried to profit from this site and thankfully there has always been a defence from the Planning office, the Parish Council, the Department of the Environment and the local community.

The local residents have had to deal with the pressure of regular and repeated efforts by the property developer who has continuously applied and reapplied for planning on this land.

As owner of the property adjacent to the site, which stands on the highest point in the village, I have recently, at the advice from the planning office, demolished a bungalow to build a new home. This is relevant as during discussions with Richard Tiffin and the planning office it was continuously impressed upon me the importance of the visual impact any development at this elevation would have on the village. The design of the house, especially the height, was of particular importance as building a two storey house was unacceptable to the planning office. Considering this, it would be highly inconsistent for 33 houses to be considered acceptable on a site which is even higher. Any buildings at this elevation will tower over the surrounding area.

Furthermore both entrances into the site have shared access with existing properties, there are three drives currently opening onto the proposed entrances.

Regarding the site, are there any steps I can take to remove the priority 3 grade label? Are there any surveys carried out on the land voicing any concerns over the elevation and subsequent water run-off. During heavy rains the tarmac road running parallel with the site is awash with water streaming into the village. Has there been any enquiries into the how the local school, already heavily subscribed will cater for the increase.

In fact, other than the land owners determination to make money and the pressure on local planners to make their targets is there anything on public record that makes this site even a consideration as a Priority 3.

Have the plans already been drawn up for all the buildings and the access, if so are they available to view?

I do hope the ideal held high by the planning office during my dealings with them are still important today, I'm sure you understand my concerns and would ask if you would be available to answer any further enquiries regarding this proposal.

LDF/7176 **2** **Holmes**
Document Section: Ref. 3 Land West of Claybush Road
Object

Representation:

I wish to object to the proposed use of Claybush Hill the Priority 3 site in Ashwell as a site to build 33 houses. I have written and emailed an extensive letter to the planning office with all my objections.

LDF/7192 **1** **Taylor**
Document Section: Ref. 3 Land West of Claybush Road
Comment

Representation:

Development of the site in question would breach an existing village boundary outside of which residential building is not currently permitted. The Village Boundary has been agreed and accepted as a limit for development with the aim of preserving Ashwell as a village. There is a size beyond which a village becomes a town and loses many of the characteristics that make the village a community of choice for its residents.

1. Village Design Statement

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<u>Ref.</u>	<u>Rep No.</u>	<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Agent</u>
<p>Development of the site would be in conflict with the Village Design Statement criteria 'New housing development should be smallscale, unless it meets a specific, identified local need. Policy 29'. A development of 33 houses is not small scale. A specific local need for 33 houses has not been identified and agreed within the community. 'The scale of the proposal should be in keeping with existing buildings in the area'. A development of the scale of 33 houses would not be in keeping with the mix of individual houses/bungalows on the Southern edge of the village. It would dominate the approach to the village from Bygrave. 'Important vistas must be protected, particularly those which allow views of the countryside from within the village. Where possible, new vistas should be created. Policy 57 (G1)'. A development in the location under consideration would eliminate views of the Western side of the village and the countryside beyond to the North and West as one approaches and enters the village from Bygrave. 'There is a need for more public open space, particularly at the western end of the village, Schemes to address this problem will be supported. Policy 57 (G8).' A development in the location under consideration would remove open space, and set a precedent for further development. This could lead to reduced access to and the possible integrity of the Arbury Banks Ancient Monument Site.</p>			

2. Previous applications

We understand that this is the latest in a series of planning applications over the past 30 years. The previous ones have all been refused. As far as we can see nothing has changed in the interim to suggest that this one should be treated any differently.

3. Infrastructure impact

An additional development of 33 houses (as well as the 27 applications approved in the past 12 months) would place a severe burden on many aspects of the village infrastructure.

- a) Roads, and in particular access to the site
 - b) The school (already at capacity)
 - c) Local secondary schools (ditto)
 - d) Water or sewerage systems
 - e) Parking at Ashwell station
4. Potential breach of Community wishes

The Coalition Government's proposals for Neighbourhood Planning Regulations was launched as a policy for 'Giving people more power over what happens in their neighbourhood'. Within the proposals it is accepted that 'a Fundamental principle of neighbourhood planning is that it is community-led. This means that the community is kept fully informed of what is being proposed and is able to make their views known throughout the process'. In the context of Ashwell we would argue that the neighbourhood in question is Ashwell village, and all residents should be given the opportunity to make their wishes known about this site being considered for housing. There has been no neighbourhood or community-wide communication of this issue. It is buried within the North-Herts website and one has to know exactly what one is searching for to even find it on the website. It would be much more democratic to have a direct link to the Ashwell Parish Council website on all Ashwell based housing plans or planning applications and for a formal procedure within Ashwell Parish Council to be established whereby developments of a certain size or a change of land use are publicised well in advance of any decision making date, and procedures established for holding petitions or referenda on such matters. Ashwell has already increased its housing close to capacity within the village boundary. We feel it has made a significant contribution to house building in recent years and cannot support a further development of this size and location.

LDF/7235	1	Young
Document Section:	Ref. 3 Land West of Claybush Road	
Representation:	<i>Comment</i>	

This site has been rejected frequently in the past, and the issues for rejection have not changed. There is some fear about infrastructure in the village. However my main concern (apart from yet more traffic on Ashwell/ Bygrave Road please see below), is backland development. This still applies here. In addition, access would have to be at the rear of existing dwellings, which in effect consolidates ribbon development built in the early-mid 1900s. Ashwell has additionally had a lot of development in recent times, and I know the village fears any larger scale building of this nature will lead to major overload on village services.

LDF/7238	1	Hancock
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<u>Ref.</u>	<u>Rep No.</u>	<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Agent</u>
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Document Section:	Ref. 3 Land West of Claybush Road		
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Representation:		<i>Object</i>	
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I moved into 51 Ashwell Street in October 1980. In August 1986 a proposal to develop four detached bungalows with garages' was put forward. Apparently this was not the first request for development in this field. My neighbours and I lodged objections. Whether that had influence or not I don't know but on the 25th March the following year the application was refused. The reasons were that the development would be within an area of rural character and that there is a 'general assumption against development except for that required for the needs of the rural community'. Furthermore the development would 'detract from the open character and appearance of the southern edge of Ashwell to the detriment of the visual amenities of this part of the village'. There is also concern expressed that a precedent may be assumed in this area and that pressure for other new dwellings would be created. There followed an appeal managed by Brian Hull Associates of Letchworth containing nineteen pages of argument and supported by fourteen pages of back-up, even so, that also failed. The next significant attempt at developing this field came in August 1995. This application was for six detached houses, two detached bungalows and eight terraced houses, one assumes all with garages. In May 1996 my neighbours and I were advised that planning permission had been refused for the following reasons: The application site lies outside of the main area of the village of Ashwell, in a rural area beyond the Green Belt.' Also, the Local Planning Authority was of the opinion that the proposed development failed to show a) that it is strictly necessary for the needs of agriculture, forestry or any proven need for local community services, b) it would not meet an identified rural housing need, c) it was not conducive to the requirements of policies 6, 24 and 25? Now we come up to date with a further review of the Strategic Plan for Ashwell which is planned for Monday 4th March in Baldock Community Centre. The number of houses/bungalows has been reported as potentially 33, presumably with garages. I have one simple question. Why is site 003 still on the Strategic Plan for Ashwell village when none of the reasons to refuse it have gone away? Furthermore, the objections above relate not surprisingly to planning issues. Many other objections which have been put forward by residents have not been addressed and identified as key reasons for not developing site 003. Traffic is big issue for that site. Access to the plot is either along Claybush Road or between nos. 47 and 51 Ashwell Street. Assuming 33 houses, this implies about 100 people and these days perhaps up to 60 vehicles. Vehicular access via Claybush Road does not allow for safe access into the village.

- a) Entering into Claybush Road from site 003 just inside the 30mph limit is on a blind bend, particularly viewed coming up from the village. There is no potential to provide a pedestrian walkway down the hill.
- b) The 't' junction just below the site fronts onto the Ashwell Primary School entrance, a rear entrance but nonetheless used daily by mothers from the south and west sides of the village, regular school buses and frequent tour buses where the children load and unload for their school journeys. Even today this is a dangerous spot for motorists and pedestrians alike. Pedestrians walking into the village via Claybush Road comprise at the moment about ten households, this will increase to 43 households doubtless with many young children.
- c) The alternative access along Ashwell Street (south) between nos. 47 and 51 is even less suitable. The current cart track is not wide enough for vehicular access and even 'pedestrian' access implies use by cyclists and motorcyclists. It is also the confluence of
 - 1) a would-be pedestrian way/cycle track for 100 or so people,
 - 2) Ashwell Street south which has vehicular access for its residents,
 - 3) John Cooke's factory senior staff and logistics access, which also facilitates lorry deliveries,
 - 4) a Bridle Way which is not only used for horses but also provides vehicular access to John Cooke's factory staff and pedestrians who choose not to use Ashwell Street north,
 - 5) Ashwell Street north has vehicular access for about thirty houses, and finally,
 - 6) pedestrian access from houses at the top of Bear Lane or for pedestrians from any other of the 5 routes who want to walk down to the village via Bear Lane.
 - 7) Pedestrian and vehicular access from at least two private residences right on the bend.

and as such results in serious and dangerous congestion, particularly in the mornings when children are being taken to school, workers and deliveries go into John Cooke's premises later commuters are starting their travel to work. Neither proposed entrance could be considered as safe or suitable for this site. There are many other considerations that need to be addressed. Some concern site 003, some are Ashwell generic. I will not go into detail on these items at this time, but will do so if the time and need arises.

Surface water soak away, exacerbated by new tarmac drives and pathways and	contamination.
Sewage system under performance.	

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3.		Education is another factor to be considered and Ashwell School is unlikely to have the capacity for further growth. The Playground in particular is small.	
4.		The infrastructure in Ashwell has its limitations as does the School and increased housing could not be accommodated. We already have problems with drains, sewage and water. Transport links are also important and the number of extra cars brought in by extra housing would make what already is a major problem much worse.	

In conclusion I seriously value the need for Social Housing within the village so do not condemn further small developments which include this. I would hope that the above can be accommodated in small discreet developments which may thereby enhance and contribute to the life of this village. We do not wish to see Ashwell losing its identity with large housing developments which will almost create a suburbia.

LDF/7392	1	Field	
Document Section:	Ref. 3 Land West of Claybush Road		
		<i>Comment</i>	

Representation:

1. This would have a great impact on the visual attraction of the village. Particularly on the approach from the south. Ashwell is currently a beautiful village, greatly enjoyed by its residents and visitors.
2. Access to the site would be difficult, with severe impact on the small surrounding roads and those into and out of Ashwell.
3. The infrastructure, particularly the drains and sewerage, seems to be at its limit. This amount of additional housing would cause considerable problems. The school is operating near its capacity and this development would almost certainly cause this to be exceeded, particularly in view of the 20 homes on Ashwell Street, for which we understand planning permission has already been given.
4. The roads in Ashwell are narrow and often severely congested, with both residents and visitors parking in the High Street and adjacent roads. The additional traffic resulting from this development, both from residents parking in the village and the inevitable delivery vans etc., would be unacceptable. As with current residents in the village, the new residents would use their cars to visit the village shops and take children to school.

LDF/7413	1	Turner	
Document Section:	Ref. 3 Land West of Claybush Road		
		<i>Comment</i>	

Representation:

Firstly, as a resident of Ashwell, and particularly of Ashwell Street, I would like to register my concern that no consultation with local residents has taken place. Interestingly, as I was aware of the new developments taking place on Silver Street and Station Road, I was trying to find evidence of any applications for housing development on all the usual on-line sites only last week. In doing that I found no mention of this new one. May I ask you to clarify why this is the case.

I am secondly writing to register my reservations about the village being able to support the expansion of so much housing at this time. As I presume you must be aware Ashwell, and Hinxworth, has problems with its sewerage already at present. The new developments will put much greater pressure on this. What plans are there to expand current provision?

Additionally, Ashwell School is currently at bursting point with huge pressure on classroom space. I wonder how the school can cope with the addition of a huge clutch of new families ¿ I presume that is the type of housing that is being planned.

I completely understand that new housing is required in the South East, surely it should be developed to integrate with the community and local services that support communities. Can you demonstrate that this proposed development is supported by infrastructure planning that can enable it to integrate as part of the community?

LDF/7415	1	Smith	
Document Section:	Ref. 3 Land West of Claybush Road		
		<i>Comment</i>	

Representation:

As a resident of Ashwell, and particularly of Ashwell Street, I would like to register my concern that no consultation with local residents has yet taken place.

Representations for Housing Options Growth Levels and Locations 2011-2031

<u>Ref.</u>	<u>Rep No.</u>	<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Agent</u>
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I am aware of the new developments taking place on Silver Street and Station Road
 I am secondly writing to register my reservations about the village being able to support the expansion of so much housing. As I presume you must be aware Ashwell, and Hinxworth, has problems with its sewerage already at present. The new developments will put much greater pressure on this. What plans are there to expand anticipate the provision of all essential services, including education in the village schools already bursting class sizes?
 The village currently has 28 new homes under construction, with a further 17 at pre planning stage; these being predominately homes accommodating 3-4 persons adding to current village infrastructure pressures as outlined above and below.
 As I understand the proposed additional 33 homes could bring the total being built within the next few years to 78 new homes and a potential population increase of 12% plus.
 I understand that new housing is required in the South East, surely it should be developed to integrate with the community and local services that support communities. Can you demonstrate that this proposed development is supported by infrastructure planning that can enable it integrate as part of the community in Ashwell?

LDF/7419	1	Bruning	
Document Section:	Ref. 3 Land West of Claybush Road		

Object

Representation:

I am writing to strongly oppose any future consideration of housing development in the site between Claybush Road and Ashwell St (West). The main reasons for the objection are as follows: 1). The scale of the development (33 houses) is not in keeping with the existing village boundaries or reasonable development expansion of a village like Ashwell. 2). Significant infrastructure impact. A development of 33 houses will have a significant negative impact on the existing infrastructure of the village. Services such as roads, water supply, sewerage already are stretched to maximum capacity. 3). Village services such as the school would also be impacted due to additional influx of children at primary school age. Existing classes run to full capacity and I cannot envisage an additional significant influx of 50+ children.

LDF/7450	3	Humphries	
Document Section:	Ref. 3 Land West of Claybush Road		

Object

Representation:

I am totally opposed to developing the land adjacent to Claybush Hill (ref 3). This is a proposal for a relatively large development and is inappropriate for the area. It would be an eyesore and a blot on the landscape. It appears to be outside the village boundary, which should not be changed.

LDF/7461	1	Hughes	
Document Section:	Ref. 3 Land West of Claybush Road		

Object

Representation:

It has recently come to our attention that there are several building developments due to take place in Ashwell. We are writing with regard to the development proposed between Claybush Hill and Ashwell Street - priority 3 on your website map. This is a huge worry as it will massively impact on the approach into the village.

Whilst the other developments will be going ahead this will push our infrastructure to the limits. The school is already over subscribed as is the doctors surgery and the general traffic through the village is terrible during weekly business hours. The village certainly does not need any other traffic added to it.

I personally left a large town to live in a village and I feel that adding all these extra properties will turn a pretty village into a small town.

We value our country side and feel it is such a shame to be building more houses on such a pretty site, is it really necessary?

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<u>Ref.</u>	<u>Rep No.</u>	<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Agent</u>
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LDF/7462	1	Moynihan	
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Document Section: Ref. 3 Land West of Claybush Road

Representation:

Object

I am writing to object to the proposed plans to build on land off Claybush Road in Ashwell. I understand that there are plans to build 33 houses on fields which are currently unspoilt open spaces.

Our children are fourth generation villagers, the village has remained a historical and beautiful place to live for hundreds of years and whilst I agree there is a demand for low cost housing, I feel that there are places that would be less spoilt by additional buildings. It would be so sad to lose the rural feeling which is so special in our proper English village, a village which is visited by many people for leisure, pleasure and just to get away from our often overpopulated towns. Our village is an asset to North Hertfordshire and should be preserved for everyone in the county.

On a practical level our children attended Ashwell Primary School and suffered for much of their time there as result of being in a very large year group. Additional housing would add to the problem of an already overstretched resource. Other dated amenities such as our roads, doctors surgery, village hall, water supply and drainage/sewer system are already struggling to cope with the current demands placed upon them.

Once this land is built upon there is no going back, it will be too late to change our minds and wish that we had thought harder about whether this was a wise decision. As planners the responsibility is great, your decisions will affect our children and their children should they wish to stay (as their parents and grandparents and greatparents did) in this very special place. Please take time to visit our village and historic church and springs and a cricket game on a summers evening. Some things are worth preserving and we think Ashwell is.

LDF/7463	1	Bates	
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Document Section: Ref. 3 Land West of Claybush Road

Representation:

Object

This is not a small development and we do not believe that the residents of the village have had a chance to make their views heard, there has been no neighbourhood of community information about these plans and finding information in the NHDC website was not straightforward. I believe it crosses the village boundary which is an agreed limit for development. Doing this would creates a very dangerous precedent. This takes me to the next point concerning the village design statement. I believe it states that housing developments should be on small scale and 33 houses is not a small number. This number of new houses would change the look of the village and have significant impact on the views from Arbury Banks and the approach to the village from Bygrave. This added to the number of houses which have already been approved (5 on Silver Street and 23 on Ashwell Street) would have a big impact on the already stretched infrastructure of the village: more cars, more children in the school, increased numbers at the busy Health Centre and an overload of the already groaning sewage system. We really do not feel that the village can support another development of this size without significant changes which may change the character and life of the village for good.

LDF/7466	1	Strickland	
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Document Section: Ref. 3 Land West of Claybush Road

Representation:

Object

1. Infrastructure √ the village does not have the infrastructure to support a development of this size.
 - a. The school is already overcrowded. Nearly all the classes are now having to be split into mixed years with children of different ages, as the class sizes are too big. If this trend continues, they will run out of classrooms and children of the village will not be able to attend the school.
 - b. Public transport - the nearest train station to the proposed site is 3 miles away. Bus services are irregular and there is no scope for putting a stop near the site.
 - c. Doctor's surgery √ this is already too busy, with significant issues in obtaining appointments
 - d. Supermarkets and other conveniences √ whilst there is a farm shop and a newsagent providing some supplies, these establishments charge significantly more (30%+) than

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shops in market towns or villages, never mind supermarkets. The nearest supermarket or affordable shop is in Baldock, 4 miles away. If the purpose of developments such as this one is the desire to provide affordable housing, it cannot follow that the cost of living is not taken into consideration.			
e. Pavements √ There are no pavements on Claybush road and no safe means of access into the village by foot. The entrance to the proposed site currently is at the beginning of a national speed limit area. There is no safe means of leaving the site.			
2. Location √ the proposed site is located in a wholly inappropriate place to build on.			
a. The land earmarked for development is on a greenfield site, outside the village, offering stunning views of the countryside from the village and allowing for beautiful views of the village as one approaches the village			
b. The proposed site would significantly diminish the views of the village and make it a less desirable destination for the numerous ramblers and holiday makes who visit Ashwell precisely because of its beauty and thereby add to its economy			
c. The proposed site at the top end of the village would have catastrophic effects on drainage. If the site was built and concreted over, the water from rainfall would have to drain somewhere. It would almost certainly run into the houses immediately below it. Water efficiency is already very bad in this area.			
d. The sewer system in Ashwell is very old and has frequent problems. The sewer system flows through my property. It blocked last year because of the use by six houses further up the hill and flooded our garden with human faeces. The council were not interested in solving this problem at the time. An entirely new sewerage system for the whole area would be needed in order to make this proposal work, requiring half of the claybush road and other environs to be dug up to solve the issue.			
e. The Claybush Road is already one of the three busiest entrance and exit points to the village. The addition of around 50 cars attempting to enter and exit this road several times a day would cause significant disruption and may require speed bumps, lights, mirrors or other changes to the road lay out in order for it to be done safely.			
f. Wildlife √ This land has been set aside for many, many years. For many years mine and other families have had a view into the countryside from our house over this beautiful field. It is home to badgers, hares, pheasant and even deer. In the summer it is filled with wildflowers providing birds and bees with nests and food. Land set aside like this has been diminishing for years due to intensive farming and this is one of the last remaining fields able offering a sanctuary to wildlife. This green space cannot be underestimated.			
g. The addition of around 100 people to the village would significantly increase the ambient noise and nuisance and ultimately the quality of life of existing residents of our small village. This effect would be wholly disproportionate.			
3. Better alternatives - There have been numerous attempts by the landowner over a number of years to have the property built on. His applications have been all denied, as there are so obviously numerous better alternatives			
a. There are numerous market towns nearby that have much better infrastructures and amenities to support new housing. Many market towns are having to close their shops as they are not being supported. This is by no means unique to villages, but is a symptom of the recession.			
b. The regeneration of market towns such as Letchworth and Hitchin with good quality affordable housing would demonstrably reach out to the people that the government and council are looking to help, rather than wealthy farmers and developers looking to make handsome profits by building on the boundaries of sought after villages.			
c. If it is the government's desire to provide affordable housing to enable people to be housed, they need to consider the types of houses that need to be developed and where. Ashwell is an expensive village, both for people looking to buy, but also to live in. Transport costs and the cost of food and other provision in the village are far more expensive than elsewhere. This would not be affordable housing, even if, which I doubt the council were, able to impose a price limit on what the house could be sold for.			
d. The Parish Council are also uniformly opposed to the development of this site. They have approved other sites in the village and as a village we have clearly cooperated historically to the countrywide need to provide more housing in proportion to our size.			
There are a number of objective reasons why the proposed development of site 003 is wholly inappropriate. In part this seems to have been recognised by the council, in classifying the site as non-priority and with the lowest category possible. I am advised that a criterion for whether a piece of land should be developed on is the number of people who protest to the proposed development. This is plainly wrong. Not only are such developments not widely publicised (I found out from a neighbour), but we are a small village, which will inevitably have less people who are in a position to protest to such a development. The basis for any development should be on objective criteria. For that I would ask you to consider the above and above all the purpose of this and previous government's desire to provide affordable homes with the least disruption, in affordable areas with a good infrastructure to support it. Ashwell and in particular the site proposed can offer none of these.			

LDF/7471	1	Merrell
Document Section:	Ref. 3 Land West of Claybush Road	

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<u>Ref.</u>	<u>Rep No.</u>	<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Agent</u>
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Representation:

We are writing to register our objection to the plans for additional housing in the village of Ashwell, in particular the area behind Claybush Road and Ashwell Street, marked as area 003 on the plans.

Our main objection is the sheer scale of the proposed development and the negative impact this would have on the village both in terms of appearance and infrastructure. We believe the view of the village from the Baldock approach will be severely compromised, and have been told in the past that this view is to be protected.

In the past much smaller proposed developments for this same site have been ruled out for reasons including the need to protect the view.

We are aware that significant objections are being raised on other grounds including drainage, sewerage, overcapacity of the village primary school, and also that the proposed large scale increase in housing stock is coinciding with the withdrawal of bus services, and potentially the village post office.

One aspect that must not be overlooked is that the Ashwell end of Claybush Road is already an extremely dangerous road for residents, with no pavement, a blind forked junction at the bottom of the hill, and a real problem with speeding vehicles.

LDF/7473	1	Scholfield
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Document Section:		Ref. 3 Land West of Claybush Road
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Object

Representation:

I understand that an application has been placed with you by a local landowner for permission to build c33 houses on Claybush Hill.

I would like to explain why I would be against such a development.

1. I have to make the assumption that, along with the developments already granted on Silver Street and behind Station Road, new residents will have between one and three children of primary and senior school age. They will, quite rightly, anticipate that their children will be educated locally. I cannot see how Ashwell JMI school and Knights Templar can possibly accommodate such an increase. Ashwell School is already over subscribed and existing residents would logically assume that their children will be eligible for admittance before anyone else. Where will new residents send their children? More school transport required on already tight council budgets? So, schooling is an issue.
2. I am sure local retailers would be delighted to have additional footfall - where will they park? No one walks anywhere these days and Ashwell cannot cope with any more parking, either along the High Street, Swan Street, Mill Street or Silver Street. A further 33 homes would mean a minimum of 66 cars. Any extra traffic would, not only cause a parking issue, but would prove an additional hazard on the narrow country lanes from Bygrave to Ashwell. These country roads were not designed to cater for large amounts of traffic and I sincerely hope that no thought would be given to making them wider!
3. The development would intrude upon the landscape on the entry into Ashwell. This is one of the lovely elevated views over vast tracts of countryside on this side of the A505. It certainly would not be subtly integrated into the landscape.
4. Although I am not sure of the situation with regard to sewerage and water supplies, I have to assume that these, too, may become a problem.
5. It would be one of the saddest episodes in Ashwell's History if a lovely (largish) village becomes urbanised.

I would very much appreciate these points being taken into consideration when this planning application is discussed.

LDF/7477	1	Hutchings
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Document Section:		Ref. 3 Land West of Claybush Road
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Object

Representation:

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I object on the basis that this level of development within this small area, will cause significant congestion and impact on available services in the area.

LDF/7490	1	Cross	
Document Section:	Ref. 3 Land West of Claybush Road		
Representation:	<i>Object</i>		

I would like to object to the proposed building of 33 dwellings on the outskirts of Ashwell (Plot 003) west of Claybush Road. My reasons are as follows:

Firstly and foremost, when is a village no longer a village? The answer to this question is of course when it becomes as built up as a small town. In the 12 years since I have lived in Ashwell I have seen much building and now I think enough is enough. There comes a point where the integrity and community feel of a village is lost through continuous development of modern housing, and I fear that we have reached that point.

Secondly, we simply do not have the services infrastructure to support more housing. The school has little capacity for more children. Last year I noticed for the first time the smell of sewerage in the village. Our sewerage system is very old indeed and in my view simply cannot support additional houses. I also have concerns about the levels and speed of traffic in the village already. New housing will only add to the volume.

Finally it is simply a case of keeping our green spaces around the village green. An estate of houses on the outskirts will be an eyesore and spoil the enjoyment of the countryside and views for many - for many people I know, myself included, this is a major factor in moving here in the first place.

LDF/7505	1	Hill	
Document Section:	Ref. 3 Land West of Claybush Road		
Representation:	<i>Object</i>		

This site would extend the present village boundaries. It would not blend with the landscape or respect the traditional settlement pattern of the village. Building 33 houses would make it very difficult for the village and its infrastructure to absorb. We feel there is no local need for this development as there are already other, smaller developments, being built within the village boundaries.

LDF/7538	1	Reed	
Document Section:	Ref. 3 Land West of Claybush Road		
Representation:	<i>Object</i>		

This development, on top of additional housing already approved in the last 12 months would place a massive burden on many aspects of the village. The village school is already at full capacity, and on a site too small for its existing number of pupils. An extra 100 residents would also impact on local services such as the GP surgery, water supply, roads and sewerage.

The development is in breach of the village boundary. This has been agreed and accepted as a limit for development with the aim of preserving Ashwell as a village.

It also conflicts with a village design statement as set out below:

'New housing development should be smallscale, unless it meets a specific, identified local need. Policy 29.' A development of 33 houses is not small scale. A specific local

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<u>Ref.</u>	<u>Rep No.</u>	<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Agent</u>
		need for 33 houses has not been identified and agreed within the community. 'The scale of the proposal should be in keeping with existing buildings in the area.' A development of the scale of 33 houses would not be in keeping with the mix of individual houses/bungalows on the Southern edge of the village. It would dominate the approach to the village from Bygrave. 'Important vistas must be protected, particularly those which allow views of the countryside from within the village. Where possible, new vistas should be created. Policy 57 (G1)'. A development in the location under consideration would eliminate views of the Western side of the village and the countryside beyond to the North and West as one approaches and enters the village from Bygrave. 'There is a need for more public open space, particularly at the western end of the village. Schemes to address this problem will be supported. Policy 57 (G8)'. A development in the location under consideration would remove open space, and set a precedent for further development. This could lead to reduced access to and the possible integrity of the Arbury Banks Ancient Monument site.	

Ashwell has already increased its housing close to capacity within the village boundary. We feel it has made a significant contribution to house building in recent years and cannot support a further development of this size and location.

LDF/7665	4	Holmes	Barker Parry Town Planning
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Document Section:	Ref. 3 Land West of Claybush Road		
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Representation:		<i>Object</i>	
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Site 003 Claybush Road, Ashwell

There is no objection to the piecemeal growth of Ashwell so long as the development can be assimilated both visually and socially. In the post war years, there have been three conventional estates laid out to the south of the village between the historic core and Ashwell Street.

This site is of a more or less comparable size although the dwelling estimate looks low assuming that it will include affordable housing which tends to be smaller. The problem with this site is that it stands to the south and uphill of Ashwell Street and would introduce in depth estate development on rising ground, where currently there is none.

The housing on Claybush Road, and to a much lesser extent Partridge Hill, extends up the hill from the core of the village, but these are seen as small linear outliers which lead to and from the village. To create an estate of 30-40 dwellings on rising land to the rear of Claybush Road and Ashwell Street would form an obvious intrusion into open countryside to the south of the village, as acknowledged by the SHLAA entry. It will be clearly visible from the network of paths and bridleways which run to the south and west of the village.

It is noted that there are seven or eight other sites listed in the 2011 and 2012 SHLAA documents, all of which are better related to the shape and form of the village. The fact that some have fallen out (simply because there was no reply to the 2012 survey?) does not in itself justify developing an inferior and unacceptable site, even if it were the only remaining option. Clearly it is not, as sites A/r01 and 007 attract green and amber lights respectively. This site should not be developed.

Although not referred to in the SHLAA, we would also query the quality of vehicular access to the site. The SHLAA does not show or refer to any access. It is understood that there are two potential points of access.

One is a track owned by the water authority between the reservoir and pumping station and 14 Claybush Road. This track is in private ownership and is narrow. It also abuts third party land and is highly unlikely to be adequate to serve a development of this size.

To the north there is a field access between properties on Ashwell Street. The adjacent properties take access and this field access, although wider, adjoins a narrow section

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of Ashwell Street, beyond the public highway, with poor visibility and adjoining third party land. On the face of it, this is equally problematic to serve upwards of 30 dwelling and the lack of an obvious, adequate point of access confirms that this site should fail.			

LDF/7723	1	George	
Document Section:	Ref. 3 Land West of Claybush Road		
Representation:	<i>Object</i>		

The site is currently Greenfield and we understand the proposal would be extend the village boundary into greenbelt to build a further 33 houses on the site. In general we do not support rapid growth of the village as we are anxious about the village's infrastructure and facilities ability to cope with such proposed growth and the potential change in the village's character.

However if there is to be extra development to be carried out in the village (and there is, in any case, a considerable amount of development already currently underway and several other sites we are aware of that are likely to be developed in the future) then the farmers field behind the Claybush road seems to us to be a very inappropriate location to choose.

Our concerns in relation to the village infrastructure are as follows ∩

We think the existing current core infrastructure is already overstretched and struggling to cope. This is demonstrated by:

School ∩ the school already has year groups at maximum capacity and others that are too big for the classrooms therefore requiring split classes. A development of this size will mean significant numbers of children moving into the village who will not be able to attend their local primary school.

Doctor's surgery - is already extremely busy. Trying to get to see a doctor on the same day you are ill is almost impossible other than being asked to wait for long periods of time for an emergency appointment.

Public Transport ∩ this is limited to either a restricted bus service or the train station which is 2 miles away. The majority of residents in the village require the use of a car as a result.

Sewers ∩ the current sewer system in the village is already under pressure with drains backing up and would need significant upgrade and improvement to support the additional demands this site would place on it.

All of the above concerns are valid for the proposal for 33 new houses regarding site 003 on their own. However, we understand that planning permission has already been given for 28 houses on 2 other sites. We are concerned that 61 new houses being built would totally overload an already struggling infrastructure as outlined above.

We do not consider that the proposed site is suitable for development because:

Extension of the Village Boundary ∩ the village has a boundary for many purposes, and this site is outside of that. This proposal is clearly building on green belt ∩ it is not infill or brownfield ∩ it would extend the village

Degradation of village entry ∩ Ashwell has a reputation for being a scenic village, which draws significant numbers of tourists and visitors, most of whom then contribute in some way to the village economy. In particular when approaching the village from the North whilst the historic church spire is visible the rest of the village is not being mostly downhill. The field proposed would be the highest part of the village and would be visible for miles from the north ∩ probably being an eyesore which the village would regret and resent.

Water run off ∩ the site is elevated and at the top of a slope. The rainfall currently absorbed by the field would be significant and have to be managed somehow without impacting the existing housing directly below. Water management in the village is poor and this would only make the situation worse.

Traffic volumes ∩ the site is located on one of the busier roads into the village. Given that most residents will need to have cars to be able to travel outside of the village this will become even more of an issue.

National speed limit next to the site entrance /exit ∩ the site entrance / exit is at the point where the road changes from the national speed limit to 30 mph and on a bend. Having a junction there will be dangerous.

Lack of pavement between the site and the village ∩ the busy road leading from the site into the village does not have a pavement which is dangerous for users, especially children walking to and from the school. Adding traffic volumes onto the road will make the situation even worse.

Elevation ∩ the site is situated approx 35 meters above the level of the village high street. This is a significant climb for anyone who is either elderly or has some form of

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physical impairment.

Wildlife ; this field has not been intensively farmed for a considerable time and is host to a number of wildlife species, including badger, deer, pheasant and other mammals. In addition, the summer months allow an abundance of wild flowers that attract a wide variety of bird and insect life.

For all of the above reasons, the proposal to allow 33 more houses (in addition to the 28 already approved) to be built in a village that does not have the infrastructure to support them, and on such a poor site simply makes no sense.

It makes even less sense when you consider the other alternatives that are available to the council such as local market town developments (Baldock, Letchworth and Hitchin). This has (to some extent) already been recognised by the allocation of the lowest priority for any site considered even vaguely suitable for development.

LDF/7786	1	Thompson	
Document Section:	Ref. 3 Land West of Claybush Road		
Representation:	<i>Object</i>		

I feel this site has many drawbacks.

1. Access difficulties, increased traffic on poor road system.
2. Local school unable to take more pupils.
3. Water and sewerage systems barely able to cope with existing properties.
4. The visual impact on the historic village vista.

Also there has been considerable increase in housing in this village over the last few years. Presently there are 28 houses already in various stages of erection in Ashwell.

LDF/7919	1	Vickerstaffe	
Document Section:	Ref. 3 Land West of Claybush Road		
Representation:	<i>Object</i>		

I object to site 003 in Ashwell being included as a proposed site for new homes. The scale of the development will produce a substantial call on resources of the village. The siting of the 003 at the high point of the village will spoil the good rural views of the village. I am also unclear how access to the village amenities would be possible without car use as there are no pavement areas on clay bush road.

LDF/7982	1	Smith & Wagstaff-Smith	
Document Section:	Ref. 3 Land West of Claybush Road		
Representation:	<i>Object</i>		

We wish to add our voices to the growing number of people who have only recently become aware of and raised objections to the Proposed Development in Ashwell, Strategic Plan site No. 003.

Whilst we are fully prepared to support the current redevelopment of the brownfield site on Silver St., and consider this an excellent way to regenerate and improve the village by providing suitably placed housing whilst reviving a derelict site at the heart of the village, we consider that the reverse would be true of the above proposals. To destroy yet another area of green belt is as lazy, short-sighted and ignorant a piece of planning as it is ultimately self-defeating. To degrade such a pleasant village as Ashwell with cheaply-built, expensively-sold housing and to try and justify it by telling us it will help to keep the Post Office open truly is to cut off your nose to spite your face.

We gather that the proposal involves cramming 33 houses onto what is currently a favourite recreation area for the village's dog walkers, at the top of the village, a scenic vista and the first thing to be seen as we drive in from Bygrave. Quite how this fits in with the Ashwell Village Design Statement will take some explaining -

6.m Where possible all new development should include affordable houses, in a

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		<p>proportion to meet local needs. Policy 29(a)</p> <p>6.n New housing development should be small scale, unless it meets a specific, identified local need. Policy 29</p> <p>Note: Small scale means not normally more than six units.</p> <p>6.o New development should be discreetly sited and should not intrude upon the landscape.</p> <p>This proposal seems to be in direct contradiction to the above elements of the AVDS. I would like to know precisely what is the point of having a design statement if it can be completely ignored whenever it is convenient for the planners to do so.</p> <p>However, our objections, as well as being aesthetic, take on a more concrete form when we consider the toll that an increased population would take on the amenities and facilities around us. Given that 28 new houses are already in process around the village, and that the proposal we object to is not the only one involving Ashwell, that increase in population will be a very significant one. It will definitely impact us negatively in the following ways;</p> <p>1. Sewerage</p> <p>We have been unfortunate enough to suffer continuously since arriving in Ashwell from its outdated and inadequate sewerage system. As you no doubt know, the main sewers regularly block and become clogged as they were not designed to cope with the quantity of waste they currently have to deal with.</p> <p>As we live at one of the lower points of the village, any significant blockage results in an outflow of raw, stinking sh*t into our front and back gardens, and if we are not on hand to stem the flow, into our house. This has happened on a number of occasions. Anglian Water, of course, deny all responsibility, claim the sewers are fine and blame users for putting incompatible matter down the drains. However, the Anglian Water engineers who attend the incidents tell us a different story and have shown us maps of the narrow, convoluted sewer system, with its twists and narrow turns, showing us the inadequacies that their bosses are so quick to cover up by pointing the finger elsewhere to save the company the expense of having to do something about it.</p> <p>Following a particularly revolting inundation we registered strong complaints and by directly addressing them to the Managing Director of Anglian Water we actually DID manage to get them to do something about it! In an act that seems to me to admit both their responsibility and acknowledge that there IS a serious problem here, Anglian Water fitted a non-return valve to our sewerage outlet so that the sewage cannot backflow into our property any more. Though this solves the immediate problem for us it does not mean that it has gone away - we have merely transferred it to the poor souls who live at the next lowest point in the village.</p> <p>Believe us when we tell you that the sewers around here cannot cope with what we have already, let alone with the waste of another sixty-odd houses. If you doubt the truth of this bring along a bucket and help to bail out the mess from someone's garden next time the drains block. This time it won't be our garden; if you live here pray that it won't be yours!</p> <p>2. Education and medical services</p> <p>As the parents of 2 pre-school age children one of the great advantages of Ashwell is the convenient location of a village primary school a couple of minutes walk away for our children. The school is already heavily subscribed, with year groups so large that the classes have to be split. The proposed increase in population will place further strain on these finite resources leading to the possibility of our children receiving a below-standard education or not finding a place at the school they live next door to and having to look elsewhere for an education. This is not an acceptable situation. We have not yet even given thought far enough into the future to consider the educational prospects at secondary age, but we fear for suitable provision at this level too. Like other forms of planning in NHDC, we feel justified in asking whether anyone has actually thought this one through at all?</p> <p>Although we are currently affected to a lesser degree by the strain on medical services we feel that the same oversubscription to Ashwell surgery is likely to affect us in the future when we find ourselves ill but unable to get to see a doctor.</p> <p>3. Road traffic</p> <p>The enormous flow of heavy duty construction traffic for all this development and proposed development will, of course, devastate the narrow streets and roads of the village at the time of construction and will inevitably do lasting damage to the roads and possibly buildings as it passes through the village.</p> <p>The real cause for concern, however, is the increase in domestic traffic and the sheer number of vehicles. Sixty-odd new homes realistically means about 150 more cars in Ashwell. Living on West End is already sometimes akin to being trackside at Silverstone, with noisy speeding cars passing at all hours. Again it is our children we fear for. The</p>	



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We would be happy to comment further and to be involved in subsequent NHDC consultation.

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LDF/4437 **13** **Hare**

Document Section: Ref. 7 61 Station Road

Representation: *Support*

We would support the buildings on 61 Station Road, Ashwell

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LDF/4437 **14** **Hare**

Document Section: Ref. 8 Land south of 120 Station Road

Representation: *Support*

If the land south of 120 Station Road could be re-instated together with the land east of Ashridge Farm, Ashwell, Ashwell Street we would support either or both.

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LDF/2157 **3** **Sells**

Document Section: Ref. 11 Land r/o 7-9 Letchworth Road

Representation: *Support*

I write to say I'm still very interested in the above land being considered for development.

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LDF/3909 **3** **Mcalonan**

Document Section: Ref. 11 Land r/o 7-9 Letchworth Road

Representation: *Object*

Although we note that this land is allocated Priority 3, that may not rule out completely the possibility of building behind our property in the future.□□Therefore, we reiterate our total opposition to such a development for the reasons set out in detail in our response to the previous consultation.

<u>Ref.</u>	<u>Rep No.</u>	<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Agent</u>
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LDF/4790 **2** **McAlonan**

Document Section: Ref. 11 Land r/o 7-9 Letchworth Road

Representation: *Object*

Reference 11: Land r/o 7-9 Letchworth Road

Although we note that this land is allocated Priority 3, that may not rule out completely the possibility of building behind our property in the future.

Therefore, we reiterate our total opposition to such a development for the reasons set out in detail in our response to the previous consultation.