Houghton & Wyton
PARISH COUNCIL

Supplementary Objection and Recommendation for refusal

25 November 2026 | Application 25/00616/OUT Land East of Houghton Hill Farm, Houghton Road, St Ives

Outline planning permission (all matters reserved except means of site access) for up to 285 dwellings, new access and emergency access, internal roads and footpaths, public open space and landscaping, surface water attenuation and associated infrastructure.

Recommendation: REFUSAL

Houghton & Wyton Parish Council maintains its objection submitted in June 2026 and which already establishes the case concerning countryside protection, the adopted spatial strategy, unsustainable development and cumulative infrastructure impacts. This representation supplements, rather than replaces, that objection and addresses the amended information submitted in November 2026.

The Council acknowledges the improvements made and the benefits of additional housing, including affordable housing, but considers that the evidence does not establish that development of this scale is acceptable in this location.

1. Residual cumulative highway impacts

The applicant's own forecasts show substantial additional queues and delays despite mitigation. Its modelling cannot reliably represent interactions between congested adjacent junctions. (Evidence A)

2. Strategic infrastructure and mitigation

The proposed measures have not demonstrated sufficient mitigation of network impacts; the strategic A141 and St Ives scheme remains uncertain in funding and delivery. (Evidence B)

3. Highway safety and active travel

The revised access and uncontrolled crossings have not adequately demonstrated safe, coherent and attractive connections for vulnerable road users. (Evidence C)

4. Landscape and settlement separation

Development would erode the rural western approach to St Ives and the remaining perceived separation between communities. HDC's own landscape consultant identifies underestimated harm. (Evidence D)

5. Inadequately secured development parameters

Permanent landscape buffers, setbacks and height limits are insufficiently defined, particularly following potential highway widening. (Evidence E)

6. Heritage and planning balance

Remaining harm to the setting of listed buildings, together with the cumulative transport and landscape impacts, weighs against permission. (Evidence F)

If refusal is not recommended, the Parish Council requests deferral pending satisfactory resolution of these matters and an opportunity to respond to the outstanding Highway Authority advice.

Evidence A | Residual cumulative highway impacts

The MEC Highways Response Report (November 2026, 23376-TRAN-0809 Rev B) forecasts substantial deterioration at several strategically important junctions even after the proposed mitigation. The following compares the 2039 Do Minimum and mitigated development scenarios.

Junction	Peak	Without scheme	With scheme + mitigation	Increase
J3 Garner Drive	PM	215m	385m	170m
J7 Somersham Road	AM	488m	743m	255m
J8 Stocks Bridge Way	AM	597m	864m	267m
J16 Parsons Green	AM	77m	171m	94m
J17 Meadow Lane	AM	1,130m	1,524m	394m
J17 Meadow Lane	PM	508m	597m	89m

Source: MEC §§3.21, 3.41, 3.47, 3.59 and 3.66. Forecast queue lengths, not observed physical queues.

Junction	Peak	Additional overall delay per PCU
J7 Somersham Road	AM	82 seconds
J8 Stocks Bridge Way	AM	76 seconds
J8 Stocks Bridge Way	PM	47 seconds
J16 Parsons Green	AM	27 seconds
J17 Meadow Lane	AM	89 seconds
J17 Meadow Lane	PM	22 seconds

Source: MEC §§3.41, 3.47, 3.59 and 3.66. Individual junction delays should not be added to infer a journey delay.

Existing congestion is not a justification for worsening it

Turley (3.13) argues that the principal constraints arise from background growth and existing strategic network conditions, rather than the development. The Parish Council accepts that the applicant cannot reasonably be expected to remedy all existing problems. However, development traffic uses the same constrained network. A lack of spare capacity makes that network more vulnerable to additional demand, not less. The relevant question is whether the additional residual and cumulative effects are acceptable, not whether the applicant created the underlying problem.

Limitations of the modelling

MEC 4.12 acknowledges that forecast queues can interact with adjacent junctions and that standalone junction models cannot reliably represent those interactions. The report identifies the need for validated wider-network microsimulation to represent them accurately and acknowledges that such a model is not currently available. The theoretical unconstrained queue forecasts should therefore not be interpreted as precise physical queue extents.

At Stocks Bridge Way and Meadow Lane, the potential for queues to extend into adjacent junctions raises concerns about blocked turning movements, signal operation, residential access, bus reliability and traffic

displacement. The qualification regarding theoretical queues reinforces the need for a robust network assessment rather than removing it. Microsimulation need not be the only acceptable method, but an appropriately validated network assessment or equally robust alternative is required before the applicant's conclusion can be relied upon.

National policy test

NPPF Policy TR6(4) requires consideration of severe adverse transport network impacts, including cumulative capacity and congestion impacts, and unacceptable highway safety impacts. Safety is a separate test. In applying TR6(3)–(4), the Council requests assessment of reasonable future scenarios, including cumulative development, lower-than-anticipated modal shift, overlapping construction and delayed strategic infrastructure. No individual queue length automatically establishes severity; the combination of substantial residual deterioration, limited resilience and modelling uncertainty is the concern. The Parish Council considers that the applicant has not adequately demonstrated that severe residual cumulative impacts would be avoided.

Evidence B | Strategic infrastructure and mitigation

The Highway Authority's July position

CCC Transport Assessment Comments HDC 2872, dated 9 July 2026 (Hannah Seymour-Shove; checked by Andrew Connolly), identifies the limitations of piecemeal capacity improvements at Junctions 7, 8, 16 and 17 and the need to investigate sufficient modal shift. Its conclusion states:

> *"Further to the above, it must be noted that once the additional information requested has been submitted, if it is demonstrated that the applicant cannot suitably mitigate the proposed development impacts on the local network, then the Highway Authority will consider recommending refusal until such a time as a strategic solution has been delivered or has progressed to a sufficient level of certainty and detailed design to enable this application to make contributions towards the strategic solution that would help address its key impacts on network capacity."*

This was a conditional position, not a final recommendation on the November amendments. The Parish Council asks whether the applicant has now demonstrated sufficient mitigation without relying upon strategic infrastructure that has yet to reach the required level of certainty. The evidence currently available does not establish that it has.

Limited modal shift and management of congestion

MEC Scenario 5 (3.37–3.39 and Figure 3.3) applies reductions of approximately 0.4–0.5% to development-generated vehicle trips and 0.2% to background vehicle trips at the four eastern St Ives junctions. The Parish Council welcomes active travel investment and the proposed £750,000 Busway B contribution, but the test is whether these measures sufficiently mitigate the identified impacts. Substantial residual queues and delays remain. The long-term viability and reliability of enhanced bus services after time-limited support ends also require consideration.

Keep Clear markings proposed in response to queues extending across side roads may help preserve access but do not increase capacity, reduce demand or resolve interactions between congested junctions. Improvements at individual junctions, including the A141/A1123/B1514 roundabout, are acknowledged but do not establish acceptability across the network as a whole.

Strategic delivery and cumulative development

The October 2026 HDC–CPCA Statement of Common Ground (printed pp.12–17) identifies an emerging A141 and St Ives Transport Improvements Scheme estimated at approximately £328.6 million at 2026

prices, excluding inflation. A141 completion is indicatively anticipated in 2033/34. Further business case development, funding, approvals, detailed design, land acquisition and construction remain necessary. Potential funding sources are identified, but full construction funding is not demonstrated as secured.

The Parish Council welcomes progress but considers that the cumulative demands of housing and employment growth in North Huntingdon and St Ives cannot safely be addressed by assuming strategic improvements will arrive on time. If effective mitigation depends upon that scheme, the necessary works, funding, delivery triggers and enforceable arrangements must be established before permission is granted. A financial contribution alone does not establish that the required capacity will be available when needed.

Evidence C | Highway safety and active travel

Continuity of active travel provision

The Parish Council welcomes the 5m segregated frontage route (3m pedestrian and 2m cycle). However, the revised entrance arrangement appears to reduce the route entering the site to a 3m shared-use path. This creates a discontinuity where movements from up to 285 homes converge, potentially encouraging cyclists to use the entrance carriageway to avoid conflicts with pedestrians. A 3m shared path is not inherently unacceptable, but its suitability must be demonstrated against forecast flows, vulnerable users and future development. The previously proposed segregated provision should be retained unless an equally safe and attractive alternative is justified, consistent with LTN 1/20. The connection towards One Leisure St Ives Outdoor Centre should also be secured rather than assumed.

Western uncontrolled crossing near Sawtry Way

This is a busy and complex section of the A1123, close to a bend and the B1090 Sawtry Way junction. Drivers frequently seek limited gaps in traffic. Multiple lanes, turning movements and the proposed bus stop add complexity. The Parish Council's MVAS equipment has recorded individual speeds exceeding 70mph in the vicinity; Sawtry Way is locally known as the 'Mad Mile'. These observations are not a speed distribution at the precise crossing location but underline the importance of assessing actual speeds and driver behaviour. Local experience is that crossing here is intimidating even with a refuge.

An enlarged refuge does not necessarily resolve risks associated with visibility, speed, available gaps and conflicting movements. The crossing must be assessed against actual speed data, stopping sight distances, peak-period gaps, crossing demand and the needs of children, older people and mobility-impaired users. A facility that residents do not trust will undermine the modal shift on which the applicant relies.

Crossing near the main entrance

The principal access serves up to 285 homes. Pedestrians and cyclists travelling towards St Ives must negotiate the entrance and the A1123, in the context of nearby Slepe Meadow and Houghton Grange junctions. The combined crossing movements should be assessed as a continuous journey. The distance to the town centre reinforces the need for genuinely attractive alternatives to driving.

A comparison of uncontrolled and signal-controlled alternatives, including a toucan where appropriate, should address safety, convenience, capacity and landscape effects. The need to preserve a rural gateway must not be used to justify an inferior crossing. Conversely, the urbanising effects of any necessary highway engineering must be included in the landscape assessment.

Road safety and the outline access decision

CCC's amended Highway Development Management response of 7 July 2026 accepted the earlier access arrangement subject to minor comments and the Transport Assessment team's position, but required further work to establish safe and deliverable off-site mitigation and recommended that determination await that work. The Parish Council does not assume that every July objection remains unresolved. It requests confirmation of acceptance of the revised drawings and the necessary Stage 1 Road Safety Audits. Since access is being determined now, fundamental safety and feasibility issues should not be deferred to subsequent technical approval.

Evidence D | Landscape and settlement separation

HDC's own landscape consultant challenges the low-value assessment

Turley 3.15 describes the site as an urban-fringe arable field of low landscape value and acknowledges a permanent major adverse effect on the character of the site itself. The Parish Council considers that the assessment must address the strategic landscape function of the site, not simply its intrinsic qualities or its small proportion of extensive character areas.

Michelle Bolger Expert Landscape Consultancy (MBELC), commissioned by HDC for this application, identifies precisely this issue in its February 2026 Addendum, 3, 6–8 and 13. The assessment considers the site in isolation, omits its role in separating St Ives and Houghton when assessing landscape function, and overstates urban influences while understating the rural context. MBELC concludes that landscape harm is underestimated.

MBELC 24 assesses the site and immediate landscape as having medium value, medium/high susceptibility and medium/high sensitivity, with an initial moderate/major adverse effect reducing to moderate adverse after establishment of the western landscape edge. This is a different receptor and assessment from the applicant's major adverse effect on the site itself; both are relevant. The consultant acknowledges that removing the roundabout reduces harm, especially to the west and to settlement separation (23), but does not conclude that all harm is removed.

MBELC 18–19 also identifies that the development would appear to extend St Ives further west north of Houghton Road than south of it, notwithstanding apparent alignment of development boundaries, because the houses opposite are set well back. The proposed access would open views into the development and harm the integrity of the southern landscape boundary. These findings directly support the need to assess the actual experience of the rural gateway rather than rely on lines on a plan.

Cumulative urbanisation on both sides of Houghton Road

The Parish Council considers that the site contributes to perceived separation between St Ives and Houghton and to the open countryside towards Wyton-on-the-Hill and RAF Wyton. Development opposite Houghton Grange would increase the overlap of built form along the A1123 and diminish the experience of passing through countryside. Highway widening, crossings, access roads, lighting and recreational infrastructure must be considered alongside the housing itself.

Peter Radmall's February 2025 review for the Parish Council of application 23/00627/OUT (Houghton Grange), particularly 2.4–2.7 and Table 4.1, identifies how narrowing a green corridor and introducing recreational infrastructure can materially reduce its separating function, spatially and visually. His report is not an assessment of the Bellway proposal, but its reasoning is relevant to the cumulative change along this corridor. Green space with a suburban character is not necessarily equivalent to a meaningful countryside gap.

MBELC's June 2025 review of Houghton Grange takes a different view: it considers Phase 1 already reads as part of St Ives and does not consider the landscape effects of Phase 2 sufficient to justify refusal (Executive Summary; 17–20). The Parish Council maintains its differing view of settlement identity. Nevertheless, MBELC's identification of road widening, traffic signals and the relationship between development on both sides of the road as factors in perceived urban character reinforces the need to assess further urbanisation cumulatively.

Outstanding landscape evidence and policy context

The February 2026 MBELC Addendum identifies missing or inadequate visualisations from the north, Wyton-on-the-Hill and west of Sawtry Way, an incorrect Conservation Area boundary and insufficient assessment of the new access (3–13, 19–20). The applicant subsequently submitted further LVIA amendments in April, as recorded in Turley's November covering letter. The Parish Council does not assume that all earlier information deficiencies remain outstanding, but requests an explicit assessment of whether the latest plans and evidence address these professional concerns, including winter views, the access and future highway widening.

Policy HWNP3 of the Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect the distinct identities of the village and St Ives. The emerging Local Plan also emphasises meaningful settlement separation, with substantial gaps identified in particular locations. Such distances are location-specific, not a universal minimum. The emerging St Ives 1 allocation for approximately 350 dwellings is acknowledged, but is not adopted and does not establish the acceptability of the present scheme or its mitigation.

Evidence E | Permanent landscape mitigation and parameters

The Parish Council acknowledges the November amendments: the frontage active travel route is moved north, a minimum 3m planting zone is provided beyond safeguarded highway land, and additional landscaping is proposed north of the route (Turley covering letter, 4 November; Planning Statement Addendum 3.17–3.20). However, Parameter Plan 603 P05 Rev G describes frontage landscaping location and width as indicative and subject to condition or reserved matters in coordination with the A141 scheme. Residential parcel boundaries have a ±5m tolerance.

Safeguarding demonstrates that future widening is sufficiently foreseeable to warrant provision, not that it is certain. If widening proceeds, the highway corridor will expand and the present open frontage may diminish. The permanent buffer should be designed against the potential future highway boundary and secured independently of safeguarded land. The Council seeks a substantially deeper, continuous structural landscape buffer, with adequate space for mature trees, hedges and their long-term management, subject to necessary access and visibility requirements.

The revised plan provides a 1.5-storey south-western parcel, which is welcomed. Elsewhere, two-and-a-half-storey dwellings are described as generally located centrally at landmark points, with ridge heights deferred to design code or reserved matters. Such buildings can typically reach around 9–11m, depending on design and levels; this is illustrative, not a measured height for this scheme. Turley 3.16 indicates an average density of approximately 34 dwellings per hectare. The Parish Council considers that lower heights and densities are needed at sensitive edges, with binding maximum ridge and eaves heights, finished levels, minimum setbacks and permanent buffer widths established at outline stage.

The Council also seeks assurance that drainage and other infrastructure do not compromise structural planting, particularly along the northern edge identified in MBELC 20. Screening buildings is not the same as preserving rural character. If the necessary parameters cannot accommodate 285 homes, the quantum should be reduced. The proposed design code is welcome but should implement a demonstrably acceptable outline framework rather than determine whether one is achievable.

Evidence F | Heritage and overall planning balance

Turley 3.21 acknowledges the Conservation Officer's identification of less-than-substantial harm to the significance of the Grade II listed East and West Lodges at Houghton Grange, through loss of rural backdrop, crossing and highway works, changes to hedgerows and urbanising features. The amendments lessen the identified harm, but do not establish that it is eliminated. The statutory duty to have special regard to preserving listed buildings and their settings and the applicable national heritage policy balance must be addressed. Less-than-substantial harm is not synonymous with negligible harm.

The Parish Council recognises housing and affordable housing benefits, the removal of the roundabout and improvements to sustainable transport and landscape proposals. It also recognises the applicant's reliance on national policy concerning the weight of restrictive development plan provisions. The objection is not based solely on location outside the built-up area; it concerns substantive impacts on highway capacity and safety, countryside character, settlement identity and heritage. Relevant adopted policies include LP10, LP11, LP12, LP14 and LP31, alongside neighbourhood policy HWNP3, insofar as applicable.

The weight afforded to infrastructure and sustainable transport benefits must reflect their demonstrated effectiveness and deliverability. The Parish Council considers that the combined adverse impacts warrant refusal and, where the applicable presumption in favour of sustainable development is engaged, considers that they significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, subject to the applicable heritage and highway policy tests.

Outstanding consultation and determination

At the time of submission, CCC has not published its substantive response to the November highway information. Its July response cannot be treated as either a final objection or acceptance of the amended application. The updated advice is fundamental to determination. If it is published after the consultation deadline, the Parish Council formally requests a reasonable opportunity to consider and respond before determination. If refusal is not recommended, determination should be deferred until outstanding matters are satisfactorily addressed and the Parish Council has had that opportunity.

On the evidence currently available, Houghton & Wyton Parish Council maintains its objection and recommends that application 25/00616/OUT be REFUSED.

Principal evidence references

Parish Council representation, June 2026 (previous grounds maintained).

MEC Highways Response Report, November 2026, 23376-TRAN-0809 Rev B, 3–4 and Appendix A (CCC HDC 2872, 9 July 2026).

CCC Highway Development Management amended consultation response, 7 July 2026.

Turley Planning Statement Addendum, November 2026, 3.12–3.23; covering letter, 4 November 2026.

Access drawing 23376_03_020_11.2 Rev G; Parameter Plan 603 P05 Rev G; Illustrative Masterplan 603 P06 Rev E; Green Infrastructure Plan 603 P04.

MBELC, Addendum to Review of Landscape and Visual Aspects, application 25/00616/OUT, 20 February 2026, 3–24.

MBELC, Land off Houghton Road, Houghton: Review of 2025 Revision, application 23/00627/OUT, June 2025, Executive Summary and 17–20.

Peter Radmall Associates, Review of January 2025 Landscape and Visual Appraisal, application 23/00627/OUT, February 2025, 2.4–2.7 and Table 4.1.

HDC–CPCA Statement of Common Ground, October 2026, printed pp.12–17.

NPPF (2026), TR6; Local Transport Note 1/20, Cycle Infrastructure Design; adopted and emerging local planning policies identified above.