

I have been Chairman of Western Enfield Residents Association for the last 10 years. Over this period Member concerns about the persistent threat of Metropolitan Green Belt development have been expressed frankly and clearly. Though I have stated my views elsewhere as an independent Resident I, here, represent consensus of the great majority of them.

The Association (WERA) has over 1100 subscribed household Members in both Oakwood and Ridgeway Wards. I also Chair the Safer Neighbourhoods Committee in Oakwood Ward which works closely with our assigned Metropolitan Police 'Safer Neighbourhoods' Team.

During the Pandemic the Association was compelled to change course from 'doorstep' to social media interaction on a demonetised basis, though there remains a strong emphasis on meetings twice a year (one of which is designated an AGM) with speakers and hospitality at a convenient public venue. We are in the process of re-establishing our website and intend to promote the Association in newly formed Wards following a comprehensive review within the Borough of Enfield by the Boundaries Commission.

The proposed 'Chase Park' town development would obliterate the agricultural landscape of Enfield Chase (a feature of historic significance) and the Equestrian Centre (with bridle trails into the Trent Park Conservation Area) and the Glebe Pastures (rising from Boxers Lake Open Space). It will impose on the tranquillity of adopted perimeter paths (along Merryhills Way and Boxers Lake) and through flora, fauna and natural landmarks, cherished by generations of local inhabitants and visitors.

The countryside (and its thriving ecosystem) will cease to provide a reassuring fringe to our avenues which will be demoted to inner suburbs, retaining only limited access to open and wild green spaces. It will no longer be possible to retreat from noise and bustle and to survey the distance across unspoilt hillsides. Views from all quarters will be obstructed by an extensive built environment of uncertain aesthetics, compacted layout and distorted perspectives.

Our water courses (joining with Salmon's Brook and, ultimately, the river Lea) are vulnerable to runoff and fly tips. Merryhills Brook and Glen Brook flank the proposed development. Their basins are managed by flood relief, Sustainable Drainage Schemes (SUDS) and volunteer clearance but their functionality and ecosystems will be overshadowed by the extensive footprint of concrete and tarmac (and reduced permeability) created by this proposed development.

The A110 Enfield Road provides a two lane clearway between Oakwood and Ridgeway Wards. It also serves as an inner orbital road for contingent junctions around the M25 when the Motorway is closed in either direction. If the Road will be expected to convey a disproportionate influx of new residents and visitors then traffic congestion and delay is likely to increase significantly.

Joining the A110, Bincote Road and Prince George Avenue provide direct routes to suburban areas beyond our affected Wards. They afford alternative approaches to Enfield Town and will be at greater risk of overloading by all vehicles. Other residential side roads cut through

and excess traffic is likely to cause serious misuse, with crowding and collision hazards at times of peak convergence, especially off Worlds End Lane where we have three adjacent schools and a busy supermarket.

A proposed commercial frontage along the A110 will be inhibiting to public transport which can be expected to convey more people but progress less directly. Deliveries (and removals) will entail frequent, large and heavy loads. Enfield Town as a market destination is undergoing a transformation because demand for goods and services continues to shift 'on-line'. Passenger experience on journeys would be further degraded as tall blocks of dubious retail advantage would replace our celebrated green vistas.

Most houses within the proposed development will not be within comfortable walking distance of rail stations for the majority of inhabitants and for most purposes. An integral pedal-cycle scheme would be impractical and expensive. Track space would compete with vehicle access where there is an emphasised need for high density housing. The immediate terrain would be physically demanding for all but young, fit and unburdened riders.

Collateral impacts and societal effects will be profound and far-reaching. The leap in population (based on number of anticipated dwellings) will be commensurate with a Ward the size of Oakwood. This cannot be absorbed by Oakwood (c. 8,750 residents) or Ridgway (c. 12,550 residents) since this would distort them grossly in relation to practicable mean values established by the recent Boundaries Review.

Increased demand for Local Government will put a burden on existing representation and might draw valued Councillors away. An enlarged constituency will have electoral consequences which might not reflect political aspirations of the current majority. This would mute the collective parliamentary voice and destabilise local democracy.

Similarly, the Metropolitan Police would be hard pressed to redistribute their rank and file Officers for expanded duties. Oakwood, especially, has a good record on security with a set of crime statistics consistently one of the lowest in the Borough. This will be in jeopardy with outside actors bringing more unwanted interest, unlawful intentions and harmful intrusions. Few local industries, limited enterprise and low employment rates are characteristic of Western Enfield. Poor economic outlook and hazards of civil unrest could herald a decline in 'affordable' but neglected reaches of such an estate.

Many pre-existing households might be expected to compete with other scarce and uncertain resources. These would include energy, water and food supplies, sewage, waste, health treatment, broadband and telephone networks and other public facilities. Satisfactory standards of delivery will not easily be attainable or sustainable.

Many promised features of developments are unfulfilled which can cause long term dissatisfaction. Additionally, the draft alludes to a new primary school. This is a self serving provision for a hypothetical situation which the Plan proposes to accommodate - and not for the thousands of established residents whose present expectations are manageable and satisfactory. On the other hand, 'affordable' housing will equate to restriction in overall space provision with tight construction budgets if energy efficiency and other standards are

to be met. The resulting impression will be no substitute for the Green Belt and dimly perceived by our incumbent members.

A busier A110 highway is thus likely to form a tangible boundary for a newly populated Chase Park enclave where on the perimeter of (but not connected with) long established and probably discontented communities in Oakwood and Ridgeway Wards.

Meanwhile, there are concerns that traffic overspill might lead to imposition of a punitive Low Density Traffic Neighbourhood (LDTN) system around the Laing Estate similar to others in Enfield Town. This would signify a consequential loss of freedom of movement.

Our region of the Borough has, until now, been protected by the Metropolitan Green Belt Act 1938, and the eventual allocation, by 1955, of provisions within the Act. These were designed to curb urban sprawl, create a breathing space between suburban zones and to preserve special character.

There is no emphasis in the Local Plan (beyond token enhancements) on how Metropolitan Green Belt might be sustained or expanded here. Nor is there any indication that Central Government grants or emergency powers are being used to expedite recycling of abundant, unexploited and well publicised brown-field alternatives; where upheavals will be better tolerated.

If development proceeds, not only will there be disruptions and diversions during several years of intensive works but the increased human activity (day and night) will be invasive and diminish, permanently, the outlook and quality of life for our neighbourhoods. The unique appeal and environmental value of this semi-rural corner of the Borough will be lost forever.