

Q 4.8: Overall, are there exceptional circumstances in principle to justify altering Green Belt boundaries for a) housing and b) employment development?

This statement argues that the Local Plan fails to evidence exceptional circumstances justifying altering Green Belt boundaries for housing development. This question relates to the Regulation 20 Representation from Hugh Small no. 01786-2-1, para 4.

In the Exceptional Circumstances Topic Paper p. 22 para 4.2, the Local Plan lists the strategic level considerations in its review of Green Belt Boundaries. In relation to housing development there is only one 'exceptional circumstance' in this list: the need for 'the provision of more family and more affordable homes'. The reason for using this specific need to justify the alteration of Green Belt boundaries emerges from the Chase Park Topic Paper p. 15 para 4.4, which claims that it is 'a specific need that is not readily achievable within the urban areas'. This claim is repeated elsewhere in the evidence base.

The Local Plan does not explain why urban areas are no longer suitable for family and affordable homes. I suggest that it is an incorrect assumption that arose because the Draft was, by the Council's own admission, 'largely prepared at the peak of the Covid-19 Pandemic.'¹ At that time (2020/21) the housing market was experiencing a 'race for space' as homebuyers sought rural homes with ample gardens rather than urban apartments. Working from home was seen as a permanent social realignment. This realignment soon proved to be temporary as workers returned to the office. Figures produced by Rightmove show that online searches by Londoners for homes outside the city fell from 46% to 31% between mid-2021 and early 2024.²

My criticism (above) of the Local Plan is not aimed at preserving the value of my own property, as the following remarks show. My home is a freehold property on Hadley Road adjacent to the proposed Chase Park development. This is at present a very dangerous stretch of road with inadequate speed restrictions, a very narrow pavement, and a long and steep walk to the nearest public transport and shops. The proposed development at Chase Park includes new infrastructure to correct these defects, including a new bus route stopping outside my door and new shopping facilities close to hand. I am 82 years old and this would improve my life dramatically. I am not therefore protesting against development on Green Belt for selfish reasons.

¹ https://www.enfield.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0012/53103/Enfield-local-plan-reg-18-consultation-statement-Apr-23-Planning.pdf p. 35 (retrieved 30 Nov 2024)

² <https://www.2.com/content/1807d78d-b67d-44f4-9eb2-55253a3c3c2e>