

Dear Sirs,

Subject: Draft Local Plan - Site SA45 – Land between Camlet Way and Crescent West, Hadley Wood

I have lived in Hadley Wood for approximately 19 years and have been a member of the Hadley Wood Association since moving into the area. One of the main reasons why I, my husband and son moved into this area was to measurably benefit from the surrounding Green Belt. We and the Hadley Wood community and wider populace value and actively cherish all the special character, historical, environmental and life-giving/enhancing qualities of our "forever" promised Green Belt, our green spaces and our woods within Hadley Wood. By all reasoning, logic and measures the Green Belt in Hadley Wood protects the special character, history, environment and life-giving/enhancing qualities of Hadley Wood and functions fully to meet its main purposes as listed below, and therefore I object fervently to the proposed site allocation, which would allow the development of 160 homes on superior, top functioning Green Belt land.

My principal reasons for objection are:

1. Site SA45 is designated Green Belt land. This fact alone means it should not even be considered for the Local Plan. By definition its actual purpose is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open, the essential characteristics of Green Belts being their openness and permanence.

Hadley Wood Green Belt, like all Green Belt has 5 main purposes:

- (a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; (*Hadley Wood, Hadley Highstone, Wrotham Park, Potters Bar*)
- (b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another; (*Enfield & Barnet*)
- (c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; (*Site SA45 is a buffer protecting from encroachment from Barnet and Enfield*)
- (d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; (*Historic Enfield Chase, Historic 15th Century Battle of Britain site, Hornbeam Hills Area of Special Character, Grade II listed buildings*)
- (e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land. (*Site SA45 is the antithesis of urban, derelict recyclable land. Alternative derelict, urban, recyclable land does exist now and will exist in the near future as old, urban and windfall land becomes available*)

In summary, since Site SA45 is wild, untouched Green Belt, development of it will automatically violate all five of its main purposes as succinctly addressed above. What is the point of designating land Green Belt if it can so easily, casually and whimsically be undesignated and released for development?

2. Destruction of a valued part of the Green Belt

The most recent Characterisation Study undertaken by Enfield Council refers to the area as "a special area of landscape character which is a major asset for the borough. It is of both landscape and historic significance"; and "The existing Green Belt boundary should be retained and protected, and future development and land use changes resisted". Why then has it chosen to destroy a valued part of our Green Belt?

3. This Green Belt makes a significant contribution to the purposes and openness of the Green Belt

The Hadley Wood Heritage and Character Assessment notes that the site provides “important views” and the landscape “acts as a buffer separating Hadley Wood from other urban areas”. No account has been taken of the fact that the site forms part of the Hornbeam Hills Area of Special Character. It also ignores the fact that the area has significant historic value as it was where the Battle of Barnet took place in the 15th Century. This historical aspect is celebrated, preserved and conserved for educational purposes and pertinent to locals and visitors.

4. The Plan fails to develop/prioritise all brownfield sites

Brownfield sites do not appear to have been prioritised in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework. As an example, why has the full capacity of the Meridian Water site not been included in the 20 year plan? Instead, the Council has chosen the easy and careless option of building on our Green Belt that has poor local connections and amenities and virtually no scope of adding them.

5. Hadley Wood is the wrong location for a sustainable development

The scheme would be wholly reliant on cars, as there are very limited local amenities, no local GP, no post office, no secondary school, an oversubscribed primary school and virtually no local employment and no scope for adding the aforementioned. In addition Hadley Wood has poor public transport links with a PTAL 1a/b. For these reasons and more, Hadley Wood is wholly unsuitable as a sustainable site. Brown field sites do exist and are the correct route for sustainability and environmental reasons.

6. Increases flood risk in other parts of Hadley Wood

Parts of the land are in flood zone 3, and local sewers/flood defences are already insufficient, vintage even, resulting in frequent flooding across Hadley Wood. The existing foul and surface water sewer infrastructure, mostly a “combined system” has not kept up with the pace or density of development. The continuous and ample back garden development and replacement of one house by two or more houses, and many occurrences of one home being demolished and replaced with large blocks of flats, already exacerbates this issue of flooding as well as other issues detrimental to the viability and preservation of Hadley Wood. To add, we are constantly lectured about the threat of climate change and the pending, imminent, anticipated increase in rain fall. Telling us flooding is going to increase exponentially. This development is at odds with the messaging from the Council who have declared a climate emergency going as far as to ban meat and pandering to Extinction Rebellion. The deputy leader of Enfield Council, Ian Barnes said: ‘Our planet is facing an existential threat from climate change.’ Also powers, personalities, politicians and proprietors surrounding and connected to this The Duchy of Lancaster land, apart from being petty with residents of Hadley Wood about very minor changes to the appearance of their homes in Hadley Wood, lecture us about climate change and the environment. Development of this site at best goes against the declared climate/environment concerns of the aforementioned and at worst reeks of hypocrisy. Where there is money and power to be gained, it would appear the Greta Thunbergs of Enfield turn a convenient blind eye. Shameful. Note, there is a basic problem with sustainable urban drainage schemes (SUDs), in that organisations; developer or local authority don’t really want them; at least not without an income stream by which their management and maintenance can be properly funded. The idea of sustainable urban drainage in urban and semi urban built up areas is government policy but without the management costs being met, they are often being implemented in nothing but the most rudimentary fashion. Even if an SUD is implemented this will be intolerable. The water has to go somewhere. Often the water is simply displaced, becoming someone else’s problem.

7. Site is surrounded by Conservation Areas and Grade II listed buildings

The site is bordered and overlooked by the Hadley Wood Conservation Area, the Monken Hadley Conservation Area and Grade II listed buildings on Camlet Way. It would be impossible to build on that site without it adversely impacting the setting, character and appearance of those heritage assets. The

current traffic levels already cause houses to shake and roads to crumble. The resulting increased traffic will bring more damage, more congestion, more pollution, more health issues, more infrastructure issues and less wellbeing of people, flora and fauna. Wildlife conservation, building conservation and special character conservation will be severely impacted. Actual conservation, let alone the notion of conservation, will be obliterated.

8. Wildlife and biodiversity would be harmed and potentially obliterated

Building over 11ha of fields for 160 homes is an inefficient use of valuable Green Belt land that serves an important purpose, and contradicts Enfield's green policies and the declaration by the Council of a Climate Emergency. The ecology of this unique area of rough grazing, wild flora, and wildlife habitat, a relic of the landscape of Enfield Chase, should be protected and cherished. The land in question is an important ecosystem of wild flowers, grasses, animals, sustaining brooks and undisturbed animal pathways. It is home to many animals such as horses, rabbits, hares, foxes, muntjac deer, pheasants, field mice, grass snakes, adders, rare birds such as the red kite which, was once extinct in England to the point of having to be reintroduced, to name just a few.

9. The Site should not be classed as 'Available' and should not be included as an allocated site

The agricultural tenant's lease runs beyond the five year threshold and this Green Belt site should not be included for development in 10+ years' time, as additional, actually suitable brownfield locations will become available to negate any perceived requirement to build these 160 homes within that timeframe.

10. Indiscriminate intensification of density within 800 metres of any station is flawed

The indiscriminate intensification of the density within 800 metres of the station is flawed as it fails to take account of the lack of amenities, poor local public transport, and the distance is measured as the crow flies, etc. This intensification fails to take account of the lack of scope to rectify these deficiencies. The additional housing to be added between, behind and above existing homes does not represent sustainable development. The proximity to a station will not negate an increase in the number of cars. Quite the opposite. A car is needed in Hadley Wood since transport and facilities are inadequate. Whilst intensification works in more urban areas where every need is catered for on the door step almost, in Hadley Wood it is not, and thus will result in more cars. Probably two cars per household at least.

11. Too small for infrastructure investment

160 new homes do not warrant the investment needed to increase schools, healthcare services, shops, leisure facilities, roads, parking etc. It should be noted that currently the roads and pavements are not maintained properly by the Council. Over the last 19 years, I have rarely noticed such maintenance works having been attended to. Our nearest GP is on Station Road in Barnet which necessitates travel by car. At present, parking there is virtually impossible, and the relatively short journey is terribly congested. A journey that should take no more than 10 minutes often takes 40 minutes and available parking on arrival cannot be depended on which necessitates more driving around until a space becomes available.

12. This proposal is an opportunistic development rather than a strategic decision

The site was not on the list for development in the 2018 consultation document and was only added when the Duchy of Lancaster, as landowner, by all accounts made it a condition of their support for the Local Plan. This appears to be unethical,...a quid pro quo arrangement that puts existing residents, future residents, people who visit Hadley Wood, school children, the environment, and wildlife, in fact everything, last, in favour of profiteering, whether it be for money or power or both.

13. The Council has not outlined the necessary 'exceptional circumstances'

The Council has not set out the necessary "exceptional circumstances" why this specific Green Belt site should be released for development for 160 homes out of the 25,000 homes they are seeking up to year 2039. This raises the question as to whether there are actually any "exceptional circumstances" that can justify this allocation.

This lack of provision and transparency alone is reason enough for this Green Belt release to not proceed.