
Dear Councillor,

Enfield Council – Draft Local Plan

I am writing to object to the council's local plan for development on Enfield's Green Belt. The Green Belt defines Enfield and is what makes it such an admirable London borough. Development on all the sites mentioned in the local plan will completely destroy Enfield's landscape and ruin the boroughs charm and natural aesthetics. I understand more affordable housing is needed within the m25 but the draft local plan aims to exhaust our beautiful Green Belt which is an obscene and devastating solution. The fact that the disruption of the Green Belt is being discussed is completely deplorable.

I object to the following Policies: SP PL10, pages 80-87, and Figure 3.11; Policy SP PL9, pages 77-80 and Concept Plan Figure 3.10; Policy SA45: Land Between Camlet Way and Crescent Way, Hadley Wood, page 364; Policy SA54, page 374; Policy SA62 page 372; and Policy SA62 page 383 and SP CL4 pages 277-279 – all of which propose the dedesignation of Green Belt for housing and other purposes.

I am a Director of Thompsons of Crews Hill Ltd; therefore, I strongly object to the development in Crews Hill (policy SP PL9, pages 77-80 and concept plan Figure 3.10). My family has been running this site since 1948 and I am the fourth generation of the Thompson family. Development on Crews Hill will have catastrophic effects on our family business and many other businesses in the Crews Hill area. Crews Hill is well known for being the biggest concentration of garden centres in Europe. It attracts masses of garden lovers nationwide throughout the whole year. The footfall of retail and trade customers is extremely difficult to measure but is, no doubt, colossal. Crews Hill brings a lot of trade and revenue to Enfield and provides thousands of jobs. If this development is approved then many businesses will be forced to sell, and this local plan, and Enfield council will be responsible for the potential extinction of numerous companies. Many businesses, like us, will find it extremely difficult to relocate due to land costs and council restrictions, resulting in companies having no choice but to cease trading. This will mean employees will be out of jobs and generations of hard work will have gone to waste.

Some of the proposed plans in this draft document are completely illogical and I cannot believe the suggestions that have been disclosed and how many aspects have been overlooked. The draft local plan describes 'winter gardens and glass house space for every home, creating a unique lifestyle related to the identity of the place.' (Character Responsive to Context 6. Pg. 11). This statement contradicts the aim of building affordable homes, as I cannot imagine any house with a glasshouse in the garden is going to be economical. Secondly, where will these new homeowners purchase their garden supplies for their lovely eco-friendly greenhouse if Crews Hill has been built on? We should not be looking at how to preserve the history of Crews Hill but how to actually enhance and improve Crews Hill's legacy by bringing some of its history back to the present.

Crews Hill is considered Green Belt on the basis that horticulture is a permitted use in the Green Belt. Enfield Council should be encouraging horticulture and agriculture not development. At the moment all garden centres in Crews Hill have to meet sales regulations by stocking a certain percentage of garden products. These regulations have been pretty relaxed resulting in many companies expanding their goods and services by selling non-gardening goods, which does not represent Crews Hill's existence. Instead of developing on Crews Hill, Enfield council should focus on improving Crews Hill by promoting gardening and well-being by recognising the value of agriculture and horticulture. Bring some of the growing history back to Enfield by including policies that encourage locally grown plants and food. We as a company only sell gardening/landscaping goods, and in the last couple of years we have erected Poly tunnel's, enabling us to go back to our roots and grow our own bedding plants, evergreens, perennials and vegetables. Let's work together to improve Crews Hill not destroy it! Horticulture plays a massive part economically for this country and our local councils need to support and endorse this industry.

In section 11 under 'Mix of People and Activity' the Local Plan explains that 'Development should create... a diversity of employment opportunities. Upskilling and specialist skills and knowledge in horticulture, land sciences, food production and the arts associated with food and the culture of food and growing can underpin the unique identity and function of Crews Hill in the landscape' (SP PL9 Pg. 78). Which is completely sanctimonious as it does not mention the thousands of jobs that will be lost due to the development in the first place. I also struggle to understand where these horticultural and food production sites will be situated within this development. Point 4 in the local plan mentions development character and that 'Land to the south of the Crews Hill built up area can support horticultural and food producing land uses' however, land to the south of Crews Hill is already fairly occupied and will not be suitable for Horticultural and food producing land as they both require a considerable amount of land to operate.

Whilst looking at Image SA27 (Pg346), which shows 'Indicative location for housing led areas', I have noticed, it does not show housing areas being developed right up to Cattlegate Road. This implies that a percentage of the garden centres will remain. If this is the case then I would like to bring to your attention the potential disruption that this development will cause. Unfortunately it will be a logistical nightmare! Whenever there is an incident on the m25, between Junctions 24-25, Crews Hill instantly becomes overwhelmed by the vehicle movement. An additional 7,000 homes will cause utter carnage on top of the garden centre traffic and Crews Hill will be gridlocked even without the participation of M25 traffic. Besides general congestion residents of the new development may have an issue with noise pollution from M25 and The Garden Centres. The Garden Centres should not have to adjust their normal working procedures due to a new development built decades after they were established. A sound barrier could be installed to decrease the issue however, it would be awfully expensive, thus making Brown belt and other existing industrial areas a lot more appealing as they would be easier to utilise, rather than losing Enfield's elegant Green Belt.

The Draft Local Plan aims at promoting cycling as it states in point 13 'Cycle and pedestrian priority streets and routes should permeate all development areas and should connect to existing and proposed surrounding strategic routes.' (Strategic Policy SP PL9 Crews Hill - pg77). However, the plan mentions in point 3 that the 'Development at Crews Hill should predominantly be limited to the core 'Hill' area.' This negates the previous statement of the use

of cycle and pedestrian routes because no matter what direction you try to access Crew Hill you will be presented with an overwhelming incline. This is great if everyone visiting Crews Hill is reasonably fit but, let's be realistic, the majority of Crews Hill residents and visitors will travel via car making the cycle lanes completely counterproductive.

Thompsons of Crews Hill Ltd employ 45 members of staff, most of which have young families to support and mortgages to pay. We have increased our workforce recently and there is no doubt that this will continue to rise as we continue to expand our company. We also have a huge client base, both trade and retail. Along with promoting small and large landscape businesses by supplying garden materials at fair prices, we also inspire householders to get in their gardens by supplying quality gardening goods and offering free garden advice. During the pandemic we supported many households and companies, by remaining open in the second lockdown. We offered discounted delivery charges to keep our customers entertained and safe at home, allowing us to supply gardening essentials safely to many homes. This instantly had a huge impact on people's mental health and wellbeing.

As the next generation of Thompsons of Crews Hill Ltd I would love to pursue my family's legacy by continuing to support our customers and employees. If the draft local plan goes ahead it will destroy the garden centres and will be the end of the Thompson dynasty.

Gardening is an extremely therapeutic and rewarding hobby and without Crews Hill many gardeners would be lost. Crews Hill influences so many people from all over the country, and, as a borough, we should be encouraging people to get in their gardens to enhance nature not promote development and building on one of our most recognisable and visited areas.

Enfield's Green Belt should be cherished and enhanced, not destroyed! This decision unfortunately has not been left for the people of Enfield instead we are relying on Enfield councillors to make the right judgment and protect the 'Lungs of London'. Don't be foolish, be rational. It's up to you to object to the repugnant Draft Local Plan and save Enfield's elegant and unique Green belt for the future of Enfield. Allow all its forthcoming generations to admire and appreciate its natural beauty as much as we have.

Kind Regards,