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I am writing to object to the proposals outlined in the Council's Draft Local Plan which relate to the release of designated Green Belt land for housing and other purposes. The Green Belt was established specifically to restrict urban sprawl, to also offer an area for recreation to urban dwellers and to serve as the "lungs of London" – an increasingly important consideration in current times of atmospheric pollution. To overturn this policy and provision is a retrograde step, is contrary to the expressed view of the Mayor of London and is a needless action when alternative sites ("brownfield" sites) exist in sufficient number and amount to meet housing development need in the borough.

Specifically, the proposals for the Crews Hill area [Policy SP PL9 pp.77-80 and Concept Plan Figure 3.10] are particularly ill-founded: notwithstanding the existence of the small railway station ("Crews Hill" – with extremely limited parking provision), the transport infrastructure and roads are already stretched and will not be able to handle the impact of some 3000+ additional houses in the area. In such a context, it should be noted that the strong probability is that such houses, if ever built, would not meet the need for affordable housing but would be larger properties to be bought by one/two car families. In the process, the current local industries (horticultural nurseries and associated activities) which provide both local employment and an attraction for customers and visitors will be lost.

To summarise: I do not dispute the need for the Council to meet its obligations in terms of housing provision, specifically affordable housing, but it follows that such provision should be related to the economic circumstances of those in housing need and to their location in terms of employment opportunities and ready availability of transport. The Crews Hill area does not meet those criteria, and the case for removing its Green Belt status is not made. The Local Plan needs to recognise this and make the necessary adjustments.