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I am writing to you to express my serious concern and grave criticism of proposals you have set out regarding the future of Enfield and its Green Belt. Although I now live in Bishops Stortford in East Hertfordshire, I grew up in Enfield, and have spent a large part of my life enjoying, sharing and researching the history of Enfield's parks and buildings. The borough is incredibly unusual and lucky to have such beautifully, unspoilt and historically significant open land, which I still regard as a neighbouring 'asset' from where I live and which I continue to visit on a regular basis (not least because I still have family members living in Enfield).

I am aghast at the proposals you have in hand regarding areas of Enfield's Green Belt and its town centre, as part of the Draft Local Plan, and am violently opposed to them. I am of course aware of the pressures on all local authorities to build more and more housing - said to be necessary, though in my experience it almost never turns out to be affordable and therefore never really solves the 'housing crisis'. In my own area, there are many housing developments under construction at present, including two on the edges of Bishops Stortford and more near Harlow.

In my view, almost all such development is a negative step, but I feel that in the case of Enfield, a far greater degree of care should be taken. The open land in Enfield is not just your average open space. It has a nationally if not internationally significant history and character - tied in with its use as a royal chase, its former royal palaces (Elsynge, and in the town centre) and its proximity to the former palace of Theobalds, one of the most important houses in England's history. I say this not just as an ordinary member of the public but as an expert on Tudor and Jacobean history and on Enfield in particular - seeing the parks and open land of Enfield inspired me to pursue my line of work, which is working as an architectural historian for Historic England.

However, I write not in my Historic England capacity, but in my capacity as a long-term resident of and visitor to Enfield. Trent Park, Forty Hall, Hillyfields, Whitewebbs, Crews Hill and Hadley Wood are all incredibly special places - just like Richmond Park, St James's Park or the grounds of Hampton Court. No one would propose building housing developments on any of the places I've just mentioned, so why is it acceptable in Enfield? There is no question in my mind that more sensitive and appropriate sites could be found within the borough or close by for new developments, if they really area required - for instance, near the North Circular or in Ponders End. Have other options really been adequately investigated? I feel that there is simply no excuse for the proposals that you have outlined - including around 3,000 new homes on open Green Belt countryside next to the historically significant Trent Park (policy SP PL 10, pp. 80-87), 3,000 or even up to 7,500 homes at Crews Hill (policy SP PL9, pp. 77-80), around 160 homes in the Green Belt at Hadley Wood (SA45, p. 364), expansion of the Tottenham Hotspurs training ground by Whitewebbs (SA62, p. 383, and SP CL4, pp. 277-9), a new industrial and distribution centre within Enfield Chase (SA54, p. 374) and encouragement for tall buildings within the Enfield Town Centre Conservation Area (pp. 156-60, figs 7.3-7.4, Policy DE6, SA2, p. 321).

These areas of Enfield should be protected, valued and promoted as beautiful and historic

features, not redeveloped and spoilt by huge additional numbers of traffic, new roads, etc. They are a major asset to the borough just as they are now - for instance, they help to attract visitors, tourists and new residents, and continue to be regularly enjoyed by all those lucky enough to know them well, young and old, people of all backgrounds and ethnicity. This has been proven over the past year as never before, as people have 'discovered' Enfield's glories for themselves during lockdowns. Are you really willing to throw all this away; to be responsible for changing the character of Enfield's landscape forever? Is that really wise? I suspect that if ANY of the current proposals affecting Enfield's Green Belt were to go ahead, and if tall buildings were erected in the town centre, all those now at the Council would be held accountable for many years for a major outrage - this is just like the widespread demolition of historic buildings that happened in the 1960s, and which is now regretted so widely.

I implore you to think again about these proposals and retain these areas of Enfield which make people so proud, and of which you, Enfield Council, should also be proud. Look elsewhere for your sites for redevelopment!