

Draft Local Plan - Site SA45 (Land between Camlet Way and Crescent West, Hadley Wood) and Intensification Zone around Hadley Wood station

I am writing to object to the proposal, within the Draft Local Plan, to develop 160 homes on Green Belt land between Camlet Way and Crescent West in Hadley Wood.

I have lived in Hadley Wood for nine years and take a keen interest in community issues. I am a governor of Hadley Wood School, I co-founded Hadley Wood Neighbourhood Watch, and as a member of the Hadley Wood Association I sit on its Security sub-committee.

Like most residents I value all the green spaces within Hadley Wood, including site SA45, for aesthetic reasons; but also, as a biologist, I appreciate that these areas have enormous ecological significance, including biodiversity and carbon sequestration. The Green Belt protects the special character of Hadley Wood; the release of Green Belt land for housing development would diminish this special character and possibly set a precedent for future incursions into the 'Intensification Zone'. The key points of my objection are listed below.

1. Significantly increasing housing in Hadley Wood is not sustainable development

While 'good' growth and development would be welcomed in the community, this proposal is not 'good' in the sense that it would be disproportionate and environmentally damaging, and would be neither beneficial nor appropriate; in other words, it would not be sustainable. The proposed development of site SA45 would mean a significant increase in the number of residents in a location where amenities and infrastructure are seriously lacking. Hadley Wood lacks schools (apart from the primary school which cannot expand), healthcare including a GP practice, and shopping and leisure facilities, including a Post Office; local public transport is poor; and drainage/sewers are inadequate. Poor public transport provision means that Hadley Wood is a car-dependent location, and increased car use will increase air pollution and therefore contribute to climate change.

2. An unjustifiable large-scale destruction of the Green Belt

The Draft Local Plan proposes that a quarter of the 25,000 proposed new homes be build on

Green Belt land, going against national policies, the London Plan, and Enfield's own Climate Change Action Plan. There is no coherent justification for building 25 per cent of the proposed houses on Green Belt land, neither is there a justification for building 160 out of those 25,000 homes on Green Belt land in Hadley Wood. The Green Belt around Hadley Wood must be protected and conserved as it serves vital purposes including separation from Barnet and Potters Bar, helping air quality in the borough and biodiversity. The centuries' old grasslands are an important resource for carbon sequestration.

3. The Draft Local Plan will destroy Hadley Wood's unique heritage landscape

The Hadley Wood meadows that are under threat are part of the established Green Belt in an Area of Special Character across three boroughs. They provide visual harmony for many walkers and cyclists, are the setting for two Conservation Areas, and their loss would greatly harm the heritage value of both Hadley Wood and Monken Hadley. Specifically, site SA24 is sandwiched between the Hadley Wood Conservation Area and the Monken Hadley Conservation Area, with Grade II listed buildings on Camlet Way. The Local Plan's proposals will adversely impact the setting, character and appearance of those heritage assets, while the Council has not produced any evidence to assess the level of harm.

4. The proposal is unnecessary and wrong

Neither the housing supply nor demand requirement has been adequately assessed. The range of housing need numbers is too wide to justify the necessary exceptional circumstances, and various potential sources of supply, such as SIL sites, have not been assessed. There is also no evidence of compliance with the Duty to Cooperate with other boroughs.

5. The Draft Local Plan fails to either prioritise or develop all brownfield sites

The Local Plan does not have a settlement hierarchy nor a prioritisation of brownfield sites. Surprisingly, Enfield Council has not included any of their landholdings, while they must be the largest single landowner in the borough.

6. Environmental impact

Developing this Green Belt site for housing will do nothing to help the Council meet its own Climate change Action Plan. As a car-dependent location Hadley Wood is not a suitable location for a large-scale increase in housing at site SA45 or through intensification. The already existing congestion would be worsened, leading to air pollution. The destruction of grassland, a valuable resource for carbon sequestration, would also represent a material negative.

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I therefore urge the Council to change the Local Plan by removing this proposed site allocation and retaining Green Belt status for the land.

