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(corrected repetition - see paragraph 4 "It is unfortunate" ... etc)

Enfield Draft Local Plan - my objections - from Peter Shrubbs

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this important consultation.

Enfield council's proposal to destroy the local Green Belt and to replace it with urban sprawl is a singularly misguided step when the need for new housing in the borough presents an opportunity for an imaginative renewal programme within the existing built-up environment. It is all the more unfortunate given the council's inability to foster a collaborative approach among its members towards the Draft Local Plan, resulting in a vote which was almost a perfect division on party lines. It is almost as if the council set out to hoodwink residents, by (1) sending out a less than adequate consultation leaflet with only one month remaining of the three month consultation period; (2) bamboozling people with complex consultation "compendium" running to thousands of pages; and (3) rushing through a decisive vote of the full council after members were given only a few days to study and assess the full implications and little or no time to find out what their constituents wanted.

We all know that builders and developers love to get hold of so-called "greenfield" sites because they know that their costs will be cheaper and their profits will be higher. Lowland England is currently in the grip of a "greenfield" gold rush promoted by the government's housing policies and now by Enfield Council as well. Our country's food self-sufficiency currently stands at around 60%. How long can it be held at that level with a growing population? And suppose food "globalisation" breaks down if other agricultural nations export less to the UK? Is now the right time to be turning farmland into suburbs?

It is all very well for planners to talk grandly about a so-called "national park city". In the case of Enfield, it is gobbledegook and subterfuge being employed in an attempt to try to disguise the blatant bulldozing of much of the borough's remaining countryside. Terms such as "rewilding" are employed to make the scheme sound environmentally friendly and "green". But it is exactly the opposite. There can be no functioning eco-system in a scheme which destroys or fragments long-standing wildlife habitats and erodes biodiversity within the Green Belt.

It is unfortunate also that the scheme will destroy some of the finest countryside vistas in the area and obliterate its rural character. I suspect many councillors are unaware of this and I would therefore encourage them to visit each of the areas affected so they can fully understand the impact the plan will have in its current form.

For these and many other reasons I wish to associate myself entirely with the response of Enfield Roadwatch to the Draft Local Plan consultation. It presents many sound reasons as to why the local plan should not go ahead in this form.

Therefore, I express my objections 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 SA52 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.

Most of these sites are part of historic Enfield Chase, which played an important role in the development of Enfield. The remaining parts of the Chase are unique in the southeast and a rare and valuable landscape asset. The loss of these sites would cause permanent harm not only to the Green Belt, but also to the very character of the borough. Vicarage Farm is crossed by the Merryhills Way footpath, much-used by Enfield residents and others for exercise and relaxation and the physical and mental health attributes of the footpath would be destroyed by development. The farmland could be put back into productive use growing local food for local people. Crews Hill is equally important to the borough and should not be destroyed. Its garden centres and other businesses provide employment and a resource for people from Enfield and beyond. Instead of losing Crews Hill for housing, its horticultural activities should be encouraged and enhanced so that it can once again be a hub for food and plant production.

I also object to PolicyDM BG10: Burial and crematorium spaces, which would take part of Firs Farm and other recreation sites for crematoria.

I also object to Policy DEG: Tall Buildings. Tall buildings are inappropriate in most parts of Enfield and the Council even admits in 7.6.4 that alternative building forms, such as lower-rise mansion blocks, can achieve a similar number of homes as tower blocks.

While I support housing development and support the ambition to meet Enfield's housing needs, I strongly object to the proposal to release Green Belt for housing or other purposes. I believe that there are alternatives available to meet housing targets and that the Green Belt is a precious resource that should be protected and preserved for future generations. It is too valuable to lose for all the many environmental, ecological, economic, public health and other reasons that have been identified, especially during the recent pandemic. The Council has a duty of care for the Green Belt, in accordance with the London Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework [NPPF], and any intentions to release parts of it should be taken out of the local plan.