

Response to the Draft Local Plan Reg 18 Consultation 2021

I am writing to **object** to the following Policies: **Policy SP PL10, pages 80-87, and Figure 3.11; and Policy SP PL9, pages 77-80 and Concept Plan Figure 3.10.**

I am objecting because these policies involve building on vast areas of the Green Belt, on remaining parts of historic Enfield Chase where unspoilt countryside survives, a rare and precious resource in Greater London. These green spaces make Enfield an inviting area in which to live, and their loss would cause permanent harm to the Green Belt and to the character of the borough.

I am particularly opposed to the loss of Vicarage Farm to create an urban development, to be known as Chase Park, on open Green Belt countryside: Policy SP PL10, pages 80-87, and Figure 3.11. The following are reasons why I oppose the proposed development:

- Health: both physical and mental health benefits from exercising in natural open green spaces, away from roads and buildings, cannot be over-emphasised, as highlighted during the Covid pandemic. I regularly walk on the Merryhills Way footpath with my wife and other family members, to Trent Park or to the Ridgeway and back home, and we see and chat to many others enjoying this space. The footpath is very well used by people of all ages (couples, families, groups of friends, primary school children, short and long distance walkers, dog walkers, runners, nature lovers etc). Development here, leaving a footpath alongside housing, would completely destroy the health benefits of the unspoilt Green Belt land. I have health problems and often find it difficult to motivate myself to exercise at home but getting out to walk in the clean air and enjoy the peaceful setting and wonderful landscape views is highly beneficial to my physical and mental wellbeing.
- Traffic congestion and air and noise pollution: more road traffic will inevitably follow with the creation of new homes on this big site. Roads in the area are already unsuitable for the high volume of traffic using them, becoming heavily congested many times every day.
- Loss of local resource: this Green Belt area is used throughout the year by local residents, and is also easy to access for people living further away with good bus and underground services nearby. If built on, it will mean having to travel further afield, probably by car, to find any equivalent area. The location adjacent to existing residential roads and within easy reach of public transport is a huge advantage that will be lost.
- Permanent loss of wildlife habitats and biodiversity: this is at a time when we have increasing evidence regarding the damage caused by climate change and the impact this will have in the future.
- Increased pressure on local services: eg on local NHS resources which are already unable to cope with demand, as demonstrated by long waiting times for minor treatments as well as surgery, patients having to travel miles by road or underground for diagnostic tests, etc. There will be no scope for expansion at Chase Farm Hospital as an extensive part of the hospital site has already been sacrificed for housing development.
- The vast extent of the proposed building work close to established residential areas will have a serious detrimental effect every day on the quality of life for people, such as my family, living locally during the long building period. The only people to benefit will be wealthy developers.

I am also opposed to Policy SP PL9, pages 77-80 and Concept Plan Figure 3.10 relating to development at Crews Hill. I oppose the proposals because I believe:

- This is a unique area, again providing a boundary to the urban sprawl and providing important environmental benefits, helping tackle the problems of pollution, high temperatures and the pace of climate change. Having worked in crowded and densely built-up central London, I find the difference in such areas incredibly striking. The benefits would be lost for ever if the proposed development were allowed to go ahead.
- Local businesses should be protected: I can see no justification for destroying the horticultural and other businesses located at Crews Hill, providing local employment. Other options should be considered seriously instead. The businesses at Crews Hill offer customers an enjoyable experience in a relaxing environment and, together with productive farmland in beautiful countryside, are also a valuable resource that Enfield Borough is lucky to have.
- Increased traffic congestion and pollution will result from the proposed development and rural lanes will be lost, also currently a feature of Enfield's character.

Building on the Green Belt should be a very last resort. More homes are needed but there are better suited sites to build them on. I always believed the Green Belt was to be protected and its purposes maintained, in accordance with the London Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework. I strongly oppose any plans to allow development on Green Belt land, especially the areas providing a boundary to existing built-up areas. Many urban areas within Enfield are in need of regeneration and building new housing within such existing deprived and neglected areas or former industrial land, which can be seen to be widely available, should be prioritised in my view. Affordable homes could be achieved in these locations, as required by Government targets, without putting the borough's future in the hands of wealthy developers putting their own interests first and irreversibly losing Enfield's heritage and the amazing benefits the existing Green Belt landscape offers for residents today and in the future.

The comments provided in this response to the consultation are my own views.