

Dear Sirs,

I wish to register our strong objection to the proposed release of Green Belt land in the borough of Enfield for housing and other purposes. We particularly wish to object to the proposal regarding the Green Belt site SA45 in Hadley Wood, involving the release and allocation of land for the development of 160 homes, and we request that the proposal be removed from the Local Plan.

My family and I have lived in Hadley Wood (19 Crescent East) for almost a year. Our reasons for objecting are as follows:

1. DESTRUCTION OF GREEN BELT & CONSERVATION AREA

We were drawn to the locality precisely due to the fact it is surrounded by Green Belt, which protects the special character of the area. The Hadley Wood meadows under threat are part of the established Green Belt in an Area of Special Character across three boroughs. They are a beautiful, restful place 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. The proposed intensification plans would also cause harm to the Conservation Area.

2. NOT A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT LOCATION.

This is key. Whilst good growth and development is welcomed, in Hadley Wood the amenities and infrastructure would require significant investment to accommodate the very meaningful increase in the number of residents that the proposal would bring. Hadley Wood lacks schools / school places, healthcare, shopping and leisure facilities, local public transport is poor and drainage/sewers are inadequate, with risks of flash flooding. It is a car-dependent location, and key roads operate at over 100% of capacity, with congestion causing air pollution and thus increasing climate change effects. Increase the number of homes by 160 and you will increase the number of cars by potentially up to double that.

I can personally assert that we have direct negative experience of the above-mentioned infrastructure limitations and why this convinces us of the folly of the proposal.

a) Lack of school places

We moved here at the start of the last school year. The Hadley Wood Primary school was unable to offer my youngest son a place, although we live less than 5 minutes walk from their gates. Despite trying all state primary schools in the surrounding area, the only school place we could secure was in Southgate, 15 mins by car (due to traffic congestion on local roads) or more than an hour if walking. Indeed my son's primary school (De Bohun) is actually the next nearest Enfield borough primary to Hadley Wood, which highlights further Hadley Wood's more rural location and infrastructure restrictions. A year later we are still unable to get a space any closer for my son, as closer schools in neighbouring boroughs also have huge waitlists and catchment area restrictions.

This raises the question of how the development proposal is being managed with regard to educational provision, both for primary and secondary education, even if there were to be

cooperation with the adjoining boroughs. It cannot be assumed that demand would simply go to the private school sector, just because of Hadley Wood's currently wealthier demographic, and moreover if the housing proposal would undoubtedly mean many more school-age children living here, including families who would only look to state schools.

b) Poor public transport links / car dependence

Furthermore, my family and I were without a car for our first 4 months in Hadley Wood and we found ourselves at a very significant disadvantage with regards to getting to school, work, food shopping, doctors visits etc, during those months. I cannot stress how necessary it is to have a car when living here and how difficult ones life is if one does not, due to the lack of proper or reliable bus links and the limited train services. We were reliant on taxi services (not a long term solution for many people) more expensive/ limited trains or the limited bus services, the more regular (yet unreliable) of which involves first a 15-20 minute walk and then an undetermined wait on the very congested Cockfosters Road just to board the bus. A development proposal that cites proximity to a mainline station as a key justification for its existence, and one that also is purportedly to include 50% affordable housing, including council tenants, means there would undoubtedly then be future residents who would not have cars and/or be on lower incomes and therefore reliant on the more affordable public transport options, which are simply lacking here.

While I support housing development and support the ambition to meet Enfield's housing needs, I believe that alternatives exist to meet housing targets, in particular on existing brownfield sites with better surrounding, existing infrastructure. 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. In Hadley Wood it serves vital purposes including separation from Barnet and Potters Bar, supporting biodiversity, and helping air quality in the borough with the centuries' old grasslands, an important resource for carbon sequestration.

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.