

To whom it may concern,

Objection to the Enfield Draft Local Plan: September 2021

As residents of the Borough of Enfield we would like to formally object to draft policy DM BG10 in the Draft Enfield Local Plan which allocates Firs Farm Wetlands (Site ID SA59) as a site for burial and/or crematorium use. As set out in herein, we call on the Council to remove all reference to Firs Farm Wetlands from Policy DM BG10 when the draft Local Plan is finalised and adopted.

We oppose this policy for the following reasons:

1. Firs Farm wetlands is a vitally important community resource, essential to the health and well-being of our family, and other families in the area.
2. Reasons 2-10 stated by Friends of Firs Farm in their objections to the draft policy DM BG10 in the Draft Enfield Local Plan.

We expand on our objections as set out below.

1. Firs Farm wetlands is a vitally important community resource, essential to the health and well-being of our family, and other families in the area.

Firs Farm is vitally important resource for our family as well as the wider community, and was very important in choosing to relocate our family to Winchmore Hill. Our family use Firs Farm Wetlands, and in particular the part of the Firs Farm Wetlands designated Site ID SA59, every day and the proposed development by Enfield Council would have a significant negative impact on our use of the space.

The importance of Firs Farm Wetlands to our family and the others that use it has increased significantly during the Covid-19 pandemic and the associated periods of lockdown. We were pleased to see the use of Firs Farm Wetlands increase, and it now plays an increasingly important role in maintaining good mental health for local people, alongside the opportunities for improving physical health. The proposed development would cause all these gains in health, wellbeing and community to be lost.

In addition to the use of Firs Farm Wetland by our family it provides a “green lung” for the surrounding residential areas, with many opportunities for informal recreation and organised sports. Firs Farm Wetlands have an important role in flood alleviation in the area, allowing pluvial flooding to be avoided, particularly in the context of increasing areas of hard-standing from new development and paving front gardens, which has led to increased run-off during

extreme weather events and an increased risk of flash flooding. The area also is important in maintaining and improving local biodiversity, and the award-winning Wetlands are home to many species of animals, birds and insects. The area now provides an important educational resource for children through the activities of schools and other community groups.

The many benefits of Firs Farm Wetlands have been recognised by Enfield Council in its relevant policy documents. In Enfield's Blue and Green Strategy, for example, the Moore Brook corridor (or 'green lung') between Pymmes Park to Firs Farm is identified as offering significant opportunities to increase green cover and improve access to existing assets (Paragraph 4.2.6), and the Firs Farm Wetlands are identified as a "Strategic Node" (Figure 14) reflecting its role as a "major area of wetland" (Paragraph 4.2.3). The Strategy identifies Firs Farm as an important area of publicly accessible open space in this area in the context of limited opportunities to diversify existing open spaces within Palmers Green, Bush Hill Park, Southgate Green and Winchmore Hill to alleviate the identified deficiencies, such as children's play areas and food-growing land (Paragraph 4.4.33). On Page 61 of the Strategy, Firs Farm is identified as a Sports Hub and a location for additional sports pitches to help achieve the Strategy's Aim 1 of achieving a 25% increase in blue-green infrastructure in Enfield. The Enfield Sports Villages Programme outlined in Appendix 1 of the Strategy identifies Firs Farm as a location for one of the Sports Hubs providing a very unique and exciting opportunity to deliver world class sports facilities in Enfield, with the aim to be recognised as centre of excellence, enhancing Enfield's reputation as a premier top sports destination. Similarly, the Enfield river and wetland restoration programme also identified in Appendix 1 to the Strategy identifies Firs Farm as part of the plans for creation of new rain gardens, reedbeds to improve water quality and reduce flood risk as well as deliver other multiple benefits, such as habitat restoration and flood plain naturalisation. Figure 30 in the Strategy identifies Enfield Council's role in implementation use all its powers (including planning) to increase the quality of blue and green infrastructure in the borough. The draft proposal to use a significant proportion of Firs Farm as a crematorium clearly is contradictory to this.

The development of the crematorium, its presence at the site, and its operation will all impact adversely on the current and proposed uses of the area in terms of sports and recreation, flood alleviation and biodiversity. This will also have a knock-on effect on local people's physical and mental health, and their well-being.

2. Reasons 2-10 stated by Friends of Firs Farm in their objections to the draft policy DM BG10 in the Draft Enfield Local Plan.

We would like to support the objections set out by Friends of Firs Farm on pages 3- 12 of their letter setting out their objections to the draft policy DM BG10.