

Dear Sir/Madam,

### **Response to the Draft Local Plan Reg 18 Consultation 2021**

I write to express my opposition to the sections of the draft Enfield local plan proposing:

- housing development at Vicarage Farm/Chase Park (Policy SP PL 10, pages 80-87 and Figure 3.11) (referred to in this letter as “**Vicarage Farm/Chase Park**”)
- housing development at Crews Hill (Policy SP PL 9, pages 77-80 and Figure 3.10) (referred to in this letter as “**Crews Hill**”)
- housing development at Hadley Wood (SA45, page 364) (referred to in this letter as “**Hadley Wood**”)

According to section 2.4 of the draft local Plan, the London Plan seeks to achieve “strong inclusive communities, making the best use of land, creating a healthy city...increasing...climate change resilience” as well as the important goal of delivering homes.

However, by seeking to build houses at Vicarage Farm/Chase Park, Hadley Wood and at Crews Hill, the Local Plan would thwart these admirable objectives. By replacing accessible and well-used Green Belt land at these three locations (particularly the open greenery and rural vistas surrounding the popular Merryhills Way through Vicarage Farm) and semi-rural/agricultural/horticultural land at Crews Hill with housing estates, the Council would be acting in a manner incompatible with the London Plan by:

- Destroying and diminishing the “strong and inclusive community” benefits of accessible, green landscape. For example, we use the Merryhills Way regularly to meet friends for walks, to meet other dog-owners with our dog and both our sons have enjoyed Beavers and Cubs nature walks and night walks along the Merryhills Way.
- Discouraging a “healthy city”. One of the reasons my family uses the Merryhills Way so frequently for social meetings is because of the mental and physical health benefits we receive from combining social activity with walking through natural surroundings with beautiful views. In particular, this means we can access Trent Park on foot from our house without having to walk beside a polluted, congested road. This valuable amenity would be lost if the proposals for the development of Vicarage Farm/Chase Park are continued.
- Reducing Enfield’s ability to increase “climate change resilience”. Replacing open Green Belt land with “high density” housing would increase the number of cars on the surrounding roads. In particular Vicarage Farm/Chase Park is a long walk from nearby train/Tube stations and the roads around that area are hilly enough to mean cycling to the station is probably not an option for all.
- Failing to make “the best use of land” for all the reasons given above.

In addition, national planning law requires exceptional circumstances and reasons to build on the Green Belt. It is not clear enough from the draft local plan why alternative locations including brownfield sites in Enfield are not suitable for development, rather than destroying the green spaces we are fortunate enough to retain on the outskirts of London. It does not appear that alternative options for developments such as brownfield sites, “Strategic Industrial Land” in the borough or more innovative solutions, such as conversion of disused shops and redundant office space have been fully considered as alternatives to destroying a valuable and legally protected natural resource.

All the proposed developments on Green Belt land listed above would undermine the character of the London Borough of Enfield and sever the Borough’s links to its unique local history. In

particular, the development at Vicarage Farm/Chase Park would destroy the Enfield Chase Heritage Area, cutting through the “chase” that links the woods of Trent Park and the historical enclosure of Old Park (Enfield and Bush Hill Park golf clubs and surrounding area). It would lead to a seamless run of housing joining up of the currently distinct areas of Enfield and Oakwood, which would both lose their local characters. In addition, although parts of the EN2 postcode around the Enfield Golf Club appear very green, free access to green spaces is in fact limited due to the private nature of Enfield Golf Club. Building on Vicarage Farm/Chase Park would result in the loss of residents’ open access to green space for leisure, social and exercise purposes without having to have access to some form of transport. It has been particularly evident in these COVID times how valuable easy access to open green space is, how grateful local residents are for this amenity and how it has brought together local Enfield residents in a new sense of shared community. I believe this recently enhanced understanding of the unique character of this part of Enfield should be protected and others across Enfield should be encouraged to share in it, rather than destroying it. We should be preserving our historical landscape and encouraging the enjoyment of it in a way similar to how Epping Forest is managed, not taking it away from a local population who have begun to appreciate its historical, visual and biological/environmental characteristics more so than ever before.

There appears to be no realistic consideration in the proposals to build houses at Crews Hill or Vicarage Farm/Chase Park of the impact on local traffic or transport links that building thousands of houses on these sites would have. It is just not compatible with modern daily life to assume that people living in these areas would rely solely, or even mostly, on cycling or public transport to get to their destinations. Traffic congestion along Enfield Road and The Ridgeway is considerable already during the rush hour and at weekends. The development at Vicarage Farm/Chase Park would exacerbate this congestion further, making journeys to school and workplaces longer than ever and contributing to harmful pollution. The trains that run through Crews Hill to Moorgate/Kings Cross are particularly busy during the rush hour periods of 6am to 9am and after 5pm on weekdays, sometimes meaning it is already impossible to find a seat at Enfield Chase and often by Winchmore Hill. This is still the case even with the current home-working patterns enforced by COVID. The draft local plan makes no mention of how the increased burden on the train services caused by building thousands of houses at Crews Hill and Vicarage Farm/Chase Park would be managed.

Finally, the draft Local Plan makes many references to Enfield’s “growing population” but does not contain any quantifiable estimates or assumptions about the anticipated rate or size of this population growth. I question how much population growth there will be in the future, especially given the impact of Brexit on migration from Europe and the general aging of the UK population. The draft Local Plan does not provide adequate evidence on predicted population growth which might count towards justifying why such large developments are required in Enfield, in particular why this would be an exceptional circumstance requiring development of Green Belt land at Vicarage Farm/Chase Park, Hadley Wood and Crews Hill.

I urge you to reconsider your proposals to develop Vicarage Farm/Chase Park, Hadley Wood and Crews Hill, in the interests of Enfield’s current and future residents.