

Dear Enfield Council,

I was born and raised in Barnet, my children attend school in Monken Hadley and my father, born in Potters Bar, spent his teenage and early adult years in Hadley Wood, where my grandparents lived for the rest of their lives, so my family has been local to this area for many decades and seen it change considerably over that time. The one thing that remained intact, amid the relentless demolition of beautiful old buildings and the gradual erosion of the character and history of the area, was the Green Belt land, which all generations of my family have enjoyed seeing, strolling through and playing in, breathing in the fresh air, spotting the animals and flowers and marvelling at the beauty of nature. Now, sadly, even this is under threat, with the Council's proposal to build 160 new homes on a large plot of land in Hadley Wood, and I am therefore writing to oppose this development in the strongest terms.

The local area is already becoming an ugly shadow of its former self, and this latest proposal is another nail in the coffin. Not content with the destruction of a sizeable portion of Trent Country Park for unaffordable "luxury" housing, not to mention building all over Cockfosters Station and car park and countless other intrusive developments all over the local area, the local councils always seem to be looking for the next little corner of countryside and character to bulldoze and, between them - particularly in my local areas of Enfield and Barnet - it seems they will not be content until every bit is overrun with ugly, soul-less buildings and our beautiful countryside is lost forever.

The whole point of the Green Belt is to protect our green spaces and this proposed development goes against all it was intended for. It forms a huge and significant part of the character of this area and is, indeed, one of the main reasons that draws people to move here - so that they can experience a form of country life so close to the city of London - but ironically, the very essence of this attraction is being quickly eroded by the endless quest to accommodate new inhabitants. People will end up forgetting why on Earth they moved here. The Green Belt land currently separates the towns of Enfield, Barnet and Potters Bar, but once the councils start building there, it will lead to urban sprawl and our towns really will become just an extension of the London outskirts and lose their individuality.

The ancient meadow lands are important to our heritage, being in an Area of Special Character, and the site of two Conservation Areas. They will be gone forever, along with the many animals, insects, plants trees, etc. that thrive there, and this need not be the case, as there are so many brownfield sites that could be used for housing instead (whereas animals and insects do not have such a choice). They are an important source of biodiversity and carbon sequestration, which improves air quality. These qualities are essential for the survival of the planet and, at this crucial time when environmental crises form such an important focus of the international agenda, local councils should be doing everything in their power to protect the countryside, for the good and health of the people, animals, plants and planet. Instead, they seem intent on destroying it, rather than exploring other, less harmful options for housing. The flooding problems will also intensify, as there will be no land to absorb the water.

Driving through the local area is like trying to navigate a deadly obstacle course, with cars parked on both sides of the road, lorries blocking the way and traffic jams stretching for miles, and with the overwhelming number of houses being built all around, including over much-needed car parks which will cause even more vehicles to spill onto the roads, it will become absolutely impossible to get anywhere - add to this another potential 160 vehicles - perhaps even double or triple that number, as many homes have multiple vehicles - and absolute chaos will prevail on the roads. The additional pollution from increased traffic and homes will contribute significantly to damaging the environment.

Hadley Wood has a very small village centre consisting of a station and a handful of shops; the already over-stretched services here and in surrounding areas will be unable to sustain the additional demand which will be placed on schools, shops, doctors, hospitals, public transport, etc., especially considering the vast amount of housing being built and planned all around the area already.

In conclusion, I would urge you strongly to please reconsider and remove this proposal so the land can be retained as the lovely Green Belt we all need and love. Thank you for your attention.