

On behalf of Save Cuffley And Northaw Green Belt (SCANGB), we wish to register the following objection to planning application 6/2020/3451/MAJ, Wells Farm for the following reasons:

1) Building in the Green Belt

This is clearly in an area of Green Belt that has been designated as 'high harm' and was recently removed from the Local Plan for that reason.

Welwyn & Hatfield BC have a strong track record of conforming to the NPPF by refusing planning permission for developments of this nature given that there are no exceptional circumstances that support this development. Most recently, an appeal against refusal for 2 detached homes at High Willows, Vineyards Road, was rejected for that very reason. The judgement from the planning inspectorate was quite clear: any benefits were clearly outweighed by harm to the Green Belt.

The Wells Farm application involves a larger loss of high harm Green Belt with no exceptional circumstances so to be consistent this also has to be refused.

A potential gateway to a much larger development

Although not part of this application, the developers have been open to admit that this is the first phase of a more ambitious project within the same site. We are also very much aware of the adjoining landowners ambitions to develop a site of some circa 600 dwelling. This is documented by recent planning applications and submissions to include the adjoining land within the emerging Local Plan.

2) Remote location

WHBC also have a strong track record of NPPF compliance when allowing development for standalone development – it just doesn't happen. This clearly falls into that category given the closest edge to Cuffley is some 250 mtrs away. If this development was allowed to proceed it will surely open the floodgates for scores of similar isolated sites & homes located across the borough.

3) Sustainable location

This site is some 1000m walking distance to the village centre, this exceeds the maximum distances recommended by government which is 800m

4) Local Plan Inspectors observations regarding development in Cuffley

Whilst the Local Plan has yet to be concluded, the Inspector has published his interim report regarding the situation in Cuffley. To summarise:

- a. There are limited employment opportunities in Cuffley and the community is largely a commuter one – predominantly by road. It makes little or no contribution to the WHBC strategy of locating homes in sustainable locations to local employment.
- b. Cuffley has a disproportionality high share of village development in comparison to the other 7 excluded villages.
- c. There is a traffic issue that will soon get severe without any mitigation and there are no viable solutions available. The inspector has recommended that future development be delayed until a lasting solution is put in place.

5) Brownfield site

Much has been made of the brownfield status of this site yet has, until recently, been home to some commercial enterprises. Although the images show a deserted and dilapidated scene, this site have been and are, home to viable business with the buildings used for storage and manufacturing. These would be lost if the site is developed.

6) Site specific comments

- a. The application identifies 32 allocated parking spaces or integral garages for the 14 properties which conforms to minimum standards. However, there is no visitor parking and, given the design of the site, no opportunity to create any. This would likely lead to on road parking along Northaw Road East which, as identified in the transport study, is a very busy road at peak times.
- b. There is no facility for waste bin storage which, presumably, would be at the front of most properties. Given the design approach these would effectively block the pavements.

In summary, given its location (high harm Green Belt, remote from Cuffley, not sustainable) and no exceptional circumstances this application has no substance or justification. It will set a precedent for similar sites to be developed and the consequences of that would change the landscape forever and for the worse. This site is seen as a starting point that would allow further development not only within Wells Farm but also the adjoining, much larger parcel of land.