



Mr Mark Peacock
Development Control
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
Campus East
Welwyn Garden City
Herts. AL10 6AE

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

24th February 2021 (by email)

Dear Mr Peacock,

**Application No. 6/2020/3451/MAJ
Wells Farm, Northaw Road East, Cuffley, EN6 4RD
Demolition of existing buildings and erection of 14 dwellings**

I write with reference to the above application for residential development which we consider as unacceptable with regard to the rural character of the area and the requirements of both national and local Green Belt policy. CPRE Hertfordshire objects strongly to this proposal for the following reasons.

1. The land identified for this proposed development is located in a wide sweep of open countryside to the south and south-west of Cuffley within the London Metropolitan Green Belt as identified in the existing Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005. There are long distance views and vistas towards the village from the south and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as revised in February 2019 requires land designated as Green Belt to be kept "permanently open" (para. 133) and "inappropriate development should not be approved except in very special circumstances" (para. 143).
2. The site, with additional land adjacent to it, is identified in the emerging Draft Local Plan as site HS30 under Policy SP3 Settlement Strategy and Green Belt Boundaries, and is proposed to be removed from Green Belt designation and allocated for housing. The Draft Local Plan is presently subject to Examination in Public (EiP).
3. CPRE Hertfordshire, together with a wide range of local community and other organisations, is represented at the EiP and has made submissions relating to the housing figures presented in the Draft Local Plan. We, and others, have challenged the basis for the Council's calculation of housing need at the EiP which are based on out-of-date population projections and the amount of land required.
4. At the Local Planning EiP hearings in August 2020, CPRE Hertfordshire made strong representations against the allocation of the site for housing. Reference was made to the Stage 3 Green Belt Review (Examination document EX156) which gave the site a



harm rating of “very high”. The companion Green Gap Study (EX160) also recognised the quality and sensitivity of the landscape gap between Cuffley and Northaw and recommended that it (including Wells Farm) should be included in the Local Plan as a “gap policy area”.

5. CPRE Hertfordshire has consistently opposed removal of land from the Green Belt in this sensitive area and believes that it is unacceptable to make any decisions on proposed development on the Green Belt prior to the outcome of the EiP and the subsequent adoption of the Local Plan. It will be necessary to determine the Inspector’s recommendations in relation to any proposals for amendments to Green Belt boundaries and the basis for any potential changes.
6. The Green Belt performs a particularly important function in this urban fringe area where services and facilities for local communities, as well as open countryside, are under significant pressure, as noted by many responses to this and similar proposals.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Berry
Planning Manager