

14 dwellings on land at Wells Farm, Northaw Road East

[Note: Govt's National Planning Policy Framework Feb 2019 is abbreviated to 'NPPF'].

Although the following are objections to the proposed 14 dwellings, a go-ahead to this would no doubt set a precedence for further massive development of Wells Farm. Therefore, issues such as pollution, etc have been noted.

1. POLLUTION: This is currently a serious problem in Cuffley as pollution levels are considered dangerously high already by European Standards so will only become worse with increased development. Refer to NPPF S.15 Item 170 (e) "Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural local environment by...preventing new...development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution... Development should...help to improve local environmental conditions such as air...quality..." This development, together with its associated influx of cars and technology use, would not only worsen an already dangerous situation, but would increase the pollution danger for existing residents together with the new ones. The Council must aim to "reduce greenhouse gas emissions" (NPPF S.14 Item 154). Therefore, Planners should seek to improve air quality, not harm it (and the local population) further.

This site is close to Cattlegate Farm so will get regular unpleasant odours.

2. PROTECTION OF THE AREA'S 'HIGH IMPACT' GREEN BELT (NPPF S.13): This site contravenes the fundamental aim of Green Belt Policy - Item 133 "to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence". Use of this site, with no natural boundary, will create precedence for future sprawl development (contra NPPF S.13 Item 133).

This site is within High Impact Green Belt countryside contra Item 134(c). This is also contra Item 134(d) that Green Belt serves "to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns".

There are no justifiable "very special" or "exceptional circumstances" to warrant altering the existing Green Belt boundaries (Item 136). Therefore development of this site is considered 'inappropriate' and harmful to the Green Belt (Item 143).

Development of this site is contra S.15 Item 170 as it will not "contribute to and enhance the natural local environment by (a) recognising the intrinsic character & beauty of the countryside" and there will be no (d) "net gains for biodiversity". Instead, development of this Green Belt site will result in the complete opposite happening to the area's natural habitats with destruction of same. Such a development site would be totally out of keeping with the surrounding rural area.

3. ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE: Northaw Road East is a country road and is notoriously problematic (as WHC is aware), especially at peak times and when there has been yet another incident/accident on the M25, A1(M) or A10. Drivers regularly struggle through intolerably long queues, temporary traffic lights and flooding on Cattlegate Road and Northaw Road East which become rat runs at these times. This site is could result in extra cars further increasing traffic, causing more stress to drivers and exacerbating the already dangerous levels of pollution (refer Point 1 above). The Local Plan Inspector, in his provisional report, noted that traffic is a significant issue with no clear mitigation plans and, until there are plans, he wouldn't recommend developments.

4. BASIC INFRASTRUCTURE:

Chances are that new residents on this site will need roads (see 3. above) or rail to reach work. The site is completely isolated and located too far out of Cuffley (or Crews Hill) to be able to walk or cycle safely to the

station so residents will need to drive (goes against sustainability rules) and there is insufficient car parking now, let alone when all these additional cars need to find day parking in Cuffley Village or Crews Hill.

There will be an impact on Cuffley and Crews Hill Stations which are nearing capacity (as WHC is aware) and trains into London are already full at peak times. It can be an unpredictable line too with trains often cancelled or turning up with too few carriages. The station car parks are always almost full.

There is a lack of public transport with the local bus being small and infrequent. Too dangerous to cycle or walk (and too far), therefore car use is needed making the site unsustainable. The nearest shops, doctor's surgery, etc are in Cuffley where car travel would be needed, once again making this site unsustainable.

The existing doctor's surgery is extremely busy already and will no doubt struggle to cope with an influx of new patients.

5. SCHOOLS: Cuffley and Northaw Villages are far from secondary schools, the nearest being Chancellors in Brookmans Park, Mount Grace in Potters Bar and Goffs in Goffs Oak. Students will have to travel further which will increase pollution as they'll have to take either cars or school buses.

Cuffley and Northaw Primary Schools are very popular and oversubscribed so will probably not be able to take many children from the new development (if any).

6. FLOODING ON NORTHAW ROAD EAST: Whenever it rains heavily there's bad flooding across the part of Northaw Road East that's next to this site (it slows traffic and damages cars). If this site is developed, this is going to exacerbate the flooding/poor land drainage situation.

NPPF S.14 Item 148 – choice of site must take full account of the flood risk and Item 155 – the Council must avoid “inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding”.

7. UNSUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:

Contrary to NPPF S.2: An development built on this isolated, 'standalone' site will not create and support a healthy community with accessible services. Environmentally, use of this site will not 'contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural...and historical environment...minimising pollution and mitigating and adapting to climate change.' It will have the opposite effect.

Contrary to NPPF S.5 (Items 72, 77-79) rural housing: this isolated, 'standalone' site, remote from amenities and Cuffley Village, will not be located 'where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities.' Isolation in the countryside should be avoided.

Contrary to NPPF S.9 Promoting sustainable transport – this site does not promote walking or cycling (dangerous road and terrain) or the use of public transport (limited and unreliable). Residents will no doubt have to use their cars.

A development on this site has been rejected in the past as it would have created a remote, isolated, 'outlier' development which would lead to future developments further destroying the precious High Impact Green Belt (leading to urban sprawl). This proposal, if allowed, would just be the first phase of a plan to develop the whole of the Wells Farm site as proposed in and removed from the Local Plan. The Inspector noted in his provisional report that Cuffley is not in a sustainable position to the rest of the Borough and already has a disproportionate amount of development compared to similar villages.