

## Objection to Proposed Retirement Development at Firs Wood Close

I would like to present my objections to the above proposed development. If allowed to go ahead, it will have a huge and serious impact on the standard of living for the residents of Firs Wood Close, Northaw Village, Potters Bar and the natural environment. My main objections are as follows:

### **1. Site Suitability**

The proposed site is in woods and countryside so it can't be ignored that, if permission is granted, it would mean a massive, irreversible loss of Green Belt land and a beautiful environment that has been enjoyed by residents plus the associated loss of wildlife arising from the destruction of natural habitats. Protecting the countryside and wildlife against such irreversible loss must be considered as the highest priority. The developer's Ecological Impact Report clearly shows the huge amount of wildlife – including protected species – and environmental issues present today.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for protecting Green Belt land states 'prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence' (Para 137) and Para 138(c) '.... safeguarding countryside from encroachment'. A development here would start that encroachment towards Northaw and will create a precedent for further applications.

Firs Wood Close is a quiet cul-de-sac off a country lane. The proposed development location is isolated and a distance from shops, amenities and services. It is obvious that residents and visitors to this proposed development would need vehicular transport. This is contrary to the Council's policy regarding reducing the need to travel and be dependent on a car. The site is therefore wholly unsuitable for a development.

### **2. Traffic**

The increase in traffic, caused by the proposed development, is going to be a huge burden on already extremely busy country roads. At certain times of day, especially morning and evening rush hours and school run times, there are long traffic jams at The Causeway traffic lights, through to Northaw East into Cuffley and back to Potters Bar. Just past the lights, thanks to the lorries queuing to turn into the recycling place and blocking the narrow road, traffic queues from early afternoon too. These country roads have never been adequate for the volume of traffic that pours through on a daily basis. If there is a problem on the M25, A10 or in Potters Bar, they are grid-locked because they are the alternative rat-run route. This development will only exacerbate further the problems currently experienced.

In addition, the substantial increase in traffic and congestion will cause air pollution and environmental damage, detrimental to the health of the local community.

The road chaos, pollution and general misery to residents that the construction of a large development is going to cause - also to users of the surrounding roads and the environment generally - is going to be truly horrendous.

### **3. GP & Transport Services**

Nearby GP surgeries are no doubt currently over-subscribed and a retirement development would probably cause an additional huge strain on them unless a new GP surgery was part of the development. If not, it would only have a negative effect on existing GP patients.

There is no bus service that could take residents from the new homes, thus there is reliance on cars.

### **4. Sustainability**

Councils aim to improve quality of life by providing for sustainable development. The proposed development is isolated and does not meet the needs or improve the quality of life of the existing Community.

It certainly will not ensure a better quality of life for people now and for generations to come. Quite the opposite - it offers only extensive loss of our precious Green Belt and daily misery which can only be detrimental and reduce residents' quality of life.

The NPPF Para 147 states 'Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.' With this development, no such 'very special circumstances' exist.

We're in a climate crisis and it's more critical than ever that our precious trees, plants, wildlife and natural environment and habitats are valued, left alone and protected. Developing the site, no matter how much the developer says they're including this pond or retaining that tree, will only cause environmental destruction, which is unacceptable in these times.