

Standing up for Hertfordshire's countryside

Mr. M. Peacock
Development Control
Welwyn Hatfield Council
Campus East
Welwyn Garden City
Hertfordshire
AL8 6AE

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

29th July 2015 (by email)

Dear Mr Peacock,

Application No. S6/2015/1342/PP

Outline planning application for residential development of up to 121 dwellings, associated infrastructure and a change of use from agricultural land to an extension of the King George V playing field. All matters reserved except for new vehicular access to serve the site, the provision of surface water discharge points and the level of development platforms on Land to the north east of King George V Playing Fields, Northaw Road East, Cuffley, Hertfordshire EN6 4RD

CPRE Hertfordshire opposes this application which would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework, the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and the emerging Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan.

All three state that residential development in the Green Belt is inappropriate, unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated which outweighs the harm done to the Green Belt. Paragraph 83 of the NPPF is clear that Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances through the preparation or review of the Local Plan.

This site is in the Green Belt. It is also outside the settlement boundary of Cuffley. In relation to specified settlements within the Green Belt, of which Cuffley is one, Policy GBSP2 of the District Plan 2005 states that ‘...development will be limited to that which is compatible with the maintenance of their Green Belt boundaries.’ Paragraph 17.13 of the Core Strategy informing the emerging Local Plan says that in Cuffley “ Development ... will be limited to the use of land and buildings within the defined urban area”. This proposal meets neither of those. It is also notable that this site was not included in the Council’s consultation document ‘Land For Housing Outside Urban Areas’ issued in 2013.

In the Planning Statement accompanying the application the applicant cites two ‘very special circumstances’ to justify the development (paragraph 9.2). These are

- (i) “The exceptional circumstances which the Borough Council acknowledges justify a review of the Green Belt.” As noted above, the NPPF states that this should be done through the Local Plan Review, which is on-going, and not by the ad-hoc approval of planning applications such as this.
- (ii) The fact that the application has been “informed by the numerous and detailed discussions held with the local community.” This consists of 9 headings, mostly relating to financial contributions towards local aspirations, none of which are material planning considerations.

Consequently, no very special circumstances can be demonstrated.

We urge the Council to reject this application.

Yours sincerely,



David Irving