

**Standing up for Hertfordshire's countryside**

Max Sanders  
Planning and Building Control  
Hertsmere Borough Council  
Civic Offices  
Elstree Way  
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Hertfordshire  
WD6 1WA

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

15<sup>th</sup> February 2019 (by email)

Dear Mr. Sanders

**Application No. 18/2410/FUL**

**Erection of new equestrian centre comprising livery stables, indoor arena, club room, lecture and training room, ancillary storage and overnight veterinary accommodation; with external horse walkers, external show jumping and dressage training area; access; parking; landscaping and drainage.**  
**at Caldecote Farm, Caldecote Lane, Bushey, Hertfordshire, WD23 4EF**

CPRE Hertfordshire has concerns regarding this application for development in the Green Belt.

Essentially the applicant's case is that the original equestrian facilities at Caldecote Farm were lost when permission was given, in 2017, for the replacement of those facilities with residential development. (Application No.16/0160/FUL). The applicant operated the equestrian business under lease and asserts that App.16/0160/FUL was submitted by the landowner against the applicant's wishes. The applicant wants to continue the business in the same area, hence the current application for replacement facilities in the adjoining paddock.

The proposal is for new outdoor recreation in the Green Belt. Paragraph 145(b) of the National Planning Policy Framework states that this is acceptable as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt. Should openness not be preserved, then, under both the NPPF and the Green Belt Policies in the Hertsmere Local Plan, the Applicant must present very special circumstances which outweigh the harm to the Green Belt.

It is implicit in the documentation accompanying the application that the applicant considers that the proposal represents a straight replacement for the original provision. However comparison between the previous buildings, as shown in App.16/0160/FUL and those proposed in the current application, demonstrates that the current proposals are significantly larger in both footprint and volume (24% and 44% respectively). Consequently this application will result in a substantially greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

The case for very special circumstances basically rests on the assessment of need for equestrian facilities in the area and the availability of alternative sites. However, comparison between the information supplied with this application and App. 16/0160/FUL indicate anomalies. Both the Need Assessment and Alternative Sites Appraisal included with 16/0160/FUL contradict those accompanying the present application. Para 10.12 of Officer's Report accompanying 16/0160/FUL states: *"Officers are satisfied that a satisfactory justification for the loss of the equestrian facility has been put forward through the submission of a needs assessment. The proposal therefore satisfies the criteria of paragraph 74 of the NPPF, policy L6 of the Local Plan (2003) and Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy, in so far as sufficient justification has been provided that the centre is surplus to requirements."*

Both sets of documentation cannot be correct. Consequently, the Council will need to compare and contrast the two and satisfy itself on the accuracy of the information provided with the current application and whether circumstances have changed significantly enough to justify this development.

Yours sincerely,

David Irving