

17 April 2019

## **PRESS RELEASE**

## **Standing up for Hertfordshire's Countryside**

### **Government funds work for huge Green Belt land release**

CPRE Hertfordshire is appalled that the government is providing £750,000 of public money to fund studies for Hemel Garden Communities (HGC), a sprawling development across hundreds of hectares of open countryside and Green Belt land to the north and east of Hemel Hempstead. The land on which this would take place spreads across the boundary between Dacorum Borough and St Albans District Council.

The development would add another 11,000 dwellings to the 44,000 in the Hertfordshire Green Belt committed in existing Local Plans even as national household formation figures are falling. It totally contradicts the National Policy Planning Framework's long-term commitment to protect the Green Belt. Why is public money being committed even before any development has been justified through local development plans?

CPRE Hertfordshire argues the Government has no right to prejudice the Local Plan process for the formal examination of the Dacorum and St Albans Local Plans especially as it has a land ownership interest through the Crown Estate. The release of Green Belt can never be a forgone conclusion.

The HGC Charter includes a sweeping new orbital road from M1 Junction 8, which will extend traffic noise across a wide area with a proposed 'country park' squeezed into the narrow gap left over between the new road and the M1. A poor substitute for those communities of Grovehill and Woodhall Farm in the north of Hemel Hempstead who currently enjoy access to genuinely tranquil countryside. The large village of Redbourn, in St Albans District will suffer too.

CPRE Herts objects that the locations don't support sustainable development or align with the urgent need to address climate change and carbon reduction targets. No fixed rail transport infrastructure is being proposed and the area is at the opposite end of the town, some 3 to 4 miles away, from Hemel Hempstead Station and Town Centre.

Kevin Fitzgerald Hon Director of CPRE Herts says we should stop wasting public money, protect this open countryside and prioritise first and foremost greatly enhanced public transport between Hemel Hempstead and St Albans as a boost to their town centres, local economies and to reduce congestion. Take the ideas of the County Council's A414 Corridor Strategy with early investment to promote brownfield land regeneration, and development of key locations in town centres, transport hubs and employment areas such as Maylands.

## Notes to Editors

1. CPRE Hertfordshire is the County Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England. CPRE fights for a better future for the English countryside. We work locally and nationally to protect, shape and enhance a beautiful, thriving countryside for everyone to value and enjoy. Our members are united in their love for England's landscapes and rural communities, and stand up for the countryside, so it can continue to sustain, enchant and inspire future generations. Founded in 1926, President: Emma Bridgewater, Patron: Her Majesty The Queen.  
[www.cpre.org.uk](http://www.cpre.org.uk).
2. CPRE Hertfordshire was founded in 1928 and is a separate registered charity. Locally, we: strive to protect the countryside from harm, working through the planning system and raising the alarm when countryside is threatened; support local communities and campaigns to protect valued local areas; advocate the sustainable use of land and other natural resources; influence planning policies to ensure that they reflect the interests of the countryside; campaign for a quieter countryside, free from litter and other intrusions; Lobby for sustainable transport policies and safer rural roads; celebrate Hertfordshire's countryside by promoting its beautiful landscapes; support village life; encourage people of all ages to take an interest in and enjoy their local countryside; Promote local food production. Our President is Sir Simon Bowes Lyon, KCVO. [www.cpreherts.org.uk](http://www.cpreherts.org.uk)