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Standing up for Hertfordshire's countryside

Shaun Greaves
Planning and Building Control
North Hertfordshire District Council
Council Offices
Gernon Road
Letchworth Garden City
Herts SG6 3JF

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

25th October 2021 (by email)

Dear Mr Greaves,

Application no. 21/02586/OP

Land South of Watton Road, Knebworth

Outline planning permission for up to 230 dwellings (including affordable housing), structural planting and landscaping, informal public open space and children's play area, surface water flood mitigation, vehicular access point and associated ancillary works. All matters reserved except for means of access.

I write with reference to the above application, to which CPRE Hertfordshire objects strongly for the following reasons.

1. The site lies within the London Metropolitan Green Belt as defined in the adopted North Herts Local Plan, and constitutes inappropriate development as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework by virtue of encroaching upon designated protected land and its impact on the open countryside surrounding Knebworth village.
2. Notwithstanding the site's allocation for development in the emerging Local Plan, presently subject to Examination in Public, it would be premature and inappropriate to grant planning permission in advance of the adoption of the Plan.
3. Significant uncertainty presently surrounds national policy regarding the future of designated protected areas including Green Belt. Recent ministerial statements have insisted that protected areas should remain free of inappropriate development such as speculative housing, and further technical guidance on this matter may be anticipated in the forthcoming Planning Bill and potential amendments to the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance.
4. Recent planning appeal decisions quoting the supremacy of housing land supply requirements over the protection of designated areas including Green Belt have led to significant public and institutional reaction, leading to the identification of inconsistencies in Government guidance on planning policy in this area.

CPRE is working nationally and locally for a beautiful and living countryside

CPRE Hertfordshire is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation

President: Sir Simon Bowes Lyon, KCVO

Chairman: Allan McNab

Registered Charity 1162419



5. CPRE, locally and nationally, is seeking clarification of the policy relating to protected areas and CPRE Hertfordshire urges the Council to refuse permission for the proposed development pending further technical guidance.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Berry
Planning Manager