

Louise Sahlke
Development Control
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
Campus East
Welwyn Garden City
Herts. AL10 6AE

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

6th April 2022 (by email)

Dear Louise Sahlke,

Application no. 2: 6/2022/0502
Land to the west of 103-109 Newgate Street Village
Outline permission for construction of up to 6 new dwellings, formation of access, car parking and turning space, and landscaping with all matters reserved

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

1. The land identified for this proposed development is located within the London Metropolitan Green Belt as identified in the existing Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 as being where development is inappropriate unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated according to criteria in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
2. It is not allocated for housing in the emerging Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan which is presently still subject to Examination in Public (EiP). It is suggested by the Applicant's consultant that the proposal constitutes infill development which may be regarded as appropriate in the Green Belt.
3. A development of six large houses is considerably in excess of what may be regarded as limited infilling of a gap in a continuous frontage of houses, and would extend significantly the boundary of the built-up area of the village. It may be regarded as an encroachment on the Green Belt with a consequent impact on the openness of the countryside in this location.
4. The Planning Statement claims that the shortfall in the supply of housing land is a reason for granting permission by virtue of the dismissal of a recent planning appeal at Bullens Green Lane, Colney Heath. The inspector at that inquiry was at pains to clarify that the circumstances of that appeal applied only in that location, and recent decisions elsewhere, including Broke Hill, Sevenoaks indicate that Green Belt protections should comprise a strong reason for refusing development, according to criteria in Paragraph 11 of the NPPF and footnote 7.



5. Further, CPRE Hertfordshire, together with a wide range of local community and other organisations, is represented at the EiP and has made submissions relating to the housing figures presented in the Draft Local Plan. We, and others, have challenged the basis for the Council's calculation of housing need at the EiP which are based on out-of-date population projections and the amount of land required.
6. It would be inappropriate to determine this application prior to the clarifications being sought by Welwyn Hatfield Council and others, including CPRE, regarding the interpretation of the NPPF and planning guidance, which may affect planning policy on the significance of designated protected land. Recent Ministerial Statements, which have policy weight, have indicated strong support for the Green Belt and the continued granting of permissions is inappropriate in these circumstances.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Berry
Planning Manager