



Kirsty Shirley
Development Management
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
The Campus
Welwyn Garden City
Herts. AL8 6AE

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

7th July 2023 (by email)

Dear Kirsty Shirley,

Application no. 6/2022/2662/MAJ

Land at Cromer Hyde Farm, Marford Road, Lemsford

Change of use from agricultural (class R) to outdoor sport and recreation class F2 (C) and construction of polo facility with the installation of three pitches and creation of viewing mound facilitated by the importation of approximately 945,000 cubic tonnes of soil over a five-year period to assist in reprofiling the site

I write with regard to the above application, to express to express our objection for the following reasons.

1. The site is located within the London Metropolitan Green Belt as identified in the existing Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005, and the emerging Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan, where development is inappropriate unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated according to criteria in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Whereas in certain cases sports related facilities and activities may be appropriate within the Green Belt, this application raises very considerable concerns.
2. The application envisages very significant alteration of the character of the Green Belt and inevitable loss of openness, with the importation of nearly a million tonnes of material over a five year period. This seems inappropriate for the provision of three polo pitches and would lead to changes in topography in a highly visible location.
3. CPRE Hertfordshire also questions the credibility of providing a facility for sports activity without any associated infrastructure other than informal car parking. The Applicant's accompanying statement emphasises the 'grassroots level' provision of the proposed polo facilities, but it is difficult to envisage why this should require the level of material proposed to be introduced to the site.
4. The Applicant does not make any attempt to demonstrate the very special circumstances which are necessary to over-come the harm which would be caused to



the Green Belt. The proposed changes in levels would have a significant visual impact on the landscape.

5. CPRE Hertfordshire supports the objections and concerns raised by a number of consultation responses, including from Hatfield Town Council, Hertfordshire County Council, Sport England, Historic England and The Garden Trust. We also note the extensive local community objections on a wide range of issues relating to the loss of open countryside and other matters.
6. The Green Belt performs a crucial purpose in this area, preventing the coalescence of settlements and providing highly valued open countryside. We urge the Council to refuse this highly inappropriate application.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Berry
Planning Manager

NOTE: We would request that this letter is published on the Council's website as a document relating to this application and should be grateful if you would notify us of the date of the appropriate meeting if it is to be determined by planning committee.