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Standing up for Hertfordshire's countryside

Robert Freeman
Planning & Development
Dacorum Borough Council
The Forum, Marlowes
Hemel Hempstead
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Our Ref:

Your Ref:

14th March 2025 - Corrected (by email)

Dear Robert Freeman,

**Planning application no. 25/00143/MOA
Land North of Chipperfield, Kings Langley**

Outline planning application for the demolition of 36 Chipperfield Road, and the construction of up to 150 residential dwellings including affordable housing (Use Class C3), new vehicular access off Chipperfield Road, new pedestrian and cycle access at Love Lane, new education facility and community building (F1(a)/sui generis use), landscaping, public open space and play space, cycle and car parking, and associated infrastructure. All matters reserved excluding Chipperfield Road and Love Lane access.

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

1. The land identified for this proposed development is designated as London Metropolitan Green Belt in the adopted Dacorum Core Strategy where development is stated as inappropriate unless very special circumstances are identified which clearly outweigh the harms caused, according to criteria in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
2. The Applicant's Planning Statement consultants note the recent revision of the NPPF and the introduction of the concept of grey belt as justification for the submission of this speculative application. No other special circumstances are identified relating to the local conditions and circumstances which would justify development in this location as opposed to any other location.
3. This site is not included in the emerging Draft Local Plan on which extensive public consultation has taken place, leading to the initial setting aside of the Draft Local Plan and subsequent re-consultation on a revised version. The Draft Local Plan has been submitted for Examination in Public and the lack of housing land supply will be fully addressed in the near future with adoption of the Local Plan scheduled in 2026.

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: Peter Waine
Registered Charity 1162419
CPRE Patron: His Majesty The King



4. Very significant local community opposition continues to this application and development in the Green Belt. The proposed development would clearly constitute a breach of the first and third purposes of the Green Belt as identified in the NPPF (paragraph 143) to prevent urban sprawl and encroachment on open countryside as it is a clear extension of the built-up area of Kings Langley.
5. We entirely refute the assertions that the first purpose of the Green Belt has no relevance in this case and that this site constitutes grey belt under the present legal definitions. The first purpose of the Green Belt refers to the effect of the urban sprawl emanating from the growth of London as the major development generator in this and the surrounding areas.
6. The proposed development is clearly urban sprawl beyond the built-up area of the adjoining settlement which the Green Belt legislation was designed to prevent. As such the designation of Green Belt provides the “strong reason” required in this case to refuse development as noted in the NPPF footnote 7.
7. It is noteworthy that every major planning application for residential and commercial development within the Green Belt in Hertfordshire made since 12th December 2024 has identified the site as grey belt, notwithstanding the quality and character of the landscape or local conditions in each case. This is clearly an unsustainable position and it is becoming increasingly clear that the existing definitions and guidance on grey belt are entirely inadequate to prevent the wholesale removal of highly valued and significant Green Belt protections.
8. The remaining issues quoted as contributing to the very special circumstances required in the event that the site is not regarded as grey belt relate to the general housing situation in Dacorum and elsewhere and constitute benefits which would accrue to any proposed development of this size and function. The now standard practice in major planning applications in the Hertfordshire Green Belt of listing such benefits, including public services and facilities and the like reduces the consideration of such issues to a check-list of items irrespective of the conditions and circumstances of the location and inevitably renders them as less “special”.
9. As significant as the proposed benefits is the growing paucity of open space adjacent to built-up areas with its attendant physical and mental health benefits. The Green Belt in this area is under unrelenting pressure for development which is jeopardising the highly valued benefits which protection brings, and its continual reduction is in danger of bringing the planning system into disrepute.



10. The existence of legally binding agreements between appropriate institutions involved in the provision of truly affordable low cost housing would be required in any case. Given the inadequacy of the official definition to reflect the true state of the housing market in Hertfordshire, affordability for average earning households is unattainable and should not be used as contributing to very special circumstances in the determination of a planning application.
11. We note that over 230 public objections have been made to this application and we support the wide range of concerns that have been raised by local residents. South-west Hertfordshire remains under unrelenting pressure for development and the value of the open countryside that remains increases for local communities and visitors, notwithstanding wider environmental benefits relating to the amelioration of the effects of climate change, maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity, and physical and mental health.
12. This application is not supported through the Local Plan process and we urge the Council to refuse permission for this inappropriate speculative development.

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.