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Standing up for Hertfordshire's countryside

Scott Volker
Development Management
Three Rivers District Council
Three Rivers House
Northway, Rickmansworth
Herts. WD3 1RL

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

2nd May 2025 (by email)

Dear Scott Volker,

Planning application no. 25/0484/OUT
Land North of Chalfont Road, Chalfont Road, Maple Cross
Outline application: Erection of up to 75 new dwellings, parking and landscaping with
associated access onto Chalfont Road (Appearance, Layout...etc, as reserved matters)

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

1. The land identified for this proposed development is designated as London Metropolitan Green Belt in the adopted Three Rivers Core Strategy where development is 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 Consultant's Design and Access Statement (DAS) seeks to justify the proposed development both on the basis of very special circumstances relating to the lack of housing land supply in the Core Strategy and the introduction of the concept of grey belt. The lack of housing land supply is now said to be exacerbated by the requirements of the revised NPPF.
3. We note that the site is not included in the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan and we object on the basis of the protection offered by Footnote 7 and Paragraph 11 of the NPPF and the significance of the Green Belt in this location, notwithstanding the need for housing land supply. In our view, the proposed development clearly constitutes 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 and substantial extension of the built-up area of Maple Cross.

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Chairman: Peter Waine

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4. Further, the DAS introduces the concept of grey belt to add to the demonstration of very special circumstances and proceeds to assert that none of the three purposes of the Green Belt which may be identified (see NPPF Glossary definition of grey belt) where development would not be inappropriate apply in this case. We do not accept that the concept of grey belt applies in this case
5. 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. 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 and, 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.
6. The Green Belt in south west Hertfordshire is under continuous and unrelenting pressure for development which is jeopardising the highly valued benefits which protection brings. It is not appropriate in our view for such a significant allocation in the Green Belt to be determined outside the Local Plan process and its continual reduction through consents for speculative development is in danger of bringing the planning system into disrepute. We urge the Council to refuse permission for this inappropriate 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.