

Dear Independent EFD Local Plan Inspector,

I am writing to you regarding my opposition to the plans for Jessel Green (LOU.R5) in Loughton. I moved to Loughton ... 2 years ago. We looked at properties in a number of locations on the outskirts of London, and found for the most part, these places to be grey and gloomy. The thought of trudging through those streets on the way to work was not an appealing one. Then we looked at Loughton. Property prices were similar and it was a similar commute time to work but it had something those other places didn't have – an abundance of green spaces and a sense of community. Building more properties doesn't feel like progress of any sort if you're removing the very thing that makes the area appealing in the first place.

Jessel Green is a space 2 I see used for many activities. It is a communal hub for dog walking, playing football, for families showing their kids how to fly kites or sledging when it snows. It's too important a space to lose, not just for convenience and a sense of community but also for our wellbeing and our children's wellbeing. In 2015, the Centre for Research in Environmental Epidemiology in Barcelona published their findings on the effects that green spaces and natural scenery had on children. They found that children exposed to more greenery showed not only better attention levels but also superior memory. Now, really, we shouldn't have to use a scientific study to back up the assertion that a healthy environment is cognitively beneficial – it feels blindingly obvious to me – but yet, here we are, in a situation where the council are going to remove a large green space that's right on the doorsteps of so many youngsters.

The final point I'd like to make regards the need for the amount of properties in your plans. "Did you know that in the Epping Forest District there are approximately 447 properties which have been empty for more than 6 months?" That's in quotation marks because it's copied verbatim from Epping Forest District Council website. They actually had a National Empty Homes Week in October last year. That does not sound like an area in desperate need of new properties. The plan to build 154 properties on Jessel Green when almost three times as many are currently sitting empty is indefensible giving the impact that losing Jessel Green will have on the community.

To summarise, building property on Jessel Green will be detrimental to the appeal of the area, removes a valuable community space that benefits local children and is at odds with the council's own appeals to fill currently empty properties.

I sincerely hope you take these and the many other points you'll receive into consideration.

Regards,

David Robinson

Resident of Loughton.