

Epping Forest District Council Representations to the Draft Local Plan Consultation 2016 (Regulation 18)

Stakeholder ID	3922	Name	H F Pennington
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Date	4/12/2016
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Letter or Email Response:

Specific Objection to Invasion/ Erosion of the Green Belt. Naturally one recognises that the District Council, although strongly motivated to preserve the environment of Epping, and, of course, that of all of the District communities, face the dilemma of being between the proverbial rock and a hard place. However, one's perception of the ramifications of the Local Plan, with the Governmental threats imposed via the NPPF, is that there is an implied inevitability that the Green Belt must be invaded so that the national need for housing growth can be satisfied at least to the volumes inferred by current political forecasts for the next few years. Of course, Epping would be greatly damaged in character by such a relaxation of the rules since there is now hardly any undeveloped land around the Town other than designated Green Belt. Any encroachment into the existing protected areas would create a precedent for future expansion. Once gone it is gone forever, and it seems inconceivable that it would be aRedacted.... that allowed, indeed promoted it. It is doubtless this quandary that has led to the present proposals to build over car parks and upon long-standing sports facilities in Epping, having run out of non-Green Belt options, and one has to have empathy with the Council's predicament. However, it would be very disturbing, should such invasion be upheld, that our elected political representatives would then appear to have beenRedacted.... For instance... Sir Eric Pickles, then Community Secretary, in the Daily Telegraph of 27th March 2012 said "Our reforms safeguard our glorious green spaces and countryside. They protect the Green Belt - that vital green lung that prevents urban sprawl." Eleanor Laing, our own MP, of course presented to Parliament in 2004 a petition signed by some 13,000 residents to the effect that the Green Belt be protected from development, and just the other day at an over-capacity attendance in Epping Hall, told us that we should not worry as the Green Belt was safe from developers. However she also said that many of her contemporaries in the House did not concern themselves with issues of Green Belt development. Nick Boles then Planning Minister, at a Newsnight interview on 28th November 2012 said "The Green Belt is vitally important. We will protect and keep the Green Belt. We can provide enough new housing over a 20-year period without even touching the Green Belt or natural parks. We won't compel Councils - the last Government tried and failed. That should imply that no consideration of Green Belt development should arise until at least 2032! There have been more recent statements by politicians arguing against urban sprawl and the crucial need to protect the Green Belt in order to prevent it. If, in spite of such assurances, erosion of the Green Belt is permitted, then why should we take any notice of any statements by our elected representatives, either at national or local levels? After all, whatever the opinions or reasoned arguments of residents, and whatever the reaction to those by the Councillors, the Government Planning Inspectorate can overrule us all without being accountable other than to consideration of where we will put our little X's at the next elections. So how does it matter what we are told by our MPs? Yet the evident need for more houses provides an argument that restriction on invasion of the Green Belt can be relaxed,

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using the "black hole" of "special circumstances". But why can't the "special circumstances" of national housing needs be activated as a means to enforcing developers sitting on existing brownfield sites already having approval to use those approvals and build the potential large number of houses, thought to be about half a million, instead of being allowed to build on precious green field sites? Such a 'land bank' should not be allowed to exist as an investment for the benefit of developers to the avoidable detriment of loyal law-abiding citizens who cherish the character and beauty of the country in which they are fortunate to live and the environment of which should be preserved using a fair share of the taxes which they pay. I trust that you will take views expressed herein into due account when determining the form of the Local Plan to be formally submitted to Government. Epping Forest District Draft Local Plan. Objection to item in the document, titled SR-01 32Ci, Page 121 Epping Sports Club and land west of Bury Lane, Lower Bury Lane - approximately 49 homes and Page 122 figure 5.4. I register my strong objection and request clarification. The original EFDC draft document referred only to the land used by the long-established Epping Sports Club in Lower Bury Lane (under SR- 0132CI to take 49 dwellings), and made no mention at all of any Green Belt land adjacent to the western side of Bury Lane, although a considerably larger area than that defined as "Sports facilities" was shown clearly, and pointed to, on the map. When this was pointed out to the councillors the words "and land to the west of Bury Lane" were added in the second edition of their draft document. However, when I attended the consultation display in Epping Hall on 11th November the charts on display for the public still did not have this amendment. I pointed this out to an officer and emphasised that the Council had at this point misrepresented their proposal for the potential development of area SR - 01 32 Ci and insisted that they must make absolutely clear what their intentions were for the Green Belt land across Bury Lane as well as the Sports Club land, otherwise it is not feasible for residents to have an educated reaction to their invitation to consult. The officer agreed and said that he would take it up with the Council. I do not know if and when that was done or what reaction ensued. Meanwhile it is reasonable to demand that it is made clear to the public exactly what the Council's intentions, or at least proposals, are for the use of the large space of Green Belt "land to the west of Bury Lane". Otherwise it gives the impression, I'm sure inadvertently, of allocation of the land by stealth. As a long term resident of Bury Lane, in a nationally listed building in a conservation area, I of course declare an interest but, as I'm sure you will agree, that does not in any way prejudice my right, or indeed any local resident's right, to know what precisely the Council's intentions are, in advance of having to respond to your draft proposals by 12th December.

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