

Independent EFD Local Plan Inspector

c/o Epping Forest District Council
Civic Offices, 323 High Street
Epping, Essex. CM16 4BZ

27th January 2018

Ref: Jessel Green. Site LOU.R5. I respectfully request this site is protected (issued with Local Green space designation) for the following reasons:

1. Personal reasons/concerns for opposing above proposed development.

Obstruction of light & views would obviously affect property prices & community detrimentally. But value isn't always financial. & my family, friends & I have enjoyed use of the green over the years for dog walking, picnics, games & community events, etc. we have all used it regularly & I would be devastated to see it go along with the community it inspires.

The greens were deliberately planned as part of a garden suburb for the physical & mental health of residents & as vital recreation spaces. There is currently much evidence available in media & government papers about this issue & the need to protect people's mental & physical health.

2. Current Use of Jessel Green

Community events on the Green encourage residents, schools & other groups to meet, work, exercise & play together. Walkers, dog walkers, local schools, Brownies, Cubs, exercise classes/training & others use the green all the time & it is a relatively 'safe' area for children to play outside, within sight/earshot of parents/neighbours, as opposed to sitting in front of screens. Encouraging safer, happier & healthier childhoods, in a time when an over-run NHS try to ensure we all live healthier lifestyles (physical, emotional & mental). Residents outside immediate area also visit to enjoy the space. Over the years young & old have visited in droves, especially when it snows, as the hill is perfect for sledging. The adjacent Cottage Loaf Public House manager is very community minded adding to the attraction. Locals used to get together on bonfire night & now a regular fun day occupies the field in the summer. I feel it is essential to keep the green not just for current generations but for those in the future. If it goes it will destroy a whole community.

3. Wildlife/Plant life:

Residents currently benefit from fruit trees planted on green by EFDC - better option than non-fruiting & they tend not to grow too high/exclude light. Wildlife in the area such as squirrels, birds – including Woodpecker families who regularly visit the green in spring would be driven away.

4. Other Issues:

a) Emergency Helicopters

The Green is a designated landing area for Emergency Air Services (eg: Police, Ambulance) when required. Hot air balloons have also used it. It is a centrally positioned site with space to land safely as opposed to other greens in the area.

b) Local Infrastructure

Some years ago, local schools were closed to make way for homes but more built to accommodate resulting growth in young population, edging nearer/further into green belt land to the detriment of local area. There are now quite a few schools in the vicinity already oversubscribed & traffic is busy with congestion at peak times increasing. A higher use of cars/transport places extra pressure on already overburdened local roads & central line - more passengers during daily commutes would not be sustainable. Bus routes/school runs currently cause heavy jams & double parking is an issue. Various speeding 'rat-runs' have sprung up in the area including Colebrook Lane & Willingale Rd, so lives will be further jeopardised especially during school runs. Potholes are left months, or years. Pollution (a killer – now under scrutiny) & litter are also considerations as are **Free** car parking & flood management - further building on clay soil in the area may undermine existing buildings.

Public Services eg: Education, NHS, Police, Social Care, Emergency Services are already underfunded, overburdened & unable to sustain 'good enough' services for current residents so plans/suggestions to build on existing infrastructure appear invalid. Policing is also a consideration as is maintenance of roads, drainage, refuse collections, etc. with EFDC funding restricted & facing less & less income. Whilst recognising National need for more social/affordable housing, it is important to ensure this is done in a proportionate & fair manner without excluding considerations of health & welfare.

There are other more viable sites within the EFDC area. Some that might benefit by siting schools nearby, (away from Loughton) which could also help alleviate traffic coming in/through the Loughton area. However, careful consideration would need to be given to infrastructure to ensure the character of these areas remain intact.

Further thoughts.

There is already a great deal of private land in EFDC area. Private companies should be stopped from buying land for 'quick bucks' - a very short-sighted tactic detrimental to sustained growth of future council income. Too many private Landlords have bought ex-council properties, promoting insecure housing, with rents increasing over time affecting tenant's lives & wellbeing.

EFDC should work more closely with Loughton residents in an **open, transparent manner** & consider their wellbeing by promoting green sites as play/recreation areas to benefit current residents & enable improvements to health, wellbeing & more community cohesion. Groups/schools could be encouraged to become involved in cultivating the area with small amounts of vegetation or planting, etc. Jessel Green could be a greater community platform, encouraging even more use.

Despite EFDC statements to the contrary, they risk compromising local character & destroying attributes that currently make Loughton a generally 'attractive place to live, work & visit!!!

Gill Short