

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

Stakeholder ID	3819	Name	Andrew	Leslie
Method	Letter			
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Letter or Email Response:

I feel compelled to write to you regarding the proposals to develop Jessel Green in the Debden estate area of Laughton. I live very close to the green and regularly use it as part of my exercise routine in the mornings. As I run on and around the green I meet and see people out walking their dogs, usually in groups. I am particularly struck by the notion that these groups of people are brought together from our diverse community by a shared love of their dogs and this beautiful green space that we are blessed with. I do not suppose that these same people would have come to know each other if it were not for the green. I see others out, using the green as a place to exercise much like myself. Later in the day my wife, who is chronically ill, is able to get to the green, even with her limited mobility, and enjoy the fresh air and the wildlife that inhabits the area. This is really important to her both from the perspective of management of her illness and her mental well being. The ability for her to get out of the house in this way is precious, and I am concerned that if you choose to develop the site with housing this essential health benefit will be lost. Quite aside from my personal use of the green and that of others, I am concerned about the impact on the local area of developing housing on the site; Already when the weather is bad and there has been a lot of rain there is evident surface run off from the green, which thankfully is absorbed by the existing drainage system. However, if the green is developed for housing there will be less soft ground for water to be absorbed into and so more surface runoff. This presents an increased risk of local flooding, which as a home owner further down the hill I am concerned with. Another concern is the already limited parking in the immediate area being swamped by the additional cars of the proposed housing development. Our local roads will become mass car parks for those who choose to live in the proposed new dwellings leaving little space for existing residents to park and presenting a safety hazard for the myriad of school children walking to and from school twice a day. The subject of schools is another concern. The local primary schools are already stretched and will become more so if additional large scale housing is developed on the green. I do not see that there are enough school places to support a large increase in local population. During the year Jessel Green is the focus of local community activity both organised and not. You may well be aware of the community fun days that are put on in partnership with local churches. These are always great days and much of the local community comes out to enjoy them. This sort of thing builds local cohesion and brings people together, out of their houses, to commune with others. This is the sort of thing that will be lost if you choose to develop the site for housing. Additionally, at other times of the year people come to the green to share in national events. For the last several years my wife and I have walked to the top of the hill to enjoy fireworks on New Year's Eve and Guy Fawkes night. We have also taken our youth group up there to enjoy them. This was a great opportunity for local youth to enjoy a night out with fireworks that some of them would not ordinarily have been able to afford to do. On these occasions, there is always quite a few other local people on the green for the same reason and there has been a great sense of fun and

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community at these times. This again shows the importance of this green space to the health, happiness and cohesion of our community. I will finish with a simple plea to not build housing on Jessel green. It would be a terrific loss to our community.