

Mr Jameson Bridgewater
Inspecting Officer
Hillingdon Local Plan Pt 2
C/O: Local Plan Programme Officers
London Borough of Hillingdon

26th July 2018

Dear Mr Bridgewater,

RE: Green Belt; Metropolitan Open Land; Areas forming links in Green Chains, Green Belt Extension No.6 Site allocations (amended Oct 2015) P162 - The Cricket Ground and Spinney, Harefield.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment. We would first refer to our original submission which is included on pages 2044-2049 of the 2nd Regulation 19 Representations. Some of the comments we made at that stage referred to the factual inaccuracies of the original site which have been corrected within the Council's document of Major Changes, page 63. However, many of the comments remain valid.

I have had an opportunity by email to try to come to common ground with Mr Davy, but this has not been possible except for one point. His suggestions are in bold italics.

- ***Residential development has taken place on the former Dairy Farm and also in the garden of 'Little Hammonds'*** This is correct, the infill of the garden of Little Hammonds and substantial building on part of the Dairy Farm site have both been approved by Hillingdon's Planning Department.

Mr Davy proposed other points, with which we disagree.

- ***The land comprising the proposed extension to the Green Belt is open in character and largely free from development.*** This is factually incorrect as all of the land of the proposed extension was part of the garden of Harefield House. When, in 1938, one part was given to the Cricket Club and the Spinney remained as a garden and has never been categorised as anything other than a private garden. It did have a number of structural features. This includes a brick built bridge over a stream. We have discovered the footings of many of the other structures, including large areas of concrete base. We note that under *Turner [2015] EWHC 2728 (Admin)* 'openness' is freedom from any development.
- ***There is a desire from both parties to keep the land permanently open.*** There are three parties to this area of land. We are unable to comment on the intention of the cricket club. Our intention is to use the site for our quiet enjoyment and maintain it for wildlife.
- ***Green Belt designation would prevent the sprawl of residential development and protect the countryside from encroachment.*** Green Belt designation would not prevent or assist with this. The area lies within the boundary of the Conservation area of Harefield Village and this provides adequate protection from urban sprawl. The protection of the Conservation area together with further Hillingdon planning protection policies, Colne Valley Regional Park, SINC site designation, numerous TPOs and the fact that most of the field next door is already Green Belt provide adequate protection.
- ***The western edge of the proposed extension to the Green Belt follows the clearly defined physical boundary of existing residential units.*** The boundary to the western edge is only part of the physical boundary of the area. At the eastern edge the Green Belt stops mid-way across the field, with no logic to this whatsoever and thus the edge of the green belt on the eastern side is not defined at all.

We would like to make the following points:

1. That NPPF (2012) para. 82 states 'The general extent of the Green Belts across the country is already established.' And that 'New Green Belts should only be established in exceptional circumstances'. There are five steps the local authority has to show under the NPPF in order to change the boundary. In this we don't think there can be any dispute.
2. We contend that Hillingdon has not shown the 'exceptional circumstances' for the placing of Green Belt status upon the land as is required by NPPF paras. 82 & 83 and I would refer you to the case of *Gallagher Homes Ltd v Solihull Borough Council [2014] EWHC 1283 (Admin)*. Referring to NPPF para. 86. There is no suggestion within the Local Plan that it is necessary to prevent development within the village and thus include it within the Green Belt proposals. If the area needs to be protected other means should be used, such as the current Conservation area designation and normal planning development management policies. The Conservation designation has been the decision of Hillingdon Council, it has not sought any change. To include part of the Conservation area would be perverse considering this part of the NPPF
3. There is no argument from Hillingdon that this land is within the Harefield Village Conservation area, nor that the Spinney is part of both this and has SINC II site designation. These, and the other designations shown above, afford excellent protection against unwanted development.
4. The area of the Spinney is covered by TPO 3 and 237. This is undisputed.
5. The area of the Spinney has never been designated as anything other than a private garden. This is also undisputed.
6. Structural features are clearly visible on the older maps of the area and photographs as well as on the ground and thus it is not free from built development as per *R (Lee Valley Regional Park Authority) v Epping Forest DC [2016] EWCA Civ 404*. As noted above this includes a brick built bridge, footings and large areas of concrete base. We contend that by Sec 336 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 these structures amount to 'buildings' ("building" includes any structure or erection, and any part of a building...)
7. As noted above, the western edge of the suggested extension to the green belt follows a boundary, but there is no clearly defined boundary on the eastern edge as the green belt stops part way across a field at a random point which is neither clear nor identified. There has been no submission that the other part of this field be made Green Belt. The previous Hillingdon 2006 submission states '*The current Dairy Farm Green Belt designation is not typical of Green Belt boundaries as it illogically cuts half way through a field and not in close proximity to a definable boundary*'.
8. That Hillingdon has previously proposed making this area Green Belt and on two previous occasions this designation has not been given. The Hillingdon UDP of 1995 and the Green Belt and Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt Assessment of January 2006. There has been no material change to this area to alter those previous decisions. In the 2006 submissions, Hillingdon did not feel that this site met the criteria for checking the unrestricted sprawl of built up areas.

If we could turn to the two specific reasons that Hillingdon give for designating this area Green Belt.

9. The recent approvals of planning permission for the garden of Little Hammonds (August 2014), further development in the same area (March 2015), the permissions for which were given whilst the consideration to making this Green Belt had already been made, and a considerable area of the Dairy Farm site (June 2009) has extended the urbanised areas of the village beyond the Cricket Club and Spinney and thus the requirement of this area as Green Belt to prevent urban sprawl is not made out.
10. This newly urbanised area has already encroached on the countryside beyond the Cricket Club and Spinney, particularly the building of a substantial development on what was previously a working farm and agricultural land.

We note the only two purposes Hillingdon propose for making this Green Belt. They do not contend that it is necessary to prevent neighbouring towns merging, nor to preserve the setting or special character of a historic town, nor to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

In summary, we do not feel that Hillingdon has made out the exceptional circumstances that need to be shown to establish a new Green Belt in this area via Para. 82.

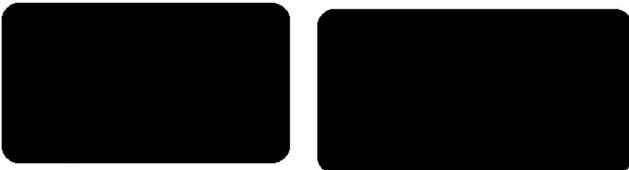
- That normal planning and development management policies are adequate, and these have already been outlined.
- There has been no major changes in circumstances since this was previously considered in 1995 and 2005.
- They have not shown what the consequences would be for any sustainable development.
- There is no shown consistency with the local plans for adjoining areas.
- They have not shown how this area of Green Belt would meet the other objectives of the framework.

The boundary to the Green Belt is not clearly defined as required by Para. 85.

We have shown that the two purposes given by Hillingdon, as outlined in Para. 80, are not applicable as developments approved by Hillingdon have overtaken the preparation of the Local Plan.

Thank you again for this opportunity to make these representations and to presenting them verbally on the 7th August.

Yours sincerely,



Richard and Sue Farmery.