

From: "Margaret Short"

Subject: My submission of representations in respect of stage 2 hearing sessions on the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan

Date: 9 October 2017 at 16:16:54 BST

To: <louise@poservices.co.uk>

Please find below my submissions:

**WHBC Local Plan submission of Margaret Mary Short of Riverside Cottage 27 Lemsford Village, Lemsford, Herts. AL8 7TN.**

**1. I wish to address the overall development strategy being advanced by WHBC in accordance with the Planning Inspector's Agenda for the overarching strategy with particular regard to items 4 and 5 namely the Green Belt Review and Green Belt exceptional circumstances.**

**2. Under the Heading: "Green Belt Review" :**

**Question 1 : Has an objective assessment of the contribution that land makes to the purposes of the Green Belt been undertaken ?**

**In answer to the question**

**I do not believe that it has been objective in so far as it relates to the two sites referred to as: "North West Hatfield Site SDS5 HAT1" known locally as Stanboroughbury Farm for which the plan is for development of around 1650 new homes – described as a new sustainable neighbourhood. The second site being Symondshyde Site SDS6 HAT 2. for which around 1130 new homes are proposed on farm land within approximately 1 mile of the boundary of the proposed site for HAT 1.**

**Both projects are proposed by Gascoyne Cecil Estates on behalf of the owner of the land. They do not propose to undertake housing construction until such time as gravel and sand extraction on both sites has taken place. The plans to extract these materials did not require removal of green belt status – the duration of the extraction exercise is unclear. Both**

sites have been actively farmed for many years.

My particular concern is that the proposals by Gascoyne Cecil Estates [GCE] entirely fail to take account of the geographical limitations for access to Welwyn Garden City which result from the location and physical barriers created by the presence of the A1M motorway, the course of the River Lea at Lemsford and the Stanborough Lakes on the eastern side of the A1M. In respect of both of these developments.

It is my understanding that WHBC have already approved the removal of Green Belt status from both of these farms without having considered or recognised the permanent physical barriers for vehicular transport to and from the two sites into Welwyn Garden City itself. Essentially there are only two prospective crossing points for traffic – whether vehicular or cyclists. One is on the westerly side of the A1M adjacent to Coopers Green Lane where there are proposals for upgrading the existing roundabout which is already heavily congested at rush hour and the other: via Green Lanes which would provide access for both sites across the junction with Brocket Road/Marford Road at the top of Lemsford Village adjacent to St John's Church, the entrance to Brocket Hall and St. John's Primary School resulting in even more traffic congestion than already exists and a greater potential for serious traffic accidents.

If the proposed housing developments on these two sites in addition to a new primary school proceed, there are also very serious implications for all the emergency services in accessing emergency scenes in a timely manner simply because of the significantly increased volume of traffic generated by the introduction of nearly 3000 new homes.

I believe that GCE and WHBC should have considered alternatives on the easterly side of the A1M that would not present the same consequences of significant traffic congestion.

**The impact of the proposals upon the inhabitants of Lemsford Village itself would appear to have been entirely overlooked by WHBC and GCE. The volume of traffic since the earlier GCE development at and around Hertfordshire University Campus and the Business Park and Mosquito Way housing development has greatly increased the traffic volumes through the village. In addition, increased housing development at Wheathampstead and St. Albans for vehicles accessing WGC as well as the slip road for access to the northbound traffic on the A1M between junctions 4 and 5, as well as those vehicles seeking to avoid congestion at the Bull roundabout at its junction with Coopers Green Lane and Brocket Road have all already added substantially to the volume of traffic passing through the village throughout the day.**

**The Symondshyde development in particular will significantly increase traffic volumes along Valley Road on the other side of the A1M with implications for the residents and school children in the area.**

**In the full version of the WHBC Plan there is barely any reference to the existence of Lemsford Village and no reference to the existence of the Grade II listed bridge which spans the River Lea beside my home. The bridge was built in the early 1790's and was not constructed to withstand the volume and weight of vehicles to which it is now constantly subject. Failure of this structure would give rise to significant flooding given the volume of water that passes through the lakes at Brocket Hall Golf Course which bounds the village. I would also create traffic gridlock.**

**Similarly little or no consideration has been given to the environmental implications of alterations to Hammonds Lane in conjunction with the Symondshyde development, which provides a very narrow winding often single track access to the development from Nomansland and Sandridge. The road winds between agricultural land on either side significantly**

**below the level of the fields on either side, demonstration that the hedgerows are ancient as is part of the woodland adjacent to the proposed site. On the opposite side of the proposed site, there is GCE controlled woodland planted in the 1960s that is nearing maturity and harvesting.**

**In answer to Question 2:**

**Do the proposed revisions to GB boundaries result in stronger boundaries that will endure well beyond the life of this plan ? I believe that the answer to this question is No, and that the change of GB status will prove to be something of a trojan horse that will encourage development proposals along the boundary with St. Albans City Council and place further pressure on the farms on both sides of the local authority boundaries, including Cromer Hyde Farm which lies between the two sites, HAT 1 and HAT 2.**

## **Question 5**

**Green Belt exceptional circumstances**

**Question:**

**What should constitute exceptional circumstances for removing land from the Green Belt ?**

**Has the choice of land to be lost from the GB been objectively derived ?**

**i) Housing**

**ii) Employment**

**Answer:**

**For the reasons given in answer to 4 above, I believe that the answer is : No**

## **Question 6**

**Spatial Vision and settlement strategy**

**Do they reinforce the Garden City and New Town heritage of the Borough, whilst maintaining the area's distinctive character ? Is the strategy being advanced consistent with the**

**Borough's GB location ? Is the strategy now being advanced really one that seeks to maintain the existing pattern of settlements ?**

**Answer:**

**Both sites are within the Hatfield Villages ward of the Borough but have no current pattern of settlement having been occupied for cultivation of arable crops and if these two sites are ultimately approved, the economic pressure of land values in the vicinity will inevitably threaten the viability of other farmland within the vicinity.**

**Although Symondshyde is described as a settlement – the Grade II listed farmhouse and some farm outbuildings and a single nearby residence called the Pigsty, hardly constitutes a settlement, when considered in comparison with the long established settlement of Lemsford Village, [formerly known as Lemsford Mills] the inhabitants of which will bear the significant detrimental impact of the 2 developments from both an environmental and transport perspective.**

**Question 7:**

**Targets for growth**

**Answer:**

**I do not feel able to address the two questions.**

**Save to say that in answer to the question: - Are the constraints imposed by infrastructure requirements fully justified ?**

**I refer to my answer to Question 4 and that I believe that the answer is therefore: No – in so far as it relates to HAT 1 and Hat 2.**

**Question 8:**

**Five Year Land Supply:**

**Are the Council's assumptions sound ?**

**Is the proposed windfall allowance appropriate ?**

**Is the proposed split housing trajectory sound ?**

**Could the proposed housing development strategy result in a five year supply of housing land ?**

**Answer:**

**I do not consider the Council's assumptions to be sound in so far as they relate to Hat1 and Hat2. I cannot answer the second and third questions. In answer to the fourth question, given that HAT 1 and 2 constitute a significant proportion of the housing development for the period of the proposed local plan, I think that the answer is probably – No.**

**Question 9**

**Is the overall development strategy being advanced by the Council sound ?**

**Answer: In so far as it relates to HAT1 and HAT2 the answer is – No. I refer to my answers to Question 4 and the adverse impact that these two proposed developments will have on the residents of Hatfield Garden Village, Lemsford and Welwyn Garden City. New housing is undoubtedly needed but these two sites have been wrongly approved because WHBC failed to take account of the road infrastructure limitations which cannot be altered as explained.**