

ENFIELD LOCAL PLAN

The Barnet Society response to the LB of Enfield's public consultation, December 2018

INTRODUCTION

This is a response by the Barnet Society. Our Society was founded in 1945 to protect the Green Belt in and around the parliamentary constituency of Chipping Barnet. We have over 600 members.

The London Borough of Enfield forms our eastern border, so we take a close interest in prospective developments there. Many of us often travel through – and appreciate – Enfield's Green Belt, often in the course of shopping trips to Enfield shopping centres, Enfield market and Crews Hill, or leisure in Trent Park. Some of our residents work in your Borough, and some of our students attend your schools.

GREEN BELT

The Barnet Society is very concerned to learn that you propose to revisit Green Belt boundaries (para 9.3.7), and that Councillor Ahmet Oyken, Cabinet Member of Property and Assets, is on record (*Independent* 5 December 2018) as saying that you will consider building on 5-7% of Green Belt land – which indicates that planning studies are already well advanced.

Not only do we object on principle to erosion of the Green Belt, we would take particular objection to any loss of the green buffer that exists between our Boroughs, especially north and south of Hadley Road and Enfield Road. These attractive stretches of countryside are vital to preserving the separate identities of Barnet, Cockfosters, Enfield and other settlements that would otherwise have merged into amorphous suburbia. The Green Belt has also saved lovely countryside north and south of the M25 for the benefit of residents, travellers and wildlife. Its openness and beauty is enhanced by the lack of roadside development along the M25.

We recognise that some development may be justifiable under exceptional circumstances. But these are not demonstrated in your consultation document. We question the government's housing targets, and believe that whatever is needed could and should be accommodated on brownfield sites, as convincingly shown by the CPRE/Enfield Society/RoadWatch study *Space to Build, Enfield* (January 2019).

GOOD GROWTH

The Barnet Society generally supports the principle of good, plan-led growth (section 2.6) and sees the merits of intensifying development areas around key overground and underground rail stations (section 2.8).

We have strong reservations, however, about your selection of Crews Hill as a new residential suburb (para 2.12.2). Crews Hill's currently wide retail and services offer, mainly horticulture-based, is a unique asset for residents, employers and employees well beyond Enfield's borders. Its commercial viability would undoubtedly be threatened by the higher land values and traffic congestion accompanying residential development.

If growth is to be encouraged at Crews Hill, we would support the CPRE/Enfield Society/RoadWatch study's case for building on its distinctiveness as a centre for horticulture (*Space to Build, Enfield, Annex 7*).

The Barnet Society is puzzled by the omission of Hadley Wood Station as a potential residential hub. It is much better served by rail, as well as having better regional rail connections. Since the station is located in a cutting, a substantial air-rights development would be technically feasible without impingeing drastically on either the Green Belt or existing housing.