

Draft Enfield Local Plan 2019-2039

Executive Summary Response by

Hadley Wood Neighbourhood Planning Forum



September 2021

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This is an executive summary of the main submission by the Hadley wood Neighbourhood Planning Forum.
- 1.2. The Hadley Wood Neighbourhood Planning Forum (HWNPF) was set up in 2015 and is an independent body, albeit connected to the Hadley Wood Association via cross committee membership. The Forum has been recognized by the London Borough of Enfield through its original designation and redesignation in January 2021 under section 61F of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 1.3. The draft Neighbourhood Plan was published in February 2019. Following feedback from the community and a detailed response from Enfield Council, the current Version of the Neighbourhood Plan has been available on the website since May 2020. The Neighbourhood Plan is expected to be the subject of formal (Regulation 14) community consultation in late 2021.
- 1.4. To support this submission the Forum, in conjunction with the Hadley Wood Association, instructed specialist professional advisors to review the Council's Evidence Base and Local Plan policies. These include a Planning Policy appraisal by Troy Planning, Heritage appraisal by JB Heritage, a Landscape and Green Belt appraisal by Enplan, a Walkability Index by Space Syntax, a Sustainability Audit by Hadley Property Consultancy. The relevant reports form part of the main submission.
- 1.5. Whilst certain strategic aims and policies are welcomed, the Hadley Wood Neighbourhood Planning Forum **objects** to all areas within 800m of stations being identified for intensification, without taking into account local public transport connections and amenities, as this would increase the number of car-dependent residents. We therefore object to the release of the Land behind Camlet Way and Crescent West, Hadley Wood ("the Site") from the Green Belt and its proposed allocation for housing development, as well as other aspects of the draft Local Plan (the "Plan"), such as the intensification within existing residential streets. The key consideration in respect of both issues is that Hadley Wood is not, in the present set up, a sustainable development location. Enfield Council is encouraged to review, for example, the more granular approach to establishing sustainable development locations used by the London Borough of Bexley in its Regulation 19 submission.
- 1.6. The Forum also objects to the proposed allocation of the Site on the basis that the allocation stems in part from a failure to establish that there are exceptional circumstances for the release of the land from the Green Belt; that failure is reflected in the Council's evidently flawed Duty to Co-Operate position, and from the fact that the alternatives to the release of this part of the Green Belt have not been adequately assessed.
- 1.7. Enfield Council have erred with respect to law and policy, process and facts.
- 1.8. The release of Land behind Camlet Way and Crescent West ("SA45") would:
 - Result in an unsustainable level of growth to Hadley Wood given the paucity of facilities located within easy reach of the Site;

- Result in the loss of land that makes a "Strong" contribution to four of the five Green Belt purposes;
- Give rise to a "Very High" degree of harm to the Green Belt;
- Increase the flood risk in other parts of Hadley Wood;
- Give rise to materially detrimental traffic impacts to an area already suffering from acknowledged congestion, thus adding to air pollution;
- Cause substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage assets of Hadley Wood Conservation Area, listed buildings and the Monken Hadley Conservation Area (which has been ignored in the Council's evidence base);
- Jeopardise the future integrity of a site of ecological and wildlife importance;
- Have a material detrimental impact on the amenity enjoyed by properties on Camlet Way and Crescent West;
- Have a detrimental impact upon the established landscape character and the Hornbeam Hill South Area of Special Character;
- Result in the destruction of centuries-old grassland that is a valuable resource for carbon sequestration, contrary to Enfield's Climate Change Plan; and
- Result in unsustainable development in a low PTAL area dependent on car usage to access key services;
- Exacerbate rather than reduce the negative effects of additional housing in Enfield on Climate Change objectives.

1.9. Such harm is unnecessary as there exists capacity to meet the Council's housing need (without requiring 160 homes on this green belt site) through the combination of:

- Release of low quality and under-utilised brownfield sites;
- Intensification of the density of development on sites already identified for allocation;
- Investigation of alternatives in other neighbouring local authority areas to the release of Green Belt land; and
- If absolutely necessary, the release of sites which would result in a much lower degree of harm to the Green Belt and would not give rise to the same degree of detrimental impacts.

1.10. The intensification on small sites and the Tall Buildings policies would also result in a substantial increase in housing numbers, which would again not represent sustainable development in Hadley Wood and should be resisted.

2. Legal and Policy

2.1 The Reg 18 proposals are flawed *inter alia* by a failure on the part of the Council to engage properly with the Forum and more widely by a failure to abide by the Duty to Co-Operate where the question of Green Belt release is concerned.

2.2 Although the Plan acknowledges the existence of the Forum, the Forum was only consulted once, at a meeting in February 2019; that was in regard of the Dec 2018 Reg 18 Local Plan. Neither site SA45 nor the broader issues affecting Hadley Wood, such as taller buildings within Hadley Wood, were communicated to the Forum prior to the release of the Reg 18 draft Local Plan, contrary to the Statement of Community Involvement.

- 2.3 The Council undertook a consultation exercise on their Green Belt review as part of this Local Plan process and consulted a number of interested parties, as set out in Appendix A of the Green Belt and MOL Study 2021. However, again there was no consultation with the Forum. The Council would have been aware that the site subject to the proposed Green Belt release and housing allocation was contrary to the draft neighbourhood plan, which does not propose any amendment to the Green Belt boundary. The lack of consultation with the Forum on this issue is a major flaw and cannot now be rectified.
- 2.4 We have already referred to the failure to evidence any positive discussions with neighbouring authorities on the question of strategic Green Belt release, Heritage matters, or alternatives to the kind of releases that the Reg 18 draft contemplates. This poses a significant threat to the legality of the Plan.
- 2.5 Turning to the contents of the Plan, the Green Belt release which would be required to allocate the Site, (SA45), is not justified by a properly-evidenced 'exceptional circumstances' case. That applies to every Green Belt site. Without a more settled position on the amount of housing needing to be met in the Plan, the Forum cannot see how a rational case can be made for the release of land like the Site.
- 2.6 The entirety of site SA45 is situated within the Green Belt and adjoins Green Belt in London Borough of Barnet and Hertsmere District. It is an 11-hectare site in the open countryside, currently in grazing use but that has as well been in agricultural use. The National Planning Policy Framework ("NPPF") is clear that Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in "exceptional circumstances" (paragraph 140).
- 2.7 The Council's objectively assessed need for housing does not, by itself, automatically constitute "exceptional circumstances" that justify the release of SA45 for major development. Case law has established that the Council is required to take into account a number of other factors to ascertain whether "exceptional circumstances" exist to justify the release of land. In the case of the Site, in the absence of a cogent case based on the housing numbers needed to be met by the Plan, the other factors run counter to there being 'exceptional circumstances', rather than in favour.
- 2.8 The SHLAA assessment is considered invalid as insufficient information is provided on, inter alia, viability and availability. We are informed by the Tenant of the land in question that they have a long lease and therefore it is difficult to see how this land can be classified as available.
- 2.9 Access to local services is acknowledged as being limited and the adverse effect on heritage assets is recognised, but no assessment undertaken. The location of the site within an Area of Special Character was missed and therefore no assessment undertaken. Had these Heritage and Landscape Assessments been undertaken, the site would not have been deemed suitable and deliverable and would not have been included as a potential housing allocation.

The Council should investigate in a far more fundamental way whether Green Belt release in areas of low overall sustainability is consistent with the objectives of countering Climate Change.

- 2.10 More broadly, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 imposes a positive obligation on the Council to seek to achieve sustainable development in the new Local Plan. In the absence of any measures to improve infrastructure, services and amenities release of the site will not contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development, breaching NPPF paragraph 105.
- 2.11 The Character of Growth Study overrides the PTAL for any location within 800m of a station "to account for inaccuracies with PTAL", without providing any supporting evidence to justify this.

2.12 Policy H1 of the London Plan is not complied with, as Enfield has not adequately assessed the development potential from alternative supply sources, such as car parks, low density retail parks and supermarkets, surplus utilities and public sector owned sites and industrial sites, especially the land owned by the Council itself.

2.13 The Capacity Study Site Identification fails to assess:

- publicly owned sites that are in active alternative use;
- vacant sites that are not in the development pipeline;
- industrial sites classed as “wider areas of search”; and
- Underutilised SIL sites which could be developed for mixed uses the retain employment uses and provide housing;

this conflicts with London Plan policy H1, NPPF paragraph 120d) and the Mayor of London’s draft Good Quality Homes for All Londoners Guidance and draft Industrial Intensification Primer.

2.14 Neither the draft Local Plan nor the supporting documents acknowledge that site SA45 is also bordered by the Monken Hadley Conservation Area, and that the proposed development will result in harm to its setting.

2.15 Neither the draft Local Plan nor the supporting documents acknowledge that the site is bordered by Green Belt land in both LB Barnet and Hertsmere District. Both rate the land as making a “Strong” contribution to the Green Belt and development of site SA45 would impact the neighbouring parcels. The Evidence Base does not contain a Statement of Common Ground between LB Enfield and neighbouring authorities, reflective of the failure to look strategically at the need for Green Belt release in this area through the proper operation of the Duty to Co-Operate.

2.16 The Council have not undertaken Heritage and Landscaping assessments to assess impacts and harms, and allocation of the site for housing development is therefore premature.

2.17 Part of site SA45 is in flood zone 3 and a Site of Borough Importance for Nature Conservation. This is unsuitable and unavailable for development and should not be released from Green Belt. Hadley Wood already suffers from surface water flooding and this allocation will only make matters worse.

2.18 The draft Local Plan breaches the NPPF by encouraging development – both on site SA45 and in areas around stations – in areas that are not sustainable development locations.

3. **Green Belt**

3.1 Critical reviews of the Green Belt Evidence Base and policies have been prepared by Troy Planning (Appendix 1) and Enplan (Appendix 3) and form part of the main submission.

3.2 NPPF paragraph 137 states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl and keeping the land permanently open.

3.3 Enfield’s Green Belt and MOL Study concludes that the site is one of the areas “that make the greatest contribution to the greatest number of Green Belt purposes” and that the harm that would be caused by the site’s release from Green Belt would be “Very High” (this is the highest

possible ranking).

34. The Green Belt and MOL Study scores site SA45 as making “Strong” contribution to four of the five purposes of the Green Belt (this is the highest possible ranking). It scores Preventing neighbouring towns as merging into one another as “Moderate”, but the accompanying text only refers to Potters Bar, whereas the much greater risk is a merging with Barnet, given the site immediately adjoins the London Borough of Barnet. The assessment of this score is therefore considered inaccurate.
35. LUC, the Council’s consultant who produced the Green Belt and MOL Study, undertook a similar study for the London Borough of Barnet for their Local Plan in November 2018. Part of the Green Belt also covers the Monken Hadley Conservation Area, next to Site SA45. That Green Belt site also scored ‘strongly’ (highest possible ranking) against four of the five Green Belt purposes in the LB Barnet’s Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land Study – Stage 1 Final Report (2018) .
36. Enfield’s Characterisation Study (2011) explicitly refers to the site with: “Although a small area within the borough, this landscape character area is part of an important area of Green Belt and is in good condition. The Green Belt area is clearly defined by Bartram’s Lane and the rear boundaries of properties on Camlet Way and Crescent West”.
37. The same Characterisation Study notes that the Farmland Valleys and Ridges landscape, which the site also falls under, “is the borough’s most important landscape type and forms a special area of landscape character which is a major asset for the borough. It is of both landscape and historic significance” and “The existing Green Belt boundary should be retained and protected, and future development and land use changes resisted”.
38. The field pattern has remained unchanged for centuries and the site is part of the Hornbeam Hills South Area of Special Character (this important designation is not even mentioned in the Main Issues and Preferred Approaches Local Plan document).

4 Sustainability

- 4.1 To assess the level of sustainability for site SA45 and the area around Hadley Wood station, a Walkability Index has been prepared by Space Syntax (Appendix 4) and a Sustainability Audit has been prepared by Hadley Property Consultancy (Appendix 5); both documents form part of this objection.
- 4.2 Unlike most other recent local plans, Enfield’s Regulation 18 Plan does not have a clearly identified settlements hierarchy. As a result, land released from the Green Belt could be developed before brownfield sites are used and/or without the provision of adequate and vital local amenities.
- 4.3 The risk of unsustainable and/or inappropriate development is further increased by policies that encourage development and intensification within 800m of stations, which fails to take into account local amenities and local public transport (as reflected in PTALs), and which measures the 800m distance in a direct line, which fails to acknowledge the circuitous routing of highways and pavements, as well as gradients.

- 4.4 Enfield should follow the example of LB Bexley, whose Regulation 19 Local Plan reduces the distance from 800m to 400m where there is only a “local shopping area”, and distances are measured based on actual roads and pavements, not “as the crow flies”.
- 4.5 The Walkability Index produced by Space Syntax (Appendix 4) shows that there are very few key services within walking distance and that Hadley Wood has an average walkability index score of 7.8, compared to the borough average of 24 and the London average of 60. Most of the residential roads in Hadley Wood are disconnected cul-de-sacs or loops that oblige the residents to walk some distance before they get to a through road that leads where they want to go. Significantly there is very little that can be done to improve walkability in these roads. There are a narrow mix of land uses accessible locally that create few reasons to walk locally, which means residents have no choice but to drive to access these services.
- 4.6 There are no walkable early year facilities (0-2 years) in Hadley Wood. There is a single entry primary school, where in 2021 they had a total of 168 applications of which 33 children were refused a place. The school is already oversubscribed with an additional waiting list of 50 children. There is no secondary school in Hadley Wood with the nearest school being sited outside the borough (4.4km away). Therefore for any new resident to access education facilities they will have to drive and more likely have to drive outside the borough.
- 4.7 There are no GP’s within walking distance, no hospital within walking distance, no police station within walking distance, no NHS dental practice within walking distance, no supermarket within walking distance and no library within walking distance. These facilities are available in Barnet or Potters Bar, outside the borough and which require a car to be accessed.
- 4.8 Due to a lack of local amenities and local public transport Hadley Wood is a car-dependent location. The railway station does not offer a direct route to Enfield Town or Cockfosters and the only bus route outside the station goes to Barnet. Residents therefore have to rely on private car usage for healthcare, shopping, leisure and education. Most journeys are via the A111, which the Baseline Transport Review indicates already operates at over 100% of capacity. Additional vehicles will add to the congestion and air pollution, with the 3,000-5,000 homes planned at Chase Park using that same access road.
- 4.9 The proposed Green Belt release for development and the intensification policies breach the NPPF paragraph 105, which requires transport issues to be considered from the earliest stage of the plan-making process.
- 4.10 The proposed development of site SA45 and wider intensification in the area, including garden developments, will increase flood risk to an unacceptable level (part of the site is flood zone 3). Hadley Wood experiences frequent flooding due to inadequate foul and surface water drainage infrastructure, which has not kept up with the increased number of dwellings built in the area.
- 4.11 The relatively modest increase of 160 homes would require existing infrastructure, which is already at overcapacity and the scheme is of such a size that would not support enhancements to this infrastructure and amenities, to cater for its direct impact. This, combined with the removal of grassland that acts as a carbon sink, would breach the NPPF paragraph 11, which requires sustainable development to meet the development needs of their area, align growth and infrastructure, improve the environment and mitigate climate change.

4.12 The issue of Hadley Wood not being a sustainable development location also arises in connection with the increased building heights. To avoid misunderstandings the Plan should state, as paragraph 3.9.3 of the London Plan does, that it is not automatically acceptable for any building to be up to the height threshold for Tall Buildings, and that buildings must not lead to unacceptable impacts on the area.

5. Environmental

5.1 The NPPF provides that planning policies should minimise the impact on biodiversity and establish coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures. The NPPF also states that planning policies should allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value.

5.2 NPPF paragraph 179 requires Plans to safeguard wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks. Site SA45 is important for biodiversity and as a wildlife corridor, as reflected in part being a designated site of local importance for Nature Conservation. The site should therefore be protected.

5.3 The site has been grassland for centuries and represents a valuable carbon sink. The first point of Enfield's Climate Change Action Plan refers to the importance of enhancing carbon sequestration. The proposal to destroy this valuable resource therefore breaches not only the NPPF and London Plan, but also LB Enfield's own Climate Change Action Plan.

5.4 As indicated above, Hadley Wood is a car-dependent location and additional housing, both on site SA45 and by way of intensification as a result of the broader proposed policies, would add to private vehicle usage and congestion, and thus exacerbate air pollution in the Air Quality Management Area. The allocation and development of Site SA45 would also represent a failure to meet Climate Change objectives.

6. Heritage

6.1 To assess the impact on the Heritage Assets from Site Allocation SA45, JB Heritage have prepared a Heritage Appraisal (Appendix 2) and this forms part of the main submission.

6.2 The site is surrounded on three sides by the Hadley Wood Conservation Area, the Monken Hadley Conservation Area and Grade II listed buildings. Neither the draft Plan nor any of the supporting documents appear to acknowledge that the site borders the Monken Hadley Conservation Area, which is a fundamental failure to comply with Step 1 of Historic England's Advice Note 3 "The Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Plan".

6.3 The published draft Plan does not contain the '*Appraisal matrices for the site options*' that were included in the version that was presented to the Councillors. That states that the "Site overlaps Hadley Wood Conservation Area and is within 500m of [four Grade II listed buildings] The site is located on the edge of Hadley Wood and its large-scale development could adversely affect the setting of these heritage assets". This pertinent information does not appear to be in either the published draft Plan or the Evidence Base.

64. A key contributor to the significance of these designated heritage assets is their setting within the surrounding open countryside. Development of the Green Belt site would heavily compromise the setting and therefore the significance of the designated assets.
65. JB Heritage conclude that the development of this proposed allocated site for housing would in their opinion cause harm to the special architectural and historic interest of the properties and both Conservation Areas that would neither preserve nor enhance its character or appearance.
66. A significant proportion of the Monken Hadley Conservation Area is open, rural and has been determined by the London Borough of Barnet to contribute to its special architectural and historic interest. Site SA45 shares these same attributes and contributes positively to its setting. Enfield Council have overlooked the Monken Hadley Conservation Area in all the assessments.
67. There is no convincing case that development on the allocated site would sustain the significance of the listed buildings on Camlet Way. JB Heritage are of the opinion that the open character of the site is a vestige of their once rural setting which contributes positively to their significance as estate cottages in the Vernacular Revival style. The introduction of built form of this scale would result in harm by virtue of the erosion of the rural character of the site and its replacement with a housing estate.

7. Amenity / Landscape

- 7.1 To assess the level of impact on the Landscape, Troy Planning have produced a Landscape report (Appendix 1) and Enplan, have produced a Landscape and Green Belt Appraisal (Appendix 3), both of which form part of the main submission.
- 7.2 The landscape character of this area is recognised in a multitude of documents, including the Hertfordshire Landscape Character Study, the Enfield Characterisation Study and the Hadley Wood Heritage and Character Assessment.
- 7.2 The Enfield Characterisation Study refers to the Farmland Valleys and Ridges as “a major asset for the borough. It is of both landscape and historical significance” and “The existing Green Belt boundary should be retained and protected, and future development and land use changes resisted”.
- 7.3 The visual amenity not only serves the adjoining Conservation Area, but all residents benefit from the views of the fields from Crescent West and public land along the railway line, which is a popular public walking route.
- 7.4 The open landscape and green space is one of the key defining characteristics of Hadley Wood, and the Enfield Characterisation Study indicates that the fields are part of an important wider area of Green Belt and are in good condition.
- 7.5 Policy DMD 84 states that “New development within the Areas of Special Character will only be permitted if features or characteristics which are key to maintaining the quality of the area are preserved and enhanced”. Nothing in the Evidence Base suggests that any adverse change to the

quality of the area has occurred.

- 7.6 Enplan advise that the landscape causes site SA45 to be of clear borough importance and its designation as an Area of Special Character recognises this value. Paragraph 174 of the NPPF requires that planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance “valued landscapes”.
- 7.7 Enplan also advise that the landscape is highly sensitive to change and the proposed development (SA45) would be in stark contrast to the leafy, low density urban edge. The substantial adverse effect on the landscape and the visual harms, together with the very high harm to the Green Belt – as identified in the Green Belt and MOL Study – should result in the site being retained as Green Belt.

8. Transport

- 8.1 To assess the impact on highways, Troy Planning have produced a report which is attached at Appendix 1 and forms part of the main submission.
- 8.2 Hadley Wood is in a PTAL 1a/b zone, with poor public transport accessibility. The railway service, which is infrequent, only runs north/south. East-west travel, for example to Enfield town centre, takes almost an hour.
- 8.3 In the absence of an underground station or adequate bus service, residents are car-dependent for the purposes of employment, schooling, shopping and leisure.
- 8.4 Neither Enfield’s Local Plan nor the London Mayor’s Transport Strategy proposes investment in improved infrastructure.
- 8.5 The additional housing, both in Hadley Wood (site SA45 and the proposed small sites intensification) and at nearby Chase Park (5,000 new homes) will largely rely on the A111 and Hadley Road, both of which already operate at over 100% of capacity at peak times. The resulting additional congestion, and thus air pollution, is unacceptable and goes against the Council’s Climate Change policies.

9 Housing Numbers

- 9.1 Troy Planning have produced a report on the housing need and site selection process (Appendix 1) and their report forms part of the main submission.
- 9.2 As the Forum identifies above, the number of dwellings needed has yet to be established. The Plan documents discuss a very wide range of potential need, ranging from 1,246 dwellings per annum in the London Plan 2020 to 4,397dpa according to the Standard Methodology as set out in the NPPG, with the White Paper adding more uncertainty.
- 9.3 The NPPF requires planning policies to identify sufficient supply, and the London Plan supplements this, outlining, inter alia, the need to use brownfield sites and reduce the number of vacant and under-occupied dwellings. Enfield have not explored all possible sources of supply – for example, not all Council owned land has been assessed and there are 3,000 vacant residential properties in Enfield.
- 9.4 As neither the demand nor the supply has been firmed up it would be wholly premature, and

inappropriate, to release land from the Green Belt for development.

10 Conclusion

- 10.1 The draft Local Plan targets a minimum of 1,246 new homes p.a. Even though that represents a reduction of a third compared with the 1,876 envisaged in the 2018 consultation document, the Plan proposes to build a quarter of all new homes on current Green Belt land.
- 10.2 As the housing target number is far from established, and as not all alternative sources of supply have been properly considered, no decisions on Green Belt release should be made.
- 10.3 Site SA45 was only included at the insistence of the high profile landowner. The draft Plan and supporting documents fail to evidence the "exceptional circumstances" to justify the release of the site, or the alternatives considered to meet the OAN that could result in no or a lesser degree of harm to the Green Belt and/or would cause less harm when considered against all the other wider policy considerations set out in the NPPF in respect of the need to achieve sustainable development.
- 10.4 It is inconceivable that, for example, Meridian Water, under discussion for over a decade, cannot provide 160 homes when the 20 year plan only includes 5,000 of the 10,000 homes planned for this brownfield development.
- 10.5 The Plan uses a highly questionable and arbitrary approach to select site SA45 for development. For example, the Character & Growth Report overrides the PTAL (1a/b for Hadley Wood) to the equivalent of PTAL 4 for all sites within 800m of any station, without providing supporting evidence. Further, local amenities and harm to heritage assets are not considered for Suitability, the Area of Special Character designation has been dropped and carbon sequestration has been ignored.
- 10.6 In order to meet the OAN shortfall the Council's primary focus should be on the identification of sites outside the Green Belt. If the release of additional sites is considered necessary, the Council should adopt a sequential approach, identifying and releasing those sites which cause the lowest degree of harm first, consistent with a stated settlements hierarchy strategy.
- 10.7 Procedural oversights, most notably with respect to the lack of appropriate consultation with the Hadley Wood Neighbourhood Planning Forum, render the Regulation 18 submission questionable.
- 10.8 Breaches of, inter alia, the London Plan and NPPF undermine the Plan, not only with respect to the Green Belt release but also, for example, by allowing all areas to build up to at least 21m height.
- 10.9 Hadley Wood is not a suitable location for sustainable development without major investment to improve the infrastructure and amenities.

Given that neither the supply nor demand requirement has been determined, and considering the other points

above, we believe there is no justification for:

- the release of site SA45 in Hadley Wood;
- the intensification on small sites within an 800m radius (as the crow flies) of the Hadley Wood station; a range of other proposed policies and measures, as discussed in the body of this submission.