

To: Mr Ian Kemp
49 All Saints Place
Bromsgrove
Worcestershire
B61 0AX

From: Jake Leith

18th September 2012

This statement relates to Issue 10 Place Strategies: Hemel Hempstead for the meeting on 16th October and refers to question 10.3.

The field referred to in the following points is the field between Cherry Bounce and Fletcher Way and we contest the soundness of the Core Strategy as follows.

1. Not Justified.

- 1.1 The field is highly valued as a recreational facility and has been in use for at least fifty years. It is widely used throughout the year for a variety of sports and leisure activities and is an asset to the community. It has all the attributes of a Village Green and a valid application was made in April 2012 to County Hall to change the status.
- 1.2 The town has no hospital, theatre (the much valued Pavilion was demolished many years ago and the promised replacement never built) fewer schools and declining industry so the provision of further housing could not be supported by the local infrastructure.
- 1.3 At a Council meeting on 30th January 2007 the Leader of the Council agreed with Mr Leith over concerns about insufficient infrastructure, stretched physical resources and the threat to discrete rural communities, and stated that the council 'does not endorse this type of development' (ref. section CA/288/07).
- 1.4 At the Local Development Core Strategy Council meeting on 26th July 2011 the council appears to have made a 'u turn' and included the field in its development strategy. This was despite assurances by a former councillor that 'the political will within the council to build on any green belt land is practically zero.'

The view to exclude the field from development was fully endorsed by Mike Penning MP. Hemel Hempstead is made attractive by the green spaces within the town. If these vital green belt areas are destroyed we cannot turn back the clock and the appeal of our town would be gone for ever.

- 1.5 If further housing is needed there are more suitable places available. There are areas in Grove Hill and other regeneration sites. There are also areas on the edge of Maylands Avenue and Breakespeare Way. Some of these areas have been classed as industrial in the past and now include residential properties on them.

- 1.6 The field is an area of outstanding natural beauty and has been recorded by artists and photographers over the years. The surrounding area is frequently used in television and film productions. It is part of our heritage and must be preserved for future generations.
- 1.7 Any building on this land will obstruct the view of local residents. Many have lived here for over 25 years and suggestions have been made previously that they are entitled to that same view.
- 1.8 The Human Rights Act 1998 gives legal effect in the UK to the fundamental rights and freedoms contained in the European Convention on Human Rights. These rights not only impact matters of life and death, they also affect the rights in everyday life and other similar basic entitlements. The proposals for Cherry Bounce would have detrimental effect on the surrounding neighbourhoods quality of life.

Human rights include:

- the right to respect for private and family life
- the right to peaceful enjoyment of your property

The above rights would be impacted by;

- homes and gardens being overlooked
- loss of privacy, relative tranquility and quietness
- significant increase in noise pollution
- increase in disturbance
- increase in traffic congestion
- loss of light from overshadowing
- loss on visual amenity
- loss of trees and parkland
- loss of open space for recreation
- de-valuation to surrounding properties through the above impacts.

2. Not consistent with national policy

- 2.1 The field is Green Belt and as such should not be built on as these areas provide valuable breathing spaces in the town.
- 2.2 The Dacorum Local Development Framework, Core Strategy Submission Stage states – ‘Local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of Green Belt . When considering any planning application, local authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt.’

2.3 It also states that ‘ great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.’ This field is adjacent to the Old Town which is a historic conservation area.