

WRITTEN STATEMENT ON LOCAL PLAN

Based on representation number 542 by Michael Lott

My earlier representation was limited solely to comments on HT2 – land north of Pound Farm as does this written statement.

Matter 1 Legal requirements

Under point 1.7 I would submit that, for reasons set out below, there is no evidence that the Council has adequately considered reasonable alternatives to development of site HT2, particularly in the light of the fact that, as noted by the Inspector in point 10.9, this site falls entirely within the Green Belt. The plan therefore appears to be in breach of the legal requirement.

Matter 4 - The housing strategy: the supply of land for housing.

Given the points I made in point 1.) of my representation (as well as in my email of 3rd July to Mrs St John Howe) and which I understand it is not necessary for me to repeat, it seems totally inappropriate for the Council to plan for a supply of virtually 1,000 more dwellings than the number of dwellings stated by the Plan as the number required. The Inspector asks the Council for their justification of this in point 4.1.

The Council exacerbates this inappropriate proposal by then proposing development on Green Belt land which the planning framework states must only be developed in very special circumstances and where the Prime Minister

has stated that the government was: “very clear that the Green Belt must be protected”.

The Green Belt is in no way being protected when Green Belt land is identified for building dwellings which are surplus to those that the Plan states are required. Furthermore, in no way can the building of dwellings surplus to requirement on Green Belt land be considered development in “very special circumstances”.

Matter 5 – The housing strategy: the spatial distribution of new housing.

5.2 The Inspector invites the Council to explain the reason for proposing no housing allocation in Category B villages or Category C settlements and asks the Council also to explain if this approach is justified.

I am perplexed at this approach by the Council. Having previously lived in the centre of a village in North Herts, I am very much aware of the need to maintain a working age population to ensure the maintenance of facilities. There is no doubt in my mind that some additional housing, particularly in Category B villages is beneficial and should always have priority over building on Green Belt land.

Matter 7- Countryside and Green Belt

My comments in Representation 542 deal comprehensively with the incompatibility of the proposed submission with paragraph 83 of the National Planning Policy Framework. It is significant to note that in a document published last year as his election address of the May 2016 elections it was stated that Councillor Richard Thake, (who is the County Councillor for the area covered by HT2 and the District Councillor for the area immediately to the north of HT2) remains opposed to any unnecessary destruction of the

greenbelt, and has been lobbying for sequential control to ensure that greenbelt and green field sites are not developed first, just because it is easier and cheaper to do so.

Development of HT2 would clearly be incompatible with the fundamental aim of Green Belts in that it would increase urban sprawl and significantly reduce the green space between Hitchin and the part of St Ippolyts parish which abuts Hitchin and the old village of St Ippolyts.

Matter 8 – The housing strategy.

Affordable housing

Given the location of HT2 in an area close to housing in the £500,000 to £1,000,000 plus range it is inconceivable that developers would forego the possibility of building housing in this price range in favour of housing which is affordable in its real sense i.e. Social Housing or housing for sale in the £100,000 - £200,000 range.

8.8 The answer to the question posed must be “no”.

Matter 9 – The basis for the housing allocations and the settlement boundaries.

9.2 d) The Inspector may wish to ask the Council whether the greatest weight /importance that has been given to HT2 is the availability of developers to build on the land and that this has overridden all other considerations.

9.5 I refer to my earlier submission (number 542). The settlement boundary the Council has drawn round a substantial part of St Ippolyts parish and the

inclusion within this boundary of HT2 is undemocratic. As a resident of this part of St Ippolyts parish for more than 25 years I have never been consulted on this drawing of the settlement boundary.

Hitchin

10.6b) I refer to my earlier submission. I have seen absolutely no evidence that safe and appropriate access for vehicles and pedestrians to and from HT2 has been given any consideration. I have certainly seen nothing.

10.9a) See my earlier comments. As far as HT2 is concerned then I am certain that the answer must be “no”. The same may apply to other sites but, as required, I am restricting my comments in this document to HT2.

10.9d) In my view, the Green Belt function would be undermined by the site's allocation, particularly for the reason I have given above i.e. that the allocation would increase urban sprawl and significantly reduce the green space between Hitchin and the part of St Ippolyts parish which abuts Hitchin and the old village of St Ippolyts.

10.10 In my view the proposed settlement boundary around HT2 is neither appropriate nor justified.

I hope the Inspector will find my comments of value and that he will have the opportunity to consider them in conjunction with the comments I submitted on 13th November 2016.

Michael Lott