

Epping Forest District Council

Local Plan 2011 - 2033

Examination

Hearing Statement on behalf of Mr John Padfield (REF: 19LAD0069)

Matter 4: The Spatial Strategy Distribution of Development

Development South of Ivy Chimneys, Epping

Issue 4: is the distribution of development justified in respect of the need for, and approach to, Green Belt releases?

- 1) Yes: The consideration of the tests of 'soundness' including compliance with national planning policy is to be examined against the provisions of The Framework 2012. The Framework states at paragraph 84:

'When drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries local planning authorities should take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development'.

- 2) Section 39 of the 2004 Act requires the preparation of a development plan with the 'objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development'. Green Belt is a planning policy constraint only to development and the NPPF does not preclude the removal of land from it in order to achieve sustainable development. Indeed, it makes it clear in paragraph 83 that the preparation of the Local Plan is the appropriate vehicle through which changes to the Green Belt boundary should be made.
- 3) Necessarily the preparation of the Local Plan must have regards to national policies and advice. The Framework makes clear that once established Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in 'exceptional circumstances', (Framework 83). The exceptional circumstances justifying the redefinition of Green Belt boundaries within Epping District are set out at paragraphs 2.136 – 2.137 of the Local Plan.

- 4) The Local Plan states 2.138:

'It is clear that there is insufficient land outside of the Green Belt to meet future development needs of the District within the plan period'.

- 5) The need to provide for new development – especially the provision for new homes provides the exceptional circumstance to review Green Belt boundaries – and remove a limited extent of land from the Green Belt in order to allow for the achievement of a sustainable pattern of development (4a).

- 6) The consequence of not releasing some land from the Green Belt to meet development needs is self-evident from the Map 2.5 in the Local Plan. Other than land within the confines of the main settlements, the District comprises land within Green Belt. As stated, (2.136) there is an inability of neighbouring authorities to meet the need of the District given their circumstances as also containing extensive areas of Green Belt’.

- 7) The strategic priorities (Framework 156) of the Plan to allocate ‘land to provide new employment floorspace to support its economic role, and facilitating the delivery of new homes and necessary infrastructure and services to meet the needs of existing and future residents’ (2.28) would not be achieved.