

Neil Holly

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 January 2024 20:13
To: Local Plan
Subject: Local Plan: Opposition to proposed changes in Green Belt boundaries to create additional employment land at the site immediately north of M6 Junction 2 [REDACTED]

From:

[REDACTED]

To:
Issues & Options Consultation
Development Strategy
Rugby Borough Council
Town Hall
Evreux Way
Rugby
CV21 2RR

23rd January 2024

Subject: Opposition to proposed changes to the Local Plan, specifically changes to Green Belt Boundaries for Additional Employment Land at the site immediately north of M6 Junction 2.

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing to express my strong objection to the proposed changes to Green Belt boundaries, specifically the site north of M6 Junction 2, as outlined in the recent council consultation documentation regarding the intended revision of the Local Plan. It has come to my attention that the purpose of these alterations is to create additional employment land, and I believe that such modifications are not in alignment with the principles set forth in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

As stipulated in chapter 13 of the NPPF, the Government emphasizes the utmost importance of protecting Green Belts. The framework explicitly advises Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to prioritize the use of suitable brownfield sites before contemplating any adjustments to Green Belt boundaries. The NPPF insists on the existence of "exceptional circumstances" as a prerequisite for any such alterations and maintains that inappropriate development is detrimental to the Green Belt and should only be sanctioned in "very special circumstances."

I would like to draw your attention to the latest data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) concerning Rugby's employment landscape. According to the ONS figures for the year ending June 2023, Rugby's employment rate stands at an impressive 81.4%, surpassing the West Midlands' overall rate of 74.3%. This data suggests that there is no immediate urgency for additional employment land in the area, undermining the claim that there exists a pressing need for such changes to the Green Belt boundaries.

Moreover, the ONS data reveals that the unemployment rate in Rugby for the same period was a mere 3%, notably lower than the national average of 3.8%. These statistics further underscore that there are no "exceptional circumstances" warranting the alteration of Green Belt boundaries to create additional employment land. It is evident that the current economic conditions do not justify compromising the integrity of the Green Belt, especially when there are brownfield sites available.

The intention to redesignate this land for additional employment purposes also runs contrary to the primary purpose of Green Belt land.

The Government, in articulating the "fundamental aim" of the Green Belt, underscores the imperative to prevent urban sprawl by maintaining land around urban areas in a state of permanent openness. This, as stated in the NPPF, is a responsibility entrusted to Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) who are mandated to define and sustain Green Belt land within their local jurisdictions.

I wish to highlight the unique circumstances of the proposed site immediately north of M6 Junction 2. This location, situated immediately adjacent to the outer limits of the large city of Coventry, is currently acting as a vital buffer to urban sprawl, preventing the absorption of the small village of Ansty into the expanding city limits. If the Green Belt land in question is redesignated for employment purposes, it is foreseeable that the urban sprawl of Coventry will absorb the village of Ansty, leading to a significant alteration of the landscape and character of the region.

The amalgamation of Coventry and Ansty into a single continuous non-rural space not only contradicts the primary aim of Green Belt land, as articulated by the Government, but also poses a threat to the identity and well-being of the local community. The adverse impact on the local environment, biodiversity, and the quality of life for residents cannot be overstated. Such a transformation would represent a departure from the intended purpose of the Green Belt, exacerbating the challenges posed by urban sprawl.

Considering the specific implications for the proposed site north of M6 Junction 2 and the surrounding areas, I urge the Council to reconsider the proposed changes. It is crucial to uphold the core principles of the Green Belt and avoid actions that would compromise the integrity of our urban and rural landscapes, particularly in light of the unique circumstances at this location.

Thank you for considering my concerns. I trust that, as stewards of our community's well-being, you will make decisions that prioritize the long-term sustainability, environmental preservation, and the unique character of our region.

Yours faithfully

