

FULL NAME
ADDRESS
ADDRESS
Wirral
CHxx yZZ

Forward Planning Team
P O Box 290
Brighton Street
Wallasey
CH44 8ED

DATE

Wirral Local Plan 'Issues and Options' Consultation - Green Belt Objections

Dear Sirs,

I am writing to formally submit my objections to any proposal for the release of Green Belt land for the purpose of development, particularly house-building, and submit for your further consideration and records my reasoning as to why I believe this to be both unnecessary and detrimental.

The case that more land is required for house-building seems to be based on the stated need to build an additional 12,000 homes when it is clear that the population figures for Wirral have been practically static for many years and there is no indication that this situation is about to change. The Council's own statistical data points to an actual need a fraction of the 12,000 figure. Consequently, demand will be much lower than the stated need would suggest.

In addition, the proposal to include Green Belt land as Options for development will likely result in those sites deteriorating through planning blight by discouraging land owners' use, investment and improvement of the land whilst waiting for any real development interest and opportunity to arise.

I also believe that the existing Local Plan proposals fail to recognise the full value the Green Belt has in making Wirral such an attractive place to live and visit, which is so accurately described in the Council's own Visitor Economy Strategy, "*Wirral Peninsula is a unique and attractive place to live, work and visit*".

It is the Green Belt that helps make Wirral so attractive and interesting by separating distinct residential towns and villages, and allowing easy access to the countryside for residents and visitors.

Added to this, the Council has also recognised that we have a 'Climate Emergency' and is committed to taking measures to address this situation. A Council Motion was passed unanimously stating that NO productive agricultural land will be released for development. The Local Plan Options fail to adhere to this commitment.

The existing Green Belt is already making an important contribution towards tackling Climate Change, reducing harmful pollution and promoting health and wellbeing through leisure activities and its attractiveness. And further measures will include:

- Increasing tree cover through large scale tree planting;
- Encouraging local food production, reducing unnecessary food miles;
- Creating and restoring flood plains, protecting homes and businesses from flooding;
- Improving wildlife habitats by creating and maintaining wildlife corridors, linking with urban parks and open spaces;
- Improving air quality, reducing high incidence of asthma;
- Providing further opportunities for recreation.

Clearly we should be investing in the Green Belt as a positive measure of tackling Climate Change and improving the quality of life of all local residents, most particularly those who live in urban areas.

We are fortunate to have Green Belt within the Borough and we need to protect and cherish it. It was created specifically to direct development into run-down areas and to prevent further decline: the need for Regeneration remains as evident as ever. Building houses in Green Belt would directly reduce still further the viability of housing in the north and east of the Peninsula, delaying their rejuvenation and improved quality of life.

Wirral is the fastest growing visitor destination in the Liverpool City Region and the economic benefits of a Green Belt which creates the landscape background for so many of the visitor attractions must be recognised. Tourism and Leisure are vital to Wirral's Local Economy and Green Belt plays a major role. We cannot afford to lose any.

Rather than releasing land from the Green Belt, the social, environmental and economic arguments would all suggest that we should be investing in the management of this Green Space. Priority should be given to the regeneration of the existing urban areas and to protection of farmland and wildlife; and this should be reflected in Planning Policy and the Local Plan by ensuring the continued protection of the Green Belt.

I intend sending copies of this letter to my local Councillors and MP for their information.

Yours faithfully,

Signature

NAME