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## Bradmore Way Appeal

It was a long wait for the decision but worth it as the inspector dismissed the developer's appeal against the council's decision to refuse planning permission to build 125 houses, a care home and scout hut on land at the end of Bradmore Way in Brookmans Park.

We were delighted, and let's face it relieved, to have the council's decision upheld in this appeal.

Essentially the inspector rejected the appeal on the grounds that the supposed advantages of the proposed development did not outweigh the damage that would be caused to the Green Belt.

The full decision can be accessed through our web site [here](#).

The Society took part in the appeal proceedings as a partner in a Combined Objectors' group with the Bradmore Way Action Group and led by CPRE Herts. The group was represented at the appeal hearings by barrister Jo Thomas. The Society's planning advisor Jed Griffiths was the group's professional witness. He was supported by Chris Berry, Planning Officer for CPREHerts.

The costs amounted to about £27,000 of which some £20,000 was raised from the local appeal. Thank you to all who contributed. Any contributions to help reduce the shortfall would be gratefully received.

North Mymms Parish Council, led by Councillor Mia Americanos-Molinero, also took part in the proceedings.

This is a significant victory for the Council's Green Belt policy and for local action.

Congratulations to all concerned.

All that said, we have now had notification that the developer is challenging the decision in the High Court.

In its explanatory note about the right to challenge decisions, the Department for Communities and Local Government states:

“A decision cannot be challenged merely because someone does not agree with the Secretary of State’s decision. Those challenging a decision have to be able to show that a serious mistake was made when reaching the decision; or, for example, that the inquiry, hearing or site visit was not handled correctly or that the procedures were not carried out properly.”

The full DCLG note is at:

[assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/307394/challenge-decision-dclg.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/307394/challenge-decision-dclg.pdf)

We shall have to wait and see how this pans out.

## **Recent approvals in Little Heath**

Planning permission has been granted for two adjacent developments in the Green Belt off Hawkshead Road in Little Heath. Both of these are included in the draft Local Plan and have been approved by the inspector: Osborn House Farm (36 dwellings), and Videne (63 dwellings). In such circumstances a refusal by the council would most likely be overturned on appeal. Nonetheless it is a disappointment that we have got to this stage and lost the opportunity to deal with these two sites in a comprehensive manner, both for establishing the future boundary of the Green Belt as well as for design and traffic management issues.

## **Local Plan**

There has been some progress on the Local Plan but it is very slow.

Following the consultation on Main Modifications in March, but only after the local elections in May, there was an exchange of correspondence between the inspector and the council which led to a six-week consultation to the end of July on further modifications.

These were mainly of a technical nature with the main objective of bringing various numbers up to date; mostly minor adjustments to reflect decisions and developments which have occurred since the original draft (which believe it or not was issued in August 2016).

One important adjustment concerns the plan's revised estimates of sustainable growth. These now include the latest figures for new employment land which are less than half of the original figure and reflect the reality of the available sites in the borough. We think this further undermines the validity of the 15,200 dwellings in the plan, which, as we have continually argued, should be reduced.

Along with others, we have argued from the beginning that the plan figure of 15,200 dwellings is calculated on national rather than local considerations and is far too high. A lower figure of around 10,000 would amply meet the local housing need and put much less pressure on the Green Belt.

For the moment, that appears to be a lost cause.

However, the plan is to be introduced in stages with a target of 9,343 dwellings over the first ten years of the plan - an initial period of 10 years, with a review to commence within a year of the plan being adopted.

*"The review would be undertaken in the context of housing need, national policy, and other relevant circumstances at the time. The review will determine additional sites to be allocated to meet the requirement in future years and provides an opportunity to examine the plan's performance to that date."*

Two items concerning North Mymms included:

1. A proposal to raise the number of dwellings associated with the proposed development on Marshmoor, from 80 to 100;
2. A specific provision to include off-site highway works for the site HS22 (BrP4) near Brookmans Park Station which we supported.

Our comments are available on our website and can be viewed [here](https://www.greenbeltsociety.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Comments-on-the-Further-Main-Modifications-to-the-Local-Plan-July-2023.pdf) or by visiting: <https://www.greenbeltsociety.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Comments-on-the-Further-Main-Modifications-to-the-Local-Plan-July-2023.pdf>

The results of the consultation have been sent to the inspector for his consideration and a final decision on whether the plan, as amended, is "sound". That decision is expected "at the end of the summer" which means any time now!

If the inspector decides that the plan is “sound” the council will then have to decide whether to adopt it or not.

## **Michael Gove (again)**

In December last, The Secretary of State for Levelling Up Housing and Communities - to give him his full title - aka Michael Gove, wrote to MPs with details of changes that the Government intended to make to the planning system. This is to come partly through legislation in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill (LUPRB) and partly through changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on which there were to be consultations.

Since then, there has been much talk and consultation but not a lot of progress, so Michael Gove took to the lectern again on 24th July to deliver a lengthy speech on government policy for planning and housing.

This substantially repeated what had been said in December adding some eye-catching stuff about Cambridge and a couple of other places.

For us and the Green Belt there was a clear statement that:

*“Later in the year, the government will pass the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill to put in place our reforms to the planning system that will create more beautiful and sustainable homes in the right places and publish updates to the National Planning Policy Framework.”*

What we hope will come out of it is that when preparing new local plans to meet housing need, authorities that are significantly constrained by Green Belt will not be required to review the Green Belt and as a result will be able to target lower levels of housing delivery.

We wait to see if these changes will help protect the Green Belt in our community when a future Local Plan is being reviewed.

For the full release please click [here](#) or visit:  
[www.gov.uk/government/news/long-term-plan-for-housing](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/long-term-plan-for-housing)

## **Clive Bennett’s Tree**

We are delighted that after many delays we finally managed to plant “Clive’s Tree”.

A well-known resident of Welham Green, Clive Bennett served on the Society's committee from its inception in 1972 and as Vice-President for many years. Sadly, he died in 2018. A small commemoration took place in April attended by his widow Edna and members of the committee and Parish Council on the edge of the recreation ground at Welham Green.

Some photos taken during the commemoration can be seen on our website [here](#).

## **London Green Belt Council**

The struggles we have locally to protect the Green Belt are replicated throughout the country but nowhere more so than in the home counties.

For several years, the society has been a member of The London Green Belt Council which (LGBC) brings together members of the public and over 100 organisations. including councils and environmental groups who share a concern for protecting the Metropolitan Green Belt.

The LGBC works with politicians, experts and decision-makers, including the All-Party Parliamentary Group for London's Green Belt, to publicise its value and threats to it, and to analyse and seek solutions to pressures to develop it.

If you would like to find out more, please visit [www.londongreenbeltcouncil.org.uk/](http://www.londongreenbeltcouncil.org.uk/).

For more news about the Green Belt in Hertfordshire please visit <http://www.cpreherts.org.uk>

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[www.greenbeltsociety.org.uk/update-membership-details/](http://www.greenbeltsociety.org.uk/update-membership-details/)
  - If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us via the various means shown in the header of this newsletter.
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