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Draft Local Plan - 2013 to 2033
12 March 2016
Section 7
Paragraph 7.29 - Site Selection
Sites 044 & 178 - Land at Priests Lane, Brentwood

I express my objections to the development of these 2 sites on the following grounds:

Traffic congestion & Air/Noise pollution

The traffic congestion in Priests Lane is so bad that it makes it difficult to exit from my cul-de-sac as the queue goes way beyond Bishop Walk. To get to the High St, it's quicker to walk than drive, only drawback is inhaling fumes from the long queue of motor vehicles. Not only that, there are scores of school children that use this route having to breathe in exhaust emissions. The BBC recently reported on illegal high levels of nitrous oxide in parts of Priests Lane, known to cause and exacerbate chronic health conditions. This will put a strain on already overstretched NHS services. If we extrapolate the proposal of 130 homes to c.300 cars, this will push up congestion and pollution to intolerable levels. Both sites are Protected Open Spaces, much needed in urban areas to absorb and mitigate against pollution.

Health & Safety

It is dangerous to cross Priests Lane as it's busy, narrow and winding but you have no choice if you live on the side without footpath! The footpaths are narrow and uneven leading to greater likelihood of trips and falls with the inevitable call upon overstretched NHS services. There have been several accidents and near misses in Priests Lane, e.g car ploughing into no.49A, another demolishing a wall at no 57, latest RTA today, Sunday. I have been overtaken by cars ignoring the speed limit of 30mph! And that's before you add treacherous road conditions from inclement weather. The lack of safe walking footpaths and cycle paths have pushed more into using their cars leading to ever greater congestion over time. This development would increase

both cars and pedestrian traffic to this street network, way beyond its design and capability. Access by emergency services would be further hindered and delayed with knock on effects on health and crime. The dirt, noise and air pollution associated with the construction of this development would be intolerable for the area over many years. Heavy construction lorries will only damage the already fragile network of pipes beneath the road. It will lead to more roadworks/repairs causing yet more queues!

Surface drainage

Whenever it rains, you get pools of water gathering at the junctions of Priests Lane with Bishop Walk and Glanthams Road and beyond, making it difficult and unsafe for road users. Moreover, pedestrians and cyclists get splashed from passing cars. Site 044 was previously deemed to be too wet for development and reports indicate that water and sewerage facilities are at maximum capacity. Building a further 130 homes and the trend to paving over front gardens would cause flooding because water cannot seep into the existing fields and worse still, lead to serious public health and safety issues were the drains to overflow.

Wildlife habitat

These Protected Open Spaces are used by a wide range of birdlife (rarer species include pheasant, heron, owl, greater-spotted and green woodpecker, jay, songthrush, sparrowhawk), squirrel, muntjac deer, badger, foxes, shrews and rabbit. The wildflower meadow attracts butterflies and flocks of birds. The mature trees amongst which are the oriental and english oak, white beam, ash, wild plum, maple and a rare species of conifer provide a diverse habitat for many species. It is what makes Brentwood such a lovely and safe place to live and raise a family. We have noticed the impact of Crossrail works on the wildlife in both sites. If this development goes ahead, it will sound the death knell of our precious and endangered wildlife.

Last but not least, the fields also act as green lungs in an urban area to absorb excess nitrous oxide and CO2 harmful to our planet. It is therefore shortsighted and irresponsible of the present Council to replace two Protected Open Spaces with 130 homes which will only put more pressure on community infrastructure and local services which will do irreparable damage to the environment and seriously undermine the quality of life for all.

In-filling dwellings in established conurbations inevitably causes problems and even more so in these two Protected Open Spaces sites. This could be avoided by building on edge or out of town area within the Borough providing much needed services and public transport links to these outlying areas.

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