

Response:

This attempt again to remove the Urban Open Space indicated as R19 (land at Priests Lane), as identified in the *Schedule of Potential Main Modifications and accompanying updated Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment* dated 01 Oct.2021, is not only short sighted but will deprive forever the two adjoining oversubscribed schools of the invaluable space to expand to relieve the inevitable pressures on school space with the increasing urbanisation of the borough.

Although a feeble attempt has been made to mitigate this glaring oversight by proposing to amend para. 9.175 with *“land adjoining The Endeavour School within the development site should be utilised to accommodate the expansion”*, this token gesture will only provide the quick-fix requirement for a sixth-form provision for disabilities pupils, and not playing field space. Crucially, there has been no reference to set aside land similarly to accommodate expansion of the adjoining mainstream Hogarth Primary School which had to sacrifice half of its precious playing fields in recent years to accommodate the exponential rise in pupil numbers and is now occupied by buildings and car park. The loss of schools’ playing fields has been extensively documented to have a negative impact on the health and well-being of our younger generation.

Rather than requiring the fix of *“an appropriate financial contribution towards the delivery of an off-site playing field”* in order *“to make the policy consistent with national policy, justified and effective”*, it would be more honest and prudent to address all the issues and problems raised with the development of this site by using the suggested *“off-site playing field space”* to develop the 75 dwellings being proposed. The area R19 could remain an important resource for the irreplaceable activities only possible at this location for the adjoining schools as well as for local community sports. The area already has the benefit of a substantial sports pavilion on site from its earlier use as a school playing field.

In 1997, restricted development was granted for just five dwellings at what is now Bishop Walk. Since then of course road traffic and its pollution has significantly increased and therefore grounds for refusing development are even stronger with Priests Lane’s narrow footpath limited to one side of the narrow road and the road narrowing even further at two sections allowing only the single passage of wider vehicles. The narrow Priests Lane precludes a bus route and engenders over-reliance on cars as witnessed by the long queues at peak times. Assessment even then confirmed that Priests Lane could not withstand an increase in traffic and the current proposal for an additional 1000 dwellings in Shenfield as well as the attraction of the railway station by Crossrail will increase this hazard and compromise health and safety even more. We pray that the planning authorities have the foresight to realise the repercussions associated with this development and keep this area as Urban Open Space for the benefit of this and future generations and not just exploit it as a short-term fix to housing numbers whilst disregarding the adverse impact on the environs.