

West End Action Group (WEAG)

9 December 2019

- * **GOOD NEWS FOR OUR GREEN BELT: FAIRFIELD LANE**
- * **PRECEDENT FOR FENNS LANE**

Dear WEAG supporters,

There's some good news for the protection of the precious Green Belt surrounding West End. A planning application to build on the Green Belt has just been turned down by the Planning Inspectorate. It's the proposal for four houses in the field on the northern side of Fairfield Lane (18/0863). SHBC refused permission in June, and now the Inspectorate has rejected the appeal. The main reasons:

1. The site is in the Green Belt
2. It's outside the defined settlement area of West End
3. It would significantly harm the character and appearance of the area
4. No "exceptional circumstances" apply (in this case, it's not legitimate infilling)
5. Therefore it's "inappropriate development in the Green Belt" and thus breaks the National Planning Policy Framework regulations
6. There are unsolved problems of drainage and flooding
7. The Borough now has the required 5-year supply of land for housing, without using this site

These were also the key points put forward by Fairfield Lane Residents Association, WEAG, and over 100 other objectors – and thank you to all those who wrote in to SHBC in January-March and/or the Inspectorate more recently and helped bring about this conclusion.

It's reassuring that the Planning Inspectorate has confirmed that these points remain crucial. Especially as every one of these points also applies to the proposal for 74 houses in Fenns Lane (19/0154), which has yet to go before the Borough's Planning Applications Committee.

For point 4, different "exceptional circumstances" are claimed by the Fenns Lane proposal - that ALL the land for houses is 'previously developed land' - but this is strongly disputed. In any case, for this exception to apply it must also be shown that the development would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt – a test it would clearly fail.

Regards

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