

Petitioning Simon Berkeley BA MA MRTPI and 2 others

SAY NO TO GA2 - Saving North Herts Green Belt



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59

59 have signed. Let's get to 100.



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NHDC are still proposing 3 developments on precious greenbelt after hundreds of residents signed petitions and objected to the original proposals. They are proposing nearly 2000 houses to be built in 3 areas, GA1, GA2 and NS1 – the impact would be huge for residents of Stevenage, Great Ashby, Graveley and other villages/hamlets, as well as seriously harming our remaining wildlife habitat to the North of Stevenage. Two of the developments have been increased in size, GA2 in particular has been more than doubled.

NHDC have seemingly ignored residents' objections as well as those from groups and MP's and we believe their plan to be

unsound and unjustified. NPPF 17 states planning should empower local people - NHDC have failed to do this; contrary to NPPF 150, their plan does not reflect our vision and aspirations. Large areas of green belt have already been removed from around Stevenage - West, South and North in regards to Stevenage Borough Council's local plan of 7,600 homes and EHDC are looking to build a further 600 houses to the East of Stevenage. Green belt was put in place to restrict urban sprawl, stop areas from merging and safeguard the countryside - NHDC's local plan does not reflect the purposes set out in paragraph 80 of the NPPF. We would therefore ask the Planning Inspector to impress on NHDC that GA2 is removed from the local plan in its entirety and that great consideration is also given in regards to GA1 and NS1 being withdrawn from the plan for the following reasons:

- Failing infrastructure - serious issues with traffic; Great Ashby is often congested with parked cars and health & safety needs to be considered as an emergency vehicle would not be able to gain access. Trains are already at full capacity during peak times and the AIM is congested daily. Our hospital is under pressure. Mental health services/children services are over stretched, doctors are struggling from the extra volume of patients and this is before a further 7,600 homes on the Stevenage local plan
- Failing economy - Proposed developments are remote from the retail and commercial centres of Stevenage and Hitchin, many business are already struggling in Stevenage and a number of shops have closed in the town centre. Extra housing would put severe pressure on an already lack of employment, Stevenage lost 5,540 employment roles in the space of 24 months, not including the many jobs recently lost at Fujitsu. Unemployment figures have increased, use of food banks have increased
- Concerns in regards to future water supplies - Affinity have recently released a statement with their concerns surrounding this
- Loss of precious green belt (open space). GA2 area and its footpaths are used by thousands of people each year for social and health benefits - walkers, riders, joggers, wildlife photographers - people of all different ages and from different backgrounds. NS1 is also regularly used by walkers and riders (and wildlife).
- Loss of wildlife habitat. The land in GA2 houses a rich and diverse amount of wildlife including endangered red kites, barn owls and protected species including bats and badgers. It is home to the most concentrated numbers of wildlife around the immediate area of Stevenage/Great Ashby and needs to be protected. The muntjac deer population has already seriously decreased since Great Ashby was built and setts have been destroyed and disturbed. Further development would be catastrophic to our local wildlife. GA2 would totally encompass ancient woodlands and a natural spring; building in this area would destroy our valuable wildlife habitat.
- Harming the landscape. These developments would be visibly intrusive and harm the character and appearance of an area of outstanding beauty (residents' opinion) scattered with listed buildings and villages, such as Graveley.

We understand that housing is needed but feel it would be more sensible to build a completely new settlement/garden city with reasonable transport links and NOT at the loss of important green belt or woodland. This is something many residents in North Hertfordshire have been vying for over the years. A new settlement that over time can grow to meet the needs of the people with the correct infrastructure designed into it from the beginning, creating thousands of jobs and a flourishing new economy. In the interim, we ask NHDC propose brown field sites as an alternative and to also look at the many properties laying vacant.

This petition will be delivered to:

- Simon Berkeley BA MA MRTPI
- Stephen McPartland
- Steve Jarvis

[Read the letter](#)

Letter to
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