

WELWYN PLANNING & AMENITY GROUP (WPAG)
(Registered Charity No. 272277)

To: The Case Officer, Planning Control, North Hertfordshire Council

Re: Planning Application No. 26/00705/FP

The proposed application is for development on the border of Welwyn Parish and therefore is of considerable interest, importance and concern to The Welwyn Planning & Amenity Group. WPAG is a registered charity, formed in the 1960's, with the aim to preserve the safety, environment and heritage of the Parish and its local communities. We work closely with our local authorities, WHBC and WPC, and with our residents.

The Welwyn Planning & Amenity Group (WPAG) hereby submits a formal objection to this application and request that planning permission be refused because we consider that it conflicts with both the development plan and national Green Belt policy.

1. The proposal constitutes inappropriate development within the Green Belt on land located outside any defined settlement boundary. The applicant's own Planning Statement appears to acknowledge that the scheme represents inappropriate Green Belt development and therefore requires the demonstration of very special circumstances. In our view, those circumstances have not been established.
2. The development would harm the openness of the Green Belt, introduce a permanent residential use onto a constrained rural site, and conflict with the development plan. There are also significant concerns relating to highway safety, accessibility for pedestrians, lack of public transport, and the impact on the landscape.
3. Planning history shows that previous proposals for residential and mobile-home style development have been refused; that an appeal was dismissed by the Planning Inspectorate on Green Belt and rural character grounds and it is therefore a significant material planning consideration that the same issues remain unsolved in the current application.
4. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 also requires decision-makers to have regard to the development plan and any other relevant material considerations.

5. The development plan includes the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011–2031, adopted on 8 November 2022, together with any other applicable elements of the statutory development plan. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), revised in December 2024 and amended on 7 February 2025, is also a material consideration concerning the protection of Green Belt land (see Chapter 13.)

Notes in support of WPAG's objection:

Green Belt - Inappropriate Development and Lack of Very Special Circumstances:

The application site is within the Metropolitan Green Belt. The NPPF makes clear that the fundamental purpose of the Green Belt is to prevent urban sprawl. NPPF paragraph 142: "The essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence."

Paragraph 153 of the NPPF states that "substantial weight must be given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful and should only be approved in very special circumstances. Such circumstances exist only where the harm resulting from the proposal, including its inappropriateness and any additional harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations."

The Welwyn Planning & Amenity Group considers that the proposed development would fail to preserve openness by the introduction of permanent residential caravan or park-home use, together with parking areas, hardstanding, access works, landscaping, engineering operations, changes in ground levels, infrastructure, and associated domestic features. Collectively, these elements would create a visual and spatial impact that is fundamentally different from open countryside, reducing the openness of the Green Belt and resulting in encroachment into the countryside, contrary to one of the Green Belt's core purposes identified in paragraph 143 of the NPPF.

Whilst recognising that paragraph 154 of the NPPF allows certain material changes of use to be treated as "not inappropriate in limited circumstances", this only applies where openness is preserved and if the proposal does not conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. In our opinion, the proposed development would result in substantial harm to openness.

Likewise, the NPPF's "grey belt" provisions should not be applicable to the proposal as it would fundamentally undermine the purposes of the Green Belt.

The proposal also conflicts with Local Plan Policies SP5 and SP2. The development site lies outside the defined settlement boundary, and the development would introduce a residential use in a location where the development plan does not direct such growth.

Planning History: This site has a lengthy and relevant planning history which demonstrates a consistent pattern whereby carefully controlled agricultural use has been acceptable as opposed to refusal of residential and mobile-home developments. Please see the most relevant and recent refusal **77/01388/1**.

Highway Safety, access, noise and residential amenity: We understand that Hertfordshire County Council, in its role as Highway Authority, recommended refusal in its consultee response dated 29 June 2026 and WPAG considers that this recommendation should be given full consideration, specifically with regards to safety.

Danesbury Park Road is a narrow rural lane with limited width, absence of pedestrian infrastructure and difficulties for emergency access. These have all been recurring concerns in previous applications relating to this site and would seem to remain an ongoing issue. Elderly residents and those with mobility issues would be impacted by lack of local facilities.

WPAG considers this site to be unsustainable as a location as it is not adequately served by transport and conflicts with NPPF Policies SP1 and D1.

Environmental impact: The site's trees and rural setting are key to its character and to Green Belt openness. The proposed changes to provide access, infrastructure, parking, etc. is likely to affect any retained trees and roots,

The proposal would harm the rural character of the area by introducing a suburban-style residential layout into a rural Green Belt site, conflicting with Local Plan Policies D1, NE1 and SP5.

WPAG would appreciate acknowledgement by North Hertfordshire Council of this representation by and respectfully request that notification of its decision be relayed to the Welwyn Planning & Amenity Group in due course.

Submitted on behalf of the Welwyn Planning & Amenity Group by Sandra Saunders, Committee member.

Address: Welwyn Planning & Amenity Group c/o 7 Codicote Road, Welwyn, AL6 9ND

Date: 1st July 2026