

Document No. STRIFE/01

APP/B1930/A/07/2045747/NWF
Town and Country Planning Act 1990

**Appeal by Helioslough Ltd
Site at land in and around Former Aerodrome,
North Orbital Road,
Upper Colne Valley,
Hertfordshire**

**Summary of the Proof of evidence on behalf
of
STRiFE (Stop the Rail Freight Exchange)**

Green Belt

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16 October 2007

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Introduction

- 1.1 My name is Adrian Wallace and I appear at this public Inquiry on behalf of Stop the Rail Freight Exchange (STRiFE). STRiFE, is a local community group from a variety of professions, religions and backgrounds, set up to represent local residents on the appellant's proposals to develop a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange on the site of the former Radlett Aerodrome.
- 1.2 My full evidence tried to articulate the views of the local community. STRiFE evidence does not aim to trespass on the professionals' territory, rather we seek to offer a local perspective.

Scope of evidence

- 1.3 My paper focuses on the local Green Belt and the likely impact if this proposal goes ahead, using a substantial amount of my own experience of using and enjoying the local Green Belt. However, my enjoyment of the local countryside demonstrated is typical of many people.

Green Belt in the Local Environment

- 1.4 I use personal experience to demonstrate the unquantifiable benefit that families like my own get from the use of the local Green belt. I use photos in the full paper to demonstrate my experience of accessing the countryside and the numerous benefits that this provides.

The proposal and the Likely Impact

- 1.5 I question the benefits of a country park which makes so little sense when there is already good (free) access to the countryside. I also question other aspects of the country park, including it's long-term funding and the management of a country park covering numerous different geographical areas.
- 1.6 My paper demonstrates the dismay that local people have with the proposals, which will include the sacrifice of a hugely important Green Belt area, the coalescence of numerous settlements, the disappearance of Hedges Farm (and the animals on the farm visited by many local families), the loss of views of open countryside and the detrimental effect on the setting of the historic city of St Albans.
- 1.7 I make clear that the proposal seems to conflict with every single national Green Belt objective.

This Proposal and Planning Policy

- 1.8 I make clear in the full paper just how much this proposal conflicts with planning policy. Whilst (in theory) we live in a “plan-led” system, I am aware that this application:
- Goes against two of the basic objectives of planning policy engrained in Planning Policy Statement 1;
 - Flies in the face of so much of Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 (Green Belts)
 - Contradicts the emerging regional planning work, including the London Arc policies which cover this area;
 - Contrasts with the aspirations for the Watling Chase Community Forest which have been recognised at regional level;
 - Runs contrary to key policies in the adopted Hertfordshire Structure Plan, and
 - Goes against numerous policies in the adopted St Albans Local Plan

Green Belt and public opinion

- 1.9 I use the findings from a MORI poll survey and a survey for the St Albans Council planning department to prove that my views are typical of those in the local community. These findings demonstrate the priority that all local residents place on preventing encroachment onto the countryside.

Conclusion

- 1.10 I conclude by noting that this proposal would run roughshod over the local green belt. It would bring extraordinary devastation to the local environment and would have a hugely detrimental impact on local communities, families and individuals.