

## London Borough on Hounslow Council (LBH) Public Hearing for the London Plan Review

- site 57 Hatton Fields

- all green field sites across the borough & relating to Matter 9 of these hearings

I am new to the process of such hearings and reviews so please take the layout and content of this document as acceptable as evidence and answer to questions relating to not only site 57 Hatton Fields but also any green site (e.g. matter 9), be it green belt or Metropolitan Open Land or a small pocket of land which could be enhanced or rewilded anywhere in LBH.

I may not be able to attend these hearings as I am a local teacher and will be in lesson teaching natural sciences and outdoor curriculum to young people who need open green spaces such as all those marked for building on in the borough. I understand all statements will be submitted and read out in full at the hearing.

In the Spring of 2024 during the launch of the Nature Recovery Stakeholder Board (NRSB), Councillor Salman Shaheen, cabinet member for recreation public spaces, said:

“The Nature Recovery Action Plan is a key part of the Council’s commitment to greening our borough, preserving threatened animal and plant species, and improving residents’ health and wellbeing by bringing them closer to nature.

“It follows on from our work to build a borough that is 45% green, plant over 20,000 trees, and transform wasteland into orchards, community gardens and allotments and pair them with local schools so children can learn about biodiversity and sustainability.

“This is the next step on a long road, but we will not walk it alone. I am grateful to all our stakeholders and partners for joining us on the journey. Together, we can ensure Hounslow is a borough in which our residents thrive because nature flourishes.”

(<https://ukpropertyforums.com/hounslow-establishes-nature-recovery-stakeholder-board/>)

I understand that LBH is at 43% green spaces (pers. comm. Cllr Katherine Dunne) at this moment in time. Building on ~24ha of Hatton Fields will remove greenspace from LBH and potentially as a result of this Local Plan over 50ha of green spaces across the whole borough could be built on. This will not support the councils 45% aim, it will decrease it.

Considering the draft LBH local plan, as a whole, it seems the western end of the borough is going to be most affected by the loss of green spaces and overall this will harm the protection of greenbelt/MOL around London itself, this one ‘exceptional circumstance’ in planning could open the flood gates and set precedent for such matters. Please don’t let this happen.

It’s worth noting the support and care by local groups such as Friends of Hatton Fields (FoHF) who have tried, with little support by LBH council, to protect and enhance the biodiversity of this area for nature but also for public health and wellbeing. They have accessed small funds to carry out an ecological survey of the site, run regular litter picking and bat walks as well as bird and other plant/botany investigations to support this green space. Hatton Fields a key public space for the community in the area. It is a haven for 5 different protected species of bat.

A consultation of the draft LBH Climate Change Resilience Plan recently closed and it’s worth noting how the loss of ~24ha of green space/meadow to warehouse buildings will affect this floodplain area locally as well as downstream, decluverting the Duke of Northumberland river across the meadows would help limit flooding downstream for

example. Increase in temperatures locally by 2-3°C or more due to the change of land use making LBH as a whole less resilient and especially the west end of the borough. This area already peaks highest temperatures note the 2020 highest recorded temperature of 37.8°C Heathrow 31/07/20 (Met Office).

As reported in the National Security Assessment on Global Ecosystems, published in summary form by Defra in January '*ongoing biodiversity loss may lead to ecosystem collapses*', highlighting that ecosystem collapse will threaten '*water insecurity and intensified natural disasters*.' This has profound consequences for everyone, so every piece of green space needs protection and enhancement.

As FoHF have already researched and provided evidence to this hearing that there is ample warehouse availability in LBH and infilling or redeveloping on existing sites is also possible. It may be cheaper in terms of sterling to build warehouses on open spaces such as green belt but the overall cost to public health, climate resilience and nature is just not worth it. And, as the NPPF states there should be 'extenuating circumstances' to de-categorise green belt and move green belt borders. There is little evidence that this needs to happen at Hatton Fields or across the west of the borough of Hounslow.

The greater value to the people of the borough of Hounslow and London as a whole would be to enhance this site for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and open up the Duke of Northumberland river to allow water seepage into the meadows which would in turn help protect the rest of London from potential flooding. Look towards the work of neighbouring boroughs, e.g. Tolworth where asbo issues have decreased and engagement with nature by the local community has increased with it's 'rewilding' or Ealing where beavers have been introduced. Isn't it time that the London Borough of Hounslow did the same? As, for the other green spaces in this local plan – protect them – to help LBH get to their 45% of green space across the borough.

Thankyou for this submission. I am a mother, a teacher, a scientist and volunteer at Friends of Hanworth Park House and Friends of Hanworth Air Park as well as a National Park City Ranger and active in supporting the enhancement of biodiversity and green spaces for the public and our young people across the borough and the world. Thank you for listening and I look forward to your feedback and report.

Sarah L. Houghton (Ms)

19.4.26