

My name is Lynn Skelt, and I have been a resident of Tollgate Road since 1990.

Initially my family and I lived in London Colney, where we enjoyed the convenience of being able to walk to various amenities such as the butchers, bakers, GP, Pharmacy, and a library. Additionally, we had access to a regular bus service that connected us to both St. Albans and Barnet.

When I returned to work, I used the bus daily to travel into St. Albans. On many occasions due to the timetable or cancellations, I had to get the bus to Hatfield Road, and walk down to our home in Smallford Lane. The proposed site is at least a mile further and walking is definitely not an option.

The Appellant claims that Colney Heath offers a range of services and transport options, but this is not the case.

The public transport system is very limited. As a result, most employed individuals consider it essential to use their own vehicles. This is especially true for retail or hospitality workers and key workers, as the last bus from St. Albans departs at 17.20pm.

Trips to supermarkets, medical facilities, senior schools, and other essential everyday activities often require taking two or more buses and up to 2 hours each way to visit either hospital.

Youngsters in the village struggle to access evening activities outside the village, and parents are loath to allow their youngsters to cycle on our roads.

While public transport can be feasible in built up areas, where buses run every 10 or 15 minutes, waiting for the bus back to Colney Heath is often a miserable wait, of up to 2 hours in an open bus shelter.

TRAINS

Colney Heath does not have its own train station. The **only** bus to link Colney Heath to Welham Green train station is late afternoon and returns 15 minutes later.

Fast trains into London are frequent, but it is impossible for commuters to work 9 to 5pm, and return home by public transport, due to the last bus departing at 17.26pm.

WALKING/CYCLING

The Appellant states the pavements in Tollgate Road are 1.5-1.8 metres wide

In places the pavements actually narrow to a mere 0.7metres.

They are in a poor state of repair with potholes deep enough to pose trip hazards, overhanging foliage, and overgrown weeds, sometimes making it necessary to walk in the road.

The pavements end adjacent to Sinclair's farm, and at the top of Coursers Road, limiting access to essential services such as the nearest supermarket in London Colney.

The walk along the A414 to Hatfield Asda is noisy and polluted by constant traffic. It is unrealistic to expect anyone walk 5 miles and return carrying heavy shopping.

CYCLING

Cycling should be a personal choice NOT THE ONLY OPTION

UNDERPASS

The route via South Hatfield is through an underpass which poses safety concerns for residents. For several months earlier this year, the underpass was flooded, making it impassable. It's tagged with graffiti, has frequent vandalism and is known for illicit drug activity. One of our Parish Councillors was knocked to the ground and his monies stolen while using this route.

The underpass lacks proper design to discourage criminal activities. It is remote with no natural surveillance, from houses or buildings, and any incident would be unlikely to be witnessed due to the low footfall.

The presence of covert CCTV cameras in the area does not provide live monitoring but relies on recorded footage The Police installed the system to detect anti-social behaviour, fly tippers and off road bikers. Unfortunately, these cameras have also fallen victim to vandalism.

Fear of crime can be a significant deterrent in people choosing to walk in a public space, especially after dark.

The underpass is not a safe and secure route to public transport or a safe journey for our children on their way to school.

Both local councils and residents have expressed their concern about the “Fragile Gap” between St. Albans and Hatfield and there have been hundreds of objections to this development. Unfortunately, this is only one, of many speculative developments which would double the size of the village.

The visual impact on open views and the potential threat to the river Colne and the aquifer, from pilings and building works are additional concerns. The river Colne is a rare chalk stream, one of only 200 worldwide.

Once polluted it is irreparable and will affect our water supply.

When the call for sites was put out, land for over 60,000 homes was put forward. Therefore houses do not need to be built in this unsustainable village.

SADC only need to identify land to build 15,000 homes before 2041

and land for 5,000 homes has already been found

The site has regular flooding both from the river and along the rear of houses 42 – 100. The latter has yet to be tested and identified.

The Appeal should be dismissed on these grounds alone especially as there are more than enough alternative sites available.

In conclusion, the lack of proper transport options, poor walking conditions, safety concerns and the potential environmental impact make it clear that Colney Heath is not equipped to sustain such extensive development. The fragile balance of our Green Belt and the wellbeing of the community must be considered above speculative interests.

Please do not let the developers turn this small country village into a legacy of concrete for our children.

We ask that you agree with the council’s decision and reject this Appeal.