

*xx Tollgate Road
Colney Heath
St Albans
AL4 xxx*

16th September 2023

To whom it may concern:

Our names are Peter and Penny Stevenson, and we live at xx Tollgate Road, Colney Heath, on the south side of the road and our garden backs on to the field. We have lived here since February 1994 (29 years).

We are unable to attend the Appeal hearing in person due to work commitments but are strongly against Vistry's proposed development of the field behind us and would like this statement read out at the appeal hearing.

The land is Green Belt and as such, enjoys protected status against being developed. The land runs down to a protected chalk stream and aquifer and currently the waters of streams like these are protected from development to stop pollution of water courses and to protect the wildlife that depends on the water source. It is worth noting that the Lords have recently rejected the Government's proposals to lower protection for water courses.

The land is unsuitable for development, and the village is equally unsuitable for the following reasons;

- a) The land regularly floods following heavy rainfall and in fact an underground river runs at the bottom of our garden, and should not be built over.
- b) Tollgate Road is already a very busy road, carrying through traffic through our village. The extra traffic generated by the proposed development will only add to the burden on Tollgate Road and make it even more difficult for residents, due to noise, pollution and the difficulties of getting our cars in and out of our driveways. Traffic regularly backs up along Tollgate Road, especially at busy periods. Outside of these times, traffic can use Tollgate Road as a race track, making it dangerous for local people and pedestrians.
- c) There is a lack of buses in the village so residents have to rely on their own cars. This is compounded by no train station – and just 1 bus to

- local train stations and the rail network. The only bus to Welham Green (station) with a return journey goes in the late afternoon – it is the 15.50 from St Albans and therefore unsuitable for commuters.
- d) There is no GP surgery and no pharmacy in Colney Heath. One local pharmacy (at Sainsbury's in London Colney) has just shut and the Boots chemist on the Colney Fields site is not a dispensing pharmacy. Access to hospitals is difficult without a car – to travel to the hospitals at either Stevenage or Watford requires 2 buses each.
 - e) Availability of local school places – there is one small primary school (single form entry) in the village and so a large increase in resident numbers will leave parents without access to local education. Again parents would be reliant on their own transport – even if there are places in surrounding school areas – further adding to the traffic problems in the village. The area around the school is already dangerous in the morning and afternoons due to the number of cars trying to stop there to let children alight / be picked up and it is only a matter of time before a serious accident occurs. Pressure is already being put on local secondary schools and pupils are currently being allocated schools as far away as Stevenage – outside our local catchment area. Again with no public transport this is putting additional pressure on our roads and on parents who have to get their children there.
 - f) There is no access to leisure activities, sports facilities, or a cinema for people here – the last bus back to Colney Heath leaves St Albans at 5.20pm so again residents need their own car, a taxi or Uber.
 - g) Cars are needed for shopping at local shops – St Albans, Hatfield or Colney Fields (London Colney) as these are too far to walk – especially carrying heavy shopping.
 - h) Currently there are too many developments trying to gain planning permission in Colney Heath. Permission has been granted for one site of approximately 100 houses in the centre of Colney Heath – these new houses will further add to the traffic on Tollgate Road as they cannot exit the village without travelling along Tollgate Road.
 - i) A village with no amenities is NOT the place for such rapid expansion as is being proposed. A lack of facilities means youngsters will be trapped here with nothing to do and no where to go.
 - j) Colney Heath is a village. The vast majority of people living here have chosen to live in a village as opposed to a town. If they wanted to live in a busy place with a large population, they would have

bought a house in a town. The status of Colney Heath should remain a relatively small village for those villagers who want a quieter location.

The information from the proposed St Albans District local plan shows a need for 15,000 new homes in this area by 2041 – 18 years away. Sites for 5,000 of these new homes have already been identified. Sites for over 60,000 new homes have already been put forward for planning approval by landowners. It is clear there are several more suitable sites than a flood plain, next to a protected water course in a village which is unsuitable for all the reasons outlined above.

We would ask the Appeal Inspectors to ensure that houses are not built on a flood plain where several more suitable alternatives exist and have been put forward.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Penny and Peter Stevenson.