

St Albans City and District Local Plan Examination

Hearing Position Statement from Robert Bolt

I believe that the Plan is not Sound in that it concentrates solely on the areas listed in the plan for development and ignores the consequences, both intended and unintended, of the Plan on other parts of St Albans, particularly the City Centre.

It ignores the Council's Transport Strategy, part of which states 'Within this overall approach, appropriate measures to better use existing roads, reduce congestion and pollution and to ensure the free flow of traffic will be supported. Particular consideration will be given to planning for reductions in transport-related emissions and improvement to air quality.'

I propose that the Plan be modified in that the area known as 'Land West of Chiswell Green' be removed from the Plan. This is because of the harm that development on that site would cause in the City Centre. It would harm both congestion and air quality in St Albans City Centre and is in conflict with the Council's Transport Strategy.

'Land West of Chiswell Green' is the smallest area in the plan with 365 houses proposed

Chiswell Green is a commuter village with many residents commuting from St Albans City Station. Most commuters travel from Chiswell Green to City Station by car. The bus service is inadequate (an hourly Green Line 724 between Heathrow and Harlow) and it is not very good at timekeeping. The most popular car route is via Holywell Hill (and its side roads) and the Peahen Crossroads in Central St Albans.

The Peahen Crossroads has the worst air quality in St Albans. It has been declared an Air Quality Management Area. This is largely as a result of traffic congestion and its associated pollution. St Albans Council increased traffic congestion in 2005. It increased both congestion and pollution when it retimed the traffic lights in a Road Safety Scheme. A report by Hertfordshire Highways in September 2004 concluded that 'The changes to the Peahen Junction will be detrimental to vehicular traffic flow in the network, adding on average about 70 seconds to travel time'

If 'Land West of Chiswell Green' is developed with 365 houses it will increase the population of Chiswell Green by around 25%. I believe it is a reasonable assumption this will add 25% to the traffic on Holywell Hill and the Peahen Junction. This would also increase by 25% both congestion and the deterioration of air quality in the City Centre. It would be detrimental to the Transport Strategy and to plans of St Albans District Council to improve air quality in the City Centre.

There is no other quicker route from Chiswell Green to the City Station than via Holywell Hill. The relatively small planned development west of Chiswell Green will impose a considerable reduction in Quality of Life in the Holywell Hill/Peahen area. In my opinion this small development should not be permitted, and the Plan should be modified to remove it. Such a removal would, in my opinion, make the Plan Sound

Robert Bolt