

Little Hallingbury Parish Council
48 The Forest
Hatfield Broad Oak
CM22 7BT

16th September 2025

To: Chris Vince
Member of Parliament for Harlow
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

Dear Chris Vince

Protecting Little Hallingbury: Community Opposition to Speculative Development and NPPF Grey Belt Revisions

As elected representatives of Little Hallingbury Parish Council, we write to express our strong opposition to a speculative planning application for 59 dwellings on Green Belt land between Motts Green and Lower Road **UTT/25/2181/OP**. The developer's claim that this land qualifies as "Grey Belt" under recent changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is deeply concerning and, in our view, premature and misleading.

This site has not been formally assessed or allocated in either the Regulation 19 Local Plan or our emerging Neighbourhood Plan. It remains Green Belt and must be treated as such, subject to the rigorous tests outlined in Paragraphs 147 and 155 of the NPPF. The proposal fails to demonstrate "very special circumstances," does not meet infrastructure or affordability thresholds, and risks significant harm to the character, heritage and sustainability of our village.

Since this application was received we have received extensive feedback from residents, which reveals not only practical objections but a deep emotional investment in protecting Little Hallingbury's identity. Their concerns include:

- Loss of Green Belt and open countryside
- Traffic congestion and road safety risks
- Inadequate infrastructure (schools, GP surgeries, shops)
- Environmental harm (wildlife disruption, flooding, sewage overflow)
- Overdevelopment and erosion of village scale and privacy
- Lack of genuine consultation and transparency

The tone of these responses reflects frustration, anxiety, and a sense of being ignored. Yet it also reveals a community that is informed, engaged, and determined to defend what it values. Our emerging Little Hallingbury Neighbourhood Plan embodies these values and is the product of extensive consultation. To allow speculative

development that bypasses this process and the merging Local Plan would undermine the principles of localism and plan-led growth.

We respectfully urge you to raise the following points with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities:

1. Clarify the status and treatment of Grey Belt land in speculative contexts
2. Strengthen protections for communities with emerging Neighbourhood Plans
3. Reaffirm the primacy of the plan-led system in Green Belt decisions.

In addition to these concerns, we reject the developer's reliance on the revised NPPF "golden rules" to justify Green Belt encroachment. The proposal fails to deliver meaningful affordability in a parish where the average house price exceeds £824,000—an economic reality that renders claims of inclusive housing untenable.

The scheme also misrepresents sustainability, citing proximity to a bus stop served by an hourly, six-day service that does not connect residents to employment, education, or healthcare in any reliable way. This undermines the principle of sustainable development and highlights a broader disconnect between speculative ambitions and the evidenced needs of our community.

The application does not meet the tests of local responsiveness, infrastructure viability, or genuine affordability, and should not be permitted to bypass the protections afforded by the Green Belt or emerging Neighbourhood Plan and Local Plan.

We therefore call upon you to press for a review of the "golden rules" mechanism within the NPPF, to ensure it cannot be used to override locally evidenced need, sustainability realities, or the democratic safeguards of plan-led development. Without such scrutiny, the policy risks becoming a loophole for speculative schemes that erode community trust and landscape integrity.

We stand united with our residents in opposing this application and defending the integrity of our planning system.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Robert Wingard

On behalf of Little Hallingbury Parish Council