

Mrs A J Grant, [REDACTED]

30th June 2014

Dear Sir

Re: Examination of TRDC SALLD

When I first learned that you had decided to hold another hearing to allow residents the opportunity to voice their opinions about the de-registration of Croxley Green's green belt, I felt heartened that you had finally realised what a complete sham TRDC has made of public consultation, that you were genuinely concerned and that you would give proper consideration to what we had to say. So, I am at a complete loss to understand why a.) you failed to include the Baldwins Lane school site in your agenda and b.) this hearing is limited to the very small number of residents who replied to the last notification from TRDC – a notification sent only to the previous consultation respondents (not all stakeholders), a notification that failed to clearly inform said respondents that they were being consulted about de-registration of green belt. In fact, I am shocked to have read an email to Cllr. Phil Brading from Officer Claire May stating that you are holding this further hearing day to prevent Judicial Review. Perhaps you could explain to residents at the hearing, on my behalf, why residents may have a case for Judicial Review – what specifically has TRDC, or you, not done that would leave it vulnerable to Judicial Review and exactly why this hearing will prevent the need for Judicial Review?

Having researched the meaning of public consultation I found the following Government link for consultation guidelines – see www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/255180/Consultation-Principles-Oct-2013.pdf.

I do not believe that TRDC has followed these guidelines in respect of consultation on the de-registration of Croxley's green belt – a very emotive subject and without doubt the most important local planning issue to affect Croxley residents, the vast majority of whom have not been given the opportunity to express their opinions in any form of consultation about de-registration– the vast majority of whom only live in Croxley because of it's rural setting.

It is clear that TRDC have failed to consult with **all** stakeholders about **de-registration of greenbelt** and I believe it is this that makes TRDC vulnerable to judicial review. What sickens me the most is that I suspect you are only holding this hearing to dot the i's and cross the t's and that you have already made up your mind. I believe the correct recommendation from you would be to insist that TRDC consult with all stakeholders about proposed green belt boundary changes throughout Three Rivers. TRDC should be forced to face up to the fact that its LDF is unsound and residents should be given the opportunity to comment **BEFORE** any changes to the green belt boundaries are made, allowing public opinion to influence the decision making, not one individual government officer standing alone.

I would like to remind you of the following facts, which you will not know about because you don't live here:

The Watford Health Campus (half a mile from Croxley) is a **proposed** housing development to include in excess of 750 new homes and a hotel. HCC also sold off the old post office site (quarter of a mile from Croxley) and Morrisons have just opened a store there and hundreds of new homes come next. Why were neither of these sites even considered in the HCC report

conducted in good time looking at suitable school sites? In fact none of the 30 proposed sites were brownfield, they were all green field or green belt sites. 5 of the 30 sites were in Croxley Green – on our recreation grounds, on our Orchard, in our conservation areas, on our farmland and on our paddocks, most of which are also Green Belt sites in Croxley. What has gone so wrong that 5 schools have closed within a 3 mile radius over the last 20 years and now councils and government inspectors are encouraging the building of schools and houses on our green belt and the building of houses where the old schools once stood? Sounds ludicrous doesn't it, or would a better word be 'devious'? One of the old school sites was sold to the Grove Hotel only last year and yet within months our County Council wants to build a new school, 2 miles away, on Croxley's greenbelt.

Are you aware that TRDC insists on a 45% contribution to affordable housing on new developments? I have been advised that developers find it unaffordable to develop small sites in Three Rivers because of this high contribution. I understand it is the highest contribution to affordable housing in the UK. Perhaps that is a reason for the developers and our councils greedily snatching up large swathes of our cheap green belt.

Britain's green belt is as important to Britain as the rainforests are to the world. Unfortunately our green belt is disappearing as quickly as the rainforests. Urban sprawl, habitat loss, loss of amenity, loss of open space, flooding, our right to enjoy our environment – who is to say what is the most important – perhaps all these things are equally important.

Finally, I have been told that the surveyor of the school sites believes that the Baldwins Lane site is a poor choice for a variety of reasons including topography and the fact that it is a flood plain. Not a surprise really!

I don't envy you your job – but please, please can you revisit the consultation process and force TRDC to do the right thing – consult again with all residents on the de-registration of green belt – at least make it a level playing field.

Yours faithfully

Amanda Grant (Mrs)