

**Letter to Welwyn Hatfield Times Editor, printed on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2013, page 16.**

Dear Sir

Your article in the edition of 17 April prompts us to write and follows on from a letter we are sending to the Chief Executive of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council in relation to the new proposed Core Strategy.

We are very concerned that choices taken by the Cabinet have not been made properly and will lead to the failure of the Council's development plan when it goes before the Planning Inspector in 2014. In that event, the entire Borough will be open to multiple planning applications from developers that the Council will find difficult to resist: in that event, everyone but developers stands to lose.

For that reason it is, in our opinion, essential to ensure that the proposed Core Strategy is reviewed now to ensure that it follows due process and that it adheres to the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Answers from the Council to date have done little to address the questions posed to it and no attempt has been made to justify the approaches taken so far.

On 9 October last the Cabinet had the choice of placing the future major development of new housing either around the two towns of Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield or the alternative of placing it mainly around these same towns but with "limited growth" around the Borough's large villages of Cuffley, Brookmans Park and Welham Green. The reason stated by the Cabinet for its choice was that, in view of the opposition from these villagers, going for that option would be "perverse".

On the face of it, the Cabinet's approach appeared to be against the advice of Officers, has not been justified, and does not seem to adhere to the NPPF. The minutes suggest that the Cabinet's other option was "arguably the more sustainable" one (a key requirement of the NPPF) and that "much more would be needed to deliver the requirement".

Residents throughout the Borough, including those in Cuffley, Brookmans Park and Welham Green, are advised to urge their elected Councillors to ensure that the process is properly reviewed as the failure of the proposed Core Strategy could result in massive damage throughout the Borough.

A full copy of the letter sent to the Chief Executive of the Borough will be posted on our respective organisations' web sites.

Yours faithfully

Garden Village Preservation Society  
Panshanger People  
Welwyn Garden City Society