

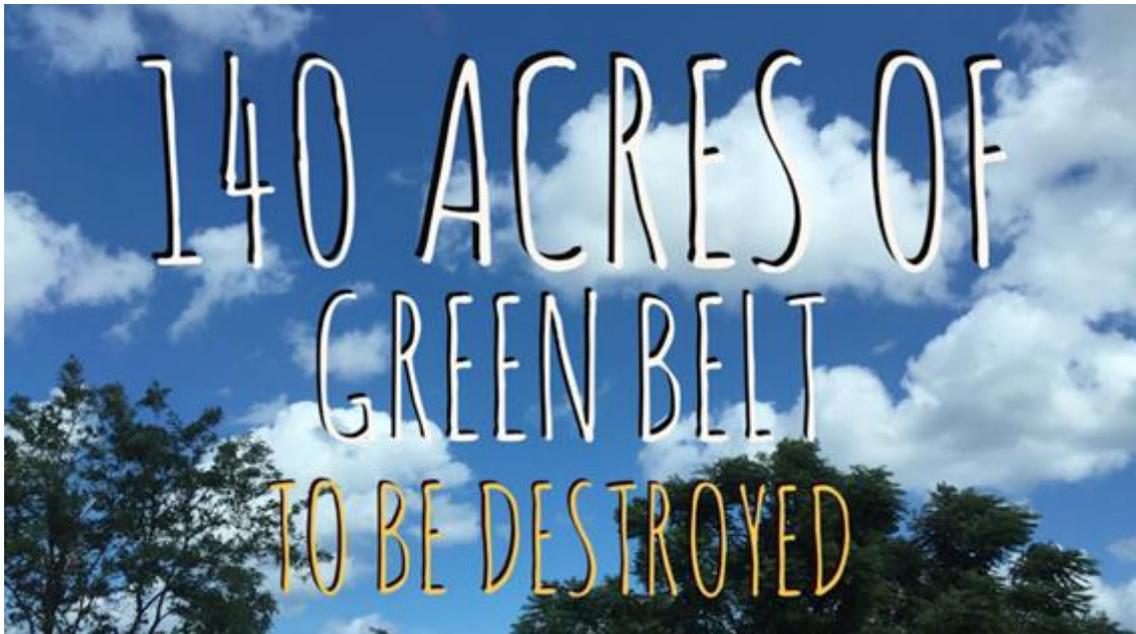


www.save-symondshyde.co.uk

Save Symondshyde - The Consultation has Started!

Dear Supporter,

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council's Local Plan consultation has begun. It's very important that you respond to it, either online or by paper before 24th October. If people don't object, the development at Symondshyde will definitely go ahead!



All you need to do, is state your objections to the plan to build 1,130 houses in the heart of the Green Belt at Symondshyde. As some people have told us how poor Welwyn Hatfield's website is, we have summarised the key points below. We have also provided comprehensive guidance on [how to respond](#) on our website. If you need help, please get in touch - contact details are at the end of this email.

Fundraising for Expert Response

As a campaign group, we will also be submitting a thorough, technical response

and we will require some expert advice for some aspects. There will inevitably be a cost associated with this, as we will need help from a planning consultant. If you can support us with a donation we'd really appreciate it. [Donations](#) can be made on our website.

How to respond to the Local Plan Consultation

- **Step 1:** Register to respond to the consultation (if you haven't already)
- **Step 2:** Click on the Local Plan Proposed Submission Document and click on the read and comment button.
- **Step 3:** All the chapters are listed on the left (in blue). Click on Chapter 24 (New Village)
- **Step 4:** Read the information about the proposed new village at Symondshyde and respond by clicking 'add comments' tab on the upper right hand side of the page. You will need to be registered and have logged in to add comments.

Our website contains [more detailed help](#) including screenshots to guide you through the above.

If you prefer you can response to the Consultation using a [paper form](#) which is available on our website. You can also see our [sample paper response](#) to the Draft Local Plan Consultation which you can use as a guide to help you with your response.

What to say

Two key reasons why Symondshyde is a bad idea are is that it is completely against local and national policies on the **Green Belt** and **Sustainability**. It's important to try and use your own words and explain from your view why this development is wrong. But you can you use these points to help you:

Green Belt Objections:

In planning terms, there is a strong presumption against inappropriate development of the Green Belt. Housing at Symondshyde is an inappropriate development.

- Government policy requires 'exceptional circumstances' to be demonstrated for taking land out of the Green Belt. Welwyn Hatfield have
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not demonstrated those exceptional circumstances or provided evidence that many local people want to sacrifice 140 acres of Green Belt land at Symondshyde for housing.

- This site (HAT15) creates an unrestricted settlement in the middle of high grade Green Belt. This would pose a significant risk of future coalescence of Hatfield into the new settlement and close the strategic gap between Wheathampstead, Hatfield and St Albans.
- Welwyn Hatfield's own Green Belt review (by SKM Consultants) stated that Symondshyde makes a "significant contribution towards safeguarding the countryside and maintaining the existing settlement pattern ... and contributed significantly towards two of the five purposes of the Green Belt". The findings have been ignored by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.
- If the HAT1 (SDS5) North West Hatfield site, which is also included in the draft Local Plan, is developed, the two sites will only be around 1 kilometre apart (just over half a mile) creating a risk that Hatfield and Symondshyde would merge into each other in the future.
- This area of Green Belt is largely unspoilt and is criss-crossed by an extensive network of rights of way, offering local communities an almost infinite choice of walking, cycling and horse riding routes of varying lengths as well as access to nature. The area is quiet, offers views out over the Lea Valley with a variety of habitats and landscape features. These habitats, landscape features, nature and quiet lanes will all be substantially degraded with a large, new settlement in its centre and by the extensive quarrying and restoration that also forms part of the plans.
- Unlike HAT1 (North West Hatfield) there are no permanent features to restrict the settlement and prevent it sprawling further into the Green Belt and coalescing with Hatfield. The area is highly prized and well used locally as a place of tranquillity for enjoying nature, walking, cycling, running and riding. It is undisturbed by noise and its value for very many local people and visitors, often living in busy towns, is considered exceptional.

Sustainability:

Building 1,130 houses at Symondshyde is unsustainable. One of Welwyn Hatfield's key policies is sustainable development, which says: we will "locate

new development to minimise the need to travel and prioritise the use of previously developed land'. Symondshyde does not achieve this. It would be an isolated settlement completely cut off from shops, community and leisure facilities and employment. It would inevitably result in high levels of car usage generating even more traffic on narrow rural roads that are already grid-locked at peak times.

Government policy says that: "Local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances". Those special circumstances do not exist in this location and the risk of future urban sprawl created by this settlement would cause great harm to this area of Green Belt.

Welwyn and Hatfield have also said that they would want to remove hundreds of thousands of tonnes of existing minerals from the site before building housing. This would destroy narrow rural lanes, and destroy the visual amenity, quality of life and quiet tranquillity of this area.

Although a bus service from Symondshyde to Hatfield is proposed as part of the plan (funded from S106 contributions) in the long term this would be unsustainable. A bus service would then no longer exist between the two settlements, once the statutory period had ended. The nature of people's lives and access to local shops, leisure and community facilities would mean they would be heavily reliant on their cars in a way that is unsustainable and adds to traffic congestion, pollution, accidents and would put even more parking pressure on town centres.

Other reasons for objecting to Symondshyde:

There are many [more reasons to object](#) on our website to help to with your response. These are split into categories, such as: Environment, Pollution, Consultation and others. It's important to put your reasons in your own words if at all possible and explain why you value this area and feel that this development is in the wrong place.

Please help us Save Symondshyde before it's too late

Unless you respond to this proposal and encourage others to do the same **it**

will go ahead. We need you to encourage as many people as possible to object to the proposals before 24th October. We can't emphasise enough how important it is that as many people as possible submit heartfelt objections. So, please tell all your friends to register with our website, so they too can receive advice on how to help prevent this dangerous precedent to Green Belt destruction.

WHBC's consultation website is not intuitive, so we have [compiled a guide on our website](#) to help you navigate the process.

Need help? Let us know

If you're worried about how best to respond to plans for Symondshyde please get in touch and we'll help you. You can contact Judy, John or Paul at theteam@save-symondshyde.co.uk with any queries and we'll be happy to help you.

This development can be stopped and with your help we will ensure that Welwyn Hatfield do not destroy this precious area of Green Belt.

Thank you!

The Save Symondshyde Campaign Team

www.save-symondshyde.co.uk



Note for Gmail users

To prevent Gmail from placing our emails in your 'Promotions' tab (where they might not be noticed) please add our email address to your Google Contacts



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