

Good morning, and first I would like to thank the Inspector for allowing me to speak today as a local resident and ward councillor for this area. I'm here to support Derby City Council's decision, made on 23rd May 2024, to refuse planning permission for the proposed residential development of up to 90 dwellings on land west of Royal Hill Road, Spondon. This decision reflects the will and well-being of our community, backed by solid local policy respecting the long-standing importance of the Spondon and Chaddesden Green Wedge. Let me explain why rejecting this application was the right choice.

This Green Wedge is vital to what makes Spondon and Chaddesden distinct. As a resident, I see daily how this area of green space acts as a buffer, weaving the countryside into our urban surroundings. It's not just an area of green space—it keeps our neighborhoods separate, preserving their unique identities and preventing sprawl that could merge our communities. I draw your attention to the 2016 Local Planning Inspector's Report, which describes Green Wedges as open, green expanses penetrating Derby's suburbs, maintaining their character, offering recreation, and enhancing quality of life. That report underpinned the dismissal of an appeal at Acorn Way, in this very Green Wedge, because development would erode its

openness. That decision still holds great weight today, and the importance of this Green Wedge remains as strong as ever.

Building up to 90 homes on this 4.51-hectare site would significantly narrow this Green Wedge. It's a very real concern that this would push residential boundaries westward, increasing the likelihood of Spondon and Chaddesden blending together. The Council's refusal rightly states that this development would reduce the countryside's reach into our city, conflicting with Policy CP18. I've heard from 116 local objectors, including fellow ward councillors, who cherish this space for its role in defining our community's

character—a character we must protect.

I recognize the benefits put forward: new homes, including 30% affordable housing, biodiversity gains, and economic activity. These matter, especially with Derby's housing supply at just 3.85 years as of January 2025. The 'tilted balance' in the National Planning Policy Framework gives these benefits weight, and I respect that. But we cannot sacrifice a strategic asset like this Green Wedge for short-term gains. The Council's decision holds that the harm—loss of openness, erosion of community separation, and breach of Policy CP18—significantly outweighs those benefits. This isn't about ignoring

housing needs; it's about meeting them in the right places, guided by careful planning.

Derby is a compact city with tight boundaries. That means our Green Wedges play a critical role, allowing green spaces to thread through our urban fabric. When the Council shaped its Core Strategy in 2017, it balanced housing growth by allocating some Green Wedge land for around 2,000 homes, but only after thorough assessment. This site hasn't been through such scrutiny. The new local plan is the right mechanism to move forward and carefully consider Derby's growth, not this appeal. Allowing this development now, prior to the now

imminent local plan process, would set a dangerous precedent for further erosion, undermining the policies that guide our city's future.

As a resident, I walk these paths and see families enjoying this open land. As a councillor, I've listened to their fears of losing it. The 117 objections show how deeply this Green Wedge matters to us. Planning must reflect our community's values, and this development risks trading a priceless green heritage for a temporary fix. I urge you to uphold the Council's decision to protect the Spondon and Chaddesden Green Wedge for future generations.

Thank you for listening.