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To: LDF Team,
London Borough of Haringey,
River Park House (6th Floor),
N22 8HQ

31st October 2011

Re: London Borough of Haringey Local Development Framework - Core Strategy

Publication of a Development Plan Document (Regulation 27) - additional Regulation 27
on Affordable Housing and Employment Land Designations

November 2010 (consolidated with further evidence to support changes to the Employment
Land Designations, September 2011)

Response to Consultation 22 September - 3rd November 2011

1. Introduction:

Standing on the East side of Station Road N11, opposite to the entrance to New Southgate rail station, and looking towards the striking view of Alexandra Palace to the South, a row of poplar trees can clearly be seen. This marks the northern edge of Muswell Hill Golf Course, but it is also clear that there is a substantial area of woodland in front of them, the area known as the former Friern Barnet sewage works site, and also, more notoriously, as the Pinkham Way development site.

Faced with this particular view, no reasonable person could doubt that this area does, in fact, constitute a Green Corridor. This is the indisputable fact which forms the background to my objections to the legal processes that have taken place around the re-designation of this land.

2. Objections in detail:

i. The change in designation from 'Employment Use' to 'Locally Significant Industrial Use'. I believe this change has been seriously compromised by the preliminary contacts that have taken place, as a matter of public record, between Haringey Council and the North London Waste Authority. There is at least an apparent conflict of interest here.

ii. Further to (i), there has been no material change whatever to the site itself which could justify such a change in designation. All activity relating to the site has been either motivated by the desire to prevent fly-tipping or connected with preliminary survey work.

iii. A change in designation from 'Employment Use' would indeed be welcome. However, the change would need to be to 'local nature reserve' or similar, in order to reflect and safeguard the real condition of the site.

iv. Further to (iii), the retention of the designation 'Employment Use' has, I would suggest, only come about as a result of a certain benign or intentional inertia in the planning and environmental oversight in the Borough of Haringey. Once again, the designation does not correspond to the reality of the conditions on the ground, in the following sense:

The Pinkham Way site has been unoccupied since the closure of the Friern Barnet sewage works in 1963. Although various developments have been proposed in the intervening years, no concrete change has taken place to the site, aside from the (presumably) authorised dumping of old lamp-posts and such like, and a considerable amount of unauthorised dumping, principally of derelict cars.

As a result, the site has 'returned to nature'. Forty-eight years of neglect have brought about the establishment, not only of scrub and grass-land, but of mature trees, and other species, some of which, such as the Bee Orchid (*Ophrys apifera*) and golden dock (*Rumex maritimus*) have been recorded as being of exceptional importance in a GLA Site Assessment Record dating from 2003. I myself, in the course of numerous visits to the site (unfortunately no longer possible due to the more restrictive fencing that was put in place in tandem with negotiations over this celebrated change in designation) have noticed unusual examples of wild roses, and, in particular, a proliferation of self-seeded apple trees, which frequently produce a very respectable crop.

The Pinkham Way site now in fact resembles very closely the most recently-added section of Coppetts Wood, across the A406 to the North-West, and in the Borough of Barnet, which is a protected nature reserve - despite the presence of some derelict structures left-over from the military use of the Coppetts Wood site during World War II. The comparison of the two sites is very instructive, since both have been subject to a similar process of 'natural greening', and thus have very similar plant and animal species present. If anything, one is struck by the greater diversity and proliferation of species in the Pinkham Way Site.

In short, the designation of 'Employment Use' is an anachronism. In particular, it takes no account of the considerable statutory activity that has taken place since 1963 with the aim of safeguarding and nurturing green spaces within built-up areas. To take only one example, Haringey, according to its own Borough Action Plan, contains only 0.16 hectares of Local Nature Reserves per 1000 residents (predicted to fall to 0.14 hectares by the year 2016, due to population growth). By comparison, Natural England recommends 1 hectare per 1000 inhabitants, and the Borough Action Plan itself sets a target of creating an additional 0.5 hectares of woodland within the borough. The designation of the Pinkham Way (or Pinkham Woods) site should be altered from 'Employment Use' to 'Local Nature Reserve', especially since, in 48 years of inoccupancy, no suitable Employment Use has yet

been found for it.

v. It can be seen *a fortiori* that the proposed change to 'Locally Significant Industrial Use' is totally inappropriate. Furthermore, the exact definition of 'locally significant' should be re-examined carefully for the following two reasons:

Firstly, the consortium of London Boroughs involved in the North London Waste project arguably represents a wider category than would be 'locally significant'.

Secondly, the undoubted disruption and nuisance that would be caused by a plant such as the one proposed would certainly be of greater than 'local' significance, especially bearing in mind the location of Pinkham Way close to the boundary of three boroughs, Haringey, Barnet and Enfield.

vi. Haringey have, in fact, already admitted the contradiction involved in the re-designation of the site. In an e-mail to Sule Nisancioglu, dated 9th March 2011, Ian Holt, Haringey's Nature Conservancy Officer summarised:

In general the site is an important part of a larger ecological complex and corridor including other SLNC's (Hollickwood Park, Muswell Hill Golf Course, Tunnel Gardens and Bluebell Wood, Albert Rd Rec and Rhodes Avenue Spinney).

Regardless of the fact that this seems to me a correct and fair appraisal of the significance of the Pinkham Way site, it quite clearly gives the lie, not only to the amended designation 'Locally Significant Industrial Use' but also to the previous designation of 'Employment Use'. We have already demonstrated that this was itself an anachronism. Haringey actually seems to agree, albeit tacitly!

vii. There is a further contradiction within the exact terms of the change of designation. Haringey have been significantly silent over their intention to retain the clause 'subject to no adverse effect on the nature conservation value of the site'. This clause is part of the UDP designation for Employment Use, but has not been mentioned in Haringey Council's Consultation Document. It is clearly incompatible with the waste facility project, and it is my contention that even an amended clause, along the lines of 'subject to minimal adverse effect on the nature conservation value of the site' would also rule out the proposed facility.

viii. This brings us on to a further ramification of the anachronistic designation of 'Employment Use', and, again *a fortiori*, the updated designation of 'Locally Significant Industrial Use'. In the intervening time since the former designation was applied, and even more significantly, even since the change to the present designation, there has been significant construction of residential properties in the close vicinity of the Pinkham Way site. This, at the very least, will necessitate a further impact evaluation of the proposed waste project, and, in my opinion, once again undermines the designation 'Locally Significant Industrial Use'.

ix. It is even possible to conceive of a legal challenge to the appropriateness of the present designation of 'Locally Significant Industrial Use' on the more fundamental grounds of the potential hazards and health implications implied by the proposed waste treatment facility. This might seem not to be relevant to the present more limited consultation on the

procedural changes in designated use, but I would contend that it is, bearing in mind the suspicion that the change in designation was motivated by the prospect of this particular proposal. Clearly there are prima facie grounds for contesting the catch-all 'Industrial' epithet, in the sense that what was and is envisaged by the change in designation itself goes considerably beyond what would normally be accepted within the general term 'industrial'.

To sum up, Haringey stands to lose 3.6 hectares of woodland, based on the Council's own Assessment. This is clearly contrary to many of the stated aims of the Borough Action Plan as well as numerous documents, including White Papers, on national strategies of nature conservation. Furthermore, the circumstances of the change in designation give rise to a suspicion that this was done in a less than impartial way. There are, in my opinion, grounds for a Public Enquiry on the whole question of the designation of the Pinkham Way site. Principally, these are:

1. The former designation for 'Employment Use' was already anachronistic, and did not take into account the changes that Nature has wrought in the whole ethos and ecosystem of the site.

2. (without prejudice to 1) The present designation is inappropriate, not only for the same reasons as in (1), but also because there are serious doubts as to the fairness and impartiality of the change, with the suspicion that it was done with the retro-active intention of smoothing the way for the proposed waste treatment plant.

I urge you to rescind the re-designation, work towards the rejection of the waste treatment plant proposal and also towards the creation of a Local Nature Reserve on the Pinkham Way Site. And lastly, I urge you also to go and stand where I stood, opposite New Southgate Station, and be honest with yourselves about what you see.

Yours faithfully