

MSP backs objectors over plans for 300-plus new homes in Balerno

Edinburgh Pentlands MSP Gordon MacDonald has objected to proposals to build more than 300 new homes on Green Belt land in Balerno.

More than 500 locals have told City of Edinburgh Council's planning chiefs that they are against the move and Mr MacDonald claims the plans by Rapleys are likely to reduce available wildlife habitat as bats, badgers, and other species are known to inhabit the area.

The Ravelrig Road development , he said, will also result in a loss of needed agricultural land. Furthermore, the line of trees crossing the site east-west potentially functions as a wildlife corridor between areas of woodland. The construction of houses nearby could potentially reduce its use.

Mr MacDonald said that the site is located within the Edinburgh Green Belt and, therefore, development does not conform to the current City of Edinburgh Council's development plans.

He added: "Such development in the Green Belt would also greatly damage public confidence in the sincerity of Edinburgh Council's commitment to maintain and protect Edinburgh's rural environment.

"The site will be bounded by countryside on two sides and, therefore, will constitute a significant intrusion into the countryside that will be out of character with the area. This will irrevocably reduce the amenity of the area.

"Development of this site will set a precedent and legitimise

development of all other sites to the east that are south of the rail line, these sites will subsequently become "in-fill" development and be difficult to object to."

The MSP also commented on the traffic situation and the environment plus the education provision and indicated that a development of this size will produce a significant amount of additional traffic onto the Lanark Road.

He added: "Given the location of the site at the very far end of the Balerno-Currie-Juniper Green corridor into Edinburgh, and given that this corridor already experiences significant morning congestion, this increase will have a disproportionately severe effect on traffic flows.

"There will be a reduction in the air quality of the area due to the increased traffic. Furthermore, given the congestion currently on the Lanark Road, the location of this development would encourage residents to instead use the backroads to the north as a rat-run into Edinburgh leading to heavy use of small country roads not intended for that level of traffic

"Local primary schools are already at capacity and such a development will not be able to be accommodated."

He stressed: "There is no discernible public support for this development as other similar nearby developments have met with near universal opposition."