

North Mymms Parish Council

Notes: Public meeting at Chancellors School hall on Tuesday 3rd March 2015 at 7.30pm
Re Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan consultation
Parish Councillors – 10 (all members of the Parish Council were present)
Members of the public present – 48
Chairman, Councillor Teresa Travell, welcome and introduction
Members of the public invited to speak

LHAG object to current sites destroying Green Belt, increases size of Little Heath by 30%, observations on infrastructure inadequacy, better plan to build new Garden City – list of MPs who support, understands the dilemma of need for housing and most constructive way is a new Garden City with infrastructure rather than tagging on to existing built areas
LHAG detailed response to consultation will be sent to the Parish Council by the end of the week, includes other issues that need to be addressed.

Who is going to pay for infrastructure? CIL/S106 funding paid by developers is apportioned to services / legal agreement.

Roads are not wide enough – will you be widening roads? *Not a NMPC decision.*

Roads aren't wide enough – are they going to knock down houses to widen roads?

More houses = build more schools, doctors etc. *See infrastructure consultation document.*

Government Minister guidance reaffirmed Green Belt = unmet housing need is not justifiable reason for development in GB, National Planning Policy Green Belt protection assurance. *Government tasked each district to undertake housing study, independent assessment of housing need, population growth, maybe outcome will not outweigh harm to GB but still going through the process, Borough Council didn't have an option not to start the process. Cuffley example. If plan fails increases risk can develop GB.*

SB hopes to have a plan that can strongly defend / housing numbers that people will accept.

Birth rate already a problem, children difficulty getting into schools now?

Query if plan fails can they develop GB? *If plan is unsound Govt has right to step in.*

Significant number of plans have been rejected because they do not show enough houses for assessed need.

Concern that no alternatives put forward – housing need can be solved in 'all' Hertfordshire.

12,000 dwellings over next ten years is 30% increase (40,000 dwellings in WHB now)

Seems to be a disproportionate increase.

Housing need greatest in southeast, crowded county, problems with access into London – develop housing in other parts of the country.

Defend our need for smaller proportion of development.

Population here is growing but NE declining, Govt can't allow all to live in SE.

SB: In response to Govt Borough final reply will deal with that. New town takes 20 years i.e. longer term and is outside control of WHBC.

Increased housing in surrounding districts. WHBC is being too ambitious in finding sites.

HS2 may draw people away from SE.

Housing assessment query objectivity - different numbers mentioned (17k/12k/now consulting on 10k) – *until WHBC puts plan in place it hasn't committed to the number.*

Inspectors turn down plans if don't have reasonable numbers.

Some villages taking much more housing, not fair share. *Some villages have more favourable sites but all in the GB, based on criteria (Officers' decision).*

Sites chosen reasons were inconsistent. BrP7 shortcomings in assessment and comparison with other sites, medium sensitivity/no landscape study done, not consistent/plan not valid, GB - wire fence is not going to be sustainable boundary, field adjacent will go, aerial view demonstrates will coalesce.

Coalescence is major issue for all villages.

Green Belt is valuable and precious - NMPC should support its protection.

Not listening – do what people want rather than what you put in your plan ...

Parish Council has not yet done its response to the consultation.

No development north south does not mean that east west is ok – gap Brookmans Park/Welham Green is less if BrP4 is developed than the gap Brookmans Park/Little Heath

Boundary Little Heath with Hertsmere is important. When officers drawing up plan should liaise/consult with Hertsmere, apparently this did not happen – duty to co-operate. Why is Brp7 not a Little Heath LH reference? Little Heath community has strong feeling for new town proposal. There is strong feeling throughout North Mymms, consensus people present indicated similar strong feeling.

Affordable/discounted housing in Brookmans Park is incredibly expensive so building housing would decimate the Green Belt while vast majority young people still could not afford to live here and employment in this area is limited. Cheaper housing further north.

Discussion on building less houses/scale down numbers and variation in type of housing – smaller scale may not be so disruptive but where would residents want to build/support? Although GB principle is important perhaps have limited development of say 40 houses? Plan puts forward only sites proposed by developers.

If say yes to 40 then risks setting precedent to build another 40 ... Green Belt is there for a reason and rubbing away at it defeats the principle of its permanence.

Gaps between villages/towns are incredibly narrow.

Welham Green / Hatfield gap is still under threat from development of waste facility, Welham Green/Brookmans Park narrow gap and comes a point where you have to say no more.

If Parish says no to development in GB that will have to be taken into consideration.

Urban fringes must be defended.

This area could become built over like Middlesex as happened in 1930s.

There is non-Green Belt land in Hertfordshire but there has been no consultation outside the Borough to find new town site – there is housing need for all districts in Hertfordshire .

Question - Is Parish Council on our side?

Chairman: we are listening to your views, each Councillor has their own views but Council operates as a united body. It is the Council's role to represent, we will use people's views to formulate the Council response and comments tonight will contribute to the letter.

Parish Council is independent of Borough Council, if the two Parish Councillors who are also Borough Councillors have a conflict they remove themselves from the discussion, they are not members of the NMPC Planning Committee.

Vote: show of hands object to Local Plan – majority of 48 members of public present (a few hands were not raised - query 5).

show of hands in favour of Local Plan = 2 people

Question – do you have advice for those present?

Suggestion to look for brownfield sites, all make an effort and if see suitable site encourage owners to put it forward, its not too late.

Concern less favourable GB sites will be put back in the plan so comment on all sites.

Pro rata dwellings for population BP and LH not densely populated so should get less dwellings. 25% proportion based on 2000 houses would be 500 new dwellings

80% traveller of new sites in Borough being allocated within the parish, i.e. Welham Green, is disproportionate.

Chairman thanked everyone for attending and for their contribution to the meeting. She encouraged people to complete the comment sheets, if not ready to hand in now they can be delivered to Parish Council office within the next few days.

Meeting finished 8.50pm