

North Mymms Parish Council

Address: [REDACTED]
Phone: [REDACTED]
Email: northmymmspc@waitrose.com
Website: www.northmymmspc.org.uk



Clerk: [REDACTED]

24th October 2016

Planning Policy
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
Council Offices
The Campus
Welwyn Garden City
AL8 6AE

For the attention of the Planning Inspector.

Dear Sirs,

NORTH MYMMS PARISH COUNCIL – Response to the Draft Local Plan and Draft Local Infrastructure Plan, Proposed Submission, August 2016.

Introduction

North Mymms Parish Council has endeavoured, with all due diligence, to assess the latest documents issued by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council in respect of the Local Plan process, however Councillors are not Planning professionals so are unable to comment as to the legality of the proposals. Rather the Parish Council has taken an over-view with regard to the local community, the needs and the impacts on this rural part of the borough.

NMPC responded to previous consultations by WHBC and requests these responses be read in conjunction please, as these set out specific comments regarding proposals for this parish. The two papers dated March 2015 and 30th March 2016 are appended.

To commence: North Mymms Parish Council reiterates that it would be preferable not to allow encroachment into the Green Belt.

However, realistically there is a need for the development of new housing and employment opportunities and associated infra-structure.

NMPC notes the local lobbying against any development whatsoever and certain sites in particular. Nevertheless, North Mymms Parish Council recognises that over previous centuries and decades there has been building in the Parish to provide homes, businesses and thriving communities.

The character of NMPC is a parish of three separate and distinct villages and a number of hamlets. It would be preferable to maintain the character of the area in this way and so it is important that coalescence is prevented. Otherwise this rural parish will be subsumed by Greater London and, whilst there are social needs for housing and employment, being surrounded by protected green land is good for wellbeing which North Mymms at present provides.

North Mymms Parish Council wishes to see any local development proceed in a careful and measured way and particularly that the necessary infra-structure is in place before construction. There is an infra-structure deficit at present in terms of transport, highways, water, sewage capacity and health provision which must be addressed in advance of major developments.

For example, the Draft Local Plan Proposed Submission dated August 2016, Policy SADM14 (Flood Risk and Surface Water Management) states the need to be informed by National Planning Policy. However, North Mymms Parish Council considers that important issues such as this should be requirements in terms of pre-application advice in order that it is incorporated as integral rather than a vague consideration. The policy should be more specific in addressing these issues.

Housing

North Mymms Parish Council strongly supports most of the Policy SP7, “Type and Mix of Housing” and agrees 9.3 ‘Housing Mix’ as it is considered imperative that there is variety in all new developments to meet local needs.

The next paragraph titled “Affordable Housing” states a delivery target of 35% for villages where 11 new dwellings or a site of 0.5 hectares or more is to be developed. North Mymms Parish Council strongly supports this proportion but considers it is imperative that Developers are prevented from avoiding this by piecemeal or phased construction, and the Affordable Housing is built ideally in advance to the proportion /numbers required. Paragraph 9.19 is not firm enough in requiring that these targets are met.

Gypsy and Traveller Sites and Numbers (SP7)

North Mymms Parish Council notes that Table 6, Gypsy and Traveller Sites and pitch provision, site HS35 (GFLAA01) located in Foxes Lane, is promoted for the provision of 12 pitches. This site currently has permission for 2 pitches and is permanently illegally occupied by up to 15 caravans. It is a small site and there is no capacity to meet the new additional proposal. There are currently gypsy and traveller sites and a showmans site in Welham Green and North Mymms Parish Council consider it is disproportionate to impose more on the village.

Business

Business Policy SADM10 (Employment Development) – North Mymms Parish Council notes the proposals regarding Policy SP23 and the Marshmoor Policy area – SDS7 9WeG4b) and would refer to the access points which raise serious safety issues for pedestrians and vehicles. The junction with the A1000 is congested at peak times, more so when there are problems on the A1 and M25, so an upgrade is supported. However, road safety crossings must be incorporated in advance of any building on the site.

With specific regard to SDS7 (WeG4b) North Mymms Parish Council queries the length of the site pathway indicated on figure 15, which seems to stop when in fact it extends to a point adjacent to New Barnfield which would address the issue raised under bullet point one of item 20.12.

Infrastructure

North Mymms Parish Council is concerned that there is insufficient detail in the Draft Local Plan regarding connectivity with Potters Bar for bus and train services, especially given that local bus and rail provision within the Parish has been reduced and is also currently under consultation to reduce the off peak trains. With increased development, needs will increase and should be reflected in the Local Plan. For example, adding extra parking for commuters.

New Schools

North Mymms Parish Council notes that the primary school at Little Heath is not promoted for expansion but expresses concern at the reliance on other schools in Potters Bar to meet the demand following new development and the issues this raises regarding transport, congestion and community division. The existing school at Welham Green has been under subscribed on many occasions and there is capacity.

North Mymms Parish Council also wishes to point out that there is an existing school facility at New Barnfield which is currently unused but would provide immediate capacity.

Historic and Environment

North Mymms Parish Council considers all the surrounding countryside to be a Heritage Asset and would wish to see the swathes of countryside between the villages and hamlets maintained and enhanced by tree and planting belts to ensure a sense of openness remains and avoids coalescence.

Health and Well Being

The stated figures in the Draft Infrastructure Plan (7.31) indicate an additional 1.3 full time General Practitioners would be required for the new allocations in the villages. This seems totally inadequate given that access to Doctors Surgeries currently for appointments sometimes requires weeks of waiting. North Mymms Parish Council have previously stated concern about the distance to major Accident and Emergency and other hospital services which are now located at Stevenage, outside of the borough. With increased residents in the borough more local services must be needed and North Mymms Parish Council question the figures provided in the Draft Infrastructure Plan.

Viability and Deliverability

North Mymms Parish Council stresses the requirement for infrastructure and design details of matters such as Housing Mix, inclusion of Affordable Housing etc. to be emphasised and ideally put in place in advance of construction of any units and consider this an important element of **all** planning applications.

NMPC has made a clear case for the development of the land at WeG8 (New Barnfield) which unfortunately has not been promoted by its owners, Hertfordshire County Council. The site, although within the Green Belt, is brownfield and with existing infrastructure sits alongside an existing vacant school facility. Development of this site and adjacent site HS11 (Hat11 Land at South Way) which is included in the Draft Local Plan, could provide up to 500 housing units at the earliest time.

In conclusion, NMPC are supportive of growth for the borough and with - limits and constraints - for this parish.

Please find attached a copy of North Mymms Parish Council's Visions and Aims Statement.

North Mymms Parish Council wish to take part in the Examination Hearing if invited by the Inspector.

North Mymms Parish Council also wish to be informed of the following please:

- i. When the Local Plan has been submitted for independent examination.
- ii. When the Inspector's Report is published.
- iii. Adoption of the Local Plan.

Yours faithfully,



Parish Clerk on behalf of North Mymms Parish Council.



Vision and Aims Statement

Three current good things:

The Environment and Facilities

Being surrounded by green fields but being close to good transport links and thriving local shops and services.

Community

The vibrancy of the communities such as the number of activities and clubs with enthusiastic participants and visible representation.

Well- Being

North Mymms is regarded as being a good place to live and work.

Aims:

To endeavour to maintain the openness of the area, the Green Belt and the overall character of the Parish.

To promote the best interests of all members of the local community in the provision of local services, facilities and amenities.

To encourage residents to let the Parish Council know of their concerns and opinions on issues arising within North Mymms.

Adopted by Council on 28th May 2014