

Our Ref: DW/15.3041

Your Ref: BDLP

18 February 2016

**Planning Policy Team**  
Brentwood Borough Council  
Town Hall  
Brentwood  
Essex  
CM15 8AY

By post and email: [planning.policy@brentwood.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@brentwood.gov.uk);

Dear Sir / Madam

**Brentwood Draft Local Plan Consultation – 10 February to 23 March 2016**  
**Representation to Allocation BWD G007**

I am writing this letter to you on behalf of Mr J Hicks and Ms A Maxwell of Hive Close Brentwood regarding the above open public consultation. Specifically, this is a letter of objection to the proposed inclusion of site BWD G007 (Land at Honeypot Lane, Brentwood) within the future growth options of the Brentwood Draft Local Plan (BDLP).

The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) identifies this site as being 10.9 hectares in area capable of accommodating circa 325 houses based on a medium density. The Local Planning Authority (LPA) have deemed the site suitable, available and achievable for a national house builder to develop. It is shown demarcated on Figure 5.5 of the BDLP as being land for release from the Green Belt as an “urban extension” that will “meet development needs swiftly.”

This letter sets out the reasoning why such a conclusion is fundamentally flawed.

**Lack of Infrastructure**

Schools within the locality have no capacity to deal with any such extent of population influx as would be generated by developing this site. The catchment area for this site is St Peters School in South Weald, and only one child was accepted to this school last year due to capacity issues. It is therefore inevitable that prospective pupils will need to travel greater distances to reach a school.

Furthermore, the existing doctor's surgeries are also lacking capacity. A GP appointment at the Beechwood Surgery closest to the proposed development site is already three weeks based on current patients in the catchment. Increasing the number of residents without significant improvements will make the situation far worse.

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**Head Office: Old School House, Rettendon Turnpike, Battlesbridge, Essex, SS11 7QL**

**London Office: 8 Pepper Street, Docklands, London, E14 9RP**

**T 0870 013 6996**

**W [www.smartplanning.co.uk](http://www.smartplanning.co.uk)**

Registered In England: 04369649

Building over 250 homes on this site “meeting development needs swiftly” as stated in the BDLP shows that these material impacts on infrastructure have not been adequately considered. If housing were to come swiftly, then there would be no opportunity to improve or brace the existing public services for the growth.

### **Traffic Management**

Honeypot Lane is, by name, a country road capable only of accommodating single-lane traffic in places, particularly upon travelling into Brentwood north to south. Even where the lane widens towards Weald Road, larger vehicles often cause blockages and disruption.

Although Weald Road itself is wider at the junction with Honeypot Lane before it crosses the bridge over the A12, there are several dips and bends in Weald Road on the approach to the settlement and these are already dangerous enough without more traffic. The top part of Weald Road is also reduced down to a single lane outside No.49, with priority signage in place.

The whole area, particularly at Weald Road, is prone to heavy congestion from the mini-roundabout at Park Road right into the town centre. The roundabout at Western Road, combined with the traffic light junction with the High Street is often very congested and it cannot cope with the sheer amount of vehicles at present. The roadway infrastructure cannot sustain additional traffic from another development at Honeypot Lane. Cars and buses (school buses ferrying children from the development site to distant schools due to capacity restrictions at local schools) will compound an existing problem.

Whenever the A12 has problems, Brentwood High Street and the B1023 are the immediate thoughts for people seeking to bypass any problems using local roads. The tailbacks are well-known and documented. It is therefore inconceivable that adding over 250 homes in such close proximity to this traffic hotspot can be viewed as a good idea.

The site is considered by the LPA to be in good close proximity to public transport, facilities and services. It is too far to walk along unlit roads with no / infrequent footpath connections and it is highly optimistic to assume everyone will walk to their destinations. No one would walk and carry a weekly shop from the High Street back to this development site; the car is an obvious choice for travel and therefore the ‘close proximity’ accounts for nothing. This is simply a denial of an existing infrastructure constraint that, without addressing appropriately, will continue to stifle traffic in the area.

### **Green Belt and Landscape Quality**

The description in the BDLP of the site representing an ‘urban extension’ goes against all the principles of the Green Belt. The LPA, in very recent times, declined an application for an extension to St Peters School on the basis that the new build would be on Green Belt land. Notwithstanding the earlier part about a lack of education infrastructure, if a public service dedicated to providing a good standard of teaching for children cannot be permitted to extend in the Green Belt on their existing premises, why should a housing developer be allowed to build 250 homes (new buildings) on land where currently fields and hedgerows exist?

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Honeypot Lane is evidently beautiful, lined with mature trees and hedgerows. The immediate surroundings create an idyllic green wedge in this location. The Brentwood SHLAA, in considering G007, states that the area is adjacent to an attractive residential development. The main factor making the existing situation attractive is the open countryside setting, a quality of the Green Belt that should not be overlooked.

Providing screening or a buffer immediately implies that the development is going to have an adverse visual impact that requires mitigation. The BDLP therefore proposes significant harm to the Green Belt in this setting.

### **Housing Supply**

Rather than proposing a piecemeal, swift 'quick win' approach to development, the LPA should seek to consolidate its strategic sites on a larger scale. Putting all the housing in one specific place generates a clearer understanding of the likely demographics, the needs in terms of school places, doctors and other services that can be designed and built deliberately to meet the demands of that bespoke development. If not, the already over-burdened services will suffer further, since no single 'urban extension' will attract such a developer contribution to alleviate all of the existing infrastructure capacity issues.

The Government has made it clear, through a statement issued by the former Secretary of State Eric Pickles, that the lack of a Five Year Housing Land Supply is not reason enough (or constitute such very special circumstances) to allow for development in the Green Belt. The expectation on the LPA is to work out their objectively assessed housing need first, then see where it can be accommodated if at all.

To have BDLP policy 5.2 on Housing Growth suggest that 18% of new housing will be urban extensions in the Green Belt is unacceptable in this regard.

### **Personal Concerns**

There are obvious concerns regarding health and safety, particularly if the proposed development site were to come forward. Construction traffic, noise and disturbance will affect the roads and air quality in this area.

The area of Honeypot Lane and Hive Close is an attractive residential area that lends a lot of its quality to the surrounding landscape. It would adversely affect these properties and their living conditions if such an urban development took place directly next door.

### **Conclusions**

Mr Hicks and Ms Maxwell, via Smart Planning, wish this formal representation to be taken into account during the consideration of the BDLP. It is hoped that revisions to the BDLP will be made in accordance with these comments, to omit the identified site from the proposed housing allocations, and that these revisions will be carried forward when the Plan is submitted for Examination in Public.

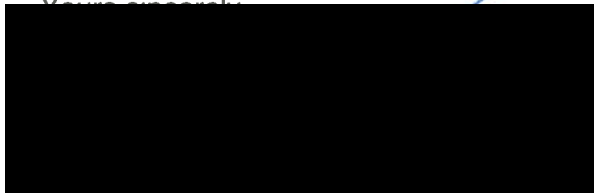
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We would appreciate acknowledgement that this letter has been received.

Yours sincerely,



**David Wallis** BSc (Hons) DipEP MRTPI  
**Team Leader**

c.c. Councillor Louise McKinlay  
Councillor William Russell  
SPL