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Brentwood Draft Local Plan, January 2016 – Comments

I am writing in support of the Strategic Objectives (numbered SO1 to SO13) in the Draft Local Plan, January 2016 (DLP).

My comments on the planning policies in the DLP which will be used to guide future detailed planning applications along with the list of the most suitable land allocated for future development are listed below.

Policy	Comments
5.1: Spatial Strategy	Support. Sustainable urban development in Brentwood and Shenfield has to be the priority and erosion of the Green Belt must be the last resort.
5.2: Housing Growth	Support. Provision needs to be made for 7240 new homes at an average rate of 362 dwellings per year. This cannot be ignored.
5.3: Job Growth	Support. Building and servicing 7240 new homes will provide significant job opportunities and stimulate the local economy.
6.1: Sustainable Development	Support. Sustainable development is to be encouraged.
6.2: Managing Growth	Support. The sequential approach has correctly identified the most appropriate/sustainable sites for development, minimising where possible Green Belt development.
6.3: General Development Criteria	Support. New development should make a positive contribution to the environment.
6.4: Effective Site Planning	Support. New development should be sensitive to the character and appearance of the surrounding properties.

7.2: Housing Mix, Types and Tenures

Object. A rigid approach is not appropriate for all sites as it depends on the local character of the area and neighbouring properties could be adversely affected, leading to planning objections. However, it is welcomed that the final mix, type and tenure will be subject to negotiation.

N.B. Table 7.1 is unclear and may contain an arithmetical error.

7.3: Residential Density

Support. The proposals need to be sympathetic to the local character whilst making efficient use of the land, *but prescriptive figures should not be applied.*

7.4: Housing Land Allocations

Support. The list of housing sites at figure 7.2 is the best solution to the problem of building 7240 new homes in the Borough over the Plan period. *However, there should be some flexibility in the phasing timetable.*

N.B. The Sustainability appraisal (SA) considered 270 sites in some detail, of which only 18 Urban Area sites were considered acceptable (1266 dwellings). Unfortunately all the remaining sites listed are located in the Green Belt (3889 dwellings).

It is important that the listed Sustainable Urban Area sites in Shenfield and Brentwood are promoted where possible (in accordance with policy 5.1) and a good example is site 178, which I support without reservation.

7.5: Affordable Housing

Object. A rigid approach is not appropriate for all sites as it depends on the local character of the area and neighbouring properties could be adversely affected, leading to planning objections and delays. It is also inappropriate for rental housing to be exactly the same specification as open-market owner-occupied housing. Pepper-potting of social housing throughout a development is not always the solution favoured by RSLs.

In conclusion and in the light of the need to manage future growth and development of the Borough I support the aims of the DLP to ensure that Brentwood continues to thrive, prosper and improve where necessary.