

From: Mr S Fleming, [REDACTED]

To: planning.policy@brentwood.gov.uk

Comments on the Brentwood Draft Local Plan, January 2016

I am recording my support and comments on the Brentwood Draft Local Plan, January 2016 (DLP), which I believe is necessary to help manage the effects of the inevitable increase in population and housing over the coming years.

First and foremost, it cannot be ignored that according to the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), **7240 new homes** need to be delivered across the Borough over the next 15 years.

Where these new homes should be located is addressed in the DLP after taking into account the detailed Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and public consultation.

I agree that Brentwood and Shenfield are considered sustainable locations for growth, given excellent transport links, access to jobs and services and town centre facilities. [Policy 5.1: Support]

I also agree with the sequential approach to site selection (fig 5.4), where land within existing urban areas is given priority and only when needs cannot be fully met from here are locations within the Green Belt considered. [Policy 6.2: Support]

The SA considered 270 alternative housing site locations, scoring each on 24 sustainability criteria. It is disappointing that they identified only 18 suitable sites within the urban area before having to consider eroding the Green Belt, where the vast majority of new dwellings are now planned. It is important that every effort is made to promote the most sustainable and appropriate urban development sites as listed in the DLP. [Policy 7.4: Support]

One of the 18 urban sites is site ref 178. Located between Brentwood and Shenfield, it is suitable, available and deliverable and subject to detailed planning considerations could be providing homes within 5 years (compared with a much longer timescale for the larger Green Belt sites). [Site 178: Support]

In the DLP, this site (0.9 of a hectare) has also been linked with the adjoining large Ursuline playing field (site 044, 4.5 hectares) and together they have been shown as capable of providing 130 homes. Development of these Ursuline playing fields has inevitably raised the concerns of a number of local residents and councillors, some more to do with existing local issues rather than planning. Some of these concerns will have been registered as part of this consultation process and linked to site 178 even though they are not applicable, so although this consultation is to do with strategy and policy rather than detailed proposals, I am taking the opportunity here to clarify some points.

Local concerns	Comment
<p>Access: <i>There is no satisfactory means of access to the site. A new access road would have to be constructed, creating yet further hazardous highway problems</i></p>	<p>Untrue. Bishop Walk is an adopted road that was designed and built to County Standards to provide a perfectly adequate means of access for possible future development. Both the planners and new house purchasers were aware of this at the time the development was built.</p>
<p>Existing traffic on local roads: <i>Traffic will increase on this and surrounding roads at peak times. There is already a bottleneck at the junction of Priests' Lane/Middleton Hall Lane</i></p>	<p>Traffic is increasing year on year and the arrival of Crossrail will have a far bigger impact. Through traffic has been a problem along Priests' Lane for many years and is something the Highways authority have to manage. Traffic calming, safe crossings, footpaths and cycle ways set away from the road could be the solution so in fact this is an opportunity to make some long-awaited improvements, funded in part by the CIL.</p>
<p>Existing speeding: <i>We have enough problems at this present time with speeding traffic, and this would only exacerbate the situation.</i></p>	<p>Speeding traffic is something the Local Councillors should take up with the Highways Authority and Police. This is an opportunity to reduce car-speeds and make safety improvements.</p>
<p>Existing unsafe roads: <i>Priests' Lane is narrow and already unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists. It does not have pavements on both sides of the road.</i></p>	<p>This part of Priests' Lane has a wide verge and footpath, which presumably is currently adequate for pedestrians irrespective of numbers using it.</p> <p>Regarding the access to site 178, Bishop Walk has a wide road with kerbs and tarmac footpaths to both sides, traffic calming curves to limit speed and clear sight lines. Safety is not an issue for this site.</p>

<p>Local amenity: <i>A visual amenity will be lost as the land is currently Protected Open Space. The impact on existing residents would be huge and loss of amenity would be dangerous.</i></p>	<p>Regarding site 178, there is no loss of amenity to neighbouring properties as the land in question is private, fenced and there has never been any public access. No houses overlook the land. The land was designated as POS under a plan that has lapsed and the current Local Plan review has concluded that it is better to allow limited development here as part of a planned urban development, rather than build on more valuable Green Belt. I fully support this view.</p> <p>Any development is likely to be a sympathetic extension of the quality houses in Bishop Walk, replacing some unsightly outbuildings. In fact, owners along Bishop Walk have over the years utilised their own gardens to erect extensions and even built a new 4 Bed house within their extensive grounds, so to them loss of amenity space is not an issue and is far from “dangerous”.</p>
<p>Local infrastructure: <i>There is an indication that current water and sewerage facilities are already at maximum capacity, further homes could lead to serious public health and safety issues.</i></p>	<p>Site 178 has adequate water and sewerage capacity, with a large diameter sewer running beneath Bishop Walk capable of serving further development. There are no health and safety issues.</p>
<p>Local schools: <i>The increase in school children is likely to be 14 per school year (for 130 dwellings) where the Borough’s primary schools are already at full capacity</i></p>	<p>On site 178 the likely increase is no more than 2 per school year. Irrespective of this, the policies of the DLP take the growth in population in the borough and the necessary improvements in infrastructure into account.</p>
<p>Site conditions: <i>It has been reported that the site is too wet for development indicating additional drainage is required.</i></p>	<p>This is not the case for site 178, the site is well-drained and there have been no such reports. In any event, new developments are required by the DLP to have a sustainable surface water drainage design that incorporates soakaways and surface water attenuation so as not to impact on adjoining properties or watercourses.</p>

N.B. I do believe that all of these concerns are adequately covered by the policies set out in the DLP, which will be used to guide scheme designs and future planning applications.