



**BRENTWOOD
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Local Plan 2015-2030
Preferred Options
July 2013
COMMENT FORM**

(For official use only)

Comment
No.

Ack. date

You can comment on the Local Plan 2015-2030 Preferred Options online at www.brentwood.gov.uk/localplan. Alternatively, please use this form to share your views on the contents of the Local Plan.

YOUR COMMENTS

Please indicate which section(s) of the Local Plan you are commenting on (please clearly state the Policy reference or paragraph number):

All Sections and Policies

S1,S2,S3,S4,CP1,CP2,CP3,CP7,CP8,CP10,CP11,CP12,CP14,CP15,CP16,CP17,DM1,DM5,DM6,DM8,DM10,DM11,DM12,DM13,DM14,DM16,DM18,DM20,DM22,DM23,DM24,DM27,DM29,DM30,DM31,DM37,DM38

Please specify if you Support or Object (tick as appropriate):

Support

JTS supports the general objectives underlying some policies (but requests some revisions to the wording) and it objects to others (see detailed representations below).

Object

Comments (please use additional sheet if required):

Preliminary Matters

The following representations have been prepared by The JTS Partnership LLP, which is a national planning practice with its head office based in Warley, Brentwood. The Partnership has had dealings with the Borough Council for many years and we welcome the fact that it is moving to replace the current, out-of-date, Local Plan.

These representations draw upon our many years' experience of promoting development proposals and of reconciling national and local planning policies. The majority of the points that we raise highlight potential inconsistencies with guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). They are intended to assist the Council to prepare a plan that is 'legally compliant' and 'sound'.

As a preliminary point, we highlight a concern that the Council has not yet published the Objectively Assessed Needs For Brentwood housing report. As an objective assessment of housing needs should form the basis of the growth strategy, which underpins the Plan, the absence of such information considerably compromises the ability of stakeholders to prepare full representations.

We also consider that a draft Proposal Map should have been published alongside the draft Plan. This would have helped with an understanding, and interpretation, of a number of proposed policies.

Subject to these caveats, we look forward to working further with the Council and to discussing the various amendments that we have suggested to a number of the policies.

Please note that we are also making separate representations on behalf of a number of clients.

Policy S1: Spatial Strategy

JTS notes the Council's preferred spatial strategy, which seeks to focus the majority of new development, a) within the existing urban areas of Brentwood and Shenfield, b) at a new strategic allocation at West Horndon and c) on suitable previously developed sites in the Green Belt.

Whilst we acknowledge the difficult balancing act that the Council has to perform, in preparing a Local Plan that fulfils the economic, social and environmental roles ascribed to the planning system by the NPPF (paragraph 7), we note that the overriding priority given to protecting the Green Belt means that the Council has chosen not to plan for 'objectively assessed housing needs' (as is required by paragraphs 17, 47 and 182 of the NPPF). As such, we consider that the Borough Council may find it difficult to convince an Inspector, at the forthcoming Examination, that the Plan is 'sound'.

It is also noted that the failure to make provision for full housing need is inconsistent with the Plan's Vision, with Strategic Objective SO8 and with the Council's Corporate Plan, which commits it to broadening, "**the range of housing in the Borough to meet the needs of our population now and in the future ...**". The Plan does not identify sufficient land to meet the 'population's' need for good quality, affordable, housing.

It is our view that the Plan would be more robust if the Council could find additional housing sites, consistent with the Spatial Strategy set out in the policy, and if it also undertook a limited review of the Green Belt, in order to remove that land which clearly serves no Green Belt function (as defined in paragraph 80 of the NPPF).

Policy S2: Amount and Distribution of Residential Development 2015-2030

We again note that the Borough Council has decided to place greater emphasis on the need to protect the Green Belt, than the need to provide for 'full objectively assessed housing needs'. As a result, the policy makes provision for 3,500 new dwellings (at an annual average build rate of 200 new dwellings), as against an 'interim' objectively assessed need of 4,962 to 5,600 dwellings (331 to 373 homes a year).

The fact that the Council has decided to plan for a figure well below 'objectively assessed housing needs' makes it all the more important that it maximises, in order of preference, the potential of:

- a) existing developed sites within the urban areas;
- b) suitable undeveloped sites within the urban areas;
- c) suitable existing developed sites in the Green Belt; and,
- d) suitable undeveloped sites in the Green Belt (i.e. sites which fulfil no, or only a limited, Green Belt function and which should be identified for residential development following a limited review of Green Belt boundaries).

It is the Partnership's view that the Council will need to identify sites falling within all of the above four categories if it is to produce a 'sound' Local Plan.

Policy S3: Job Growth and Employment Land

We note the Council's preferred growth option and the fact that it seeks to identify both existing employment sites and land for new employment development. However, we consider that the Council has omitted a number of sites which are currently being used for employment purposes and that, accordingly, this part of the policy needs to be reviewed.

We fully support the Borough Council's decision to reallocate a number of existing employment sites for alternative development (such as the Wates Way Industrial Estate), where the proposed alternative use(s) make more efficient use of the land and helps satisfy the shortfall in housing land.

Policy S4: Provision for Retail and Commercial Leisure

We support the preferred growth option underlying this policy and the emphasis placed on meeting the need for additional comparison, and convenience, retail floor space primarily in Brentwood town centre and at

West Horndon.

Policy CP1: Sustainable Development

JTS supports this policy, which is reflective of relevant guidance set out in the NPPF. We are, however, of the opinion that it will take a 'sea change' in the culture of the planning department, and an injection of significant additional resources (particularly in terms of manpower), if it is to deliver the commitment to, **"work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions ..."**, so that, **"... proposals can be approved wherever possible ..."**.

Policy CP2: Managing Growth

Subject to the reservations expressed in relation to Policies S1 and S2, we generally support the proposed settlement hierarchy (paragraphs 2.12 to 2.16), together with the role ascribed to each settlement therein.

Although we do not express a view either way, we note a potential inconsistency between criterion c and the NPPF requirement to plan for 'objectively assessed housing needs'. In that respect, there is also a potential conflict between criteria c and g.

Policy CP3: Strategic Sites

JTS supports the strategic sites identified by the Borough Council, but we again note our concerns (expressed in relation to Policies S1 and S2) about the failure to provide for 'objectively assessed housing needs'. We also highlight the fact that it may be necessary for the Council to identify further large, strategic, sites, if the Plan is to be found 'sound' and consistent with NPPF guidance.

Policy CP7: Brentwood Enterprise Park

Whilst we generally support the identification of the former M25 Works Compound for development as a new business park, we have to question whether it can be considered as a previously developed 'brownfield' site.

It is our understanding that the M25 Work Compound was constructed, under permitted development rights, in relation to the recent widening of the M25 motorway. With the M25 improvements having been completed, and with the site having been vacated, the General Permitted Development Order requires that the land be returned to its original state (i.e. open countryside). Accordingly, it has to be questioned whether it can be defined as 'previously developed' land. Currently, it could only be lawfully used for agricultural or forestry purposes.

Whilst we support the development of the site for a business park, the draft Plan needs to be factually correct and set out a sound justification for the allocation.

Policy CP8: Housing Type and Mix

JTS generally supports the objectives underlying this policy, which we consider to be NPPF compliant, whilst, at the same time, providing sufficient flexibility for schemes to take account of local circumstances and any particular constraints appertaining to a site.

We do, however, consider that there is a potential conflict between Policy CP8 and Policy DM24. The latter acknowledges that, whilst the Council will seek to ensure that 35% of all new dwellings are affordable, this target may be reduced, and that, in certain circumstances, it may not be possible to provide any affordable housing, where this threatens the viability of a scheme.

This needs to be reflected in Policy CP8 for, as presently worded, it does not acknowledge the fact that, in some limited circumstances, it may not be viable to provide any affordable housing within a residential scheme. Accordingly, the second sentence of the first paragraph should be amended with wording along the following lines:-

Subject to the requirements of Policy DM24, the Council will seek to ensure that all new residential schemes include a proportion of affordable new homes.

Policy CP10: Green Belt

Given the inability of the Council to make provision for 'objectively assessed housing needs' (see comments

concerning Policies S1 and S2), it must seek to maximise the amount of housing land it can allocate in accordance with its preferred spatial strategy (as expressed in Policy CP1), including the identification of existing developed sites in the Green Belt.

Whilst not advocating a 'root and branch' review of the Green Belt, we consider that the Council will also need to review its boundaries and remove that land which clearly does not serve one of the Green Belt functions as set out in paragraph 80 of the NPPF or which can, otherwise, be developed without causing harm to the openness of the Green Belt (see comments relating to Policy S2).

Policy CP11 – Strong and Competitive Economy

We commend the Council's commitment to fostering economic growth and, in particular, the support expressed for development that diversifies, and grows, the local economy.

We are, however, disappointed that the policy does not recognise the contribution that tourism can make to the local economy, growth prospects and the provision of new jobs. An additional criterion should be added to the policy confirming the Borough Council's support for proposals which increase visitor numbers to the Borough and/or which provide visitor accommodation.

Policy CP12: Thriving Town and Local Centres

JTS generally supports this policy and, in particular, the commitment to make the best use of previously developed land. However, and given the inability of the Council to plan for 'objectively assessed housing needs' (see comments regarding Policies S1 and S2), the Council has to give consideration to also releasing, and identifying, undeveloped sites, within the existing urban area, which serve no particular function (see comments re Policy S2).

Policy CP14: Sustainable Construction and Energy

Whilst the objectives underlying this draft policy are to be welcomed, greater recognition needs to be given to the fact that the incorporation of sustainable construction and renewable energy technologies, within a scheme, can significantly increase the cost of new development and can, therefore, in certain instances, threaten viability. Greater flexibility needs to be built into the policy, with the third paragraph being reworded as follows:-

Where development viability is compromised by these standards, the developer/applicant will need to provide evidence as to why the targets cannot be met (either in their entirety or in part).

Policy CP15: High Quality Design

JTS generally supports this policy, but considers that a number of amendments need to be made in order to ensure that it is NPPF compliant.

In particular, the policy should recognise that the 'site and context appraisal', referred to in penultimate paragraph, should be commensurate with the nature, scale and potential impact of the proposed development.

The policy also needs to reflect the fact that whilst the Government places great importance on achieving good design (paragraph 56 of the NPPF), neither planning policies, nor local planning authorities, should '**attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes...**' on developers (paragraph 60 of the NPPF). Most importantly (paragraph 59 of the NPPF), "**.... design policies should avoid unnecessary prescription or detail and should concentrate on guiding the overall scale, density, massing, height, landscape, layout, materials and access of new development in relation to neighbouring buildings and the local area more generally**".

Policy CP16: Enjoyable and Quality Public Realm

We consider that this policy should be reworded. Whilst no objection is raised, in principle, to any of the matters to which it relates, only larger development schemes will need to, and will be capable of, addressing all the matters set out therein. As currently drafted, the policy applies to '**all new development**', whether it is a strategic site or a small scale extension to an existing property. Accordingly, the second sentence of the

policy should be re-drafted to read:-

New development must be based on a thorough site and contextual appraisal, which is appropriate to the form, nature and scale of the development being proposed, and it should be sensitive to its context, and where appropriate, incorporate:

Policy CP17: Provision of Infrastructure and Community Facilities

We consider that further guidance should be set out in the supporting text, to the policy, describing how the Council will assess the provision of, or contributions required to, that necessary off-site infrastructure, which it will seek from new development, in advance of it adopting a CIL Charging Schedule. Currently, the Council has no mechanism for doing this -or for assessing the impact of new development.

Policy DM1: General Development Criteria

As currently worded, this policy is unacceptable in that it states that planning permission will be refused where a proposal has **any** adverse impact on matters such as visual amenity, the character or appearance of the surrounding area, highway conditions or highway safety, health, environment or amenity etc.

There are very few forms of development that do not have some form of adverse impact, whatever benefits they may bring, on some interest of acknowledged planning importance. Good planning is all about weighing the benefits to be derived from a proposal, against the dis-benefits, so that a balanced decision can be made.

The policy needs to be reworded to reflect this and the phrase '**no significant unacceptable impact**' (or similar words to that effect) needs to be added to each of the criteria. As an example, criterion a should be reworded to read:-

Have no significant unacceptable adverse effect on visual amenity or the character or appearance of the surrounding area.

The penultimate paragraph also needs to be reworded in order to reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development (as set out in the NPPF) and the commitment set out by the Council in Policy CP1 to, "**always work proactively with applicants to jointly find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible**". An alternative form of wording could be:-

Where the Council considers the need for the development, or the benefits to be derived from a development, outweigh any harm caused, it will seek to negotiate suitable compensatory measures.

The final paragraph of the policy must be omitted in its entirety. The Town & Country Planning Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations set out when an Environmental Statement will be required. The Council cannot circumvent European and national policy and guidance and set its own criteria for when an ES will be needed. This part of the policy is unsound, legally flawed, and will lead to many judicial reviews and appeals.

Policy DM5: Employment Development Criteria

JTS generally supports this policy, although it notes that a number of the strategic employment sites do not necessarily meet all of the criteria set out therein.

Policy DM6: Areas allocated for General Development and Office Development

JTS generally supports this policy - but see also the comments made with respect to Policy S3.

Policy DM8: Supporting the Rural Economy

We welcome the support for development related to small scale rural enterprises and which diversifies the range of economic activity both on farms and in the rural area generally.

There is, however, a concern that whilst the policy refers both to agricultural and other rural enterprises, the supporting text almost exclusively concerns the diversification of existing farms. The Council should explicitly recognise that there are many other types of enterprise (other than farms and agriculture) that benefit the

rural economy (such as riding schools, livery stables, small scale visitor accommodation etc).

Policy DM10: Non-retail Uses

Whilst JTS generally supports the objective of retaining the primary retail role of town centres, the policy does not reflect the fundamental, and deep-seated, changes that are happening in this sector and, in particular, the move towards online retailing and the resultant reduction in demand for traditional retail units (which is being experienced nationwide).

The proposal to allow no further loss of Class A1 retail units, within primary shopping frontages, and to also retain 60% of units in secondary frontages and shopping parades in Class A1 retail use, does not reflect the market and is not justified in the supporting text (or in the evidence base produced for the Plan).

JTS also maintains an objection to the policy as there is no Proposals Map to define what the Council considers to be 'primary' and 'secondary' frontages. We suspect that the Council's opinion will bear little relation to current market trends and realities.

Policy DM11: New Developments in the Green Belt

We generally support the objectives underlying this policy, but consider that it needs substantial amendment in order to bring it into line with relevant NPPF guidance.

Section 9 of the NPPF sets out, in detail, what may be appropriate development in the Green Belt. Local Plan policies cannot, and should not, seek to change these definitions.

In particular, the third paragraph of the policy is at odds with paragraph 89 of the NPPF, which provides that the following categories of development may be appropriate development in the Green Belt:-

- the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;
- the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
- limited infilling in villages, and limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the Local Plan; and
- limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.

Furthermore, paragraph 90 of the NPPF also provides that the following additional categories of development may be appropriate, provided that they preserve the Green Belt's openness:-

- mineral extraction;
- engineering operations;
- local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate the requirement for a Green Belt location;
- the reuse of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction; and
- development brought forward under a community right to build order.

The Council needs to review Policy DM11 in order to make sure it is consistent with the NPPF definitions of appropriate development. As the policy currently stands, there is a conflict and it is unsound.

Furthermore, the test used to judge impact on 'openness' should be that set out in the NPPF (i.e. 'preserve openness') and the policy should be amended where a different form of wording is used.

Policy DM12: Established Areas of Development

JTS generally supports this policy, which is consistent with some of the categories of development identified in paragraph 89 of the NPPF as potentially being appropriate in the Green Belt.

We consider that the policy introduces, in accordance with NPPF guidance, a degree of flexibility and will allow genuine in-fill plots, which, although currently located in the Green Belt, in practice, serve no Green Belt function, to be brought forward for development. However, we are of the view that there are many more 'relevant frontages', than are currently listed in the policy, to which it should apply.

Policy DM13: Extensions to Dwellings in the Green Belt

This policy needs to be substantially reviewed as it is inconsistent with NPPF guidance and, accordingly, is unsound.

Paragraph 89 of the NPPF makes it clear that the following classes of development may be appropriate in the Green Belt:-

- the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

The way that the policy is currently worded, suggests that the Council will only grant permission for residential extensions in the Green Belt in 'very special circumstances'. Clearly, however, 'very special circumstances' do not need to be proven for appropriate development – i.e. an extension or alteration to a residential building that does not result in a disproportionate addition.

The policy must be reworded to reflect NPPF guidance and to state that permission will be granted for extensions and alterations to existing dwellings, which are not disproportionate, when considered with respect to the size of the original building.

It is only if an extension is found to be disproportionate, would it then be necessary to consider whether there are 'very special circumstances' which justify the grant of permission.

The policy should also be deleted to remove both criteria (a) and (b). The NPPF does not differentiate between a building purposely constructed as a dwelling and one which has been converted to a dwelling.

Most importantly, the NPPF requires that the Council considers each case on its merits – i.e. it must consider, in each case, whether a proposed extension is disproportionate. A blanket 35% upper limit will not allow this – it is not in the interests of good planning – and is, accordingly, unsound. Chelmsford Borough Council recently proposed a similar limit in its Focused Review of its Core Strategy but dropped it before the Examination on the grounds that it was unsound.

Policy DM14: Replacement Dwellings in the Green Belt

For similar reasons relating to Policy DM13 (see above), this policy is unsound and needs to be reviewed in order to bring it into line with the National Planning Policy Framework.

Policy DM16: Reuse and Residential Conversions of Rural Buildings

This policy must be reviewed in order to ensure that it is consistent with NPPF guidance (paragraph 90). The only tests set out in the NPPF, in relation to the reuse of existing buildings in the Green Belt, are that:-

- the proposal should preserve openness; and that,
- the building should be of permanent and substantial construction.

All other criteria should be omitted from the policy for the matters covered are either out with NPPF guidance or are dealt with by other policies in the plan (i.e. Policy DM1).

In particular, the requirement to demonstrate, where a residential conversion is proposed, that every reasonable effort has first been made to secure a suitable business or commercial reuse, is entirely inconsistent with both NPPF policy and also the significant shortfall in land required to meet 'objectively

assessed housing needs'. A residential conversion, of an existing rural building, can make a small, but valuable, contribution to meeting 'objectively assessed housing needs' and, accordingly, the policy should set out a preference for residential conversion before commercial (because of the size of the residential land shortfall).

Policy DM18: Landscape Protection and Woodland Management

This policy should be reworded so that it more closely coincides with Policy DM17 in that the opening paragraph should read as follows:

Development will not be permitted where it would have a detrimental effect on, or result in the loss of, significant landscape heritage or a feature of ecological importance, including trees, woodlands or hedgerows, unless it can be demonstrated that the justification for the development outweighs the harm caused.

Policy DM20: Listed Buildings

This policy needs to be reviewed in light of the guidance set out in the NPPF (paragraphs 126 to 141). In particular, the final paragraph of the policy needs to be reworded for, as it is currently set out, it implies that change of use of listed buildings will only be permitted in certain circumstances. This does not accord with NPPF policy, which indicates that changes of use should only be refused if harm is caused to the heritage value of the asset.

Policy DM22: Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Remains

This policy needs to be amended in order to clarify what the Council requires when it refers to, in paragraph 2, a 'full archaeological assessment'. Consistent with NPPF guidance, it is normally only necessary to provide a Phase 1 Archaeological Assessment, in respect of most sites that are considered to be of archaeological interest.

It is only in respect of the most important sites (i.e. scheduled ancient monuments) that a more detailed study, including intrusive investigations, should be required prior to an application being submitted.

Policy DM23: Housing Land Allocations – Major Sites

JTS takes no issue with the sites identified for residential development in this policy but considers that the Council needs to identify additional land, consistent with the approach set out in our comments relating to Policy S2.

Policy DM24: Affordable Housing

Whilst we recognise the need to provide affordable housing within the Borough, we welcome the Council's understanding that such provision can potentially impact upon the viability of a scheme. Accordingly, JTS welcomes, and supports, the final paragraph of the policy.

We also consider that the policy should not seek any affordable housing provision on sites of less than 15 units. On smaller sites (14 units and below) it is often physically, or logistically, difficult, or financial disadvantageous, to include affordable housing on site. These problems become more acute, the smaller the site gets.

With small sites, that provide a small element of affordable housing (for example 2 affordable units on a development of 8 units), the need to secure agreement with a Registered Social Landlord (RSL), will very significantly reduce the value of the land. Indeed, such sites are not attractive to the vast majority of RSLs (they are too small to efficiently manage) and the policy could, therefore, sterilise many small sites.

The final sentence of the first paragraph of the policy, and the subsequent thresholds for contributions, (a) to (e), should be deleted.

In the alternative, and only if the Council's evidence base shows that the necessary level of affordable housing will not be delivered from sites over 15 units in size, then, and only then, should a financial contribution (towards off-site affordable housing provision) be sought. In any event, sites of less than 5 dwellings should not fall within the policy.

In this alternative, criteria (a), (b) , (c) & (d) should include the following wording at the end of each paragraph, "...or a financial contribution for each new dwelling towards the provision of affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough", together with the deletion of (e), so for example criteria (a) would read as:

"a. At least four affordable homes on sites which have 12 to 14 dwellings or a financial contribution for each new dwelling should be made towards the provision of affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough"

Any alterations should not override the provisions of the final paragraph of Policy DM24, which enable negotiation on the level of provision (financial or on-site provision) where viability is compromised. This provision is critical in ensuring the deliverability of all sites and, in particular, small sites (the economic viability of which is often more sensitive to additional costs - whether from planning contributions, economic conditions or physical site constraints).

The Council also needs to set out a clear basis for determining the level of financial contribution to be sought in lieu of on-site affordable housing provision. Currently no guidelines exist and nor does the general text of the draft Local Plan give any indication of how such contributions are to be calculated. Lack of clarity will lead to significant delays so affecting the deliverability of housing sites.

Finally, the Council also needs to give consideration as to how the affordable housing requirements for sites of 14 dwellings, or under, relate to other policies set out in the Plan.

For instance, Policy DM3, whilst setting out target densities for new residential development, also requires that the density of a scheme should be sympathetic to the character of the local area. Other policies (such as Policy CP1) require that the siting, design and layout of a scheme should respond to, and be in keeping with, its locality and context.

Accordingly, and if criteria (a), (b) , (c) & (d) are retained, the policy should be flexible enough to take account of the situation where a small housing development comes forward in a low density area. There will be cases where it is determined that a low density development, comprising large family housing, is appropriate to the character of the area. Large family housing does not make good affordable housing and the policy needs to be sufficiently flexible to recognise this.

Policy DM27: Mixed Use Development

JTS generally supports this policy and welcomes the flexibility set out in the second paragraph.

Policy DM29: Accessible, Adaptable Development

As with affordable housing policy DM24, the need to provide 5% Lifetime Homes dwellings, in all new developments of 20 dwellings or more, should be subject to a viability assessment.

Policy DM30: Provision of Open Space and New Development

Whilst JTS supports the policy, it objects to the requirement, set out in supporting paragraph 4.129, that 15% of a site, on which 50 or more dwelling units are to be proposed, should be set aside for public open space. The objection is based on the fact that the draft Local Plan provides no justification for this figure and it would result in an efficient use of land.

Policy DM31: Protection and Enhancement of Open Space, Community, Sport and Recreational Facilities

An objection is raised to this policy on the basis that it is not possible to assess its full impact until the Proposals Map, which identifies Open Space, and Local Green Space has been published.

JTS can also see no justification as to why the Council would have a starting position of protecting (i.e. set a presumption against the development of) "**other previously undeveloped land**" within urban areas. Given the shortage of housing land, which is in-built into the draft Plan (see representations with respect to Policies S1 and S2), the Council needs to make the best use possible of all land within the urban areas, whether previously developed or previously undeveloped.

Policy DM37: Contaminated Land and Hazardous Substances

JTS considers that the Borough Council should give consideration as to how the requirements of the second paragraph relate to the guidance set out in Circular 11/95: Use of Conditions in Planning Permissions. Whilst it may be good practice to request that a Phase 1 Desk-Top Study be submitted with a planning application, Phase 2 and Phase 3 matters can often be dealt with by condition.

Policy DM38: Parking

We welcome the flexibility built into this policy and, in particular, the inference that the Parking Standards, which have been adopted as supplementary planning guidance, will not be slavishly followed and that parking requirements will be assessed in relation to the type of development proposed, the intensity of use and the location.

Omission

Finally, we note, with regret that the Council has not included a specific policy on riding schools and stables within the draft plan. Given the contribution that such business make to the rural economy, we request that policies, similar to those in the current local plan be included in the next draft; We commend the following wording:

Riding Schools And Livery Stables

Proposals for livery stables and riding schools, and associated developments (other than residential properties), will be supported. New buildings will be granted planning permission where:

- a) they are required for activities ancillary to the livery stable/riding school use;
- b) the buildings are well sited in relation to, and are in keeping with the scale of, other buildings on the site;
- c) the proposal will not have an unacceptable detrimental impact on other person's enjoyment of the countryside;
- d) it would not result in the permanent loss of best or most versatile agricultural land;
- e) it would not have an unacceptable detrimental impact on highway safety.

Please return to Planning Policy Team, Brentwood Borough Council, Town Hall, Brentwood, Essex CM15 8AY, or alternatively attach completed form and email planning.policy@brentwood.gov.uk

Please note that all responses will be published online. More information can be found at www.brentwood.gov.uk/localplan

All responses should be received by Wednesday 2nd October 2013