

FINAL DRAFT

Herongate and Ingrave Parish Council Response to Consultation on Brentwood Strategic Growth Options

Assumptions:

1. The six thousand plus building requirement from the Government is fixed.
2. This implies a 20 - 25% growth in Brentwood's population from incomers alone by 2030.
3. The only way that there is any possibility of this huge rate of growth being sustainable is to make an equally huge investment in infrastructure.

It is obvious that piecemeal developments will not make possible any significant income from "106" or similar type commitments making large developments obligatory. Necessary infrastructure improvements would be impossible.

It is equally clear that good quality, productive, agricultural land should be avoided when selecting locations for enormous developments of the type required. If the UK is to grow at this rate, feeding the resident population will become difficult, particularly in a world that is becoming increasingly unstable.

To apply the above to the situation in Herongate and Ingrave; all of the farm land to the east of the A128 (Brentwood Road) as far as Hutton and Billericay is in current productive use and should be left to help feed the country. Additionally, this agricultural land, particularly if, as seems likely, Brentwood Borough is absorbed into London, will be a part of the greenbelt separating our Borough from Billericay and Wickford. The vast majority of this land has very poor access roads which again would make it very unsuitable for large developments.

Of the remaining option sites in the two villages, all are small. The majority have accessibility problems. However, two sites, one opposite Button Common and the other next to the Ingrave Johnston School, are potentially accessible directly from the Brentwood Road. Were these sites removed from the greenbelt by the LDP process, many reasons would remain for not using either of them.

The Brentwood Road (A128) is heavily loaded and has a bottleneck through Herongate and Ingrave. Gridlock is regularly caused by the various junctions through the villages; Billericay Road and the Petrol Station are good examples. Vetoing any new junctions on the A128 would be an excellent way of not making matters worse. In the event that, as mooted, major developments occur in West Horndon and/or Dunton Garden Suburb then the idea of having additional junctions in the bottleneck becomes ludicrous.

These two sites have another common factor; both form a part of the Thames Chase Woodlands. The designations were formally established between the Borough and the Thames Chase organisation. A commitment was made by the Brentwood Borough Council to act for Thames Chase in protecting the sites from harm as special landscape areas and as wildlife habitats. Both areas are proven to support prolific quantities of wildlife. The site opposite Button Common is a County Wildlife site and the other has recently been subjected to detailed ecological studies for mammals, reptiles, amphibians and bats providing proof of the prolific presence of many species in each category. We assume that Brentwood Borough would not even consider renegeing on such a formal commitment to Thames Chase. Further, the site opposite Button Common is sandwiched between two conservation areas which would be very badly degraded by building a number of blocks of flats there. Similarly, the site between Hillcrest Nursery and Ingrave Johnston School is the last remaining greenbelt area preventing the conjoining of Ingrave and Herongate. These are two separate villages and residents very much wish them to remain so.