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**BRENTWOOD
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Brentwood Borough Local Plan

Strategic Growth Options Consultation

January 2015

Consultation questionnaire

This consultation questionnaire relates to the Brentwood Local Plan Strategic Growth Options Consultation and is provided for you to make comments. Please take the opportunity to read the consultation document before filling in this form and returning to:

Planning Policy Team, Brentwood Borough Council Town Hall, Brentwood, Essex, CM15 8AY
or by email to planning.policy@brentwood.gov.uk

Comments need to be received by 5pm on Tuesday 17 February 2015

If you need any help completing this form please contact the Planning Policy Team using the contact details given above or by telephoning 01277 312620.

Personal Details

Questions

The Council is seeking responses on key issues. Focused questions appear in bold boxes throughout the Strategic Growth Options document. These questions are summarised in this consultation questionnaire. More information can be found at www.brentwood.gov.uk/localplan.

Please use an additional sheet if necessary. Please note that all responses will be published online.



Q1: Do you agree with the broad areas, for the purpose of considering approaches to growth?

Yes

Comments

We support the division of Brentwood Borough into three broad areas. Each exhibits different characteristics in relation to landscape, settlement distribution, function and size, and accessibility which impact upon their ability to accommodate future housing growth.

We recommend that a balanced spatial strategy is adopted by the Council, which helps meet the development needs from all settlements across the Borough. This means that the level of housing growth proposed at each settlement should: (i) meet local needs, and (ii) be commensurate to the sustainability credentials of the settlement.

This approach is in accordance with the NPPF (paragraph 14) which states that the presumption in favour of sustainable development is the golden thread running through plan-making and decision-taking.

We therefore support the identification of the majority of new housing growth to the A12 Corridor, at Brentwood as this is the most sustainable location in the Borough. Other settlements, including larger and smaller villages, across the Borough, should be allocated land for smaller scale housing growth to respond to local needs only. This is in accordance with the NPPF (paragraph 55) which promotes housing in rural areas where it will “*enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities*” whilst avoiding “*new isolated homes in the countryside*”. We do not support the development of a new settlement such as Dunton Garden Suburb (see further details in Q4 below).



Q2: Do you agree with the issues raised within each of these areas?

Yes No

Comments

In general we agree with the issues raised in each area. Most importantly there is no reference to Crossrail proposals at Brentwood, and that this major investment will significantly enhance the sustainability credentials of the settlement as a location for housing growth.

(A) North of the Borough – Given the Council’s description, the area does not represent a suitable location for growth beyond that of local needs only. We do not support significant growth in the area. The area’s attractive countryside character including scattered pattern of villages should be protected. The area does not provide suitable transport connections or local services and facilities to accommodate development beyond local needs. For example the area does not contain a railway

station or any rail connections.

(B) A12 Corridor – The area represents the most sustainable location for housing growth in the Borough. We consider the Council’s description under-estimates the characteristics and features of the area which would support future growth. There is no reference to the existing excellent rail infrastructure and future planned Crossrail development which will significantly enhance the area’s sustainability credentials to accommodate housing growth. There is also no acknowledgement of the range of supporting infrastructure, services and facilities which exist within the only town and largest settlement in the Borough.

(C) A127 Corridor – In comparison with Area B, we consider the opportunity presented in the description over-estimates Area C’s ability to accommodate new growth. Significantly the area only contains one settlement and therefore access to existing infrastructure, services and facilities to support growth is more limited. We do not support significant growth in the area.



Q3: Do you have any comments on the appropriateness of particular sites? Yes

Comments

We support housing development on **Land at Sawyers Hall Lane (“Sawyers Hall Farm, Sawyers Hall Lane / Doddinghurst Road, Brentwood” – Site Refs 024A and 024B)**. The two Site Refs set out in the Strategic Growth Options Consultation should be considered as a single site. The site should be allocated for housing and be released from the Green Belt.

The site is located in the A12 Corridor which represents the most sustainable location in the Borough to accommodate new growth. This is because the Settlement Hierarchy (Brentwood Borough Local Plan 2015-2030: Preferred Options, July 2013) identifies Brentwood as the only town and largest settlement in the Borough. It is classified as a “main town” and is the only settlement in Category 1 (out of 4). It is the focus of employment, retail, services and facilities and is the most accessible location in the Borough. Crossrail, to open in 2019, will significantly enhance Brentwood’s sustainability credentials for housing growth. Therefore it is vital that the new Brentwood Local Plan ensures that opportunities arising from this major investment are maximised by allocating sites for housing within walking distance of the town centre, existing services and facilities and close to the railway station, such as Land at Sawyers Hall Lane.

A number of potential housing sites are identified to the north of Brentwood Town Centre (to the east of Brentwood, and to the east and north of Pilgrims Hatch). Land at Sawyers Hall Lane represents the most sustainable site for new growth for the following reasons:

- The site makes a Limited or No contribution to the Green Belt in terms of NPPF purposes and local objectives (see **Section 4**, Green Belt Assessment)
- The site displays low landscape sensitivity and moderate capacity to accommodate change in terms of residential development (see **Appendix A** Landscape and Visual Appraisal Report, and **Section 4**, Landscape)
- The site offers a number of possible access solutions from Doddinghurst Road and the A12 (see **Appendix B** Highways Technical Note, and **Section 4**, Access)
- The site is located in a highly accessible location and is within walking distance of Brentwood town centre, railway station and existing services and facilities (see **Section 4**, Sustainable Patterns of Development)
- The site provides an opportunity to bring forward a critical mass of new homes (between 400 and 900 units) including supporting community infrastructure, to deliver a range of positive impacts to Brentwood.

The other potential sites to the north of the A12 have a stronger relationship to the wider countryside and Green Belt towards the north of the Borough. These locations are also considered to be less capable of integration with Brentwood, especially in terms of accessibility, for example to the town centre and railway station, and would not yield a comparable development opportunity in terms of size in comparison to Land at Sawyers Hall Lane.

The sustainability Appraisal (January 2015) sets out the objectives of the Local Plan. Focusing new growth in Brentwood on Land at Sawyers Hall Lane would achieve and help support the objectives as follows:

Local Plan Objective	Impact of Growth at Sawyers Hall Lane
Direct development growth to the existing urban areas in locations well served by existing and proposed local services and facilities	The site adjoins the main town of Brentwood and is well served by community services and facilities.
Manage growth to that capable of being accommodated by existing or proposed infrastructure, services and facilities	The site is capable of being delivered both with and without infrastructure investment (e.g. New Junction on A12).
Expand and enhance Brentwood Town Centre's retail offer	The site would provide a substantial new population representing a critical mass to deliver positive impacts on the town centre e.g. increased spending, levels of activity etc.
Promote and encourage the continued regeneration of Brentwood Town and Local Centres	See above. The site is within walking distance of the town centre and therefore is capable of delivering a range of benefits.
Optimise the social and economic benefits that arise from Crossrail for the benefit of residents and visitors to the borough	The site provides the largest development opportunities within 2 km from Crossrail at Brentwood.
Plan for housing that meets the needs of the borough and contributes to creating inclusive, balanced, sustainable communities	The site is capable of delivering 450 to 900 units and is able to bring forward affordable housing and market housing to meet local identified needs.
Protect and nurture existing leisure, cultural and recreational assets	The site is able to support existing assets as it is located adjacent to existing leisure, cultural and recreational assets along Sawyers Hall Lane (as well as assets in the town centre).

Improve public transport, cycling and walking facilities and encourage sustainable transport choices	The site is well served by public transport and walking / cycling routes. It is close to the town centre and would encourage sustainable transport choices.
Secure the delivery of essential infrastructure, including transportation schemes and community facilities in order to support new development growth throughout its delivery	The site, due to its scale is capable to providing community infrastructure (if required). As part of a potential larger scheme to the east of Brentwood, a new junction along the A12 might be provided.
Safeguard the Green Belt and protect and enhance valuable landscapes and the natural and historic environment	Overall the site makes a Limited or No contribution towards the NPPF Purposes and local objectives (see Green Belt Assessment in Section 4 of these Representations). The site displays low landscape sensitivity and moderate capacity to accommodate change in terms of residential development.

Land at Sawyers Hall Lane has the capacity to accommodate 400 to 900 new homes. Residential-led masterplan options are set out in Figures 2 and 3 of these Representations. Housing would be designed to meet local needs and the site would be able to accommodate required community infrastructure. The masterplan options demonstrate that the site is capable of being developed on its own, or as part of a larger scheme to the east of Brentwood if a new junction on the A12 is bought forward. Section 5 provides further details on development capacity and masterplan studies.

? Q4: Given the greater capacity for growth along the A127 corridor, which of the sites put forward do you think is the best location for growth?

Comments

We do not support significant growth in the A127 corridor, including development at Dunton Garden Suburb. The area only contains one settlement, West Horndon, which is classified as a large village (Category 3, of 4) in the Brentwood Settlement Hierarchy (Brentwood Borough Local Plan 2015-2030: Preferred Options, July 2013) and existing services and facilities are limited.

As explained in Q1, we support a balanced spatial strategy for the Borough which provides new growth across all settlements but is focused in the most sustainable locations such as Brentwood. Focusing housing in a single location in the Borough, such as at Dunton Garden Suburb, would mean that development would be less evenly distributed and less capable of responding to local needs across the Borough.

? Q5: Should the A12 corridor accommodate growth by releasing sites on the edge of urban areas? Yes

Comments

As explained in Q1 and Q3, we support new growth in the A12 Corridor, especially at Brentwood. Land at Sawyers Hall Lane (“Sawyers Hall Farm, Sawyers Hall Lane / Doddinghurst Road, Brentwood” – Site Refs 024A and 024B) should be allocated for future housing and be released from the Green Belt.

Given the limited availability of brownfield sites in Brentwood, the Council acknowledges that Green Belt sites will need to come forward to accommodate future housing growth. The challenge, within the A12 Corridor and across the Borough, is to identify the most suitable sites. The site selection process should be clear and transparent and consider a range of factors including contribution towards the Green Belt purposes, landscape sensitivity and capacity, transport infrastructure capacity, accessibility and connectivity, sustainable patterns of development, natural and historic environment designation and constraints such as flood risk.

? Q6: In order to provide for local need is it preferable for Greenfield sites on the edge of villages to be released, or to develop brownfield sites (both within the Green Belt)? Yes No

Comments

n/a

? Q7: To enable future employment need to be met do you agree that the most sustainable approach is to allocate new sites close to the strategic highway network? Yes No

Comments

n/a

? Q8: In order to ensure that the Town Centre remains economically sustainable, do you agree that a “Town Centre First” approach should be taken to retail development? Yes No

Comments

We support the retail development in existing town centres, especially at locations such as Brentwood due to its high levels to public transport accessibility and planned Crossrail development. In parallel with this strategy, Brentwood should be the overall focus for development for a range of uses including retail and housing.



Q9: Are there opportunities for more open space provision in the area where you live?

Yes No

Comments

n/a



Q10: Please rate the level to which you value the landscape near where you live (on a scale of 1 to 5), as compared to other areas within Brentwood Borough, for the following aspects:

Aspect:	Very Low	Low	Average	High	Very High
Scenic Beauty / Attractiveness	1	2	3	4	5
Outdoor Recreation / Leisure Use	1	2	3	4	5
Wildlife Interest	1	2	3	4	5
Historic Interest	1	2	3	4	5
Tranquility	1	2	3	4	5
Other – please specify:	1	2	3	4	5



Q11: To what extent do you think the following are present in the landscape near where you live (on a scale of 1 to 4):

Aspect:	Absent	Occasional	Frequent	Predominant
Houses	1	2	3	4
Commercial / Industrial buildings	1	2	3	4
Nature Reserves / Wildlife	1	2	3	4
Farmland	1	2	3	4
Woodland	1	2	3	4
Degraded / Derelict / Waste land	1	2	3	4

Infrastructure (Road / Rail / Pylons etc.)	1	2	3	4
Leisure / Recreation Facilities	1	2	3	4
Other – please specify:	1	2	3	4

? Q12: Have we considered the main infrastructure issues? Are there other important issues to consider? Yes No

Comments

The new Brentwood Local Plan must seek to maximise benefits and locational advantages resulting from Crossrail. Therefore we support future housing development close to Brentwood Railway Station, such as on Land at Sawyers Hall Lane (“Sawyers Hall Farm, Sawyers Hall Lane / Doddinghurst Road, Brentwood” – Site Refs 024A and 024B).

As explained in Q13, the highways capacity issues in Brentwood Centre and along the A12 should be considered. A potential new junction on the A12, to serve potential development to the east of Brentwood, would help alleviate congestion from the centre of Brentwood.

? Q13: What do you think the priorities for infrastructure spending should be?

Comments

The priority for infrastructure spending should be to focus investment in and around existing settlements, in particular Brentwood. This approach would deliver positive impacts from infrastructure spending to both existing residents as new communities, assuming that sites adjoining existing settlements are allocated for future housing, such as on Land at Sawyers Hall Lane (“Sawyers Hall Farm, Sawyers Hall Lane / Doddinghurst Road, Brentwood” – Site Refs 024A and 024B).

In relation to the potential new junction on the A12 (as proposed in Section 5 of these Representations), this could deliver a major benefit if incorporated into a well-planned masterplan for the east of Brentwood including Land at Sawyers Hall Lane (“Sawyers Hall Farm, Sawyers Hall Lane / Doddinghurst Road, Brentwood” – Site Refs 024A and 024B) and land to the north of the A12 (Site Ref 089 – Brentwood Centre).

The A12 currently provides two points of access to Brentwood. One is the Brook Street roundabout (A12 junction with M25) to the west, the other is off to the east at Mountnessing. With these points of access at the extremities of the town of Brentwood, much of the traffic flow is focussed on the A1023

through the Town. If a new junction were to be installed at the above location (on the A12), this would be almost centrally located between the existing junctions and would assist in alleviating congestion from the centre of Brentwood. Traffic to and from Pilgrims Hatch and the northern part of Brentwood would have much more direct access to the A12 and would not need to travel through the centre of Brentwood to access the Strategic Highway Network.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire

Please ensure that you return comments to the Council by 5pm on Tuesday 17 February 2015 (see page 1 for details)