



**BRENTWOOD
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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

(For official use only)

Comment
No.

1D2848

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.

PERSONAL DETAILS

YOUR COMMENTS

Please indicate which section(s) of the Local Plan you are commenting on (please clearly state the Policy reference or paragraph number): DM24, DM25, DM31, DM21, DM18, DM32, DM16, DM35, DM36

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

Support

Object

Comments (please use additional sheet if required):

On the whole I support the document in terms of its approach to development and spatial strategy however there are some issues especially relating to the boroughs rural communities that I believe need more emphasis.

- DM24 / 25:- Focus on elderly housing provision. It has become noticeable at borough level and especially in relation to rural communities that there is a shortage of affordable housing for school leavers and elderly residents. The issue of accommodation for the elderly who are looking for smaller manageable dwellings has been compounded by the regular granting of planning permission to demolish existing bungalows and develop on the land often replacing the bungalow with expensive houses. I feel that more provision should be made for the protection of dwellings suitable for elderly residents.
- DM31 & DM21:- Village greens / conservation areas / open spaces. Village greens and conservation areas are under constant pressure from proposed developments. In Blackmore we have a listed public building next to the village green in a conservation area with a proposal for redevelopment and new buildings. Examples already exist of poorly considered development which is out of scale or does not consider the historic vernacular. I think the local development plan is an opportunity in line with the NPPF to bring more safeguards into place to protect the character of our conservation areas and protect our greens and open spaces by deterring opportunist development and re-enforcing the requirement for scale, vernacular and historic character to be considered.

3. The localism Act and NPPF allows for neighbourhood plans. No mention of this seems to be made in the Local Development Plan. The document needs to place some emphasis on this, demonstrate the support the LPA will give to communities to develop their own planning guidelines and encourage the use of these plans. Communities often feel powerless when planning becomes an issue in their communities and often respond strongly to development good or bad. The use of community plans and design statements especially in rural communities and sensitive areas would mitigate this. From experience I would say that rural communities generally have a deep mistrust of the planning system and parish councils. Helping communities develop their own community plans would enable a buy in to the system and create stronger links between communities and the local planning department.
4. DM18 / DM32:- Tree protection. Even though we have legislation covering the protection of trees and hedgerows it is noticeable that we are losing a large number of trees from our urban and rural landscape. Native hedges also seem to be being replaced for laurel and other ornamental species around houses and domestic land in agricultural and rural settings. TPO's seem to be predominantly for native species whilst fine ornamental tree specimens are disregarded. My concern is that new residents see trees and native hedges as unnecessary maintenance and have them removed at the first opportunity. This is changing the atmosphere and character of many of our developed landscapes and street scenes. It would be good to see more protection put in place to preserve our tree lines and hedgerows in the Local Development Plan outside the current conservation area and general TPO approach. Perhaps a survey of the borough to identify particularly good treescapes, specimens and hedgerows / wildlife corridors.
5. DM16:- Community services / transport infrastructure. I am concerned that many of our communities are poorly served in terms of public services such as libraries and especially bus routes. Many of our outlying communities and rural villages are forced to use cars or expensive and unreliable public transport systems. Something that is not sustainable and should have stronger focus in the LDP.

We are also losing smaller shops and public houses to either shopping chains or development. More encouragement is needed to enable these to continue as independent businesses. In rural communities good shops and public houses attract outside visitors, especially at weekends, and boost the local economy. Unfortunately they seem to be seen as economic opportunities by developers and supermarket chains. Any building that has community worth should be protected by more than change of use legislation, opportunist development should be discouraged and community benefit have more weighting in the LDP.

6. DM36 & DM35 – Their seems to be a total disregard for SuDs or surface water harvesting in the development of drives at the front of properties. I have seen many lawns and planting beds removed from the front of properties to be replaced by block paved drives which don't appear to take drainage into consideration. We already have regular flooding issues in Blackmore and little control over the creation of hard standing areas. I would like to see more focus on surface water drainage and SuDs legislation relating to small development in the LDP
7. Parking – issues relating to parking and speed limits do not seem to have much focus in the LDP. In relation to schools in particular I think more focus needs to be placed on parking restrictions, road safety measures and speeding with a clear policy statement borough wide. I have also noticed a trend for parking cars for the sole purpose of advertising outside shops and community buildings which are taking up parking spaces for visitors to those. This has

resulted in issues of double parking and parking in restricted areas creating a safety hazard. I see this as an infrastructure issue as well as a commercial issue and needs some kind of restriction within the LDP.

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