

Thank you for the opportunity to comment upon the Consultation Document of the Local Plan for 2015-2030. The Borough Council made a presentation to our Parish Council at our meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> of September 2013 and there were about 30 members of the public present. As one might suppose there was a lot of emotion expressed mainly about the proposed development sites within the Borough. However our comments will be confined to sites that affect the village with most of those being about the proposed Woodlands site in School Road. Indeed the owners of the property were present and, like everybody from the village, they expressed astonishment that they had not been consulted or even appraised of the situation. The first that anyone in the village had heard of this proposal, and the full Parish Council is included, was publication in the local press. The meeting was to some degree reassured by the statement that the Borough Council had no plans to compulsorily purchase properties but, of course, only the future will attest to this. The meeting also had explained to them, by the Parish Council, that the SHLAA document identified other sites within the Green Belt, surrounding the village, most of which had been “discounted”. It was further explained, by the Borough representatives, that to be “counted” was only used in order to make up the numbers of the offered residential units to the proposed approximately three and a half thousand as opposed to the greater than five thousand unit required by central government as the Brentwood share. Again only the future will show if this is true. We are not sure that “discounted” should really be “not yet counted”. As to other “not discounted sites”, these all lie within the Green Belt and the general mood of the meeting was one of disapproval for such developments. This was even if the landowners had intimated a willingness to offer such sites. The mood was mollified by the Parish Councils reaffirmation that it would continue with its policy to vigorously oppose such developments in “green” Green Belt sites and only support developments if the proposal had inappropriate heavy industrial use for which residential development would afford an exceptional planning gain. The meeting was further mollified by reassertion that compulsory purchase would not be used.

It was noted that, in the document, Kelvedon Hatch village was not mentioned with regard to a deficiency in playgrounds and leisure pursuit land. The village does have a playground and the use of green open spaces in the form of Poor’s Field at the centre of the village, which is where our Village Hall resides. The Village Hall is a Charitable Trust administered by a board of trustees for the benefit of the villagers, with the associated open green space as one of its assets. The Parish council rents the use of this land for the parishioners with monies derived from its precept. Other green space is provided at Eagle Field, again rented from the owners by the Parish Council. Further green space is afforded in the village around the Swan Pond. This has been maintained over the years by the Parish Council, as the Borough has no funds to do so. We are in the process of transferring ownership in order to secure this asset for the Village. Green Belt land surrounds the village but, as explained in the Brentwood Open Space Strategy, this is not counted in the consultation document as to do so the Borough Council would have to negotiate an agreement (and costs) with the landowners.

It ought to be noted that the provision of playground and other leisure space by the endeavours of the Parish Council in agreement with the landowners can be revoked with short or non-existent notice periods, which means that this provision cannot be counted as such for the purposes of the Local Plan for 2015-2030. It ought also be noted that none of this provision is made by the Borough only by the Parish. This, of course, leaves Kelvedon Hatch totally unprovided for with respect to playgrounds, leisure space or open green space.

All of this is contrary to proposed policy DM31. In particular it is noted in this policy that the “Council will seek provision of community and recreational facilities through the acquisitions of land, joint use of existing facilities or by entering into negotiation with private land owners”. Within the justification of this proposed policy, in paragraphs 4.135 to 4.139, inclusive, no mention is made of the residents of Kelvedon Hatch as being deficient in provision of facilities, due to failing to attain the standards set in paragraphs 4.140 and 4.141. Some of the blame for this poor state of affairs must, of course, fall to the providers of the evidence used in making the proposal document. In this evidence the Poor’s Field has been counted as a sports field with pitches. This is not the case. It is used as a sports facility by clubs that rent the use from the Charitable Trust and again the length of

notice to quit will preclude it from being counted for the purposes of the Local Plan. The Trust has the full support and agreement of the Charity Commissioners that it is acting properly and lawfully in these matters of apportioning and renting out the use of its assets. Having attempted to understand the Survey and Assessment of Needs and Audit of Open Spaces, Sport and Recreational Facilities in Brentwood Borough, PNP, 2007 with regard to their sections about Kelvedon Hatch and its environs, we have come to the conclusion that it is so wrong and misleading as to be totally useless for its purpose. We have not considered other parishes, as they ought to have detailed knowledge of its deficiencies with regard to their own areas. The use of such a useless document in the preparation of the Local Plan 2015-2030 ought to alert the Borough Council to the need for a detailed and informed analysis of the other supporting evidence that has been used.

The Parish Council requires that the omission of Kelvedon Hatch as being deficient in provision of playground, leisure space and open green space within the justification to proposed policy DM31 be rectified. We would also suggest that proper consultation with the owners of proposed development sites and with the relevant Parish Councils before publication of the same would not come amiss. It is apparent from conversations with other parishes in the Borough, at the BBPCA meetings, that this problem is happening elsewhere. It would also help alleviate the much hurt and anger that has resulted in this mismanagement of the affair.

For and on Behalf of Kelvedon Hatch Parish Council,  
Richard North, Council Chairman.