

NORTH WEALD BASSETT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP



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NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

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Epping Forest District Council
The Planning Policy Team



Epping Forest District Council Submission Version Local Plan 2011-2033 Regulation 19 Public Consultation

As per the Local Plan consultation paperwork, please find below the response to the consultation from the North Weald Bassett Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

The Department for Communities and Local Government publication entitled 'Neighbourhood Planning' states that "Neighbourhood planning is a new way for communities to decide the future of the places where they live and work. They will be able to:

- choose where they want new homes, shops and offices to be built; and
- have their say on what those new buildings should look like and what infrastructure should be provided and grant planning permission for the new buildings they want to see go ahead."

The North Weald Bassett Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was established to support the production of a Neighbourhood Plan for the area (which encompasses North Weald Village, Thornwood and Hastingwood) with this aim in mind. The Steering Group has undertaken high level consultation within the Plan area. In light of the responses we received, it feels that the infrastructure planned within the Local Plan is insufficient to support growth in the Plan area, and as a result we must find that the plan is unsound due to failing to meet the tests of soundness.

The research undertaken by the Steering Group indicates that just over 45% of those who responded to the question 'What issues do you feel are most important when designing new homes and places?' identified Infrastructure. This was the highest collective response. This was followed by Lack of facilities, Current and Increase in Traffic, Parking and Doctors.

The National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 152, 156, 157, 162, 173) emphasises the importance and requirement for Local Planning Authorities to plan for the appropriate infrastructure to support development as part of the Local Plan process.

Page 10 of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan that supports the Local Plan states the following:

"The Schedule presents the infrastructure needed to ensure that all development is policy compliant, in relation to the level of social and physical infrastructure required to serve the needs of the additional population. In reality, service delivery is complex, and limited by financial constraints. It will be for providers to decide how best to deliver services and meet new infrastructure demands."

The last sentence clearly shows that it is being left to 'providers' to meet new infrastructure demands, which by default implies that the Local Plan itself has not adequately planned for the demands.

In addition, the provision of various forms of open space throughout the Plan Area is classified only as 'Desirable' (the lowest priority) in the Infrastructure Delivery Schedule, with the meaning described as 'This type of infrastructure would improve operational capacity, and deliver other wider benefits, but would not prevent or delay the delivery of further development'.

The feedback received from residents within the Plan area clearly shows that infrastructure is the most important factor when considering new homes. Residents have clearly stated that acceptance of the level of development proposed in the Local Plan is contingent on securing the right infrastructure to cope with not only current shortfalls in provision, but to manage the increased demand.

The Steering Group feels that the Local Plan fails the test of being consistent with National Planning Policy as demonstrated above.

In terms of the required changes that would be necessary for the Plan to be 'sound', more specific detail would be needed to show that the infrastructure needed to support sustainable development had been secured in terms of who, how, and when, and for the Local Plan to make a firm commitment within the Plan document itself that without the necessary infrastructure, permission for housing will not be granted.

The Steering Group would like the opportunity to represent the residents of the Neighbourhood Plan Area at any subsequent hearing as part of the examination in public.

Yours faithfully



Mr Geoff Bennett
Chairman