

Chief Executive: John Wood



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Sent by email to:
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Dear Sir/Madam,

Shenley Neighbourhood Development Plan Pre-Submission Plan, Regulation 14 Consultation

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above consultation. This letter relates to the services of the Environment & Infrastructure Department, which also incorporates other services provided by the county council where relevant.

The county council has the following comments to make in relation to 'Ecology and Landscape', 'Fire & Rescue', 'Historic Environment', 'Highways', 'Libraries', 'Minerals and Waste Planning' and 'Rights of Way.'

Ecology and Landscape

There is no reference to the protection and enhancement of local character, which is a core principle embedded throughout the NPPF. There should be reference to the relevant local Landscape Character Assessments that are a vital tool for identifying and describing landscape character, and provide guidelines to ensure that change conserves and enhances landscape character.

The importance and location of views out of the village into the surrounding countryside is mentioned within the plan, however there should also be reference to the protection and enhancement of views from the wider countryside towards the village. For example there is no reference to views under policy S7 New Rural Edges.

There is no reference to the creation and enhancement of green infrastructure, which is also core principle embedded throughout the NPPF. There should be reference to the relevant local green infrastructure plans and an understanding of how the NP area responds to the needs and opportunities of the wider Green Infrastructure (GI) network.

Specific comments in relation to Landscape are as follows:

Part A Introduction, 1.8 The Parish of Shenley in 2018

Under paragraph 1.82 it is stated there *'are a large number of wildlife sites within the Shenley NPA boundary such as...'* A map of the wildlife sites is required, or there should be reference to where information about them can be obtained (Hertfordshire Environmental Records Centre).

Part B Vision & Objectives

There should be Objectives for the conservation and enhancement of landscape character, and the historic environment. Objective 02 is supported in principle; however it does not reflect the point that where landscapes are improved for agriculture, they are relatively limited in terms of associated biodiversity. Furthermore, if farming is to continue it needs to be supported where possible; protection alone is insufficient to maintain farmland.

Rural Character of Old Shenley S1

With regards to 1.34 *'Living and working in rural settlements is associated with...f) access to gardens, orchards and allotments and rural wildlife.'* This point is supported in principle; however there is no description of existing land uses within the Plan area – farms, leisure use etc.

Site Assessment Final Report, January 2018

2 – Land at Harperbury Hospital, Harper Lane

East of Harperbury Hospital, north of orchard site. Dense mature hedgerows/ woodland strips/scrub and grassland amenity playing field although this is likely to be improved. Would require offsetting to compensate for loss of local habitats if developed, otherwise no likely constraints. Needs to consider conservation of adjacent orchard as community orchard.

3 – Land to West of Shenley Hospital and North of Cricket Ground

Arable field. Unlikely to support significant farmland ecology given lack of features. Adjacent to Cow Banks Wood Local Wildlife Site (77/039) – which will need buffering from any construction / development impact, consistent with NE Standing Advice.

4 – Land adjoining Wilton End Cottage and land south of Radlett Lane

(Site identified as most suitable for development in report).

Complex of (likely) improved grassland fields, hedgerows and small woodlands and scattered trees. Local ecological interest in respect of habitats. Includes two Ecosites - Long View Meadow (77/028) and Grassland at Twin Pines (77/041). White letter hairstreak records from southern part. Historic orchard site in southern section. Intrinsic interest unlikely to be sufficient to represent a constraint but net impact will require some biodiversity offsetting to compensate for loss of open linkages and grassland habitat resources.

5 – Land south of Radlett Lane at the Woodhall Estate

Grasslands with no data likely to be improved. Hedgerow and scattered tree network and drain through fields provide local features. Unlikely to present major intrinsic constraints but would increase isolation of Wildlife Site at Shenley Park 77/040 and adjacent Stanley Lord orchard ecosite 77/083. This would need addressing to maintain corridor along Radlett Lane.

6 – Land west of Green Street and north of Stapleton Road

Includes a small part of Lyndhurst Farm ecosite (85/011) which is disturbed ruderal vegetation and scrub. The remainder—formerly grassland, appears to have been recently converted to allotments with car parking. Site adjacent to lorry dump—clearly an area of degraded countryside. Allotment replacement if lost. Great crested newt area—may be present in rough vegetation. No ecological constraint.

7 – Land lying to the north of Stapleton Road

Now largely arable with hedgerows and scrub buffer to south. Part of ‘Organ Hall Pastures’ Local Wildlife Site (85/039), although land use change since 2010 has removed large areas of grassland at the western end of the Wildlife Site, which would now not meet any WS criteria. Great crested newt area but unlikely if arable. No ecological constraint – any remnant grassland area to NW may be of value and need offsetting if lost.

8 – Land lying to the west of Well End Road and North of Potters Lane

East end of Potters Lane. Grassland—likely to be species poor and ruderal horse pasture. No ecological constraint although loss of large area of open grass pasture may require some compensation through offsetting. Hedgerow and scrub boundaries locally valuable but few other features. Local bird interest.

Fire & Rescue

The proposals within the draft plan will not impact upon current operational response times within the neighbourhood plan area. There may however be a cost if new fire hydrants need to be installed on developments located outside of the urban area.

Highways

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) as Highways Authority aims to provide a safe, efficient and resilient transport system that serves the needs of businesses and residents across Hertfordshire and to minimise impact on the environment. The Neighbourhood Plan should align with the HCC’s Transport strategy documents. HCC has recently adopted Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) 2018 – 2031 which sets out the long-term transport strategy for the County, in order to accommodate the levels of housing and employment growth being identified by the Districts in their emerging Local Plans.

LTP4 will provide a framework to guide all our future transport planning and investment. It highlights both existing and future transport problems and issues and identifies ways we can deal with them. LTP4 accelerates the transition from a previous transport strategy that was largely car based to a more balanced approach

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which caters for all forms of transport and seeks to encourage a switch from the private car to sustainable transport (e.g. walking, cycling and passenger transport) wherever possible.

HCC as Highways Authority is a statutory consultee to planning applications submitted to Hertsmere Borough Council. These are assessed and considered in the context of the current legislation. Both National and local policies are considered in relation to sustainable transport. Developers need to ensure that their development sites support their share of the required infrastructure and service improvements, and are accessible by all transport modes. Any new design/any associated off-site highway infrastructure will have to undergo appropriate scrutiny that promotes highway safety.

Vision and Objectives. The overall vision of the Shenley Neighbourhood Plan is broadly supported by the Highway Authority. Objectives 04, 05, 06, 09, 10, 11 and 12 support LTP4 Policy 1: Transport User Hierarchy which states “to support the creation of built environments that encourage greater and safer use of sustainable transport modes, the county council will in the design of any scheme and development of any transport strategy consider in the following order:

- Opportunities to reduce travel demand and the need to travel
- Vulnerable road user needs (such as pedestrians and cyclists)
- Passenger transport user needs
- Powered two wheeler (mopeds and motorbikes) user needs
- Other motor vehicle user needs

Community Priority Projects. The Highway Authority notes the initial work on identifying Community Priority Projects and supports projects that would improve the walking and cycling environment in the village. During the development of these projects it would be appropriate to hold discussions with the Highway Authority to ensure that any proposals on the highway align to current regulations and policies such as the Speed Management Strategy.

Policy Specific Comments.

Policy S4: Community Infrastructure Facilities. The retention of community facilities and the provision of new facilities which would ensure local facilities that are accessible by modes other than the car, supports the LTP policy to reduce the need to travel.

Policy S5.1: Design and Development Briefs for major development proposals would help to ensure that access, cycling and walking are integrated into the proposals at an early stage.

Policy S6: Building for Life 12. The Highway Authority notes the plan proposes making use of the Building for Life 12. These 12 key questions and themes support LTP4.

Policy S7: Connecting Shenley Village. Using planning conditions and obligations to help deliver the measures set out in Policy S7 such as improving walking and cycling and public transport in and around Shenley is supported by the Highway Authority.

The Highway Authority would be happy to discuss any of the matters raised in this response with the Shenley Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

Historic Environment

There is reference to development that respects and enhances the Conservation Area centred on Old Shenley (Rural Character of Old Shenley S1). However there is no mention of below-ground heritage assets of archaeological interest, or the importance of appropriately conserving and/or recording any such assets that may be impacted by development within the parish.

Significant archaeological remains dating particularly from the medieval period are present within the area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan, including moated manor houses at Shenleybury, Salisbury Hall, Shenley Hill, Green Street Farm and Wild Farm. Shenley itself was a medieval village and the church of St Botolph has medieval origins.

The Neighbourhood Plan should recognise the importance of heritage assets to Shenley, and due account should be taken of the historic environment in considering development proposals. It is advised that the potential presence of unknown buried heritage assets of archaeological interest and the limitations that this may put on development as per NPPF paras 184-202 should be recognised.

Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)

Overall, flood risk and drainage is briefly mentioned within the Neighbourhood Plan. It is considered in the site proformas to the extent of identifying whether a site is in Flood Zone 2 or 3 which is for flood risk from main rivers (which are not predominant in the context of the whole parish).

SuDS (written in full in the document as Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems rather than the more usual Sustainable Drainage Systems) is mentioned on page 79 under utilities and sustainability; however, the benefits of SuDS are not explored or explained.

Surface Water flood risk does not seem to have been considered in developing the Neighbourhood Plan. It is not significant for most of the developed areas of the parish apart from the areas on the northern boundary of the village and further on the parish boundary. There are a number of significant surface water flow routes through the parish and these will need to be considered if these areas are ever developed.

For major development, HCC as the LLFA will be a statutory consultee; however, this is not the case for minor development. SuDS are the preferred means of managing surface water in new developments and if well designed can bring benefits for amenity and biodiversity as well as managing drainage and water quality. The

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Neighbourhood Plan may want to review if more detail is needed in directing design of SuDS or whether to signpost industry best practice such as published by CIRIA and Sudscape and/or existing policy and guidance published by HCC.

Libraries

The aspiration new or improved community infrastructure facilities to meet the needs arising from planned growth of the village, including the desire for a community service hub and place to socialise, learn and celebrate is supported.

HCC does not have a public library in Shenley and HCC has no plans to make any additional library provision in the village itself. Library service requirements for an increased population arising as a result of village growth will be met through the nearest town libraries in Borehamwood and Radlett. HCC would seek Section 106 contributions from new residential developments in Shenley, in order to increase capacity for service provision in those libraries.

With this in mind, it is noted that the plan calls for an improved public transport provision in the village, with high frequency bus service to Borehamwood, Radlett, Potters Bar and St Albans. A reliable and regular bus service will be important for an increasing population living in Shenley, in order to be able to easily access public library services in nearby towns without having to rely on access to a car. It is supported therefore that reliable public transport provision needs to be an integral part of the growth plan for the village.

Minerals and Waste Planning

As noted in HCC's response to the Shenley Neighbourhood Plan Area designation consultation (November 2016), regarding minerals matters, the area falls entirely within the sand and gravel belt. HCC as Minerals Planning Authority (MPA) would raise concerns with regard to unnecessary sterilisation of minerals from non-mineral development, and would support reference to 'Minerals Policy 5: Mineral Sterilisation' from the Minerals Local Plan (adopted March 2007), in order to prevent this.

The Neighbourhood Plan area includes part of 'Land at Coursers Road' which is identified as a preferred area (Preferred Area 3) for sand and gravel extraction in the Minerals Local Plan (adopted March 2007). 'Land at Coursers Road' has been worked as part of Tyttenhanger, an operational sand and gravel extraction site, which has permission until December 2032, which is also within the Neighbourhood Plan area. It would be appropriate for the Shenley Neighbourhood Development Plan to reference Tyttenhanger Quarry in the Plan as a key location for mineral extraction in Hertfordshire.

As additionally noted in HCC's previous consultation response, regarding waste matters, the Plan area includes Land at Redwell Wood Farm, Ridge which is identified as an existing safeguarded strategic site in the Waste Site Allocation document (July 2014). The proposed Neighbourhood Plan area also contains Shenley Sewage Treatment Works. These sites are safeguarded facilities under Policy 5: Safeguarding of Sites of the Waste Core Strategy and Development

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Management Policies document (adopted November 2012). It would be appropriate to see reference to these sites and their safeguarded status within the Plan.

As outlined above, the Neighbourhood Plan area contains existing waste sites and preferred mineral workings. HCC would like to continue being consulted on future consultation stages of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Rights of Way

It is requested that references to 'Footpath No 10' are changed to 'Bridleway No 10' on p.46.



General Comments

The Neighbourhood Plan should be consistent with current legislation, policy and guidance, principally the revised NPPF (2018), the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan and other related legislation such as the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC).

At this stage the Neighbourhood Plan does not provide sufficient reference to the relevant national legislation and policy. There should be reference to the following:

- Support of the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan, 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment.'
- The Local Authority's statutory obligation in respect of its Biodiversity Duty under the NERC Act 2006.
- Flood Risk and Surface Water Management (see further comments below)
- Landscape character and visual amenity (see further comments under landscape below).
- Sustainable Development, which supports opportunities to secure net environmental gains.
- There is reference to Hertsmere Borough Council Green Spaces, however there is no reference to Local Green Space designations which can be based on biodiversity richness.
- Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation, and long term implications including biodiversity.
- Protecting and enhancing biodiversity or geological sites commensurate with their status, following the guidance within (NPPF paragraph 174).
- Priority habitats or species.
- Natural capital or ecosystem services.
- Provision of measurable net gains for biodiversity.
- Ecological networks, green infrastructure corridors or stepping stones.
- Light pollution measures or controls

Yours sincerely,

Martin Wells

Growth & Infrastructure Unit
Hertfordshire County Council