

Not sure what to ask at Hertsmere's Local Plan Exhibition?

Here're a few ideas!

The Document and Consultation Process:

1. Does Hertsmere Borough Council believe that the Local Plan consultation document is user-friendly and understandable by the average resident who is not trained in planning matters?
2. The process map produced by HBC indicates that this is the only point in the process where local residents are consulted. How does HBC expect local residents to be able to give considered feedback when the plan is at such an early stage, it is not clear which sites are preferred, what will potentially be built on those sites, or what infrastructure will support any development.
3. The consultation document refers to a draft infrastructure delivery plan – however there is no indication about where this plan can be found. How can we comment without understanding the planned infrastructure?
4. There is a considerable lack of clarity in the consultation document around the sites that have been put forward and how they are labelled.
5. There is another, seemingly more recently published, document on the HBC website with different maps and different commentary in relation to sites (green belt review comments). This appears to supercede the consultation document. Why is the consultation taking place on a document that is seemingly out of date?
6. The response rates to HBCs previous consultation were below 1% of the local population. Does HBC believe that this represents a successful engagement with local residents?

Numbers of homes:

1. Page 5 of the Local Plan consultation document indicates the need to build 444 homes in Hertsmere per year, with a buffer. This would indicate a requirement of approx. 7,500 new homes across the whole of Hertsmere over the whole fifteen year period. We now understand that HBC's plan is to build 10,800 in that timeframe. Why are you building 3,300 more than the consultation document says?
2. Why is Hertsmere Borough Council (HBC) looking to build so many houses when Herts County Council is only planning infrastructure for approx. 4,500 homes across Hertsmere in the next 15 years?
3. Why have Hertsmere Borough Council revised their building numbers upwards when the government has revised their projection of housing need downwards? And why have we not been told what the new revised number for Hertsmere is?
4. The government have recently revised the levels of housing required downwards – how has Hertsmere taken this into account?
5. Will HBC have a flexible plan, releasing sites in a staged process so we don't unnecessarily over-build, in case the numbers/projections of housing need are lowered again in the coming years.
6. What incentives does Hertsmere Borough Council get from the Government for building in Hertsmere? And what incentives does Hertsmere Borough Council get if it builds above the recommended numbers?

Sites:

1. The consultation document is not clear in relation to the sites and maps: eg. areas within Shenley Parish are labelled as Borehamwood "BE" and appear in the Borehamwood section (Other Shenley areas are labelled "H")
2. How will the various development sites interact or relate to each other? Has this been considered?
3. Very little information is provided about the smaller sites, although other more recent documentation indicates that at least one of these in Shenley is going forward for second stage green belt review?
4. At last Tuesday's EBRA meeting, Harvey Cohen said that if the Redwell site + one other site in Potters Bar were built, then Hertsmere's requirement for new housing would be fulfilled. It sounds like a decision has already been made.

Homes:

1. How can HBC guarantee that we get a mix of home types that are appropriate to the local housing need? (eg. homes that are more affordable, homes for people to "downsize into", rather than luxury homes).
2. At last Tuesday's EBRA meeting in Borehamwood, Harvey Cohen said that " 35% of the new homes built in Hertsmere would be affordable homes, guaranteed". How is he able to make that guarantee?

Infrastructure:

1. How will HBC ensure we have school places, doctor's surgeries and other facilities needed to support any new homes when providing these items is out of their control? Why would HBC go ahead and build if these things are not going to be made available?
2. Traffic is already an issue in Shenley at peak times. How has traffic flow been considered in relation to the potential development sites, both in Hertsmere and those in neighbouring districts?
3. Given that Shenley has limited facilities and doesn't have a railway station, why is such a large proportion of the sites being considered by Hertsmere Borough Council in Shenley?