



SHENLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP
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Policy & Transport Team
Hertsmere Borough Council
Civic Offices
Elstree Way
Borehamwood
Herts WD6 1WA

19TH October 2017

Dear Harvey, Christine, Mark & Ann,

HERTSMERE'S NEW LOCAL PLAN: PLANNING FOR GROWTH 'ISSUES & OPTIONS CONSULTATION

On behalf of Shenley Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group we are writing to give you our response to the proposals in your Planning for Growth 'Issues & Options' Consultation which relate to Shenley.

We must tell you that the presentation we attended at your offices on Thursday 7th September left us with some major concerns. Not only are you suggesting up to 500 or more homes be built in the heart of Shenley (discussed at previous meetings but with lower housing numbers) but we were surprised by your choice for the new garden village starting with 4,000 homes. We note that the whole area shown on your map is in the larger borough ward of Shenley and it would appear that about 50% of the site is in Shenley Parish and therefore in our Neighbourhood Plan area.

We briefed our colleagues at the Shenley Neighbourhood Steering Group meeting on 12th September and it was decided that we should hold a Public meeting in Shenley Village Hall on Tuesday 10th October to tell residents more about your consultation. We felt that the brief leaflet that you planned to deliver to all households would not be sufficient to ensure that the Community

had the opportunity to understand exactly what you are suggesting and to grasp the full implications of what you are proposing. We collectively came to this view as your Drop In session at Shenley Primary School is not until Monday 13th November and the deadline for comments on your proposals is 30th November, *not a lot of time*. It was clear to us that residents needed to see in full the sections relating to Shenley and have a map showing the three areas of search, two in the Centre of Shenley and the area you suggest for the New Garden Village. Shortly after this decision was made the Parish Council decided that the meeting should be led by the Parish Council rather than the Neighbourhood Plan team and this is what happened.

Over 190 people attended the meeting last Tuesday, 70 more than attended the Neighbourhood Plan Launch on 5th April. Those present gave us clear and overwhelming feedback that they are strongly opposed to what you are suggesting. The post-it comments made at the meeting are listed at the end of this letter.

While we are happy as a Neighbourhood Planning group to deal with the housing needs of our existing community and we have commissioned Site Allocations and Housing Needs assessments by AECOM - we do not believe our housing requirements will be shown to be any more than a few hundred homes. A 4,000 home new Garden village plus a possible 500-1,000 more homes in the centre of the village are not needed for our community. At this point we do not know how many of the 1,000 homes you think Shenley should have. Actually if a 1,000 of the Garden village homes end up being in Shenley Parish then we should not have any extra development.

NEW GARDEN VILLAGE

While we supported the new village approach in theory we would be grateful if you could answer the following questions:

- 1) Why is there only one option for the new settlement?
Best practice normally expects several alternative options
- 2) What is the planning justification for placing the new village at the proposed location?
- 3) Have St Albans City District Council and Welwyn & Hatfield District Councils been consulted? The new village would be very close to Colney Heath and London Colney who we know are also concerned as to how the new settlement will impact on them. (Representatives were at the SPC meeting on 10th October)
- 4) Where will the residents of the new Garden village be employed?

- 5) What research has been undertaken about the likely impact on the existing infrastructure?

- 6) How has the figure of 9,000 homes required for Hertsmere been arrived at? Has Hertsmere queried the current housing targets bearing in mind that you will have to take large areas of the green belt? If so what was Central Government's response? If they have ignored this question how can they continue to be publically supporting the retention of the Green belt. There have been numerous articles in the National press recently stating that they still support the Green belt. While a minimum incursion into the Green belt surrounding larger settlements may be feasible, substantial settlements as suggested by you would cause several existing settlements to be coalesced. We do not understand why 'rougher' areas of land in Hertsmere are not chosen to be built on first (a point we raised at a previous meeting). There are significant areas of the Green Belt in the Borough that have now become 'Orphaned' and non-viable for Green Belt uses due to previous development. For example, Patchett's Green Riding School is currently being built on. The turnout fields and Cross-country course have now been 'orphaned' and the road access is already in place to the A41. As the land is bordered by the A41 and the M1 there is unlikely to be too much opposition to further building.

- 7) Last year's Brexit referendum result should be considered. At the time the Local Plan was examined some of the calculations would have taken into account the freedom of movement between EU member states. At this point in time we know that immigration is likely to fall and this must reduce some of the housing needs going forward. *Do we need so many homes in Hertsmere?*

Our major concerns are as follows:

- 1) The proposed site of the new Garden village is not near any railway station.

- 2) Most new residents are not likely to be local and probably will need to commute to London with the following impact on our roads:
 - i. At this location new residents would have to go to either St Albans Station by car as there is no public transport.

 - ii. or go to Radlett

 - iii. or go Borehamwood: a large number of the existing Shenley commuters use Borehamwood as it saves approximately £1,000 a year because it is a zone closer to London. £1,000 is a lot of money

and it is therefore logical to conclude that new garden village residents will also want to save money and will therefore drive through Shenley to get to Borehamwood Station. Station parking now is very full so where will new residents park?

- iv. The volume of traffic already at the Bell roundabout in peak hours makes each of the above options a very difficult journey.
- v. The traffic generated from the proposed settlement is for the above reasons likely to head towards Radlett or Borehamwood Stations doubling the existing 10,000 car movements already going through Shenley village.
- vi. If they follow the route Bell Lane/Harper Lane & Watling Street to go to Radlett they will be joined by the traffic from the proposed housing estate at the Pastoral Centre, the traffic coming from the new estate at Harperbury and the traffic generated by either the Freight forwarding Centre or the alternative development of 2,000 new homes on that site.

We are currently at gridlock because of the existing volume of traffic heading towards a narrow single track bridge (cars have to give way to large vehicles) over the railway at the Watling Street junction.

When planning something as large as a new settlement good practice would be to 'plan out' existing problems rather than increase them. The development of a new Garden Village at the site proposed would in effect turn the roads in and around Shenley into a virtually permanent state of gridlock.

It makes no sense to us and cannot be environmentally sound or good for residents' wellbeing to build a new community of 4,000 plus when

- (i) There is no railway station within walking distance.
- (ii) There is no public transport.
- (iii) There is no employment within easy access.

Even if you build the houses, create new schools, new Doctor's Surgeries, Dental practices and leisure facilities the bigger issue is where would these new residents work? In our response earlier we have said many of the new residents are likely to have to commute to London then it would clearly make sense for any new community to be close to a railway station so that they could walk to the station and it

would require a good bus service. Currently the proposed site simply has not got the required infrastructure.

With regard to the suggestion that the new Garden Village starts at Salisbury Hall and crosses the M25 to the rest of the landowners holdings it seems nonsensical to create a new village either side of the the M25 motorway. What about motorway pollution?

Comer Homes large land holding in Shenley

The suggested site of the new Garden Village also re-ignites our concerns about the long term aims of Comer Homes as the land adjoining your proposed new village belongs to them and we know they have put forward the land opposite Porters Park in answer to your 'Call for sites'. *The new village could ultimately join up with Comer Homes land and consume our existing village making us a town!*

AN ALTERNATIVE SITE

There are other areas of green fields - for example land adjacent to South Mimms Services. This green field area if developed would give easy access to both the M25 and the A1M together with a wider choice of railway stations e.g. the Potters Bar line to Kings Cross and the Borehamwood Thames Link line to St Pancras, the Northern Line at Barnet, the Piccadilly Line at Cockfosters and Hadley Wood Great Northern to Moorgate or Welwyn Garden City.

Have any other options like this been considered and if so why have they been rejected?

1,000 HOMES IN SHENLEY & ELSTREE

With regard to the two specific sites you have suggested for development in the main part of the village.

1. Pursley Farm Field

We would not support further development of existing homes onto that land for the following reasons

- a. **The land is actively farmed** by the Hunter family and any development there would place housing adjacent to the farmyard and the concern is that new residents would complain about the noise e.g. the grain dryer working 24 hours and interrupting their sleep. We have noted in other areas where housing has been

developed in the same situation that noise complaints have prompted local councils to effectively shut down farms. Farming is an important feature of our rural village and therefore we would not support further development near the Bonsai development for that reason. We hope that the Hunters will not lose their home.

- b. **Rights of way.** This area has numerous Rights of Way across the land and being on the edge of the village many residents use them. Because the land is so close to the heart of the village and is so easy to use it plays an important community role. The area is also well used by the wider community. It is part of one of the round Shenley routes starting and ending at the Tea rooms in Shenley Park.

- c. **The Rural Character of village would be adversely affected.** At the moment whichever way you come into Shenley: from Well end into London Road/Green Street & Wood Hall Lane/Radlett Lane and coming up from the M25, the beauty of our rural approaches is due to the lovely open rural landscape. Development of Pursley Farm fields as indicated would materially affect the rural character of the village.

2. Top of Radlett Lane

We would support limited development with a mix of housing as identified through our emerging Neighbourhood Plan because we recognise that development in that area would link the Porters Park development to the older part of the village and give us a more balanced village. We would not support development below the existing Spinney bridleway for the same reason as we cannot support development on Pursley Farm fields - for the infrastructure traffic reasons relating to the capacity of Radlett Lane mentioned in more detail below.

Employment in Shenley

There is virtually no employment in the Shenley area as most of the land is arable and actively farmed. There are some businesses which have offices in the village but most of the employees are not local and as there is virtually no public transport they have to drive into the village.

Our Green Belt

Shenley is known for its open spaces and the current Local Plan confirms that there should be no building in the Green Belt. Central Government policy highlights the need to ensure the health and wellbeing of every

community. At the moment our Green belt is well used not only by the local community but by the wider community. We can contribute to the wider needs of the community by continuing to have the large areas of *quality* green belt for people to walk and pursue other outdoor hobbies like horse riding, bike riding, flying micro light aircraft etc. Development of a Local Plan and our Neighbourhood plan is all about land use, and the retention of rural areas that allow residents across the borough to easily access the Green Belt, improving their health and wellbeing is just as valuable as meeting housing numbers, especially when that is more than local need.

When the hospital site was put forward for re-development as a 'Garden Village' the end result was a very dense urban development! Steering Group members who were involved at the time remember attending meetings with Planners (this included site meetings) highlighting potential traffic issues but they were ignored in so far it was assumed a new development would produce similar traffic to that produced by the existing hospital. Of course that assumption was incorrect as most employees at the Hospital lived on site or in the village! As well as low traffic and employment opportunities the other benefits the Hospital provided Shenley residents with included a mini A&E and Doctors surgery, a Social Club, Cricket Club, Community Hall and other facilities like the swimming pool. Shenley ended up with a big urban development, lots more traffic, worse infrastructure and far fewer facilities. The wellbeing in the village was arguably much higher then than it is today.

It was firmly pointed out in the late '80s, when redevelopment of the Hospital Site was first suggested, that the roads surrounding the village were narrow and twisty rural lanes.

The road from Shenley to Radlett (Radlett Lane) is particularly busy. If you meet a bus or other larger vehicle on any of the bends you have to stop and give way to them as it is not possible to pass safely. At peak times currently there is queuing from between the Shenley Cricket Club exit to the Porters Park Golf Club entrance and it takes a *long time* to get to the junction in Radlett. *There is no possibility of improving this route.* If it had it been possible it would have been done when Porters Park was built.

So, we can say with confidence that any proposed development other than the natural development of the Village would make this route even more of a problem than it is now and burden our community with unacceptable congestion.

The route from the existing roundabout Shenleybury/Bell Lane/Harper Lane and Napsbury Lane causes severe congestion owing to the high volume of traffic coming off the M25 at Junction 22 and coming through Shenley to Well End and the A1. Shenley to Borehamwood via Green Street also has a high volume of traffic from residents who work in Borehamwood and those living further afield who get to Borehamwood via Shenley. It is undeniable that Shenley is used as a 'rat run'.

As you know we are creating a Neighbourhood Plan and our vision for the future will include how we see the village expanding not just in the next 15 years but 30 to 40 years into the future to ensure future proofing. I hope you will agree that it is the community itself that knows best what it needs and how this can be achieved. Planners do not live in the area and therefore have no first-hand knowledge of the existing problems. As you are aware that the Neighbourhood Plan process dictates that there is a duty for both of us to co-operate. We are meant to work together. At the moment it feels more like you are imposing the new settlement on us rather than us being equal partners. We have highlighted in this letter issues of concern not because we are being 'nimby' but because they are facts and you have a duty to listen to us.

Attached are the comments made by Residents at the meeting at the Village Hall on 10th October.

We must also let you know that we have had numerous comments from residents saying that your online portal is not user friendly. It is likely that you will get a considerable number of written responses which are not in your prescribed format.

We would like to meet with you as soon as possible to discuss the points in this letter and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Nicky Beaton and Rosemary Gilligan
(Chair)
SHENLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP

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SPC MEETING AT VILLAGE HALL ON 10TH OCT. 2017 - POST-IT COMMENTS

Radlett Lane/Shenley Hill are not fit to take ANY more traffic.

Protect the Green Belt!! Preserve Village Life.

Any development must have supporting infrastructure including new roads.

TRAFFIC, TRAFFIC, TRAFFIC !!!

Traffic jams on local roads. Pollution!

Please don't turn our village into a town. And if there is new traffic how will I get to school on time?

If the Parish Council appear unable to change the name of Novita back to The Black Lion what hope do we have with this Bigger Issue?

Just say no! The pollution, traffic and strain on infrastructure alone makes further development untenable.

Aging population will need vehicles not bikes!

N.B. Building of 200+ (actually 300+) new homes already agreed just down the road at Harperbury Hospital site. Huge impact on village from this.

Where will the children go to school

No to losing our Green Belt.

Why is this end of Hertfordshire getting the village also what about while they build? The affect it will have!

Don't destroy our countryside and environment.

Moved from town, will force me to move again for clean air.

Stop lorries through Shenley – they aren't allowed anyway, so enforce this law.

No building on Green Belt.

There is already too much pressure on the Doctors.

Not enough school places already especially Second.

Protect the Green Belt and Shenley village. No more traffic!!

Roads already over capacity during rush hour.

No to development on Pursley Farm fields.

Would these homes be for local people?

Bums on seats at every meeting!! Save the Green belt. It will never be green belt again if you lose it.

We need sheltered/ over 50's housing – no more 'ticky tacky' estates.

Green belt is needed/intended to keep villages separate from surrounding conurbations. Hands off!

No to losing our Green belt.

Progress is good but PLEASE don't turn our village into a town!

Not enough Secondary School places at the moment. Kids will be stuck in traffic for hours trying to get to school miles away.

Eventually one town will merge with another. What about the countryside – What about nature – Build elsewhere NOT here.