



Consultation ends Tuesday 17 February

Message from the Leader of the Council



One of the biggest things the Council will be working on this year is the Local Development Plan and I urge you to get involved and have your say in the two consultations you can read about in this newsletter. I cannot stress enough that these are consultations and not a final plan. No decisions have been made. The sites set out in the document are potential development sites that were suggested in the past by developers, landowners and residents. Not all the sites are needed to meet the nationally set housing requirements for the Borough.

It is vital we get views from people in the Borough on where you would like to see development and just as importantly – sites that you do *NOT* want developed. It is essential we go through the proper planning law process before any sites are considered suitable or unsuitable for development. By following the legal process we protect our Borough in the future from unplanned development. We have to have a Plan in place to ensure that we are not left vulnerable to predatory planning applications.

I am very much aware of how precious the Green Belt in and around Brentwood is to local people. I too regard our Green Belt and open spaces as one of our greatest assets and so will do all I can to protect it for future generations.

I hope the frequently asked questions and answers within this newsletter will help inform you of the issues and reasons why it is so important to have your say. If you have not already done so please send us your comments.

Best Wishes

Councillor Barry Aspinell, Leader of the Council

Current Consultations

Two consultations are currently underway. The first is the Brentwood Borough Strategic Growth Options consultation. In addition, we are working with Basildon Borough Council on the Dunton Garden Suburb consultation.

How long have I got to respond?

We would encourage anyone who has not yet responded to take a few moments to do so. The Strategic Growth Options consultation ends on Tuesday 17 February. The Dunton Garden Suburb consultation ends on Monday 16 March. All comments must be received by these deadlines. Responding online is the quickest way to comment. Alternatively, you can complete a comment form, available from the Town Hall, local libraries, or downloaded from our website and return this to us. Please see www.brentwood.gov.uk/localplan for more information.

Strategic Growth Options Frequently Asked Questions

Listed below are the most frequently asked questions received during the consultations to date and a brief response to some of the main issues. Additional questions and further detail can be found at the frequently asked questions section of our website www.brentwood.gov.uk/localplan

What is the Local Plan?

The Local Plan will be used to help shape the direction of future change within the Borough. Among other things, the Plan influences where new homes, jobs, infrastructure, local facilities and green space will be provided. It will set a strategy for how the needs of the Borough can be met, while ensuring that our environment and local character are protected and enhanced.

Why should I comment? How will my views be taken into account?

Once the Plan is officially in place, development proposals over the next 15 years will need to follow the Plan's policies. The Plan will help shape the design and location of future development, among other things. It is therefore vital that your views are heard so that the Plan can be informed by local aspirations.

At the end of the consultation the Council will analyse all responses and publish a report summarising these and setting out next steps. The information gathered will inform future updates of the Plan.

How many homes will be built? Why do we need so many houses?

Currently the Borough's need has been calculated to be 360 new homes a year, which is approximately 5,500 over 15 years. This figure has been set in accordance with national guidance.

How long will it be until the Plan is finally adopted?

The Plan will need to go through at least two more stages of formal consultation as well as a public examination. It is therefore hoped to be officially adopted in 2016. Once adopted the Plan will stay in place for 15 years.

Why do we need to provide so many Gypsy and Traveller pitches? Why are they near people's homes?

The Council has a duty to provide for the needs of all the Borough's residents and provide for them equally. This includes allocating new sites for Gypsy and Traveller pitches as well as houses. Locations near existing or new settlements have been proposed to minimise the impact on things such as Green Belt in the Borough, as also needs to be considered with housing site options.

How can the Council be allowed to build on Green Belt land? Can't we just build everything on brownfield land?

The Council's preferred approach has always been to build on brownfield land in existing urban areas. However, brownfield land alone does not fulfil the requirements we must meet. We need to allocate sites for 5,500 homes, but the capacity of available brownfield land in the Borough is only 2,500 homes.

As part of the Local Plan process it is possible for Councils to review Green Belt boundaries. Other Local Authorities that have failed to meet their full need have been found "unsound" at examination, which is expensive, prolongs the plan-making process and leaves the Council vulnerable to uncontrolled development. Sites in the Green Belt have been proposed in order to help meet future growth, and to ensure development occurs in a controlled way. It is important to keep in mind that the Plan is a tool to protect the environment as well as to propose development.



**Growth
Options
Consultation
ends Tuesday
17 February**

Further Questions

Has the Council already decided which sites should be developed?

Definitely not. As part of the 'Preferred Options' consultation in 2013 the Council set out its preferred sites. However, due to more sites having come forward since then, and changes to the planning system the Council are reconsidering all options. At present no sites have been decided on for inclusion in the Plan. Decisions will be made taking into consideration public views, national policy and new evidence.

Why don't we just build where nobody lives, so development doesn't affect anyone?

As part of the plan-making process the Council has to consider the social, environmental and economic sustainability of individual sites, as well as to what extent particular sites are in line with the Plan's vision and strategic objectives. Infrastructure is a key concern for us. Allowing for managed development around existing settlements will enable financial contributions from developers to provide better economies of scale. These contributions will go towards improving valuable existing community infrastructure, such as doctors surgeries and schools. This means existing communities can benefit from these improvements.

Why have I heard that Hopefield Animal Sanctuary is having to close?

The land on which Hopefield Animal Sanctuary sits has been put forward as part of a larger site by the landowner, for consideration as part of the Local Plan process. The Council is aware of the important contribution that Hopefield Animal Sanctuary makes to the local community and to Brentwood as a whole. We are committed to making sure that the Animal Sanctuary stays in the Borough and continues to prosper as an asset for the community. The Council has recently approved an application to designate the animal sanctuary as an Asset of Community Value

Why has such a large area been allocated near Herongate & Ingrave?

The Strategic Growth Options consultation does not allocate any sites. Sites set out in the consultation document have been put forward by landowners, developers and others. Not all sites will be necessary to meet the needs of the Borough. In addition not all sites will be suitable for development, as they will not be in keeping with the Council's preferred spatial strategy or local aspirations for future development. Identification of sites does not mean that sites will be allocated, or receive planning permission. This site alone could accommodate more than four times the number of homes needed in the next 15 years.

How much affordable housing will be provided and where will it go?

The Council will seek to secure levels of affordable housing in new developments in line with national policy and informed by local evidence. This is currently around 35% of dwellings in new developments. The Council will ensure that affordable housing is distributed fairly across the Borough.

Dunton Garden Suburb

For full details about this consultation please see www.brentwood.gov.uk/dunton

**Dunton
Consultation
ends Monday
16 March**

Why is Dunton being considered for such a large scale development?

At this stage of the plan-making process the Council must consider all options, including exploring opportunities with neighbouring authorities. This includes Dunton Garden Suburb, which is the name given to a potential option between West Horndon and Laindon (in Basildon Borough). This particular location has come about after we became aware of Basildon's draft Local Plan proposals as part of "Duty to Cooperate" discussions. This legally requires local planning authorities to cooperate on strategic cross boundary issues, such as housing and transport. Their Plan proposed a development of 2,300 homes and employment land up to the Brentwood-Basildon Borough boundary.

Will a Dunton Garden Suburb development just contribute to urban sprawl?

The Council values the Borough's high quality urban environment that residents enjoy. The proposals at Dunton would be in line with "Garden Suburb or City" principles, which place greater importance on maintaining green space around new communities to create a more pleasant environment.

What is a Garden Suburb?

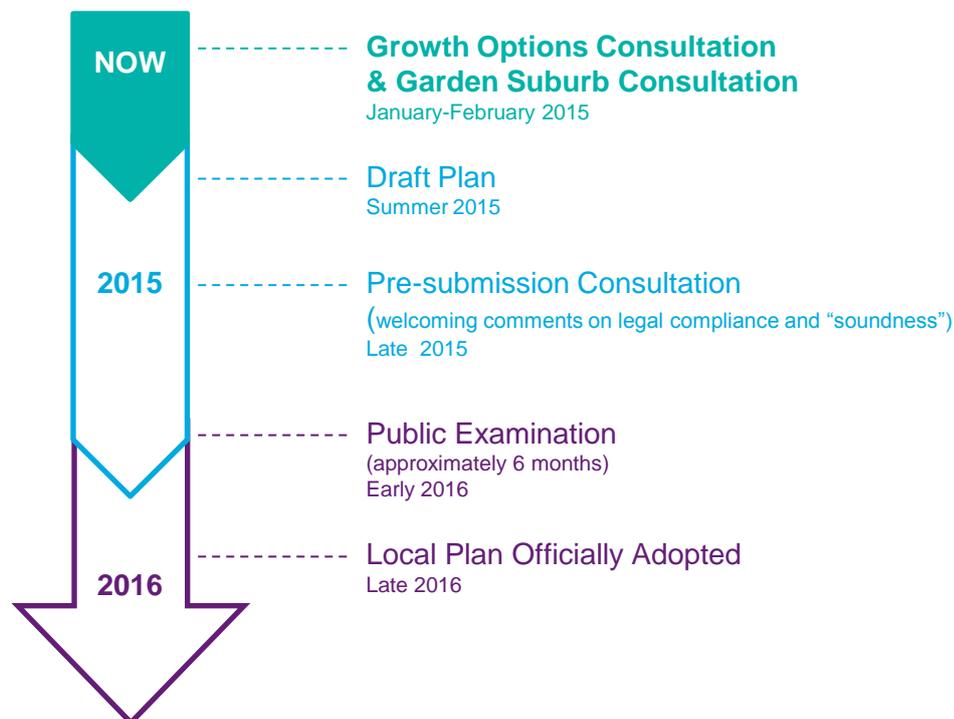
A development built on the outskirts of an existing settlement, following principles to create neighbourhoods with housing for all tenures (social, rent and private) with enhanced natural environments, local facilities and infrastructure. The concept does not just relate to the design, but is also about ensuring engagement with local communities from early stages, and aiming for long term local stewardship.

What Happens Next?

After the end of the consultation, we will begin to analyse all responses from residents. These will then be compiled into separate reports for each consultation summarising the responses, and acted on as follows:

- A revised Draft Plan will be prepared reflecting the responses to the Strategic Growth Options and previous consultations, and there will be a further opportunity to put forward your views.
- The Dunton Garden Suburb consultation will be reported back to both Brentwood and Basildon's decision making committees to determine if the proposal is to be taken any further.

The final stage will be submission to the Secretary of State for public examination.



For more information please visit the Council's website at:

www.brentwood.gov.uk/localplan or www.brentwood.gov.uk/dunton

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