

The Friends of the Forster Country



'To preserve for all time the open green space north of Stevenage known as the Forster Country'

North Hertfordshire District Council Examination of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 – 2031 Hearing Statement by The Friends of the Forster Country (FoFC)

Matter 15 Countryside and Green Belt: the policy approach to the Green Belt, Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt and Urban Open Land

FoFC Representation Policy SP16 and Site NS1

HEARING STATEMENT

Matter 15 Countryside and Green Belt: the policy approach to the Green Belt, Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt and Urban Open Land

The Plan is unsound as Policy SP16 is not consistent with Government policy.

The arguments expounded under Matter 7 apply equally to matter 15. In particular to **issues 10-4,9,14,23,28** and **issues 11- 14,19, 24,31, 40, 45, 69, 78.**

11.22 The proposal to build 900 houses on NS1 (Policy SP16) within a quarter of a mile from the Graveley village centre and immediately adjacent to the boundary of the village cricket field and the boundaries of numbers 2 and 4 High St will totally destroy the character of the village. The village consists of 168 houses only. It will also destroy the half of Forster Country within the NHDC boundary.

Site NS1 is at present Green Belt and no new areas in other parts of the district will compensate the residents of Graveley and Stevenage Old Town for the loss.

The rationale for destruction of Green Belt and its intrinsic value to the health and wellbeing of its citizens anywhere in North Hertfordshire is flawed. The forecast for population increase in North Hertfordshire found in the SHMA and its own supporting documentation is based merely on extrapolation of past growth and not on reasoned argument. Slightly over half of this growth is caused by projected inward migration which has been excessive over recent years and for which plans are in hand to increase control

Para 4.199 acknowledges StOOP but not the Hertfordshire Way, a 200-mile route round Hertfordshire, marked on all OS maps. The section acknowledges the need for a 'green route' from Stevenage north but the Plan does not provide a green route from that northern area to areas west of the A1 and railway. No-one will want to use that route (which is currently green) if they have to go through site NS1 to get past junction 8 of the A1(M).

To say Forster Country is known merely colloquially (para 4.200) is not the case as that does not take into account the fact that it is known as that internationally, in the national media and locally including local estate agents. Use of the term "colloquially" here attempts to create the impression that Forster Country is not important so belittling the significance of this literary heritage asset.

SBC includes plans to build up to the NHDC/SBC border so between them there will be an urban area without feeling part of or loyalty to either authority. It is not clear that the NHDC Green Belt Review took into account the possible loss of Green Belt south of the District Boundary. If both plans are passed, Graveley will

The intention of basing the design on a looped road with both ends joining the roads between Graveley and Stevenage (or the A1 junction 8) will cause all the traffic generated by these areas to pour onto the B197 and to A1 junction 8. This will add considerably to the congestion already suffered in the area; bad news when both are already struggling to cope. The extra traffic will make life harder for residents of Stevenage Old Town and of Graveley and people from many areas of Hertfordshire trying to reach Lister Hospital.

The policy lists several heritage assets but effectively ignores Grade 1 listed Rooks Nest House just across the boundary in Stevenage.