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 4 The housing strategy. The supply of land for housing

FoFC Representation Policy HS1: Housing - linked to Policy SP4 and Policy SP8

HEARING STATEMENT

Matter 4 The housing strategy: the supply of land for housing (Policy SP4 and SP8)
The Plan is unsound as Policy SP8 and SP4 are not consistent with government policy.

It is noted that references within the Local Plan itself to Previously Developed Land (PDL) and Brownfield sites are infrequent and in many cases purely qualitative. The Plan does include reference to approximately 9 sites which could be described as PDL but it is not clear that a thorough investigation of all such sites has taken place.

Central Government have stated that local authorities should make every effort to identify and utilise PDL before turning to green field and in particular Green Belt land.

FoFC have been unable to locate a schedule of PDL. The Plan says that 20% of the new dwellings are targeted for PDL. That is about 2,600 dwellings according to the Plan representing perhaps 90 hectares. This statement asserts that the Plan should include within its own body the main outcome of a PDL survey and resulting schedule. This in turn would inform the Plan with respect to other non PDL-land earmarked for development.

This statement asserts that the Plan does not indicate that sufficient work has been carried out in respect of identifying PDL.

Further, If the Plan is accepted people who live in the NS1 area will consider that their main town centres are Stevenage Old and New Towns as they do at present in Great Ashby. FoFC cannot find within the main Plan under SP4 mention of any central facilities such as shops, school, doctor's surgery, dentist etc within site NS1. The Plan says nothing about Stevenage Town Centre. Many houses on site NS1 will be a long way from the Stevenage Town Centre with the route to it being a single carriageway road. Despite this, residents will want to drive as there seems to be no reasonable walking route which would be too far for most anyway. There is no current cycle path from the Chancellors Road area.

It also appears that there has been little cooperation between NHDC and SBC regarding this in respect of stated provision of facilities for the NS1 site.

This makes site NS1 as envisaged within the Plan unsuitable for development.