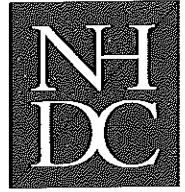


NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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26th June 2017

Dear Mr Lewis,

Re: North Herts Draft Local Plan – Recent Developments in Ickleford

Thank-you for your letter of 19 May 2017 regarding recent and potential developments in Ickleford, notably on the Ickleford Manor and Bowmans' Mill sites respectively. I note the points raised regarding the relationship between these and the sites identified in the emerging North Hertfordshire Local Plan for the period to 2031.

The Local Plan has now been submitted to the Secretary of State's planning inspectors for examination.

The submitted Plan makes clear that, firstly, the sites and numbers identified for individual settlements / parishes are not maximums. Secondly, there is still reliance upon a substantive contribution from 'windfall' development over and above the proposed housing allocations on sites which are not specifically identified. These are not distributed or allocated to any particular settlement(s). If progressed, the sites referred to above would presently fall into this category and would contribute to the overall housing requirements of the plan.

The most appropriate structure of the examination will be determined by the appointed Inspector. However, based on recent experience with nearby authorities, I anticipate it is most likely the examination will progress on a phased basis. Such an approach would normally see some of the broader issues of principle discussed first, with the merits of individual allocations in villages such as Ickleford following later.

These broader issues of principle might include such matters as:

- The Council's compliance with relevant legislation and regulations;
- The housing target identified by the plan;
- The Council's five-year housing land supply;
- The allowances for 'windfall' development;
- The strategy for dispersing some of the District's future housing needs to its larger villages; and
- The proposed review of Green Belt boundaries to meet development needs.

I do not consider it to be advantageous or advisable to contemplate a review of the proposed allocations in Ickleford or any other location until such time as the structure of the examination is confirmed and / or it reaches some initial conclusions on the matters above and / or the Council can begin to interpret a 'direction of travel' on these issues from the Inspector's line(s) of enquiry.

As you correctly suggest, the starting point of the examination is that the Council has submitted a 'sound' and appropriate Plan and will evidence this position in response to any questions posed by the Inspector. However circumstances can and do change throughout the course of examinations. Where appropriate and necessary, the Council will keep its position under review as the examination progresses or new information becomes available.

The Council has also invited the Inspector to use his statutory powers to make changes, or modifications, to the Plan if he considers this to be necessary in light of the evidence that is presented to the examination by any of the parties involved.

Notwithstanding the above, should any applications come forward on these (or any other) sites in advance of the Local Plan examination, the existing 'saved' policies of the Council's Local Plan, the draft policies of the new Plan and national planning guidance require us to have regard to a range of issues including infrastructure, design and impact upon local character and / or heritage assets prior to any planning permission(s) being granted.

I trust this clarifies the situation.

Yours sincerely,

David Scholes
Chief Executive

cc.
Ickleford Parish Council
Cllr Harry Spencer Smith
Cllr David Levett
Nigel Smith