

Draft proposed revisions to Policy SP2

Note: **Numbers** and **percentages** are provisional based upon the figures in Chapter 13 of the submitted plan (LP1) as measured against the current housing requirement (15,950 homes). These will be updated in line with any alterations to the proposed housing requirement, components of supply and / or sites following the completion of the hearing sessions.

Policy SP2: Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Distribution

Between 2011 and 2031, the plan seeks to make provision for at least 15,950 new homes.

Approximately **80%** The majority of the District's housing development and the substantial majority of new employment, retail and other development will be located within the adjusted settlement boundaries of or adjoining the following towns:

- Baldock (**3,290** homes¹);
- Hitchin (**1,650**);
- Letchworth Garden City (**2,167**);
- Royston (**1,712**);
- Stevenage (including Great Ashby)² (**1,830**); and
- Luton² (**2,100**)

Approximately **11%** of housing, along with supporting infrastructure and facilities will be delivered in five villages identified for growth:

- Barkway (**204**)
- Codicote (**364**)
- Ickleford (**209**)
- Knebworth (**663**)
- Little Wymondley (**316**)

The remaining development will be dispersed across the District as set out below.

In Category A villages, General development will also be allowed within the defined settlement boundaries of the Category A villages of:

- Ashwell;
- Barkway;
- Barley;
- Breachwood Green;
- Cockernhoe;
- Codicote;
- Graveley;
- Hexton;
- Ickleford;
- Kimpton;
- Knebworth;
- Little Wymondley;
- Lower Stondon²;
- Oaklands²;
- Offley;
- Pirton;
- Preston;
- Reed;
- Sandon;
- St Ippolyts;
- Therfield;
- Weston; and
- Whitwell.

¹ This is the total of planned, permitted and completed development for the period 2011-2031 as shown in Chapter 13 of the submitted plan. These figures are not a target and do not necessarily represent the maximum number of new homes that will be built.

² These settlements are (substantively) located outside of North Hertfordshire's administrative area, but the urban areas adjoin, or already lie partially within, the District.

Infilling development which does not extend the built core of the village will be allowed in the Category B villages of:

- Blackmore End;
- Great Wymondley;
- Hinxworth;
- Holwell;
- Kelshall;
- Lilley;
- Newnham;
- Old Knebworth;
- Rushden;
- Wallington; and
- Willian.

Only limited affordable housing and facilities for local community needs will be allowed in the Category C settlements of:

- Bygrave;
- Caldecote;
- Clothall;
- Langley;
- Nuthampstead;
- Peters Green; and
- Radwell

Development outside of these locations will be permitted where this is supported by an adopted Neighbourhood Plan

- 4.10 North Hertfordshire includes a range of settlements, including isolated rural hamlets, numerous villages, the four towns of Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City, Baldock and Royston, and large parts of the Great Ashby estate on the edge of Stevenage.
- 4.11 The Council wishes to focus the majority of new development on the towns (including urban extensions to existing towns) in order to make maximum use of existing facilities, social networks and infrastructure, and maximise opportunities to deliver new infrastructure. However, it is important to allow growth of the villages in order to allow those communities to continue to function.
- 4.12 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) acknowledges sometimes development in one village may support services in other nearby villages. Although some communities may lack a full range of facilities themselves, they should not be barred from further development. In many of the District's rural areas the average number of people per household is falling. Some of the villages have seen very little growth in recent years and their populations have actually fallen. Our evidence gives further consideration to these issues and explains how the settlement hierarchy has been developed³. For those areas within the Green Belt, we have additionally considered how villages contribute to openness⁴.
- 4.13 Five villages have been identified that can support higher levels of growth:**
- **Knebworth and Codicote are the two largest villages within North Hertfordshire and support a range of services, including a station at Knebworth;**

³ Housing and Green Belt Background Paper (NHDC, 2016)

⁴ Green Belt Review (NHDC, 2016). Paragraph 86 of the NPPF explains how planning authorities should consider villages within the Green Belt when setting boundaries.

- **Ickleford and Little Wymondley provide opportunities to accommodate further residential development in close proximity to neighbouring towns along with sustainable transport connections; and**
 - **Barkway as a focus for development in the rural east of the District.**
- 4.14 Category A villages, normally those containing primary schools, all have defined boundaries within which development will be allowed and sites have been allocated to meet the District's overall housing ~~total~~**requirement**. Category A villages have defined settlement boundaries and are excluded from the policy designation (either Green Belt or Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt – see Policy SP5) which affects the surrounding countryside.
- 4.15 Category B villages are those with a lower level of facilities such as village halls and public houses. Category B villages will be allowed to accommodate limited infill development that does not expand the built core of the village into the surrounding countryside.
- 4.16 Blackmore End has been excluded from the Green Belt because of its limited contribution to the openness and purposes of the Green Belt. For the remaining Category B villages, this Plan does not define a settlement boundary or the extent of the built core. The Council believes it should be possible to assess on a case-by-case basis whether a site is in the built core. However, that may be something that affected communities wish to explore through neighbourhood plans.
- 4.17 The Category C settlements are
- those which give their names to a parish that does not contain any category A or B villages; and / or
 - those with a modest level of facilities but which make an important contribution to the open character of the Green Belt.
- 4.18 Within Category C settlements, a more restrictive approach will be taken. We will support limited affordable housing and schemes for community facilities which meet proven needs from that parish in line with the detailed policies of this Plan.
- 4.19 Our Sustainability Appraisal says that our policy will have a range of positive effects in seeking to focus new development within or adjoining existing settlements. There may be some potential negative impacts in terms of interaction with exiting residential areas and environmental aspects due to development being on greenfield sites. However these impacts can be mitigated and addressed through design and layout considerations and other policies in this Plan.

Following the reframing of Policy SP2, it is considered that consequential amendments should be made to Policy SP8(c)(iii) and the supporting text at Paragraph 4.95 for consistency and effectiveness

Policy SP8: Housing

Over the period 2011-2031, housing growth will be supported across the District. We will:

- a. ...
- b. ...
- c. Deliver these homes through the sites and allowances identified in this Plan that will support approximately⁵:
 - i. ...
 - ii. ...
 - iii. **4,860** homes through local housing allocations that will provide homes on:
 - **Further sites within the adjusted settlement boundaries of the towns;**
 - **Land within the adjusted settlement boundaries of the five villages identified for growth; and**
 - **Sites identified within the defined settlement boundaries of the Category A villages**

This includes the use of newly identified sites and land within pre-existing settlement limits, **non-strategic sites released from the Green Belt as part of a comprehensive, District wide review; and **other** land identified following a review of other relevant boundaries or designations.**

...

...

4.95 The remainder of new homes will be delivered through a range of local housing allocations set out in the detailed policies of this Plan:

- ~~More than 850 further homes are identified within pre-existing settlement boundaries and have influenced our target to build 20% of new homes on previously developed land;~~
- ~~As part of our comprehensive review of the Green Belt, a number of additional villages have been 'inset' with boundaries drawn to release additional land for development. These locations will contribute around 2,600 homes to our target whilst also ensuring the long-term sustainability of these settlements.~~
- **Sites for a further 2,900 homes, in addition to the strategic sites, are identified within the adjusted settlement boundaries of the towns. This**

⁵ These requirements include a small buffer of approximately 7% over and above the targets for North Hertfordshire's housing needs identified in criterion (a) to ensure sufficient flexibility. See Monitoring and Delivery chapter for further information.

includes a A series of **non-strategic** developments around the edge of Royston **that** will contribute almost **1,000** further homes; ~~while~~

- **Sites for nearly 1,600 homes are identified at the five village locations identified for growth by Policy SP2; while**
- A review of ~~the~~ settlement boundaries ~~in the Rural Areas Beyond the Green Belt~~ **of Category A villages** allows for approximately **400** homes.