

Berkhamsted Residents' Action Group

**Statements
to the
Independent Examination
into
Dacorum Borough Council
Core Strategy**

18 September 2012

Issue 4: Design and Using Resources Efficiently

BRAG refers to the evidence in our earlier response to the Core Strategy, in particular paragraph 18.34.

We believe that the Core Strategy is unsound in relation to the future supply of water to the Borough. Dacorum's water supply is from aquifers. There are no direct out of area water supply facilities. It is the Council's aim to improve the area's chalk streams and improve and protect associated wildlife habitat. Development, particularly residential, that has taken place in recent years has already had an impact on the principal chalk streams, the Gade running north south through Hemel Hempstead and the Bulborne running north west south east through Berkhamsted. There are water extract pumping stations close to both of these. Earlier this year the Bulborne was dry, not for the first time, and the Grand Union Canal which also relies on spring fed water was at very low levels and a stretch was closed. This area was the last to have the 2012 hose pipe ban lifted.

No provision is made for improving water resources to meet the increase in demand from the planned growth in housing or any additional unplanned growth, nor address the increased stress on existing watercourses, let alone meet the Council's aims.

Developers' answers to this issue appears to be twofold; reliance on the water supplier to meet demand and increasing the efficiency of new housing in relation to water use. Efficiency will limit incremental demand, it will not remove it.

To address this, a limit should be placed on new residential development in the Borough over the plan period. As a start, any proposed or suggested development on Green Belt should be removed from the Core Strategy. (See Issue 6 for additional arguments on Berkhamsted housing targets.)

The Core Strategy fails the soundness test in that the development and infrastructure requirements have not been objectively assessed in respect of water management; deliverability and thus effectiveness over the Plan period must be in doubt and in the circumstances it is difficult to see how the planned growth meets the definition of sustainable development.