

Dacorum Borough Council Core Strategy Examination: October 2012

Statement from CPRE Hertfordshire (Representor Id: 498429)

Issue 10: Hemel Hempstead, Question 10.3

1. I, Michael Nidd, represent CPRE Hertfordshire.
2. This statement complements our original representations on the Core Strategy Pre-submission, which are still relevant except where updated by this statement and seeks to address the Inspector's relevant questions as set out in his guidance note.

10.3 Are the local allocations justified and are the principles for their development sound?

3. The short answer to this question is 'No', for the reasons set out in the following paragraphs, in addition to our representations and statements on Green Belt and Housing.
4. LA1 is a site which, at one recent stage, Dacorum itself did not wish to see developed. Its Green Belt status, too, is to check the further growth of a large built-up area (Grovehill), to prevent the merging of neighbouring communities of very dissimilar visual characteristics and to preserve the special character of the Piccotts End Conservation Area.
5. Development here would detract substantially from the visual amenity and to the quality of views across the Gade Valley. It is noteworthy that the roof structures of the existing houses in Grovehill, towards the top of the slope, are mono-pitch, low-rise so as to present the smallest possible intrusion into the views.
6. LA2 is a steeply-sloping, small area which currently (just) achieves a separation between new-build and the Old Town Conservation Area. Development would deny most of the principal objectives of a Green Belt: checking the further growth of a large built-up area, preventing the merging of neighbouring communities, preserving the special character of an area. It would also present problems over accelerated surface water run-off through a reduction in absorbent surfaces on this hillside.

7. LA3 represents a very large settlement which would also negate the Green Belt objectives of checking the further growth of a large built-up area, preventing the merging of neighbouring communities and preserving the special character of an area: in this case putting two more of Hertfordshire's "ends" in peril: the proposed development would sprawl towards both of the communities of Bourne End and Potten End. The site is also a long way from the town centre.

Summary

8. We consider that the Local Allocations make the Core Strategy unsound because they are not justified: the "exceptional circumstances" to justify their inclusion have not been adduced; and they are also contrary to national policy as expressed in the National Planning Policy Framework which re-affirms Government commitment to protection of the Green Belt.
9. In order to make the Core Strategy sound we seek the removal of all references to the three Local Allocations from the text, with appropriate textual amendments.