

Core Strategy Examination

Berkhamsted Town Council responses to questions.

Issue 11, Berkhamsted

Q 11.1. Is the policy for growth and change in this area appropriate and justified, including in relation to national guidance and local needs, and in terms of economic, social and environmental impact?

Berkhamsted Town Council believes that the policy for growth in the town is not justified for the reasons given in response to Q 6.1. We agree that all reasonable alternative sites have been assessed but we do not accept that it is necessary to release any Green Belt land because the assessed housing demand is not estimated for Berkhamsted in the same way as it has been estimated for other market towns in the Borough. If it were then no Green Belt releases would be required in the town.

Q 11.2. Is the proposal SS1 properly justified, particularly in terms of sustainability?

Again since the Town Council believes that the required housing demand assessment for the Town should be 750 houses and not the 1180 specified in the Core Strategy, we do not accept that it is necessary to increase the allocation of housing to this site above the figure that is currently provided for (100). This site is also not sustainable in that it is on the edge of town and on the top of a valley sloop and will, therefore, create a demand for increased car usage for trips to the town centre.

Q 11.3 Have the consequences of development on local infrastructure (including highways, car parking, schools and health services) been satisfactorily addressed?

Berkhamsted Town Council maintains that the infrastructure issues have not been satisfactorily assessed, particularly with regard to car parking and schools. In the case of car parking the Town Council is in the process of consulting on the introduction of controlled parking schemes as means of alleviating the pressure on parking on streets in the town. Marks and Spencer have recently been granted planning permission for a new food store in the town but with a parking provision well below the recommended minima for the Accessibility Zone.

The Core Strategy admits the need for a new school in the town during the plan period. However the allocated sites (one to the north west of the town and one to the south east) are both in the Green Belt. This indicates that the need to remove land from Green Belt designation over the plan period is greater than indicated by the housing allocations alone.

Q 11.6. Is local allocation LA4 (Shootersway, Berkhamsted) properly justified?

Berkhamsted Town Council believes that the policy for growth in the town is not justified for the reasons given in response to Q 6.1. We agree that if Green Belt releases were needed this site has been properly assessed and is reasonable, however, we do not accept that it is necessary to release any Green Belt land for housing because the assessed housing demand estimated for Berkhamsted is too high and not consistent with assessments in other market towns in the Borough. If it had been assessed in a consistent way then no Green Belt releases would be required in the town for housing.