



Draft Local Plan Proposed Submission Consultation 2016

Guidance note for respondents

The Local Plan and its supporting documents are being published in order for representations to be made prior to its submission for examination. Once the Council has decided to submit its Local Plan an independent Inspector, appointed by the Planning Inspectorate, will decide whether the Local Plan can be adopted. Any representations made in response to this consultation would be forwarded to the Inspector for their consideration as part of any examination.

To aid the Inspector, the Planning Inspectorate ask that representations to the Local Plan (including the Policies Map) at this stage are made in a specific way and address the purposes of the local plan examination which are set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended):

1. Does the Plan comply with the legal requirements?
2. Is the Plan a sound plan for the future of North Hertfordshire?

Wherever possible, representations should address these questions (see further guidance below) but all valid representations that we receive will be considered and would be forwarded to the Inspector.

Legal Compliance

This concerns the process of preparing the Local Plan. You should consider the following before responding on its legal compliance:

- Has the programme for preparing the Local Plan followed the programme set out in the Council's Local Development Scheme?
- Has the process of preparing the Local Plan been in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement?
- Does the Local Plan meet the requirement for content and consultation set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012?
- Has the Council complied with the requirements arising from the duty to co-operate on strategic and cross-boundary issues?
- Do the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulatory Assessment accompanying the Local Plan form a suitable assessment of the sustainability of the Council's proposals, and follow the Sustainability Appraisal guidance?

Soundness

This concerns the actual content of the Local Plan. You should consider the following before responding on its soundness:

Positively prepared – the plan should be based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development;

Justified – the plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence;

Effective – the plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross boundary strategic priorities; and

Consistent with national policy – the plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Paragraph 182 of the National Planning Policy Framework

General advice when responding

The Inspector will have to deal with a large number of representations in a limited amount of time. Representations should be brief and to the point.

Representations should specifically address either **soundness** or **legal compliance**. Objections to the Local Plan should clearly explain why it is unsound or not legally compliant, and where possible set out the modifications considered necessary.

Any comments on the Policies Map should be made against the relevant policy or section of the plan.

If you wish to challenge the evidence on which the plan is based, your representation should be made against a relevant part of the plan which relies upon that evidence for its justification.

Responses on soundness should avoid generic statements such as “traffic will increase as a result of development” – if this is a concern, the representation must explain why this means the Local Plan is unsound.

If you think that the addition of a new policy or proposal would be necessary to make the Local Plan sound, you should consider whether or not the matter is already dealt with by national policy or adequately covered by existing local planning guidance, e.g supplementary planning documents. If this is the case, it is unlikely to be necessary for it to be duplicated.

The consultation is not a vote. The Inspector will give the same weight to an issue whether it appears in hundreds of responses or in just one. Where a group shares a common view on how the Local Plan or one of the supporting documents should be changed, it will assist the Inspector if the group makes only a single response. In such cases the representation should indicate how many people the group represents, and how the response has been authorised.

Submitting your response

Representations can be made:

- through the Council's website: www.north-herts.gov.uk/localplan;
- by email to local.plans@north-herts.gov.uk; or
- by post to Strategic Planning and Policy Team, PO Box 480, M33 0DE

Attachments should only be used where necessary to support the representation, e.g. plans or images. If these are submitted electronically, they should be in pdf or jpeg format and not exceed 10MB in size.

Any comments that you send us will be public documents. We cannot accept confidential or anonymous responses. Your comments and your name will be published following the consultation, but personal information will remain confidential.

The Council will not accept any representations which are considered abusive, defamatory, racist or otherwise unacceptable. Examples of other matters which might make a representation invalid include:

- References within your representation to the name, age of, or school attended by, a child; or
- Photographs in which car registration numbers or other personal information are clearly identifiable.

Requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) or the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) should not be included in representations. Due to the volume of responses we expect to receive to the Local Plan, we will not be able to identify, or respond to, any such requests contained within representations to the local plan.

Any FOI or EIR requests should be made separately here: <http://www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/council-performance-and-data/data-protection-and-freedom-information/freedom-information-2>

All representations must be received by **30th November 2016**.

Late representations will not be considered by the Inspector as part of the examination.