

RT HON SIR OLIVER HEALD QC MP

HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Response to updated matters, issues and questions NHDC Local Plan 2011-2031

I remain concerned at the overall effect of the proposed Local Plan on the North Hertfordshire part of my constituency and refer to my original submission in January 2015 to NHDC in respect of their Preferred Options Paper.

In terms of Matters 21 and 22, the assessment of housing need should take account of what we are learning from the Covid pandemic, where high density housing without open spaces has been deleterious to public health. The history of North Hertfordshire is as the home of the first Garden City and the principles of Ebenezer Howard, including the precursor of the Green Belt known as the Agricultural Belt. His vision was of a pattern of communities built in line with these principles and particularly valuing open space and food production. This has been a popular vision of our future in North Hertfordshire.

The use of Green Belt in the Plan is excessive and should be exceptional. I share the Inspector's concern that the buffer is only 13%.

I also share the concerns of Stephen McPartland MP about coalescence on the boundaries of authority areas, particularly in relation to Stevenage.

I have previously raised overdevelopment and particular sites. Now that national statistics show a need for fewer homes, the Plan should take account of this. It may result in less by way of New Homes Bonus, but the Plan should be aiming to build well and along Garden City principles.

Rt Hon Sir Oliver Heald QC MP
Member of Parliament for North East Hertfordshire

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