

## **North Herts Local Plan hearings Matter 26 – villages ‘for growth’**

We understand the Inspector finds that reclassifying Ickleford as a village ‘for growth’ does not result in a more (or less) permissive approach to windfall development, and does not allow for further growth at the 5 villages than if they were identified under the ‘category A villages’ tier.

We wish to point out a problem with Local Plan section 4.9 onwards and proposed modifications to Policy SP2 (Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Distribution). This classifies Ickleford as a village for growth and states the provisional number of houses planned for Ickleford is approximately 210 because it lies *‘in close proximity to neighbouring towns along with sustainable transport connections.’* We argue that this is not a sound assessment of Ickleford’s transport capacity. The A600 Bedford Road traffic situation is already unsustainable and, as pointed out previously in the Local Plan consultation process, bus, pedestrian and cycling options are grossly inadequate. The current developments at LS1 and elsewhere in Bedfordshire are adding to traffic problems and pollution.

This issue is linked to our submission to the Inspector under Matter 23. In allowing development at IC2 (A600 Bedford Road), the Plan would contravene Policy SP5, because it has not taken into consideration cumulative effects of development, and there is no evidence of highways mitigation being implemented. Neither is there any evidence of mitigation via walking and cycling improvements and public transport services to reduce the need to travel by car. The potential to make meaningful improvements to the already congested A600 through Ickleford appears to be minimal. There can be no justification for adding to the congestion by releasing land from the Green Belt to build additional homes on a greenfield site at IC2.

### **The Local Plan contravenes NPPF 29, 30, 34, 35, 120, 157.**

The 40+ homes planned for IC2 should be removed from the provisional targets, and Ickleford’s label as a ‘village for growth’ should be reconsidered.

In terms of building development, the provisional ‘target’ for Ickleford will soon be met via developments elsewhere in the parish, including LS1 Lower Ramerick Farm (144 new homes) and Ickleford Manor (19 new homes completed). If the planning application for brownfields development at the former Bowmans Mill site is approved, even only partially, then Ickleford will have exceeded the provisional ‘target.’

AG and JF Saunders  
17 February 2020