

Examination of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 – 2031

Inspector: Mr Simon Berkeley BA MA MRTPI
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Ms Mary Cook

Town Legal LLP

By email only

16 December 2020

Dear Ms Cook

Site BK3 - Barkway

Thank you for your letter dated 27 November.

I note your comment that the Council's change in position in relation to the above site was unexpected. I also note your point about the authority for the decision to publish ED210. However, you will appreciate that the responsibility in this respect rests with the Council, and is not a matter for my comment.

You raise a number of other points and I note them all, including those about the schooling arrangements in Barkway, when and/or if the reserve school site would be needed and your view about the appropriateness of 'downgrading' Barkway's place in the settlement hierarchy. These are matters for me to consider, and I invite you to elaborate and set out your case fully in a hearing statement in due course.

On that point, as you are aware, I am scheduling a hearing session to consider both Site BK3 and Barkway's categorisation within the settlement hierarchy. My Matters, Issues and Question ("MIQs") will be issued shortly, along with guidance notes and a hearing schedule. I intend to hold this session on Monday 1 February 2021.

For the avoidance of any doubt, it remains the case that I am examining the Local Plan as originally submitted. I will only recommend any main modifications where necessary for soundness. However, it is of course part of my role to consider any draft main modifications put forward by the Council or, indeed, anyone else. In this case, I have on the one hand main modification MM010 proposing that Barkway should fall within the villages 'for growth' tier of the hierarchy, along with MM216 and MM389 proposing to extend Site BK3 to encompass the land reserved for education. On the other hand, I have the Council's revised position set out in ED210. My MIQs will effectively invite views in relation to both scenarios, so that I can conclude which modifications, if any, are necessary for soundness. As such, my examination will explore the issues fully, as you would expect – interested parties will be able to make their points both in writing and orally at the hearing session.

I trust that this letter helps to clarify matters.

Yours sincerely

Simon Berkeley

Inspector