

Simon Berkeley  
Inspector  
North Hertfordshire local Plan

The comments that follow sets out what I was referring to during my intervention of the draft Local Plan as debated under Matter 2 on Monday

**LOCAL PLAN**  
**Amendment relating to the definition of Sustainable Development**

It is essential that the Local Plan follows the definition as set out in the NPPF as against setting out an interpretation of the definition and the three dimensions.

By interpretation of a totally different criteria and the order that they are set out provides the Local Authority with two positions

A.

To initiate refusal of planning applications mainly based on environmental grounds

B.

To encourage resistance by opponents of building new houses and to do so on environmental grounds. These strategic policies, as set out in the draft Local Plan are open to those resisting building

A Local Plan should not be allowed to make this change in the emphasis of how sustainable development should be defined since sustainable development is a core issue which says

“At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking”.

**Local Plan Definition**

[The strategic objectives change the emphasis in the definition of sustainable development]

**Strategic Objectives**

3.7 The strategic objectives provide the link between our vision for the District and the strategic policies set out in the Local Plan.

**Environmental**

ENV1

Direct development towards the most sustainable locations which seek to maintain the existing settlement pattern.

ENV2

Protect and enhance the historic character of North Hertfordshire’s towns, villages, hamlets and landscape by promoting good design that creates a distinctive sense of place.

ENV3

Protect, maintain and enhance the District’s historic and natural environment, its cultural assets and network of open spaces, urban and rural landscapes.

ENV4

Mitigate the effects of climate change by encouraging the use of sustainable construction techniques, the appropriate use of renewable energy technologies and reducing the risk of flooding.

ENV5

Reduce water consumption, increase biodiversity and protect and enhance the quality of existing environmental assets by enhancing new green spaces and networks of green space for both recreation and wildlife.

## **Economic**

ECON1

Support a vibrant, diverse and competitive local economy that provides a range of job opportunities enabling new and existing businesses to grow and thrive.

ECON2

Ensure an adequate supply of employment land, office accommodation and support facilities to meet the needs of new and existing businesses within our urban and rural areas.

ECON3

Provide for a greater mix of skilled jobs as well as providing opportunities for further education and skills training to promote investor confidence in locating to, or remaining in the District.

ECON4

Maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of our town, neighbourhood and village centres, as well as strengthening the retail roles of our town

## **Social**

SOC1

Identify locations for a range of types and tenures of homes, including affordable homes, to meet identified needs and provide adequate housing for an increasing and ageing population.

SOC2

Encourage safe and vibrant mixed communities that provide for the needs of all North Hertfordshire's residents.

SOC3

Improve access to, maintain and make provision for new facilities including community, sports, leisure, health and cultural facilities, that meet the needs of all North Hertfordshire's communities

SOC4

Enable rural communities to plan to meet their own local needs, especially through neighbourhood planning.

## **Whereas the NPPF clearly sets out the three dimensions in the order economic, social and environment**

*Whereas the Draft Local Plan sets out the three dimensions as environment, economic and social.*

It is worth repeating the NPPF definition so that Inspector Mr Simon Berkeley can see for himself how the Local Plan has potentially distorted this core strategic objective

“At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking”.

“The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The policies set out in the NPPF, taken as a whole, constitute the Government's view of what sustainable development in England means in practice for the planning system.

There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:

**an economic role** – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and

innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;

**a social role** – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and

**an environmental role** – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy”

NOTE

The word “: and”

In my interpretation both the economic and social dimensions have equal status and environment is but a subsidiary dimension in relation to the economic and social dimensions.

Wilfred Aspinall  
November 2017

[wilfredaspinall@me.com](mailto:wilfredaspinall@me.com)

Mobile - 07872953922