

## Hertsmere Local Plan: Regulation 18 Consultation

### FAQs

#### **What is the current consultation about?**

- > Hertsmere Borough Council is opening a public consultation on the early ideas for the borough's new local plan. This is known as a Regulation 18 consultation.
- > The new local plan will set out how Hertsmere can grow in a green, sustainable and equitable way over the coming years, with benefits for all those who live and work in the borough. As a key planning document, it will indicate how and where new development will come forward, from homes and employment space to health services, transport and new green space.

#### **Why is the consultation happening now?**

- > The Government is currently implementing changes to the way that local plans are produced in England.
- > To be considered under the existing system, the Council must submit the local plan for examination by 31 December 2026. To meet this deadline, the current consultation will be followed later this year by a 'Regulation 19' consultation on a full draft of the plan, where comments are typically limited to procedural matters rather than policy.
- > As such, this consultation represents the single best opportunity for interested parties to influence the shape of the emerging plan.

#### **What about the prior local plan consultation in early 2024?**

- > The council previously consulted on a draft local plan in 2024, and the feedback provided at this stage is valued. However, significant changes in circumstances have occurred since that time, including:
  - > Substantial changes to government planning policy and guidance
  - > Updated and increased housing need and housing targets
  - > The evolving economic, social and spatial context arising from a post-Covid and post-Brexit environment
- > While this context has changed, the council has carefully considered the feedback from the previous consultations, and several consistent themes raised at that time have informed the new plan.

### **Why does Hertsmere need a revised Local Plan?**

- > Every council is required to maintain an up-to-date Local Plan to guide how development takes place in its area. The Local Plan sets out where new homes, jobs and infrastructure should be located and provides the planning policies used to assess planning applications.
- > Without an up-to-date Local Plan, decisions are more likely to be made through individual planning appeals rather than through a coordinated strategy shaped by the local community. Preparing a Local Plan allows the Council to plan positively for the future, prioritise regeneration and infrastructure, and manage development pressures in a way that protects the character of the Borough and its surrounding countryside.

### **Why are the proposed housing numbers higher now than in the previous consultation?**

- > Since Hertsmere Borough Council's last Local Plan consultation in 2024, the Government's updated housing requirements mean that for many areas like Hertsmere, the number of new homes required to address local housing needs has increased. While the feedback received at this time has been taken into account, the higher housing requirements have meant that additional sites have had to be considered as having the potential to addressing some of the borough's housing need.
- > To be found legally 'sound' at examination, the emerging Local Plan will need to meet the borough's needs in full. While the council has no discretion to change the overall level of housing growth, the specific sites used to provide that growth can be assessed as part of the Local Plan process.

### **Are all of the sites in the consultation document going to be allocated?**

- > No. It is important to emphasise that none of the sites in the consultation document are finalised allocations. Rather, the document contains a long list of 'candidate' sites, which have been assessed as responding and conforming to the emerging spatial strategy for the borough. The approach to the current consultation is to invite feedback on the full list of candidate sites, before an updated list is produced later this year.
- > If all sites in the consultation document were developed and built out in the plan period, the long list of sites could potentially deliver at least 18,943 dwellings, as against the target 16,160 new homes which are required for the plan to be found sound.

### **How does the local plan envisage Hertsmere developing over the plan period?**

- > The emerging plan is underpinned by a spatial strategy and by planning policies which set out a direction of travel for Hertsmere's development over the years ahead.
- > As the borough's largest settlements, the strategy anticipates that most growth, specifically during the first five years of the plan, will be focussed on Borehamwood and Potters Bar. The emerging plan will seek the regeneration of these settlements, including through comprehensive redevelopment of their town centres. These locations have the potential to enhance existing infrastructure.

### **What about the green belt?**

- > The Green Belt plays a central role in shaping Hertsmere's spatial strategy and remains a key consideration in planning for future growth.
- > The over-arching approach of the emerging local plan is to maximise growth and regeneration opportunities within the borough's urban areas and limit the release of green belt land for development as far as possible and enhance existing infrastructure.
- > However, government policy (as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework NPPF) makes clear that green belt boundaries can be reviewed through the local plan process where exceptional circumstances are demonstrated.
- > In Hertsmere's case, the scale of housing need means that some release of green belt land is necessary to ensure those needs can be met in full. The aim is to do so in a way that has the least impact.

### **What does the new local plan mean for Borehamwood?**

- > Borehamwood is viewed as being central to the borough's growth over the plan period.
- > The local plan will support the regeneration and renewal of Borehamwood Town Centre, including redeveloping and intensifying key sites and opportunities for mixed-use development.
- > Where necessary to support Hertsmere's housing needs, carefully planned development at the edge of Borehamwood may also be considered where this represents sustainable locations and which can be delivered alongside supporting infrastructure.
- > Improvements to public realm and streets, including around Shenley Road and the railway station, will also be supported to enhance accessibility and the overall quality of the town centre environment.
- > The emerging plan envisages that a net total of up to 8,000 homes and 75,000 sq. m. of employment floorspace could be delivered in Borehamwood over the plan period up to 2041, if all of the candidate sites were allocated. Final figures are expected to be lower than this once site allocations are finalised.

### **What does the new local plan mean for Potters Bar?**

- > Potters Bar is additionally seen as being central to the borough's growth over the plan period.
- > Opportunities for growth will focus on the redevelopment and intensification of sites within the existing urban area, alongside carefully planned development opportunities on land around the town where these represent sustainable locations for growth.
- > The town's centre, including the High Street and Darkes Lane areas, will evolve over time through investment in public realm, infrastructure and mixed-use development.
- > The plan also seeks to improve connectivity and movement throughout Potters Bar, helping to create a more accessible and sustainable town, supporting a shift towards more sustainable travel patterns.
- > The emerging plan envisages that up to 5,000 homes and 217,000 sq. m. of employment floorspace could be delivered in Potters Bar over the plan period up to 2041, if all of the candidate sites were allocated. Final figures are expected to be lower than this once site allocations are finalised.

### **What does the new local plan mean for Bushey?**

- > Bushey will contribute to Hertsmere's overall housing needs, through optimising suitable sites within the existing urban area.
- > The plan seeks to strengthen Bushey's local centres, including Bushey Village and Bushey Heath will be achieved through public realm improvements, sensitive redevelopment and delivery of mixed-use development to support shops, services, community and employment activity.
- > A vision for the Bushey area is being developed, which will consider how it can accommodate an appropriate level of growth while protecting historic character, landscape setting and community identity which define the town.
- > The emerging plan envisages that a net total of up to 3,000 homes and 75,000 sq. m. of employment floorspace could be added in Bushey over the plan period up to 2041, if all of the candidate sites were allocated. Final figures are expected to be lower than this once site allocations are finalised.

### **What does the new local plan mean for Radlett?**

- > Radlett will accommodate more modest and incremental growth compared with the borough's larger settlements. Opportunities for development are expected to arise primarily through the sensitive redevelopment of previously developed land, small infill sites and the efficient use of under-utilised land within the existing urban area.
- > The plan seeks to strengthen Radlett Village Centre as the focal point for community life supporting a vibrant mix of shops, services, cultural uses and community facilities.
- > It will also seeks to protect and enhance Radlett's distinctive character, heritage and green setting, and will ensure that new development contributes positively to the village's built and natural environment.
- > This will include strengthening green infrastructure networks, protecting important views and open spaces, and ensuring that development maintains the qualities that define Radlett as a distinctive village within Hertsmere.
- > The emerging plan envisages that a net total of up to 2,900 homes could be added in Radlett over the plan period up to 2041, if all of the candidate sites were allocated. Final figures are expected to be lower than this once site allocations are finalised.

### **What does the new local plan mean for Shenley and the villages?**

- > Rural areas like Shenley and other villages in the borough are generally not seen as supporting sustainable development, and the plan generally indicates that development will rather be directed towards the larger settlements in the borough.

### **What is the role of the public events accompanying the consultation?**

- > Hertsmere Borough Council will host a series of seven public information events as a central part of the Regulation 18 consultation process. These events are being arranged to enable residents to meet the local plan team and discuss the plan.