

BARKWAY PARISH COUNCIL

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT PLAN HEARING STATEMENT

I am Dr Julia Rose Magill MBE, a Councillor with Barkway Parish Council (BPC) with a mandate to represent the Council in respect of Matters 21 and 22

MIQ: Matter 22 – the supply of land for housing

I propose to answer the following MIQ's without restating the reasons that the Parish Council has already given in evidence yesterday as to why the proposals relating to BK3 are unsound.

Responses from Barkway Parish Council to the MIQs on the supply of land for housing supply are as follows:

22.1 The overall supply of land for housing

- a) **Is reducing the overall housing requirement, and undertaking an early review of the Local Plan, the most appropriate way forward? If not, why not?**

Yes, we agree with NHDC that the primacy of the Statutory Development Plan needs to be restored to prevent opportunistic development against the current background of a 1.3 year land supply. We also agree with NHDC that the review of the plan within five years will lead to changes in the plan. This must include substitution of alternative sites because of the deletion of BK3 as an allocated site.

- b) **Is the selection of additional land for housing from previously identified sources the most appropriate way forward? If so, why?**

Not in all cases – BK3 is not sound and should not be allocated at all. The proposal to add additional land relating to the reserved school site compounds the problems with BK3 and is not sound.

- c) **Is the identification and selection of additional land for housing the most appropriate way forward? If so, why?**

New sites will be required eventually to substitute out BK3 and improve overall housing supply – but substitute sites for BK3 would not have to be identified until the review period because, as set out in Barkway's evidence on the OAN yesterday, removing BK3 can be accommodated within the planning assumptions of the current plan without materially impacting the plan's soundness in meeting its OAN.

As set out in our response to matter 26 on the Green Belt, new Green Belt sites and other sites adjacent to towns, or the creation of new towns as elsewhere in Hertfordshire are intrinsically more sustainable approaches than the development of rural villages beyond the Green Belt, such as BK3 which is an inherently unsustainable and economically damaging site.

22.2 The five year housing land supply

- c) Is the 'three-stepped approach' proposed by the Council the most appropriate method for setting the five year housing land requirement? If not, why not?

This is a pragmatic approach, given the need to have Statutory Development Plan in place as soon as possible; however, we do not agree with HNDC's paragraph 39 in its paper on housing land supply that:

"It is important to be clear that the Council is not proposing the removal of any sites from the Plan. "

BK3 can and must be removed in order for the LDP to be sound

- d) Is one of the other approaches to setting the five year housing land requirement explored in the Council's note, or another approach entirely, more appropriate? If so, why?

Barkway PC would be reluctant to see further delay in getting the Statutory Plan in place because of the opportunity that allows for undesirable, opportunistic development. As the BK3 proposal must be deleted from the LDP, we recognise, however, that if there were to be further delay to identify additional sites, this would allow more sustainable sites to be selected, particularly adjacent to existing towns where there is the transport, education, health, sewage and retail infrastructure already in place.

Even taking into account the pressures on land supply, for the reasons I have discussed, in order for the LDP to be sound, BK3 should not be allocated and should be deleted from the LDP. This would not have a material impact on the overall OAN and, under the NHDC proposals for land supply, a substitute site, or sites can be sought as part of the early review of the LDP.