

Colin Haigh, Head of Planning, WHC with copies to Grant Shapps MP and All Councillors (both Parish and Cabinet Housing Committee)

The North Mymms District Green Belt Society would like to formally object/comment to the proposed housing allocation within the Local Plan on the following grounds.

1. The target of 12,500 homes is a projected estimate over a very long period. This means 50% will be on Green Belt land. This projection is excessively high compared with our neighbouring boroughs' proposed numbers.
2. There has always been a high demand for homes in our borough because of the quality of green infrastructure, which offers the local community both recreational and visual amenities. This situation has been the same for the last 40 years. Therefore no exceptional circumstances exist to outweigh harm to Green Belt land.
3. In a recent Press Release on 6 October 2014, the Government stated that "Councils must protect our precious Green Belt land". Any housing needs must take into consideration the constraints of the Green Belt.
4. We note that a number of sites allocated in the Parish are susceptible to surface water flooding or are within or very near designated flood zones and would, therefore, not be appropriate for development.
5. There are also a number of sites selected and, if developed, would start ribbon development – all contrary to the purposes of Green Belt as stated in the NPPF (2012).
6. We would raise concerns regarding the existing infrastructure being suitable for such a large scale development.
7. We would challenge the actual figures being used as they do not seem to take account of existing developments and of recent Government initiatives, such as conversion of office buildings and student accommodation.
8. Finally we would state that with only 13% of England being Green Belt (our own borough is actually 80% Green Belt) it is not government policy to reduce this by taking chunks of it away for ever.

Regards
North Mymms District Green Belt Society
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