

BA2 & BA3:

Informed that the first few builds will be in site BA2 and BA3 (check clothall). With the additional of the 400 houses these two sites will bring, there will be additional pressure on the current schools, doctors surgery and other amenities such as the community centre, library and town centre parking. There is no mention of providing additional school/doctor services within the current plan for BA2 and BA3.

At present there is one doctors surgery servicing both the entirety of Baldock and also the surrounding villages (Ashwell, Weston, and Sandon). It is already extremely difficult to secure a same day appointment if you ring 10-15 minutes after the opening time. Making appointments in advance is usually a 2 week wait. Additional houses without additional doctor provision will cause significant stress on the current services.

In addition, the current primary school provision in Baldock consists of two faith schools (St Mary's and St John's) and 1 non-religious school (Hartsfield). Hartsfield has been oversubscribed for the last 4 years and has a catchment of approximately 900m meaning that the majority of children in Baldock have to travel to village schools (Sandon, Ashwell, and Weston) incurring traffic issues and timing issues for working parents. The proposed housing within these sites will generate another class worth of primary school children with no where to go. It is already significant problem within Baldock without the additional houses.

There is limited parking available at Baldock railway station and very few roads surrounding it which can cater for parking. To cope with the increased housing additional parking would need to be provided for. It is not clear where this parking would be placed within the town. In addition the increased traffic would put further pressure on already congested junctions such as the A505/A507 crossroads.

Parking within the town will also come under pressure as an additional 2400 households try to use the services within the town.

There is no mention of what % green space will be provided for, no mention of tree planting to improve air quality, nor mention of the provision of parks for children.

All construction traffic for the further development of Clothall Common would need to go through the town to some extent causing air quality, noise and congestion issues which have no obvious remedy.

Existing parks and green spaces in Baldock do not have parking which is not an issue given the small size of the town however is likely to cause congestion and air quality issues around existing parks and green spaces as the town, and therefore demand, expands from people who live far enough away that they have to drive to these facilities.

Changes:

- Provide additional schooling along with the new builds in site BA1 and BA2. Note: there is talk of increasing the size of Hartfield, whose size is already above the national average with a two form entry. Increasing this to a 3 class entry would result in a secondary school feel for 5/6 year olds with teachers and children unknown. I would question the appropriateness of this for such small children
- Recommend a variety of housing styles and increase the allowances of self-builds; this will reduce the monotony often associated with a housing development.
- Require each site to include a children's play park.
- Require a minimum of green space per site to ensure improved air quality, surface water drainage, and general aesthetic wellbeing. Suggest developers imitate the % green space achieved in Milton Keynes, a highly successful build with regards to green spaces. 22% figure 1.7, pg 22 in the MK planning manual, MKDC 1992.
- Every house to have a back and front garden to aid water drainage and reduce flooding risk.
- Additional railway parking
- Additional town centre parking
- Funding to be made available to extend both the library and community centre in order that they can cope with the increased demand placed upon them by these developments.
- Work in partnership with the rail companies and bus providers to ensure that services are increased as the size of the town grows rather than reduced (see Great Northern 2018 consultation). Increase the size and amenities of the station (i.e. more manned ticket office hours) in order that it can cater for the increased demand.
- Ensure houses have sufficient parking. Modern developments seem to assume one car families which is very rarely true even for a 2 bed property and causes congestion on the roads outside.
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BA1:

Adding an additional 2400 houses to Baldock will cause significant pressure on the roads within Baldock. The cross roads by the station, linking the A507 and A505, is already jammed with traffic during peak periods with long tailbacks. There is also a lot of industry traffic that moves from the Letchworth industrial estate across to the A505 via Baldock.

The crossroads cannot be widened as it is surrounded by listed buildings. The proposed road linking the A1 Baldock Services directly with the A505 does not account for the increased traffic which will be moving to and from Baldock rail station.

The majority of jobs exist south of Baldock i.e. Luton/Stevenage or the A1 taking people toward London. The biggest building site (BA1) is North East of the town implying an increased level of traffic through the town to reach these other urban centres.

It is inequitable that Baldock town is to be increased by 80% where as other Hertfordshire towns are expanding by only 10 - 20% and yet Baldock is one of the smaller towns thus less able to cope with the size of development being suggested.

Air quality will be significantly reduced within the town following increased traffic of at least 5000 cars on the roads. In addition, there is no mention of tree planting to improve the air quality issue, or % of green space planned to aid surface water drainage and improve aesthetics and well-being.

All construction traffic for the further development would need to go through the town to some extent causing air quality, noise and congestion issues which have no obvious remedy. This can only be achieved by developing the additional infrastructure (specifically the link road) first.

The housing site is on a slope. Baldock town already has issues with flooding when there is heavy rain. Building on this site will reduce or possibly even remove the natural drainage that currently exists, resulting in increased risk of flood water and damage to the town centre. Many buildings within the centre are historic and/or listed buildings. There is no mention of how the developers plan to resolve the drainage issues caused by building on this site and it is often found in recent years that housing developments rarely provide sufficient drainage given the lack of green space, lack of gardens and high density of housing.

Its my understanding that the proposed site for building is the habitat for a number of endangered species (birds and bats) which I believe should be protected through either a reduction in the size of the development to limit damage to the species or reduce the density of the housing to ensure species can co-exist with the development.

Existing parks and green spaces in Baldock do not have parking which is not an issue given the small size of the town however is likely to cause congestion and air quality issues around existing parks and green spaces as the town, and therefore demand, expands from people who live far enough away that they have to drive to these facilities.

Changes:

- Additional railway parking
- Additional town centre parking
- Fewer houses to be built within this site as Baldock road network and current community services will struggle to cope.

- Recommend a variety of housing styles and increase the allowances of self-builds; this will reduce the monotony often associated with a housing development.
- Require each site to include a children's play park.
- Require a minimum of green space per site to ensure improved air quality, surface water drainage, and general aesthetic wellbeing. Suggest developers imitate the % green space achieved in Milton Keynes, a highly successful build with regards to green spaces. 22% figure 1.7, pg 22 in the MK planning manual, MKDC 1992.
- More equitable approach to the build allocation across Hertfordshire
- Every house to have a back and front garden to aid water drainage and reduce flooding risk.
- Tree planting along every public road
- Ensure houses have sufficient parking. Modern developments seem to assume one car families which is very rarely true even for a 2 bed property and causes congestion on the roads outside.
- Reduce number of houses and / or density of houses to ensure endangered wildlife is protected
- Reduce number of houses and / or density of houses to reduce flooding risk to the town.
- Build key infrastructure in advance of allowing new building. I.e. The link road to ensure that construction traffic does not have to go through existing road network pinch points.
- An additional large green space with ample parking to be provided as part of the new development in order that Baldock has a facility which can cater for both increased demand and the need to drive to it's location.
- Funding to be made available to extend the library in order that they can cope with the increased demand placed upon them by these developments.
- Rather than build as an extension of Baldock should the Council not consider developing a town of the same size away from existing communities in order that the road network and other infrastructure can be developed from scratch and thus be suitable for the needs of the community rather than exacerbating existing infrastructure issues? This has worked successfully in a number of places, such as Milton Keynes.
- Work in partnership with the rail companies and bus providers to ensure that services are increased as the size of the town grows rather than reduced (see Great Northern 2018 consultation). Increase the size and amenities of the station (i.e. more manned ticket office hours) in order that it can cater for the increased demand.