

# NHDC Local Plan

## Consultation ends 30<sup>th</sup> November

*...What does this mean for Baldock?*

The proposal is to build 3,290 new homes in Baldock by 2031.  
Building starts with the 500 in Clothall Common and includes 2,800 on land North of Baldock

For more information, take a look at the NHDC website: [www.north-herts.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.north-herts.gov.uk/localplan)  
Information is also available at the library (ask the staff for help)  
and, during normal opening hours, at the Council Offices, Gernon Road, Letchworth SG6 3JF .

*...What can we do?*

The Independent Planning Inspector is likely to make changes to the plan. Some changes may be based on representations made during this new consultation.

The Inspector will not necessarily see your comments from the last one.

The only way that a Planning Inspector will know what we want is for us to respond to this consultation.

*...How do we do that?*

Take a look at the documentation:-

- Local Plan itself (of particular relevance to Baldock are policy SP14 (p60) and the community section (p134))
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Evidence base on which the plans are founded

Decide on the points you would like to make. There is an official document on the website to guide you and some extra notes overleaf to point you to parts of the document you may wish to comment on. Remember, you can say what you like and don't like about the plan!

Use the online software to submit your comments. The NHDC prefer online representations but will also accept emails ([localplans@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:localplans@north-herts.gov.uk)) and letters (posted to Strategic Planning and Projects Group, North Hertfordshire District Council, PO Box 480, M33 0DE).

*SRB will have their own postboxes and copies of the NHDC's downloadable form to fill in at key locations around town e.g. The Post Office in Whitehorse Street and the Community Centre. Please use these by 20th November and we will post your representations for you. For more information see our website.*

**SAVERURALBALDOCK**  
.GO.UK  

## ...Help!

SRB attended a seminar recently, held by an Inspector, who told us how to write effective representations. We were told that to be effective, representations have to challenge the Plan in terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). If the Plan does not adhere to the NPPF then its soundness is in question. The NPPF is a pretty long document but if you consider what real shortcomings the plan has, then you can look up what the NPPF says about this criterion. Explain which part of the Local Plan fails to comply, using document references (e.g. policy SP14) and area codes (e.g. BA1 is land North of Baldock known as Blackhorse Farm) wherever you can.

The NPPF soundness criteria are

- **Positively prepared** – the plan should be prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development;
- **Justified** – the plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence;
- **Effective** – the plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities; and
- **Consistent with national policy** – the plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the Framework.

## ...sounds complicated...are there any examples?

Let's take the example of the traffic, which will be of concern to many people in Baldock and beyond. NPPF section 4 is about "Promoting sustainable transport". It states that Transport Statements and Assessments should be carried out, that developments should take up opportunities to reduce the need for major transport infrastructure and that plans should take account of whether "safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people". Do you think the plan has achieved this for all areas being considered for development?

*You will find more examples on the SRB website [saveruralbaldock.co.uk](http://saveruralbaldock.co.uk)*

What effect will 3,290 houses have on the town? Can it thrive or will it choke? NPPF Chapter 2 is entitled "Ensuring the vitality of town centres". It covers aspects including requirements to "retain and enhance existing markets" and "promote competitive town centres...which reflect the individuality of the town...".

Are you concerned about the infrastructure being provided? NPPF paragraph 177 describes that "it is ... important to ensure that there is a reasonable prospect that planned infrastructure is deliverable in a timely fashion...the local planning authority must understand district wide development costs at the time Local Plans are drawn up".

## ...what about the online software?

You will need to register to use the software. Don't be afraid to start using it. Once you have registered on the system, you have access to a short guide to help you. You can login and start putting in your answers then save your draft. You can come back to it later to review or change your answers and submit it when you are ready. If you need help or get stuck you can ring the Local Plans team at the Council on 01462 474000.

Also, if using the software, you will have the opportunity to ask for updates on the plan's progress and also to ask to be invited to the Public Hearing sometime next summer.