

# Key points summary

SAY NO TO GRESLEY PARK THURSDAY, 5 OCTOBER 20175 reads

**Day 1, 3rd October. The first day sat for just 3 1/4 hours and concluded Matters 1& 2 - points 1-6 of the Inspector's questions.** Debate focused on the total housing need in East Herts. Parties offered differing 'evidence, based on their interpretation of national policy. Our opinion - a neutral day. CPRE challenged the Plan's soundness.

**Day 2 Examined Matter 2: (points 7 - 11 inc.) Development Strategy - spatial supply and distribution (Policy DPS3) 1).**

Exceptional considerations for breaching individual greenbelt locations e.g. Gresley Park, will be considered in November ... not next week. 2) CPRE suggested that EHDC had not taken account of greenbelt constraints in determining where new housing should be allocated. 3) EHDC advised that a number of brown field sites had not been put forward as these were less sustainable than their proposed 'town extensions'. 4) EHDC were challenged as to why they did not promote more housing in the larger, more sustainable villages. 5) I think it was generally accepted by East Herts that development on the fringe of their boundary i.e. East of Stevenage, East of WGC would meet that authority's housing needs, rather than those of East Herts. 6) With regard to housing delivery in the first 5 years EHDC advised that it [theoretically] can build 7,304 homes - marginally above perceived (unsubstantiated) need: Development interests thought this optimistic'; In response others suggested that building in the larger villages, with good communication / rail links would provide 'flexibility' to meet the Council's 5 year housing build target.

**Thursday 5th Oct - Day 3 examined Matter 2: (points 12 - 15 inc.) Development Strategy - housing delivery (Policy DPS3) and Matter 2: Development Strategy - Villages (Policies DPS3, DPS6, VILL1 and VILL4) 1) EOS1** It was suggested from the floor, that with Sewerage upgrades and major highway works required, the number of houses projected in the early years is 'heroic - it will not happen', it was suggested. Negotiation with 3 separate house builders in prospect will inevitably delay the start. The Inspector asked EHDC if house builders have been identified. The Council will check on that.

In response to a tabled annual build out statement, a comment was made that the first year's target of 255 homes completed is extremely ambitious. The Inspector asked how confident EHDC is in achieving that? A response will be made! (We were advised that NLP advice suggests it takes on average 3.9 years to lodge a planning application from the time the site is identified) - EHDC advised that no planning applications have been received for the major sites, including EOS1. **2) DELIVERABILITY:** Given a high reliance on developing green belt locations, building sector interests suggest that the 5 year delivery strategy would be more certain if the Council allowed further development in already developed [non-greenbelt] locations. A comment was similarly made that delivery of 600 homes at EOS1 in the first 5 years is highly unrealistic.

**3) WINDFALL SITES:** Steve Baker (CPRE) suggest that East Herts are understating the level of windfall sites by upwards of 200 dwellings each year. East Herts responded by stating it believed its numbers are fair, as it does not expect the same historic level of speculative planning applications once the Plan is in place. The Inspector asked EHDC to review its windfall projections. She asked EHDC to assess whether other sites can be brought forward during the plan period. She also advised that Masterplans should contain full, not outline planning applications to speed up the planning and build process.

**4) BUILDING ON GREENBELT:** Touching on Greenbelt issues, CPRE's Steve Baker reminded the audience that planning authorities must only look to build on greenbelt land having first demonstrated that it has exhausted all opportunities elsewhere.

**5) VILLAGE ASSUMPTIONS:** This one hour afternoon session examined the assumption that 500 dwellings would be delivered by the Villages over the Plan period. The consensus seemed to be this was overly pessimistic.

## Arrangements for next week

Part 1 of the Enquiry concludes next week. The key session will be held, currently, next Thursday (11th October) when Green Belt release - exceptional purposes and site selection process will be examined. We do not have SayNo2gp Facebook cover for that. We are grateful therefore to Bernadette Dunthorne, a leading light in the [Stop Harlow North Campaign](#) and a Parish Councillor, who will share her thoughts on the day for us. We will review next week's sessions subsequently and update this summary.