

**RESPONSE TO
DRAFT REG 18 LOCAL PLAN 2020
DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL
CONSULTATION**

27 November 2020 to 28 February 2021

My name is Elizabeth Ashley, I am 19 years old and have lived in Berkhamsted almost all of my life. I love my town so am extremely disappointed by the proposed development laid out in the draft local plan. Not only is it clear that the opinions of local people have not been taken into account, but it seems evident that there has been no thought of how the new developments will affect young people and the future of Berkhamsted.

Firstly, the destruction and development of large areas of greenbelt land is completely unacceptable. Not only will this have devastating impacts on biodiversity and local wildlife it also seems completely unnecessary. Where in the past the council have said that greenbelt areas are highly sensitive to development and their boundaries "should be adjusted only in exceptional circumstances... with the support of local people."

(letter from the Department of Communities and Local Government, June 2016) now that seems to have been forgotten in favour of property development companies rather than local people and the local environment. On top of this, building over greenbelt land will negatively affect the mental health of many Berkhamsted citizens. During the past year green spaces have become a much bigger part in everyone's lives. I know for myself and my peers after the cancellations of exams we were left feeling useless, being so close to beautiful countryside was necessary in maintaining a sense of normality and sanity that we most definitely could not have gone without. In the current mental health crisis our country is facing, it feels irresponsible of the council to even think about removing so much green space from the local community. Instead, it seems obvious to build instead on brownfield land or through conversions of already urban areas – instead of taking away our beloved countryside!

I plan on living in Berkhamsted long into the future, that's why I am so disappointed in the lack of affordable housing that the draft plan is proposing. Berkhamsted is known to be a bustling family town with people of all ages. Unaffordable housing will force out young people, changing the town's dynamic and culture. I also worry about the affect that the increased population size will

have on local infrastructure. My last year at Ashlyns school I was head girl so saw first hand the strain on our local schools, although I see new schools have been proposed it does not seem enough.

The draft local plan is also incredibly vague when it comes to discussing how Dacorum council will work with developers and stakeholders to ensure that Hertfordshire's carbon emission and climate targets are met. Local people should not have to suffer environmental degradation to their local town because of development that was unwanted in the first place!

Overall, as a young person who has grown up in Berkhamsted and plans to stay in the town long into the future I am extremely disappointed by the Draft Local plan, it lacks an awareness of the needs of local people and if it were to go ahead the environmental damage it would cause would be completely unforgivable. I hope my voice, and the opinions of other local people will be listened to and plans will be rewritten to meet the needs of the town and its citizens.

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