

Hunsdon, Eastwick & Gilston Neighbourhood Plan Group (HEGNPG) Update (Dec 2017)

Saving our Green Belt and Villages

Two very important events have taken place in the last few months:
Community Workshop – 23rd September 2017
Examination in Public – 8th November 2017

Important new event – Saturday 20th January 2018

Start time 09:30 until 1:00pm with opportunity to discuss further until 2:00pm

Both the earlier events were very well attended with more than 100 residents at the **Community Workshop** discussing the disturbing implications of the draft Concept Development Framework (CDF) prepared by the Land Owners and East Herts without any community involvement. As a community we put forward lots of good ideas for improvement despite this being a difficult process for all residents given the implications for the community. Your help in doing that was wonderful; thank you all.



The comments and ideas were collated by HEGNPG' s planning consultants Urban Silence (the NP group requested funding from East Herts District Council (EHDC) / Places for People (PfP) for vital professional support in order for the community to be able to respond fully to the CDF and so Urban Silence, although engaged by the Neighbourhood Plan group, are funded by (PfP)). HEGNPG then submitted and presented a report * and long list of ideas and comments * from the workshop to

EHDC and PfP before the Examination in Public (EiP). Interestingly the authors of the CDF – Places for People, the principle land owner – have accepted over 96% of the changes put forward by us.

More than 60 residents attended The **Examination in Public** (EiP) of the District Plan. The Gilston Area was addressed on the morning of the 8th November and a bus load of residents from Gilston, Eastwick and Hunsdon arrived early at Wallfields to join our MP, Mark Prisk and register a protest against the loss of our Green Belt and the unsustainability of the proposals for 10,000 homes.



SHN, CPRE, Historic England and the HEGNPG's consultant, Chris Bowden of Navigus, combined to respond to the inspector's questions challenging the justification for the proposed housing on the Green Belt and the deliverability of the proposals due to the absence of firm plans to provide the necessary supporting infrastructure, transport, water supply and sewerage systems. Mark Prisk also contributed to the discussion making it clear that he thought the case for 'exceptional circumstances' leading to the release of Green Belt designation had not been made by East Herts.

Next Steps

Modifications to EHDC's submitted District Plan –

It's hard to know how this will all pan out because obviously the Inspector, Christine Thorby, did not give any clues but we believe that she will next make recommendations to East Herts for policy amendments in the District Plan to meet the shortcomings she perceives. EHDC is likely to respond to her by around 15th December. The amended Local Plan will, we understand, then require a further round of public consultation, and subject to the Inspector's response, this is currently anticipated to run from mid January to late February. Having taken into consideration

the Submitted Plan, as clarified / updated by evidence provided at the Hearings, and subject to responses arising from the second round of public consultations, the Inspector looks to submit her 'Report' to EHDC by the end of April 2018. After this stage the inspector will make her full report and final recommendations to the Secretary of State for a decision. We are possibly looking at a year from now to see the final outcome. Our core hope is that the case for there being the justification for releasing green belt land will not be found, just as Independent Inspectors have determined in the past.

If EHDC's District Plan is approved –

Obviously, we would dearly love the Inspector to recommend the removal of the Gilston Area policies in their entirety but as you know the HEGNPG has been realistic and over the last year engaged with both East Herts and the potential developers to secure the best possible outcome for our communities should the Gilston Area be allocated for development, which we are aware many believe is a 'done deal' given the support Government has given to the proposal prior to and during the EiP. Key issues related to the site allocation for us are the visual and environmental impact on the landscape and villages, the financial commitment to a programme of necessary supporting infrastructure to address the current problems we all face and its delivery in a timely fashion, the layout and design quality and the interim and permanent ownership (by us as a Community) and management of the community assets (for example the Airfield Park). In addition, the measures that will be taken to mitigate the impact of any build out on our community which would be ongoing over a period of 30 years plus.

PfP intend to submit a revised Concept Development Framework (CDF) in the near future, to support the modified Plan and because of this the HEGNPG is embarking on a series of meetings, on your behalf, with East Herts and the potential developers in order to influence the revision of the CDF. East Herts have agreed the revised CDF should then be subject to a further round of consultation to secure the approval of our communities. It is absolutely vital that we influence and agree the revised CDF as this document will guide all future planning applications for the Eastwick & Gilston Area development, should EHDC's District Plan be approved. Skipping this stage and relying on formal objections to any applications (as & when submitted) is unlikely to have any impact at that late stage.

Concept Development Framework (CDF) Revision Two

Second Community Workshop

Saturday 20th January 2018

Eastwick & Gilston Village Hall

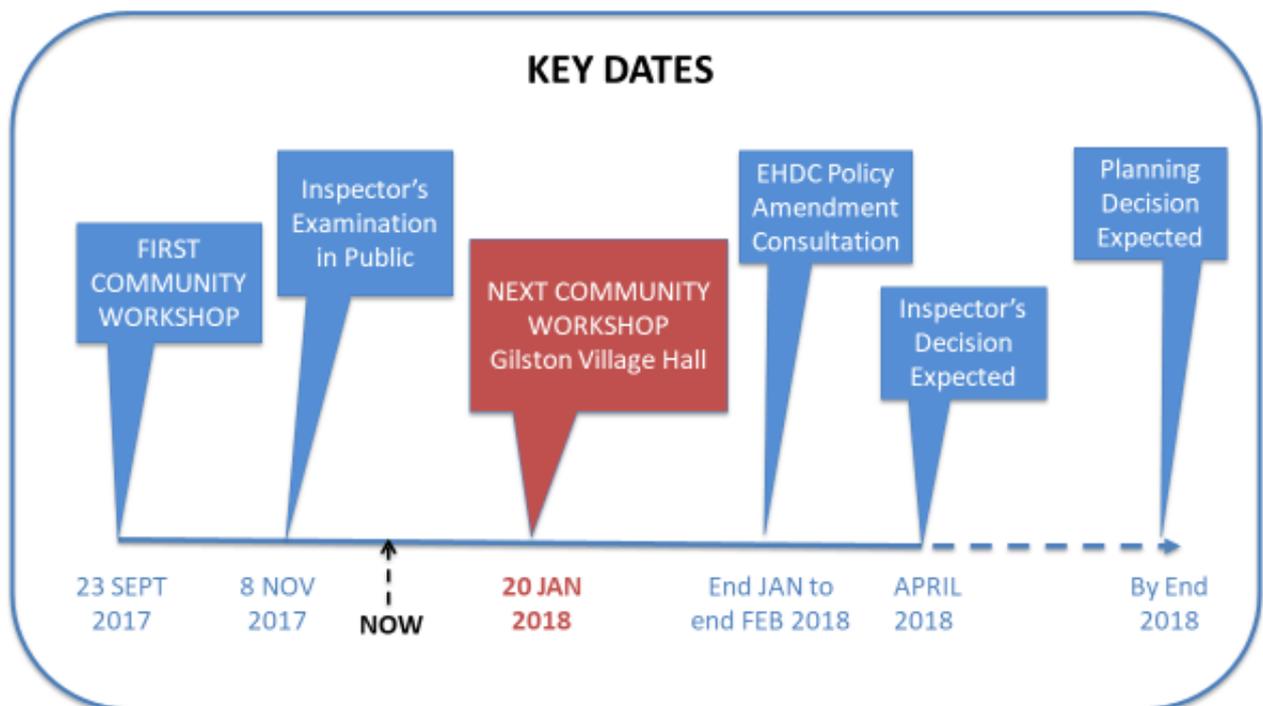
From 09:30am until 1:00pm with opportunity at the end for further discussion (until 2:00pm)

In expectation of a revised CDF being ready for further community consultation we, HEGNPG, plan to **hold a further workshop, Saturday 20th January 2018, to give you an opportunity to see how it is changing and submit further comments in advance of the formal consultation period.** This would give us the best chance to shape the development and have our voices heard.

Your participation is important to the ‘process’ to demonstrate that we have your support. For all residents and businesses in the area this proposal will have a major impact on your lives during its 30 year construction period and thereafter – now is the time to get our messages out and argued for.

YOUR GREEN BELT NEEDS YOU YOUR PARTICIPATION IS VITAL.

Many thanks to you all for your continued engagement in this process. It is essential we continue to demonstrate the community’s commitment to our Green Belt and Villages.



* All documents can be found on several websites:
www.hegnp.org.uk
Stop Harlow North – see their facebook and twitter feed
www.eastherts.gov.uk/examinationdocuments