

From: [REDACTED]
To: <planning.policy@whitehorsedc.gov.uk>
Date: 19/12/2014 11:38
Subject: Local Plan representations

Dear Policy Team,

This is the last message from me with regard to the Local Plan reps, you will be pleased to note. This is a personal comment made on my own behalf.

I wish to object to the Settlement hierarchy which is proposed as one of the Core Policies for the following reasons:

1. The hierarchy is a re-run of all the earlier, failed attempts to devise a system for regulating the supply of housing throughout the District. It concentrates new development on locations which appear to be sustainable in their own right but seems to ignore the fact that the whole District is really just a number of large housing markets, none of which is a single settlement. In essence, the linkages which help to create sustainable communities are formed by groups of settlements working together and it is damaging to try to isolate some of these and to reject them for any form of new development apart from "exception cases" because all settlements of whatever size can, and do contribute to the liveliness variety and interest of the whole area.
2. It is quite clearly the case that groups of settlements do operate together and support each other even though some of the very small settlements may not themselves contain many, or even any, services and facilities. It is possible to identify and define these groups, and indeed some of them are doing this themselves in the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans eg Uffington, Baulking and Woolstone. Without wishing to supply an exhaustive list it is possible to identify many other groups: East and West Hanney; East and West Hendred; Ardington, Lockinge and Ginge; the Letcombes and Childrey.
3. One of the problems with relying on large allocations of land for housing is the fact that only the large national housebuilders are able to develop such sites. Small local builders are squeezed out of the market. This reduces the variety and range of dwellings available and erodes local distinctiveness.
4. The very small settlements which fall below the threshold of "smaller village" are an important part of the character of the Vale, and they do contribute to, and support nearby larger settlements. The opportunities for new development in such locations is, in any event, very limited, but they will shrink and lose their identity if they are forced to rely just on the "exceptions" policy. The policy should allow for one or two dwellings in such settlements with perhaps an annual limit. Given the character of most of them, which are conservation areas it would be a straightforward matter to control any attempts to develop excessively in such locations.

I should be happy to expand on these comments should you wish me to, or to discuss this with you. I suppose that I have to say that on this issue alone I am not able to state that the Local Plan is "sound".

Yours faithfully

Terry Gashe

Ferax Planning



18A Market Place

Wantage

OX12 8AH