

Bishop's Stortford Neighbourhood Plan Group
Bishop's Stortford Town Council,
The Old Monastery
Windhill
Bishop's Stortford
CM23 2ND

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

24th March 2021 (by email)

comments@stortfordplan.org

Dear Neighbourhood Plan Group,

Review of 2015 Bishop's Stortford Neighbourhood Plan for Silverleys and Meads Wards and 2017 Bishop's Stortford Neighbourhood Plan for All Saints, Central, South and part of Thorley – Feb 2021

Introduction

CPRE Hertfordshire (CPREH) supports the production of Neighbourhood Plans (NPs) as it accords with one of its core aims for people to be more engaged with planning in the countryside, and is grateful for the opportunity to comment. CPREH notes the work of the Neighbourhood Plan Group and Town Council adding to the already substantial documentation including new chapters on the Town Centre and climate change, and additional passages on Transport and Green Infrastructure.

Strengths

CPREH welcomes treatment of the following issues:

- Comprehensive approach for a positive consultation
- Very tailored local site-specific policies
- Local green spaces of value identified in response to experience of pandemic
- Additional sections on Town Centre and Climate Change are timely and necessary
- Additional sections for green infrastructure and transport
- Support for electric vehicles, modal shift and traffic demand measures.

Suggested amendments

The following general suggestions are made with regard to potential amendments for consideration, and these are followed by specific topic areas:

- Electric vehicles are still only a small market but there is a legacy of millions of Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) vehicles; the plan could be clearer in promoting reduced car use to meet carbon emission objectives.

- Increased consideration of the post pandemic challenges to the town centre, given potential reductions in commuting to offices, increased online comparison goods shopping and related concerns.

Green Infrastructure

- Policy GIP1 is supported and the Town Council may wish to consider promoting the *Building In Nature* accreditation¹ system for new development.
- Policy GIP2 is supported and we suggest that new development close to green spaces should respect entranceways and overlook public green spaces as the spaces and approaches would benefit from passive surveillance.
- Policy GIP3 is supported and there may be a need for a proper audit of areas, routes and the actions needed. The Stort Path should promote walking and cycling up to Stansted Mountfitchet linking to the new green spaces in the north of the Bishops Stortford
- Street Trees are promoted in new developments but residents of existing streets may well wish to see enhancement by tree planting. Policy GIP3 could include comments to support residents who promote schemes locally for street trees, given the multiple benefits that follow.

Transport and town centre

- Policy TP4 promotes priority to sustainable travel and Policy TP5 supports better bus travel which are welcomed; further measures could be included either in policy or text to support public transport.
- Inclusion of sustainable travel targets and monitoring would provide a stronger focus. Reference may be made to *Decarbonising Transport* March 2020. CPRE has called for buses to be low emission and the BID could take a lead in public transport promotion and workplace parking fees to fund public transport.
- Dedicated public transport lanes or routes in the town centre would improve time - keeping and the priority and attractiveness of public transport.
- In the light of reduced office use and comparison goods shopping, it is recommended that Policy BP4 be stated more positively to support residential uses and promote low - car or car free occupation with S106 sums for sustainable transport.
- CPRE supports residential use in the town to boost its economy, vitality and lessen pressures for housing on greenfield sites. The NP suggests that flats are not being occupied and this needs further investigation as the young and elderly may prefer town centre locations.
- Policies TP9 and TP10 referring to new developments could be amended to include reference to existing streets and increased cycling use, including ebikes.

¹ See Building in Nature website at <https://www.buildingwithnature.org.uk/how-it-works>



- The use of some form of road pricing or pollution charging mechanism should be considered to address the Hockerill AQMA where traffic problems are particularly acute and have persisted since at least 2007 with pollution levels at twice the prescribed limits.

Yours faithfully,

Chris Berry
Planning Manager