

## For Consideration at Town Planning 20-01-20

### BTC Statement on Principles of Development within Berkhamsted – Local Plan January 2020

#### Preamble

1. The Berkhamsted Town Council (BTC) recognises that there are a number of sites within the town which are likely to be proposed for development as part of the current and upcoming Local Plan process.
2. Accordingly, the Council has given thought to and agreed a number of principles it would like to see adhered to and reflected in DBC policy as the specifics of the proposals are developed.
3. These principles are largely driven by the recognition that our commitment to action to address the climate emergency, must be carried through into practical measures and that we must not allow building which will further add to our town's carbon footprint or contribute to further environmental degradation.
4. They are also driven by a desire to build strong and resilient neighbourhood communities within the town and to ensure that adequate infrastructure is in place to allow for a thriving public realm and good quality of life for existing and future residents.
5. The principles outlined in this paper are necessarily high level and we recognise that they will require translation into specific standards and detail. At this time, BTC wishes to place on record its aspiration that any new development should conform to the highest current standards of environmental sustainability and should promote integrated communities.
6. The following comments relate primarily to new development as that is what is most likely to come through into the Local Plan but the principles could equally well apply to brown field development opportunities.

#### Medium to large developments (estates) – *centred on community and quality of life*

Recognising that there may be proposals for some larger scale developments (which we take to be circa 100 homes and with cumulation by builder/developer) on the outskirts of town, the Council wish to see the following principles incorporated:

1. These development should operate not just as residential areas but as discrete neighbourhoods with their own services and infrastructure.
2. Provision of a Community Hub is central - the purpose of such a provision would be to provide local shared space for meetings, social and leisure activities and rentable shared work spaces. The space would allow for the development of strong social infrastructure.

The effect will be to build community, reduce vehicle based travel and provide security through neighbourhood activity throughout the day.

3. Play areas and community open areas distributed throughout the development to allow for children to play out, potentially independently and to form close local friendships. Play areas should be free of vehicle traffic and visible from the housing they serve.
4. Diversity of housing type and tenure – developments must be mixed, to promote social cohesion and form strong communities.
5. Provision for small local businesses and social enterprises to develop, to allow residents to live and work in the same locality and to improve diversity and community.
6. Use of Zoned Development to increase local mixed employment opportunities.

## Construction and Design – *zero carbon standards and resilience built in*

All housing must be built to zero carbon standards. Although we recognise that ‘zero carbon’ will incorporate more than the measures outlined below, we nevertheless wish to draw attention specifically to the following:

1. We would prefer to see maximum density housing in some areas with the specific purpose of also maximising community spaces as referred to above and below.
2. All power and heat to be sourced from renewables and provision of renewably sourced district heating/combined heat and power.
3. Rainwater harvesting and use of grey water.
4. Technologies to maximise clean water use efficiency – with objective of achieving Waterwise standard of 100 litres per day as a minimum.
5. Biodiversity offset as a fundamental condition of development.
6. The use of trees and natural habitat to carbon offset, reduce flooding and protect against high summer temperatures.
7. The use of hedges and wildlife corridors to promote native species and provide habitat.
8. Green roofs to attract insects, butterflies etc and to improve thermal efficiency and water run-off.
9. Where parking is unavoidable, provision should be made underground or in shared home-specific facility away from the dwellings. The principle is to reduce space given over to personal parking and consolidate in one area, allowing streets for freedom of children, pedestrians and cyclists and to enhance quality of life.
10. High standard, accessible bike storage.

## Amenity/Infrastructure – *reducing emissions and improving quality of life*

1. Ensure that all new development sites are linked safely and efficiently for cyclists and pedestrians with other areas both within and outside of the new development.
2. Provide more cycle and pedestrian entry/exit points and fewer vehicle traffic entry/exits – to promote more cycle/pedestrian ‘rat runs’ which are potentially quicker than using the car

3. Local public transport provision to also support the above linkages.
4. All new developments should include car sharing services with a minimum of two cars per 100 homes and with a minimum of two cars.
5. Provision of electric vehicle charging points for private vehicles and use of EV in neighbourhood car clubs.
6. Increase medical provision in neighbourhoods, potentially using the community hub.
7. Ensure adequate provision for education, siting schools within walking distance of new development (or new development within walking distance of existing schools).
8. Communal gardens and allotments provided on all new development.
9. Maximise water efficiency and recycling potential to ensure continued good supply with least stress exerted on local sources.
10. Provision of neighbourhood food composting facilities.