

Core Strategy Examination

Berkhamsted Town Council responses to questions.

Issue 6. Providing Homes.

Q 6.1 Are the housing policies . . . supported by clear and robust evidence?

Berkhamsted Town Council believes that the figure for the level of growth of demand for dwellings in Berkhamsted is arrived at by a rather broad brush piece of guesswork that is not supported by material evidence. From the paper *Population: Background Note for the Core Strategy*, dated April 2009, (Ref. BP4) we have the following figures for the market towns in the borough:

	Tring	Kings Langley	Bovingdon	Berkhamsted
Zero net migration, CLG household size projection (2006)	4880	1698	1667	7846
Zero net migration, CLG household size projection (2031)	5819	2025	1988	9355
Change 2006-2031	938	327	321	1509
Maintain population, CLG household size projection (2006)	4800	1671	1640	7717
Maintain population, CLG household size projection (2031)	5265	1841	1799	8464
Change 2006-2031	465	170	159	747
Housing				

growth allocated in Core Strategy	480	110	130	1180
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For each of the market towns in the Borough: Tring, Kings Langley and, Bovingdon, but not for the market town of Berkhamsted, the housing growth allocated in the Core Strategy, 2006-2031, is based on the figure that would maintain the current level of population i.e. which corresponds to the growth level consistent with “**maintain population, CLG household size**”. In the case of Kings Langley and Bovingdon it is lower than that figure.

In the case of Berkhamsted, however, a different approach is taken and a significantly higher figure used, corresponding to a figure higher than the average of the two extreme growth assumptions listed in the table above. The reason why a rather different and significantly higher figure of growth is assumed for Berkhamsted in comparison with the other market towns in the Borough is not a consequence of the settlement hierarchy which would require only that strategic growth in the borough should be concentrated on Hemel Hempstead. The justification for allowing more growth in Berkhamsted is based solely on the fact that it is the second largest town in the Borough and so is able to accommodate more development. However, this would require a significant level of in-filling in suburban areas of the town, which are at present protected by the Character Area Assessments. Such infilling would destroy Berkhamsted’s distinctive character and place intolerable pressure on the town’s infrastructure. Any expansion of school provision in the town to accommodate this level of growth would require a new school to be provided in the Green Belt. Berkhamsted has other and very severe infrastructure deficits, in the form of on-street parking and road congestion, The Town Council is presently trying to address the problem of parking in the town with a consultation on the introduction of Controlled Parking Zones.

The assumptions for Berkhamsted in the Emerging Core Strategy are not well founded and should be more consistent with other market towns across the borough and should be set at 750 i.e “**maintain population, CLG household size**”, in the above table.

Q 6.3 Is the apportionment of growth between the settlements properly justified.

Berkhamsted Town Council believes that the apportionment between market towns is not properly justified for the reasons give in the answer to Q 6.1 above.