



The proposed site of Bowmans Cross garden village

Pictures: COLNEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

Garden village in Local Plan 'will merge parishes'

A proposed garden village at Junction 22 of the M25 will be within a few hundred metres of both London Colney and Colney Heath, parish councillors have warned.

The scheme has been included in Hertsmere Borough Council's Local Plan for the period up to 2035, which sets out proposed sites for development in the area.

The entire Bowmans Cross garden village site is on the Green Belt, and the current estimate is for 2,500 new homes by 2036, with a total of 6,000-8,000 within the next 30 years.

Hertsmere advises that the new proposal has much less employment on site, and it will be a dormitory village highly dependent on car use.

Colney Heath and London Colney Parish Councils both consider the scheme will create coalescence between the settlements as it could be within 350m.

Cllr Dreda Gordon said: "If this site is developed it will result in almost continuous development between Colney Heath and London Colney effectively merging the parishes to create a swathe of new housing alongside the M25 due to the ill thought-out Bowmans Cross

"It seems Hertsmere are applying dual standards when considering the Green Belt. In response to one of our questions as to the selection of site for further consideration they responded... 'In the case of urban extensions, this was limited to promoted sites which would not result in the coalescence of settlements'."

MATT ADAMS

Matt.Adams@archant.co.uk

Cllr Peter Cook said: "The proposals are to create a dormitory village highly dependent on car use. Everyone locally will have experienced the congestion during the Longabout works – Bowmans Cross will just make congestion even worse on the M25, A414 and A1(M).

"We had concerns with the previous proposals employment opportunities which were for relatively low paid warehousing and distribution personnel – now there are none."

Although Hertsmere has claimed the council has not made any decision about the garden village, councillors have been seen at public consultation events telling residents to say they are in favour of the scheme.

Cllr Cook added: "It is hard to find out exactly what they are doing as most of their planning panel meetings are held in private. From our research Hertsmere is the council to have held the greatest percentage of these across England. Operating in this opaque manner is poor for democracy.

"When a council chooses to hide its policy making process from public scrutiny by its electorate it means the residents are not informed of what is being considered."

Cllr Dr Harvey Cohen, portfolio holder for planning at Hertsmere, said: "We're currently in the process of writing a new Local Plan, which will act as a blueprint for development in Hertsmere

until 2036.

"It will set out the number of new homes and jobs that need to be created, and will give a view on where development should take place.

"While, we are considering a long list of potential sites for housing and employment, including land on the Tyttenhanger Estate, known as Bowmans Cross, no decisions have yet been made on which sites will be brought forward in our draft plan.

"As part of our investigations, we're undertaking technical studies to assess the feasibility of each site, which includes looking at transport options and sustainability considerations.

"We're also holding discussions with key stakeholders, including London Colney and Colney Heath parish councils.

"Their feedback, along with responses from three previous rounds of public consultation undertaken by us on how people would like to see growth in Hertsmere, will be used to help inform and shape the draft plan.

"Our member planning panel is a cross-party, cross-borough advisory panel which at times meets privately because of the specialised and confidential nature of some of the work being discussed.

"However, minutes of our meetings are available to view on our website.

"Members of the public will have a further chance to comment on the draft plan when it is published next year and before it is assessed by a government-appointed inspector at a public examination."

