

Core Strategy Examination

Berkhamsted Town Council responses to questions.

Issue 4. Design and using resources efficiently.

Q 4.1 Is the overall approach to design appropriate and will it result in distinctive development that will add to the character of the Borough?

In its submission to the Borough Council's draft Submission Document Berkhamsted Town Council expressed strong concerns that the presently applicable Character Area Assessments, which define and enshrine the distinctiveness of parts of Berkhamsted, should remain as a source of planning guidance as they have served the development management decisions of the town well. The Core Strategy proposes to combine these into a new SPD: an Urban Design Assessment. Berkhamsted Town Council is concerned that the Character Area Assessments would be diluted and this could lead to a deterioration of the character of these areas and loss of their distinctiveness, leading for example to significantly higher densities in the suburban areas of the town than have been allowed under current policies and Supplementary Planning Guidance. The Town Council has already witnessed pressures from developers, who wish to build in back gardens, to relax the application of these policies. The Character Area Assessments should be retained as a source of planning policy and they should not be diluted in the context of the new Urban Design Assessments. The Design Assessments should also protect the role of gardens in preserving green amenity space and the network of wildspace in the town.