



North Cray Residents Association

www.northcrayresidents.org.uk

TO: Ms Clare Loops, Strategic Planning and Growth, Bexley DATE: 8 July 2017

FROM: Mrs Jean Gammons, Secretary

Dear Ms Loop

BEXLEY GROWTH STRATEGY : PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Thank you for your invitation to our Association to comment on the above.

First, I should explain that the key elements of our Association's aims and objectives is to (a) promote and further the preservation of the local environment as a residential area (b) the protection of the Green Belt and (c) the improvement of local amenities in North Cray.

Our Association's comments on the proposals set out in this draft strategy for Bexley's growth are given below.

We welcome the statements in paras 6.4.13 and 6.4.17 that, for Sidcup, only modest housing and commercial growth is proposed, with the recognition that the main opportunities lie in a development of the area's significant cultural offer linked to the performing arts colleges; and that for Foots Cray the potential for the area to contribute to the development of an enhanced cultural offer is also significant.

We particularly welcome the statements in section 3.6, and the specific Aims and Objectives set out in para 3.6.6, which are for Bexley *“To value the natural environment to ensure that it remains an essential characteristic of the borough and an important recreational, leisure, cultural and economic resource that enhances the quality of life of residents as well as providing habitat for a range of protected species”*.

North Cray is very fortunate to have within it a large part of Bexley's Green Belt and Heritage Land, as well as several Public Footpaths, bridle paths, a wood in Cocksure Lane (Gattons Plantation owned and administered for public use by The Woodland Trust) and, at its centre, Footscray Meadows (a park with a nature reserve owned and administered by Bexley council;). All this makes a major contribution to leisure activities, particularly those of horse riders and walkers; and not only for North Cray residents but also for people throughout the borough and beyond. North Cray also has two Conservation Areas (High Beeches and The Village); and many of its trees are protected by Tree Preservation Orders and many of its buildings protected by both

Historic England Listing and Local listing. North Cray is also home to three protected species: badgers, bats and the Great Crested Newt.

Thanks to Bexley's planning department and its planning committee, our part of Bexley's Green Belt and Heritage Land has, in recent years, been largely protected from unwelcome and inappropriate development such as new housing and a private school; and its stand against this has been supported by the Planning Inspectorate.

Bexley also withdrew last year its controversial plan to allow the sale and development of highway land in North Cray, notably that along the North Cray Road – a dual carriageway which cuts our community in two; but which, thankfully, has been softened by mature trees and other plantings along much of its length under the care of Bexley council.

All this is what the people of North Cray care so much about, and we hope that none of this will be lost in any part of Bexley's future plans for growth.

Although our Association represents some 90% of the households in North Cray, it cannot express on the part of its residents anything more than what is covered by its remit as set out in its Constitution, which I have dealt with above.

However, we do recognise that it is important for the residents of North Cray to express their own views on everything that is set out in Bexley's draft Growth Strategy and, for this reason, we have urged them - both at our recent AGM and in several of our *NewsMails* - to contribute to your Public Consultation survey as individuals.

Yours sincerely

Jean Gammons MBE

COPIED TO:

James Brokenshire, MP for Sidcup and Old Bexley
Robert Lancaster, Head of Development Management, Bexley
Cllrs Don Massey and Ross Downing
Coldblow Residents Association
Bexley Civic Society