

## Govia Thameslink Railway 2018 Timetable consultation — update

GTR has launched a consultation which sets out proposed extensive changes to the timetable which will be operated by GTR in 2018. Our summary of the expected changes for Knebworth from the consultation documents are as follows, subject to any further changes from GTR:

- ◇ Knebworth is to be served by trains between Cambridge and London St Pancras (Route TL7) typically every 30 minutes, but no Peterborough trains.
- ◇ The service will provide through trains to Maidstone East / Ashford International, except for Sundays where they will end at Kings Cross.
- ◇ There are expected to be 2 additional morning peak services to London.
- ◇ All the trains will be slow stopping trains calling at Welwyn North, Welwyn Garden City, Hatfield, Potters Bar, Finsbury Park.
- ◇ There will be no more fast trains to or from London during the peak hours. Therefore, the journey time compared to those trains is expected to increase by up to half, from about 23 minutes to up to 36 minutes.
- ◇ Reduced frequency of trains outside of peak hours, including hourly on Sundays and late evenings (subject to further clarification from GTR).

Knebworth station has been identified in the NHDC Local Plan as having the highest growth of the five stations in the district over the last decade, at 71%. Knebworth is also proposed for significant housing growth (663 new homes). The station has platforms on the both fast and slow lines, in common with the major stations in the district and on the line to London.

Therefore it is important that people provide their views now to GTR on the rail service needed to support the village in the future.

The GTR consultation website is here, including a link to the online survey:

<http://www.thameslinkrailway.com/your-journey/timetable-consultation>

Or you can respond in writing to: GTR 2018 Timetable Consultation, East Side Offices, Kings Cross Station, Kings Cross, London N1C 4AP

The consultation asks specific questions about our route — you can support or oppose the changes:

*77. Do you support the proposed changes which will see Knebworth, Welwyn North, Welwyn Garden City, Hatfield and Potters Bar served by half hourly trains to and from Cambridge trains instead of hourly trains to both Cambridge and Peterborough?*

*76. Do you support the proposed frequency improvements throughout the Great Northern Metro routes?*

*27. Comments on the Thameslink Mainline Route TL7*

**Railway Consultation closes at 5pm on THURSDAY 8 DECEMBER 2016**

Please note that a Knebworth Rail Users' Forum has been set up on Facebook. This is independent of the Parish Council and can be found here for those interested:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/knebworthruf>

## NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE LOCAL PLAN 2011 – 2031

### Knebworth Parish Council invites you to a Public Meeting to be held on Wednesday 23 November 2016 in Knebworth Village Hall at 8.00pm

To discuss the North Hertfordshire Local Plan and its impact on Knebworth prior to the closure of the consultation on 30 November 2016. A planning consultant will be at the meeting to answer questions.

The North Herts Local Plan is in its final phase before it is submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. It will be subject to public examination by a Planning Inspector in 2017. The Parish Council needs your support to register your concerns about what the Local Plan will mean to Knebworth.

#### Housing

There are proposals for a minimum of 663 dwellings, an increase of 31% on the existing stock.

#### Location

Developments are concentrated on four sites:

Site KB1 Land at Deards End (200 dwellings)  
Site KB2 Land off Gypsy Lane (184 dwellings)  
Site KB3 Chas Lowe Site, London Road (14 dwellings)  
Site KB4 Land East of Knebworth (200 dwellings)

Total 663 dwellings (including infill)

#### Delivery

2016-2021 – 50 dwellings  
2022-2026 – 344 dwellings  
2027-2031 – 244 dwellings

#### Green Belt

Three of the above sites are in the Green Belt and are a threat to the openness of the landscape which surrounds the village.

#### Employment

There are no proposals for local employment expansion.

#### Transport

There are no plans to increase transport capacity in the village.

#### Schools

The Plan provides for an additional primary school on site KB2, but there are no firm plans for access to secondary schools.

#### Drainage

There are constraints in drainage infrastructure connecting to Rye Meads, near Hoddesdon.

#### Conservation Areas

Sites KB1 and KB2 are located next to Deards End Lane and Stockens Green conservation areas.

Current planning legislation encourages local people to help shape their future. This gives us a say, provided that our arguments are based on planning issues, not just opinion. To help you, we have prepared some notes on topics or issues that you can use as part of your response to the consultation. You can comment on-line at [www.north-herts.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.north-herts.gov.uk/localplan), by letter, or by email to [local.plans@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:local.plans@north-herts.gov.uk). We recommend that you comment on-line if possible.



## The Inspection Process

At the Examination, the Council will have to show that the Local Plan is legally-compliant and that is “sound” under four distinct headings. These are summarised below. Your local knowledge can help to inform.

### 1 — is the Plan Positive?

- ◇ Has it adequately engaged with local residents?
- ◇ Do you feel that your comments have been listened to, and acted upon?
- ◇ Does the Plan adequately recognise the local infrastructure issues – such as traffic, rail congestion, car parking, schooling, and health care?
- ◇ Can the proposed developments be sustained without an increase in infrastructure?
- ◇ Are these concerns adequately addressed in the Local Plan?

#### *Is the Plan Positive? Notes to help*

Following previous consultations, the housing targets for Knebworth have increased. Do they provide for local needs?

HCC Highways have not come forward with any proposals to deal with traffic problems on local roads, especially the B197.

### 2 — is the Plan Justified?

- ◇ Are there better alternatives to the proposed housing sites?
- ◇ Is the evidence for the Local Plan reasonable and fair?
- ◇ Could the Plan bring any real benefits to Knebworth?
- ◇ What do you see as the threats to implementing the Local Plan?

#### *Is the Plan Justified? Notes to help*

The Local Plan has forecasted a much higher rate of development for Knebworth than for other parts of North Hertfordshire. Is this fair?

There is no provision for the creation of local employment. Will this lead to problems of congestion on the roads and on the railway at peak periods?

Government planning policies state that any development must be sustainable (i.e. current or planning infrastructure must be able to cope). Have you had recent experiences that demonstrate lack of capacity in local infrastructure?

It is national policy to protect the Green Belt, yet the Local Plan is proposing to remove large areas to the east and west of Knebworth. By removing Green Belt, there is also the threat of coalescence between Knebworth, Stevenage, and Woolmer Green. Are there alternatives elsewhere?

### 3 — is the Local Plan Consistent with National Planning Policy?

The Parish Council has enlisted the help of a planning consultant to assess this issue. You can help our case with your local knowledge and your involvement.

### 4 — is the Plan Effective?

- ◇ Does it contribute towards the vision for the whole District?
- ◇ Will it deliver a sustainable solution for Knebworth?
- ◇ Given your local knowledge, what do think are the possible obstacles to the delivery of this Plan? What would render it ineffective (this could be lack of infrastructure capacity)?

#### *Is the Plan Effective? Notes to help*

Your local knowledge really helps here. Only local residents can appreciate the issues around infrastructure and services capacity (road and rail congestion, schooling, health, and social services). The Planning Inspector will match your local knowledge with assumption and assessments of NHDC.

You need to tell the Council about the facts around the inadequacy of the current infrastructure and your view on how future developments will render the Plan ineffective without investment.

## HOW TO DO IT: the Do's and Don'ts of Lodging an Objection

- ◇ **DO** use the on-line consultation link – it is the simplest way, and you can comment on the whole plan or any individual parts of it.
- ◇ **DO** be as specific as possible – use your local knowledge and quoted facts and evidence to support your arguments.
- ◇ **DO** encourage as many people as possible to register their objections the more community involvement there is, the more the Inspector is likely to listen.
- ◇ **DO** support the Parish Council – they are working very hard to make sure we are not swamped with development.
- ◇ **DON'T** express an opinion – it does not count. Saying something like “I think this is outrageous” will have no influence at all. Only the facts and real life experiences will influence the Inspector's views.
- ◇ **DON'T be LATE! – The date for lodging your objection is 30<sup>th</sup> November 2016.**
- ◇ **DON'T** think this is a “done deal” – it isn't. There is still much that the Council has to do to ensure that the Local Plan is sound. The more we can find substantive objections to the Plan, the more likely we can find an effective solution for Knebworth.
- ◇ **DON'T** make political points – the Inspector will not be interested.

## Who will review these objections?

This will be the Planning Inspector. Although NHDC will be collecting and collating all the representations, it will be for the Planning Inspector to review them and to decide whether they are material to judging the soundness of the Local Plan.

## What happens next?

You have until 30<sup>th</sup> November to lodge any objections. Unlike objections to planning applications, anything that is received after 11.59pm on the 30<sup>th</sup> November will not be accepted.

The Parish Council is here to help, so do keep in touch. There will be a Public Meeting in the Village Hall on 23 November 2016 starting at 8.00pm. A planning consultant will be there to answer questions.

If you need help to register and use the online consultation please contact the clerk.