



The BDRA Charter – The Four Firsts

The role of Billerica District Residents' Association (BDRA) as the only truly independent representative of Billerica residents, representing almost one half of the Billerica community, needs to adapt to a future that is likely to feature a Local Plan that even with careful monitoring will do irreparable damage to the quality of our lives and our community.

Whilst our primary aim in the immediate future is to continue the work of the Billerica Action Group over the last 5 years to fight against excessive development through the Examination in Public (EiP) of the Local Plan, we need to consider the longer term.

We need to ensure that national planning policies are upheld, such as maintaining the Green Belt as a rightful and legal constraint, ensuring any agreed development is sustainable with proper, considered infrastructure in place before building commences, and that local needs are a priority. We must also protect the environment as once it is lost it will never be replaced.

We believe these simple imperatives reflect current stated planning policy and are difficult to argue against. They are the cornerstones of successful and effective communities and ensure a high quality of life for all.

This Four Firsts Charter will shape and guide our actions through the EiP and beyond to whenever planning applications are submitted and subsequently considered by the local council. Where an application is approved we will use the Charter to strive to ensure that these core principles are delivered.

The Four Firsts;

1. **Infrastructure First** – adequate, appropriate infrastructure must be in place before development starts. This includes but is not limited to; schools, health facilities, shops, roads, public transport and parking.
2. **Local First** – new development must prioritise local needs and fully integrate with the existing local community.
3. **Affordable First**- all development must deliver the full affordable house quota first, followed by smaller houses for local first time buyers, young families and those residents wanting to downsize.
4. **Environment First** – the Green Belt and existing public green spaces must be protected, hedgerows and trees should be maintained where new development takes place, air quality should be a primary concern in any development, and new public green places should be created within developments where they do not exist today.