

## Epping Forest District Council Representations to the Draft Local Plan Consultation 2016 (Regulation 18)

Stakeholder ID 1966 Name Melissa Pepper

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Method Survey

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Date

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### Survey Response:

1. Do you agree with the overall vision that the Draft Plan sets out for Epping Forest District?

Strongly disagree

Please explain your choice in Question 1:

The Draft Local Plan is not supported by firm plans for infrastructure development, therefore I do not agree with the overall vision. The vision refers to sustainable locations for development, minimising impact on local area, protecting green belt, maximising development opportunities within existing settlements without compromising distinctiveness and attractiveness, mitigating air pollution, supporting expansion of tourism, enhancing green spaces and leisure, and ensuring development away from areas that are at risk of flooding. The land south of Brook Road that has been proposed for development meets none of these criteria - the infrastructure (in particular the horrendously congested road) is not sustainable, it is currently green belt, it is next to the M25, and often floods.

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2. Do you agree with the overall vision that the Draft Plan sets out for Epping Forest District?

Strongly disagree

Please explain your choice in Question 2:

Epping is taking on a disproportionately high level of development in comparison to other parts of the region, with the bulk of plans clustering around the south of the town - an area already struggling to cope with the volume of traffic, residents, and commuters. The plans states that housing supply exceeds requirement therefore I cannot understand why any development has been proposed for green belt. Epping Forest District Council should exhaust all possibilities of building on brownfield site, before green belt development is ever considered.

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3. Do you agree with the proposals for development around Harlow?

Disagree

Please explain your choice in Question 3:

Harlow should take on a greater proportion of development across the region. There are considerably more employment opportunities in Harlow and the surrounding area, particularly around the Stansted London Cambridge Corridor. Furthermore, many parts of Harlow are already developed minimising loss of green belt, while the infrastructure (including roads) and local services are built to cope with larger numbers of people. There is more scope for development in Harlow, particularly around the airfield. Resident respondents to the 2012 Community Choices consultation in North Weald Bassett themselves suggested that the Airfield should be used more constructively/intensively

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4. Do you agree with the proposed shopping area in...

Epping?

No

Buckhurst Hill?

No opinion

Loughton Broadway?

No opinion

Chipping Ongar?

No opinion

Loughton High Road?

No opinion

Waltham Abbey?

No opinion

Please explain your choice in Question 4:

I am keen to see investment in our local towns to help them thrive; however, we need to address the huge problems with traffic congestion and parking in Epping before we encourage more visitors. We also need to consider the reasons why people choose to come to Epping: to enjoy the surroundings of a historic market town and the open space of the surrounding green belt. I strongly oppose plans for any development in Epping that encroaches on either of these.

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5. Do you agree with the proposals for new employment development?

Disagree

Please explain your choice in Question 5:

Significant housing development in Epping will increase the population considerably. There are no clear indications in the plan around employment development in Epping to support new populations. As outlined above, there are notably more employment opportunities in Harlow, as well as the Harlow Enterprise Zone. In

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order to best take advantage of these employment opportunities, It makes sense to increase development in the Harlow area in order to meet government housing demand.

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6. Do you agree with the proposed sites in your area?

Epping (Draft Policy P 1):

No

Please provide reasons for your view on Epping:

I object strongly to planned development south of Brook Road (SR-0113B). For ease of reference I set out my individual points below. While I am concerned about the scale of development throughout Epping, my points below largely refer to the Brook Road area, drawing on my experiences as a resident over the last four years:

- Traffic: Brook Road is one of only two entrance/exit roads into Epping. The town is busy. People like to visit. To shop. To use the restaurants and other facilities. The high road is gridlocked pretty much constantly from early in the morning until late evening. Many drivers use Brook Road to cut off the high road. This creates horrendous traffic morning, evening and often in between. A bad morning in Brook Road has to be seen to be believed. As the road is so narrow it is only possible for traffic to move in one direction at a time. Cars often meet each other and don't know what to do. Nobody will budge. Traffic is backed up to each end of the road. People shout at each other and blare their horns. This isn't an occasional incident. This is almost every day. It affects our quality of life. Residents' cars are frequently damaged (again a very regular - not occasional - occurrence). Residents' animals are injured (there have been a number of cats killed), and the safety of small children on foot and in buggies who walk up and down the road twice a day to attend local schools is seriously at risk.
- Parking: Parking is a real problem in Brook Road. Residents largely respect each other's space and muddle by to 'make it work'. However, as one of the few roads on the south side of Epping without resident parking restrictions, a large volume of commuters park in our road every day. There is not room for all of us. I appreciate that as a resident I don't 'own the road'. As frustrating as it is not being able to park in my road (and I mean 'road', not 'outside my house' here. I have often had to drive in to another street - particularly problematic for my husband after a long night shift as a Met Police officer who just wants to get in to bed), the main problem is how commuter parking exacerbates the traffic problems outlined above. More parked cars = fewer places to give way to other vehicles. Fewer places to give way = more shouting and horn blaring. A large volume of parked vehicles considerably reduces visibility creating additional danger - something I personally experienced last August when a vehicle pulled off a drive in Brook Road and, not being able to see around the snake of parked cars, reversed straight into my path. Luckily I was moving fairly slowly. Luckily it 'only' cost £500 to fix. Luckily (and most importantly), the toddler strapped in to the back seat was unharmed. Could have been pretty nasty though.
- Emergency vehicle access: An ambulance, fire engine or police car called to Brook Road during busy times would have minimal (if not zero) chance of accessing the road. As a resident, I am very concerned about this.
- Flooding: We've had a number of water issues in Brook Road. Just a few months ago a burst water main caused the road to close for a week. It's also called Brook Road for a reason - there's a brook there - which adds to flooding and water logging issues (as do the pot holes - which are caused by and exacerbate problems).
- Environment: One of the top priority areas emerging from the previous consultation in 2012 was protecting our Green Belt. According to a report to the Cabinet dated 10 June 2013, very strong opinions were expressed about building on Green Belt land. The land south of Brook Road is Green Belt. Moving Green Belt boundaries and building opposite Brook Road disregards the results of the earlier consultation. It also 'muddies' the boundaries between Epping and Theydon Bois. Where do we start and they end? Visitors come to Epping to enjoy a pleasant town, closely surrounded by green space. They will not visit - or spend money in the local pubs, restaurants and shops - an over spilling town surrounded by housing estates.
- Noise and air pollution: Traffic congestion and being close to the M25 and Central Line means that noise and air pollution is already problematic in this area. This will be exacerbated exponentially if the land south of Brook Road is developed.
- Infrastructure: I recently waited 5 weeks for a doctor's appointment. Friends are unable to get school places for their children at Ivy Chimneys Primary - despite living virtually in the same

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stretch of road. The Central Line is standing room only by Debden, with the Epping station car park full before 7.30am each weekday. Shops, restaurants and other services are a brisk 20 to 30 minute uphill walk from the south side of Epping. Services are barely covering existing residents. Plans indicate that facilities will increase to cope with additional population, however currently they seem to take significantly lower priority than house building. The infrastructure needs to be in place before new residents arrive - not addressed as an afterthought once government targets for housing requirements are met. This will not work. At community meetings council officials have stated that a new road will be built in order to cope with the additional pressure created by 244 units on the land south of Brook Road. We have been told that the new road will run from the end of Bower Hill, round the bottom of the Brook Road land, and join up to Ivy Chimneys. We have been told that this bypass road will run either underneath or over the top of the Central Line bridge located at the bottom of Brook Road. How will this work? How much will this cost? How long will this take? And of course we are assuming that this will be finalised and operational prior to 244 families moving in? We need to have answers to these questions before we can even begin considering housing development on the land south of Brook Road. So here's the situation: Brook Road is heavily congested, frequently dangerous, regularly

flooded, and located within an area where local facilities cannot cope with current demand. An additional 244 units, around 400 or so cars, and around 750 or so human beings is unthinkable.

Loughton (Draft Policy P 2)

**No opinion**

Please provide reasons for your view on Loughton:

Waltham Abbey (Draft Policy P 3)

**No opinion**

Please provide reasons for your view on Waltham Abbey:

Chipping Ongar (Draft Policy P 4)

**No opinion**

Please provide reasons for your view on Chipping Ongar:

Buckhurst Hill (Draft Policy P 5)

**No opinion**

Please provide reasons for your view on Buckhurst Hill:

North Weald Bassett (Draft Policy P 6)

**No opinion**

Please provide reasons for your view on North Weald Bassett:

Chigwell (Draft Policy P 7)

**No opinion**

Please provide reasons for your view on North Weald Bassett:

Theydon Bois (Draft Policy P 8)

**No opinion**

Please provide reasons for your view on Theydon Bois:

Roydon (Draft Policy P 9)

**No opinion**

Please provide reasons for your view on Roydon:

Nazeing (Draft Policy P 10)

**No opinion**

Please provide reasons for your view on Nazeing:

Thornwood (Draft Policy P 11)

**No opinion**

Please provide reasons for your view on Thornwood:

Coopersale, Fyfield, High Ongar, Lower Sheering, Moreton, Sewardstonbury, Sheering, Stapleford Abbots (Draft Policy P 12)

**No opinion**

Please provide reasons for your view on Coopersale, Fyfield, High Ongar, Lower Sheering, Moreton, Sewardstonbury, Sheering, Stapleford Abbots:

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7. Do you agree with the approach to infrastructure provision being proposed in the plan?

Strongly disagree

Please explain your choice in Question 7:

Strongly disagree - largely due to the distinct lack of detail. The plan highlights concerns that growth might adversely affect the quality of life for local residents, due to lack of supporting infrastructure; however indicates that no firm plans are in place to cater for road, traffic, education, health, or emergency service provision. There are no indications of timings for when and where things will be developed. Infrastructure seems like an afterthought once government targets for housing requirements are met. This is the wrong way around. Infrastructure needs to be in place BEFORE houses are built and people move in. We can't comment fully on proposals - and Epping Forest District Council surely can't move forward with this - until we all know what the infrastructure looks like.

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8. An Interim Sustainability Appraisal has been commissioned to support the Draft Local Plan. We would welcome any comments you may have on this.

Throughout the sustainability appraisal (as in prior consultations and other related documents) there is again a priority around protecting Green Belt boundaries. Building on land south of Brook Road completely contradicts this. The sustainability appraisal highlights the opportunities that housing and employment investment can bring to the region, particularly in areas that require regeneration such as Harlow. With this in mind, surely Harlow would benefit from taking a more substantial share of planned housing development in the region? Greater development in Harlow poses significantly fewer negatives - and considerably greater positives - than destroying green belt and compounding existing traffic, parking and commuter problems on the south side of Epping.

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9. Do you wish to comment on any other policies in the Draft Local Plan?

Key priorities emerging from the Community Choices consultation (Issues and Options) which ran from July to October 2012 were: continuing to protect the Green Belt; using "brownfield" land before releasing any Green Belt for development; preventing districts from sprawling in to each other. Building on the land south of Brook Road directly conflicts with each of these priority issues. Finally, almost two thirds (60%) of people responding to the 2012 consultation opposed development planned for the land south of Brook Road and Ivy Chimneys Road. We live in Epping. We know what we're talking about. We see the problems this area currently faces everyday. We know how catastrophic it would be to bring hundreds of additional houses, people and cars to this. Please take our views in to consideration.

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