

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

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Method	Letter		
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Letter or Email Response:

Epping Forest District Draft Local Plan Consultation 2016 SR- 0153 land to the north of Stewards Green Road This is a proposed development of green belt land to the east of Bower Court and The Orchards. The size of the plot and numbers of dwellings have been reduced from the initial plans put forward in the first consultation during which I raised a number of concerns. (Annex 1). The planners of earlier years attempted to ensure permanent green belt status by specifying that NO public access to the green belt area was provided from Bower House, Bower Court, The Orchards or Stewards Green Estate, and NO access plots to the green belt were left. The Orchards itself was developed as a number of small spurs with the spur at the north end barred by a permanent barrier, and retaining the hawthorn hedge beyond that in order to preclude any pedestrian right of way. In response to my query during the first consultation I was advised that access would be from Stewards Green Road. I now note that this access is most unlikely since the lower field is scheduled to remain as green belt along with the plot behind Bower House. Access is therefore likely to be through The Orchards on roads designed for access to 76 homes. The proposals mark a fivefold increase of this to service 381 dwellings. Both the layout and design of The Orchards roads are unsuitable for the proposed increase. In addition, the junction with Bower Hill will become dangerous given the extra traffic flows from the development of sites SR-0587, SR-0113B and to a lesser extent SR-0069/33 . A further and even more significant area of concern is the impact of the proposals on the use of the Essex Way footpath. Currently from Epping the only direct entrance and egress for this section is from Bower Hill. Use of the path is almost entirely recreational and it is seldom used after dark. Observations made on first consultation Annex 1 Q39: EPP-H East of The Orchards and former Central Line, north of Stewards Green Road impact on Green Belt: Development of the area would halve the size of the green belt between Epping and Fiddlers Hamlet. Impact on the landscape: This view is visible to the east/southeast from many parts of Epping (including the railway), and offers a magnificent landscape past Stewards Green Cottages to High Warren/Beachet Woods and Hill Hall. For some 80 years it has been protected and preserved by planners. First, Bower Hill built in the 1930s as bungalows, then The Orchards again restricted to bungalows in the 1960s and 1970s. The planners/designers of the M1 motorway screened the road in a deep cutting so that enjoyment of this attractive landscape was completely retained . Impact on biodiversity: The site virtually adjoins the local wildlife area of Stewards Green Lane, and the site itself with its small woodland and wide field verges (including ditches) is home to several wildlife species. Traffic Congestion: The proposed size of the development would create a complete new community representing an increase in dwellings of some 10% for the town and doubling the members to the east of the railway. The local through roads are barely adequate to cope at present. At consultation you advised that the site would be accessed from Stewards Green Road . This would mean a 1.5 to 2.5 mile trip by car for every journey to town even though the site is only 0.5 to 1.0 miles away. Any alternative and additional access (e.g. by demolishing an

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existing property) on the western side of the site could lead to a quiet estate road such as The Orchards becoming a through route. The proposed housing would be especially attractive to commuters since it lies within easy walking distance via the Essex Way to the station. The consultation document refers to capacity constraints on the Central Line so LU may not welcome 20%+ additional passengers at the peaks. The egress of the Essex Way onto Bower Hill has difficult sight lines for motorists in both directions. It is on the steepest part of the hill where vehicles are accelerating after the station bridge corners.