

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

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| Stakeholder ID | 4309 | Name | tom | licence |
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| Date | 11/12/2016 |
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Letter or Email Response:

I write to convey my objections to the draft local plan. Loughton is a leafy and pleasant environment, one of the first towns this side of London which doesn't have the character of monotonous grey suburban sprawl. For this reason, many people have made their homes here, and residential occupation is now at capacity - a fact which is plain to everyone from strains upon Loughton's infrastructure, including congestion in the high street and roads leading off it, a lack of adequate parking for the residents and for visitors/ shoppers, and congestion on the Central Line, affecting many commuters who live here. At present, residents are willing to a certain extent to accept these inconveniences on account of the benefits of living in Loughton, which are the pleasant aspect of a low-rise skyline and the presence of open spaces which can be used for recreation. Not only does the local plan intend to erode both; it proposes to add to the congestion and the density of population by ill-conceived developments that have more to do with housing targets and developers wishing to capitalise on house prices than with sensible and effective urban planning. At a time when a considerable burden is being placed upon local health services by the need to care for the mental and physical health of our population, recreational green spaces play a very important role by providing for the physical and mental well-being of residents. Whenever I take a walk on the Borders' Lane sites or the greens in Debden, I see other residents engaged in a wide variety of activities, including ball games, running around, having BBQs etc. It is important to note that these activities cannot take place in the forest, either because they're not allowed (as with BBQs) or because parents can't let their children go running off among the trees. Dogs too are sometimes lost in this fashion. Open playing spaces suitable for various activities are therefore essential - a point that was understood by the Victorians and Edwardians who laid out these parks in the first place, but which has been forgotten in our less-publicly minded and money-driven society. As for the car park areas where development is proposed - including Debden and Loughton Station car park, and the car parks next to the library and Traps Hill- the addition of hundreds of houses - even if existing parking is retained - will impose an unbearable strain on the infrastructure of roads and traffic, which is already, as I've mentioned, overburdened in Loughton. Developments in some of these zones will not be possible, moreover, without blocks of flats at least three stories high which will be totally out of keeping and will ruin the skyline. Developers always prefer to refer to these new houses as 'homes', because it sounds more appealing. In truth, however, your 'home' is the place you live in; not just the building. Loughton will begin to feel less like a home to people and more like the concrete sprawl people have to inhabit nearer to central London. There will also be an impact on visitors coming into town, who instead of seeing an open and pleasant aspect across the Loughton station car park, will arrive to see a housing development there, which will have to be blocks of flats to accommodate the number of units proposed. Finally, the proposed numbers of dwellings are out of line with guidance and good planning practice on density and urban cramming. How can 304 dwellings fit onto Lucton's field, along with the sports centre that has

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been promised? How can 114 dwellings fit on or over the car park for Loughton station? These numbers may be best-case scenarios for greedy developers but they are worst-case scenarios for the residents who will inhabit these small cramped-in blocks, and for the community which will suffer the strain and the loss of amenity. The draft local plan is a hurried attempt at fixing a problem. It is not a long-term strategy for improving quality of living. It is totally out of keeping with over 100 years of careful preservation which, largely, has kept Loughton a pleasant amenable place. It is inimical to the past, blind to the present and uncaring for the future, and should be rewritten to account for the needs of people - present and future - who actually live here.