

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

Stakeholder ID 3754 Name C jane

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Method Letter

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### Letter or Email Response:

RE: Draft local plan The plan for a huge amount of homes in the Debden/loughton area of Epping Forest District is fundamentally unworkable and flawed beyond belief. There is currently an infrastructure set up in the area which is stretched to capacity and beyond. There are not enough school and nursery places already. Doctors' surgeries are incapable of dealing with their current workloads. The nearest hospital is 40 minutes away by car and there are plans to move it further from Loughton, you'd have to go for a different hospital if you were using public transport. The roads struggle with the number of cars already using them and are in a poor state of repair which is to be made worse by the two main bus routes for the area facing cuts in services. The developments mooted for the station car parks where new residents, and I quote EFDC officials, not requiring cars because they're so close to the tube are unbelievably naive. Let's also remember that the tubes themselves are struggling and the areas are flooded with parking commuters' cars every day. The water services are likely to struggle with any major increase in housing. The sewage treatment alone is already nearing the full capacity at Beckton which will also have to deal with any extra housing in East London too. I'm aware that the development plan document mentions infrastructure plans, but as the council has no power to actually deal with any of these issues the vague statements in there amount to nothing more than hope that things will change. That's simply not good enough. Assuming you are still hell bent on going ahead with this poor plan I would like to express my opinion regarding the proposed development of green areas in Debden, namely Jessel Green and Rochford Green. These green areas perform essential roles in many ways. It is well documented that areas such as these provide a buffer against the stresses and strains of modern life helping with mental and physical health. They provide a safe, readily accessible green space for children and adults alike to exercise and breathe in these days of obesity and with subsequent diabetes issues running rife and looking to cost the NHS billions. Jessel Green also performs a valuable role as a sort of flood plain or sponge for the area and is often quite wet. I am reliably informed that the Cottage Loaf itself is built on stilts as a guard against the levels of water at the lower end of the slope. Which gives you an idea how much water the green copes with. Building there would not only put the new development at risk, but jeopardise the status of existing housing in the area. These greens are regularly used by many people, my family and I included. My young children often use the Rochford Green playground after school and the Jessel Green one at weekends and on school holidays. They join in on the council organised play dates on Jessel Green in the summer and take part in the various fun days that are held there too. I'm on the green as often as time will allow, several days a week and as my kitchen window looks out over Jessel Green I see the dog walkers, joggers, kite flyers and the rest of the area users every day. It's performing a vital role as a helipad for air ambulances of late too. These are becoming increasingly important as the roads become ever more congested. It's a great asset to the local wildlife too giving birds and mammals much needed corridors of movement and places to rest and forage. An example, one day

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this summer I was on Jessel Green when I saw a sparrow hawk on the grass being harassed by two crows, after a few moments the hawk tried to escape but the crows came in again making the hawk opens his talons and away flew a starling that had been held by the hawk the whole time. I half expected David Attenborough to pop out of the bus shelter. Never seen a starling move so fast either. These areas are our village greens and removal of them would radically and disastrously alter the character of the area. Whilst we are near the forest that is a very different sort of green area and not one I would let my children loose on without very close supervision. Difficult to hold a fun day there either. Or play football. The idea that a new garden village, properly planned and catered for has to be the best, most logical plan for the predicted needs of the area. Shoe horning homes into any crevices available without provision for their needs is doomed to failure. You have asked for other possible sites for development and remembering that this plan lasts at least 17 years may I suggest some alternate possibilities. The narrow stretch between Lawton Road and Rectory Road could be utilised for some housing. There are several buildings on Loughton High Road where the shops are just ground floor buildings. Centric parade alone is 6 shops wide and has three story buildings either side. The extra two floors should afford enough space for between 24 and 30 flats. The empty office space above the Halifax could be reallocated too. There are no flats above the three shops where the wimpy is either. I'm sure there are other possibilities. The retail development on Langston Road should certainly include residential space above. Other brownfield sites on Langston Road could also surely be used. There are two adjacent properties (currently boarded up) at the bottom end of Alderton Hill that could be utilised for a fairly large development of, hopefully, affordable housing. There is currently a building site being made of what used to be M&Co on Loughton High Rd, I hope that this will include some housing as it is clearly very high on every agenda. Perhaps current housing stock could be altered to expand the individual capacity of each home, putting in loft extensions and turning houses into flats to increase stock levels. Feel free to use your imaginations and think outside the box a bit rather than just bulldozing any bit of green you happen to find. Lastly I would like to urge the council to apply protected status on both Jessel and Rochford Greens to save these extremely valuable spaces for generations to come. They are our village greens. We use them, we value them and we need them. Please don't bin them.