

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

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Letter or Email Response:

Q2 The Local Plan outlines the number of new houses proposed for the district but these re concentrated on one or two areas with other towns and villages being allocated very few. It is likely that many residents particularly those in villages, will not be in favour of large number of houses being built locally, but it appears that we, the Council Tax payers of the area, have been given no choice but to accept development on a large scale. However, if a substantial amount of building is going to take place then it should be spread more evenly across the district. It is likely that many people moving in to these new properties will in fact work further afield possibly in London. It is hard to see how development around Harlow will offer enough opportunities for those living in North Weald or anywhere else in the district to find work. Wages in Harlow, a deprived area, are renowned for being low hence the new properties will most likely only be affordable for those on higher incomes who work in London or similar areas. Therefore, traffic will increase on already crowded and congested roads. If the allocation of new houses were spread more evenly across the district this would even out the flow of traffic thus reducing the impact on one or two towns and villages. In view of this I disagree with the Local Plan because of the allocation of new housing seems unfair and should be more evenly spread across the district. Q6 I believe the areas identified in North Weald for development are on the whole completely inappropriate. I refer first to areas SR-0158A, SR-0003 and SR-0036. • SR-0158A the land behind Queens Road and Oak Piece is higher than parts of Queens Road, therefore, building 600 dwellings here would greatly increase the risk of flooding to existing homes. Indeed some of the houses in Queens Road flooded some years ago after a prolonged dry spell of weather when the land in question was unable to absorb the amount of rainfall that fell in a short time. Consequently, the water ran from the field, filled the ditch and flooded a number houses at the lower part of the road. Even earlier this year, some houses flooded again. When the proposal to use this land was put forward and was, it seems, accepted did anyone from the Council bother to actually visit the site? Because if they had, they would surely have noticed the fact that the field slopes down towards Queens Road. Any houses built here would increase surface water to run-off and to build on this area is to disregard the wellbeing of existing residents who, in some cases, have lived there for more than 50 years. Development on this site would blight the lives of those people and ruin their properties. • That the site SR-0003 is surprising in its proposal as it closely borders the Cripsey Brook. This means effectively that development SR-0158A and SR-0003 will in fact both cause run-off into the brook surely adding to the flood risk elsewhere in the village. (Please note that when the village flooded during the 1980s it was of course the lowest areas that were badly affected - between the Kings Head and the bottom of Queens Road). I am well aware of the flood prevention scheme near Church Lane but this is only satisfactory at present because the fields surrounding that area can absorb some of the rainfall - something that will not happen if those fields are covered in houses and hard surfaces. It is quite clear that this scheme will be inadequate if this large development goes ahead. • In addition,

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I can only assume it must have escaped the notice of the planners that this area is productive agricultural land - eg it produces food. Agricultural land should not be destroyed and with an expanding population is needed more than ever both now and in the future. Once destroyed it cannot be replaced. In addition, allowing development of this land would further diminish the rural character of North Weald. • Adjacent to SR-0158A is the sewage works. How anyone could suggest building houses so close to this is beyond me. As a keen walker I pass this facility often and the smell is frequently unpleasant and at times overpowering. The quality of life for anyone living next to this would be zero and I would suspect a danger to their health. It is likely that any residents living in houses that might be built here would have to keep their windows shut most of the time and it is hard to see how they could enjoy their gardens when the wind was in the wrong direction or in the heat of the summer. I have to also question whether the sewage works could cope with the enormous number of houses proposed for the village. • Over the last few decades the use of private cars has increased considerably and due to this, parking has become a major issue for many people in the village. Nearly all streets in North Weald are now lined with cars with many parked on pavements. In the Local Plan there seems to be no clear indication of how many off road parking spaces will be allocated to the new houses and from this I can only assume the provision will be minimal. This will lead to spill-over parking in roads adjacent to the proposed sites and even more congested and dangerous roads within the village. Roads lined with parked cars attract vandalism and cause friction between neighbours. It also makes life difficult for those with young children, the elderly or disabled to carry shopping etc from car to house. Another reduction in quality of life. • Roads around the district are congested at the best of times, Epping in particular, as many people work in either central or Greater London. Using public transport is hardly an option as buses are also stuck in near-stationary traffic and subject to long delays. Building so many houses in North Weald will just increase the difficulties many of us have in attempting to drive through Epping to go to work and put added pressure on the M11 and M25, current users of which are also subject to frequent, long delays. • While still on the subject of roads and the large number of vehicles now using them, it is clear that even at the present time the authorities struggle with maintenance. Many roads are full of potholes causing damage to vehicles and increasing the potential for accidents. Adding such a large number of new houses to one small area of the district will increase vehicular traffic and can only make this worse. • Regarding SR-0036 I note that a traveller site GRT_N_06 has been proposed and yet on page 61 of the Plan - Draft Policy H4 Traveller Site Development sub-heading "What you told us" paragraph 4.24 it clearly states that: 1. There was an indication that settled and travelling communities favoured a degree of separation from one another 2. Traveller preference was for concentration of provision within existing areas to enable them to live in close proximity to family members Therefore, I struggle to see how the views of either the settled or travelling community have been taken into account and strongly suggest that this proposal will suit no-one. Q9 SP 5 3.93 The purpose of Green Belt land was to prevent urban sprawl, to maintain agricultural land and to provide habitat for wildlife. The area indicated as SR-0158A on the plan is home to many species of birds including kingfishers, seen in the brook, and rather more rare birds such as little egrets. The hedgerows provide shelter to other birds and small mammals, in fact, there is an abundance wildlife living in and around the village which should not be displaced. Another purpose of green belt land was to protect the character of rural communities. North Weald has grown substantially over the last 30 years but at present is still semi-rural. It has been stated that the Draft Local Plan would seek to allow communities within Epping Forest District to retain their character but with the number of houses proposed for North Weald the opposite will be the case and the village will lose its individuality something which could never be regained.

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