

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

Stakeholder ID	3934	Name	John Stoneham
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### Letter or Email Response:

To whom it may concern This letter is in response to your Draft local plan. As a local resident in Loughton I would like to take this opportunity to express my views on the plan that you have put forward regarding the future of our county's housing and population distribution. I understand the need to build more housing, and appreciate the magnitude of the task that you have to complete, but I am convinced that it would be grossly negligent to destroy the green spaces which are so important to our community. It is surely our duty to maintain these space for future generations. You have requested factual evidence to support our belief in the preservation of our green spaces and I submit the following points.

- Health and Wellbeing, in 2009 a survey was commissioned that lead to the conclusion that green spaces in communities were essential to the mental and physical health of the people that resided in that community, it found that "The more time people spend outdoors the less stressed they feel - an important consideration given the cost to the UK economy of depression and mental illness, which has been calculated at £26.1bn" and "People who use green spaces are more likely to take exercise than those who don't, and that the attractiveness or quality of green space is important: people don't want to use neglected parks or open spaces" and "A study of 345,143 GP records in the Netherlands indicated that the annual prevalence rates for 15 of 24 chosen disease clusters was lower where there was more green space within 1km. This correlation was strongest for anxiety and depression, and among children." With Obesity on the rise, an ageing population and middle-aged people working longer hours, it is now vitally important to provide recreational spaces that are appropriately placed for ease of access by the majority of the local population.
- Community Infrastructure. Loughton is quite densely populated and our community infrastructure is already at capacity. We have 3 doctors surgeries in Loughton, which are already massively oversubscribed, and waiting times are well over a week for a non-emergency appointment. As for education, we have 3 Senior schools, 6 Primary schools and one college, which are already at capacity. The addition of 1250 new homes and families will stretch these services beyond any reasonable limit.
- Emergency infrastructure. Due to the current state of the economy, we have already seen massive reductions in the budgets for our front line services. Police stations have closed and police officer numbers have dwindled, fire stations have had appliances removed and the number of fire fighter cut, front line ambulances and crews have fallen to levels not seen since the late 80's and all this with a booming population. In Loughton we only have access to one fire appliance (reduced from 2 due to cuts), our ambulance station stands empty most of the time while our crews serve London and other parts of the county and police officers are often drafted to other areas to deal with emergency calls. This means that the people of Loughton are not getting anywhere near the level of service that they need or deserve. For example, the average waiting time for a front line ambulance in Loughton is 19 minutes and the travel time to an A&E hospital in an ambulance on an emergency run is 22 minutes. As such it is a preference to send the air ambulance from North Weald airfield (a privilege that is normally reserved for far more rural locations

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than Loughton) which only takes 6 minutes and often lands on the green spaces that you are proposing to build on. It is clear that with front line emergency services already over stretched, adding another 2500 people to the area would be negligent and irresponsible and may well result in people losing their lives.

- Civil infrastructure. Loughton is penned in by natural and manmade boundaries with green belt farm land to the north and east, Epping forest to the north, London to the west, and the Roding Valley flood plains and the M 11 motorway to the south. This would make expanding current infrastructure to cope with increased volumes incredibly difficult. Already, in peak times, a driver can sit for hours on the M11 south-bound or a commuter must squeeze into an overcrowded train as they attempt the arduous commute to work. Access to the M25 is restricted by a single carriageway road that winds through Epping Forest which is notorious for accidents and can become very dangerous in the winter time. At weekends, when you would like to go shopping or just go and sit in a cafe and enjoy the ambience, you are greeted with grid-locked roads full of cars chuffing out poisonous gasses and over-crowded car parks. Increasing the population of this already saturated town will only inflate the problem. For example, I recently had to take my son to the A&E department at Princess Alexander Hospital in Harlow. It is a 12.4 mile journey that should take no more than 30 minutes, but on a Saturday afternoon it took us over an hour to get there simply because of the volume of cars on the road, now in my view this is unacceptable and unreasonable. At this point in my letter I would like to bring your attention to some parts of Loughton that I feel are suitable and unsuitable for housing development I will try to accentuate the pros and cons for each site as well as what I feel would be any adverse impact on the local community.
- Epping Forest College Upper Site, This site I believe has already been earmarked for development, it is a well placed site with good access to infrastructure and transport links. As it is a dilapidated site it would be a perfect for redevelopment. The disadvantages are: Local schools which are already full to capacity and places local health facilities which are already operating far beyond capacity. Waiting times are already unacceptably long and with an ageing population in Loughton I cannot see this improving any time soon.
- Lucton Fields, This site is well placed for development with good access to infrastructure and local transport links. It is a large site, with good access to local roads, so development traffic disruption would be kept to a minimum, The disadvantages are again, the local schools and medical services which are at capacity.
- Rochford Green, This site I feel would be bad for any future development. The location already has significance for local communities who use it daily for multiple recreational activities. It is a hub for younger residents to meet and socialise and losing it to development would be detrimental to the local communities. And again, schools are full and medical services already stretched. In addition, with Transport for London cutting bus services in this area new residents will be forced to rely on cars, which will add an extra burden on to an already congested road network.
- Jesell Green, of all the sites that you have put in your draft plan, I feel this is the most unsuitable. This site I feel would be extremely bad for any future development. Firstly the location is geographically challenging for development. The road network is already in a state of disrepair and with increased traffic due to construction traffic this would cause it to decay. It will also require extra construction costs due to increased foundation and drainage required to accommodate what is very soggy ground in the winter months and a large gradient that would have to be overcome. This site also has huge significance for local communities who use it daily for multiple recreational activities including fitness training, football, dog walking, bike riding. There are also multiple community activities that happen on this site, such as fun days and school activities. It is a hub for younger residents to meet and socialise. Its loss to development would be devastating to the local community as local residents would have nowhere for recreation. As well, local schools are already saturated and places are hard to find and local health facilities are already operating far beyond capacity. With Transport for London cutting bus services in this area new residents will be forced to rely on cars, which will add an extra burden on to an already congested road network. As you can see the evidence for not building on Loughton's green spaces is overwhelming I cannot stress how important these spaces are to the wellbeing of the local community. Their loss would be devastating to the residents and the impact on local infrastructure would be a disaster, completely overwhelming their limited capacity, Laughton is the second most densely populated community in Essex and I struggle to see how you can expect it to accommodate or support more residents, I really do hope that you consider the points that I have made when you make your decision, and leave the green spaces of Laughton for us all to enjoy. I thank you for the attention that you have given this letter and I request that you send me confirmation of having received it. Many thanks, ...Redacted....

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