

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

Stakeholder ID	4210	Name	Mike Soutar
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Date	1/11/2016
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Letter or Email Response:

Dear Sir, I have a number of points I would like to make about the development proposals in the Local Plan. I would like you to formally take them into account as part of the consultancy period and look forward to hearing your specific feedback. First of all, let me make it clear that I do not propose all development and understand the need for more housing stock in the district and in Epping itself, but I do believe there are some issues which have been ignored thus far, with the consequences not adequately explained in the Local Plan. Two general points to begin with: 1. I believe Epping town is taking too high a proportion of the proposed overall number of new dwellings in the district. Epping is already the fastest growing town in the district over the last decade and this over-development risks ruining its special and ancient character as a market town - the very aspect which makes it such an attractive place for families to settle in and for businesses to invest in. This overall number should be reviewed and reduced significantly with the burden of new homes spread more equitably across the district. 2. The supporting infrastructure is already under severe strain. There are already insufficient public services and amenities such as NHS dentists and GPs in Epping. The roads are, statistically, the most congested in Epping Forest District so to add any significant number of new dwellings will only make these issues much worse. I do not believe there is sufficient detail in the Local Plan and supporting documents to give residents comfort that this has been properly considered. In particular I would like to comment on site SR-0132Ci: SR-0132Ci really is in two blocks, separated by Bury Lane. The first block to the East includes the site of Epping Cricket Club, Bowls Club and Tennis Club. The proposal to build dwellings on this land which has historically housed the sports grounds is entirely at odds with the council's commitment to providing leisure facilities for members of the public, which any proposed relocation of the Sports Club does not adequately compensate. Epping Cricket Club have been holding matches there since 1896 - it is a very well used and utterly central part of the cultural life and heritage of the town. Moving it to a location even further from the centre of town will undoubtedly lead to a harmful disconnect between the sports facilities, the teams and their natural local support. The site also contains a number of ancient trees. I do not believe sufficient analysis has been conducted on the traffic problems that such a housing development would have on Lower Bury Lane which is the only access road to this site. The lane has already been narrowed to make it safer for pupils for the new secondary school to navigate every morning and afternoon and there is no opportunity to widen it.Redacted.... I can testify that it is already a heavily congested traffic point as a result. I therefore cannot support the assertion from the Council's own Site Suitability Assessment which states: "[The] area around the site [is] expected to be uncongested at peak time, or site below the site size threshold where it would be expected to affect congestion." Adding a whole new estate would completely overload the narrow lane and would lead to increased risk of serious and possibly fatal injuries to schoolchildren and other pedestrians. The second, larger, block outlined in SR-0132Ci concerns the arable land which sits between Creed's Farm and Epping Cemetery. I

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understand that there are concerns about loss of Green Belt-designated land in the second block - the farmland to the West of Bury Lane - but given the need for additional housing it would seem a sensible and workable solution to develop that part of SR-0132Ci and fully preserve the sports facilities in a position where they can and will be used. I trust you will take my objections and comments on board and I look forward to hearing from you. Yours sincerely,
....Redacted....