

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

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Method	Email				
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### Letter or Email Response:

General The overall draft local plan appears well thought out and provides a balanced attitude to growth based on substantial detailed evidence. It provides a cohesive approach to enable the district to flourish in a sustainable way, sensitively managing the synergy between urban and rural and positively considering the impact on Epping Forest SPA and the Lee Valley SPA. The proposal to amend the Green Belt boundary to accommodate sustainable strategic sites, which whilst potentially controversial to some, is necessary and in fact shows a mature, realistic and proactive approach to meeting the district long term needs. The constraints of policies such as E2, T1, DM3, 5, 16, 18 and 20 to name but a few, will support measured growth which takes account of, and minimises the impact on existing communities and the infrastructure that supports them. H1 - Housing mix and accommodation types The proposal to promote varied and sustainable communities by synergising the existing neighbourhoods with new provision via a range of housing tenures, size and type options is wholeheartedly welcomed. This will provide occupiers with greater choice as will the requirement for Category 2 homes, helping to create a sense of place for residents by enabling them to remain in their home despite changing needs or circumstances. H2 - Affordable Housing The level of affordable housing sought appears sensible and realistic to stimulate rather than stall the delivery of new housing provision. Additionally, the acceptance that in certain parts of the district viability may be an issue on specific sites and the willingness to work openly and flexibly to find a solution in these instances is fully endorsed. However, the omission of even an indicative tenure apportionment for the affordable housing between rented and intermediate could cause confusion and potentially delay the progression of schemes in the early stages. Whilst flexibility and the desire to reflect up to date evidence is welcomed, ambiguity is less constructive particularly as the most recent SHMA identifies current needs, suggests the likely travel of short to mid-term future trends and the timescales for updating it regularly are unknown. H3 - Rural Exceptions Acknowledgement that these sites still have a role in meeting the district long term need is applauded, as are the proposed constraints on such applications to mitigate any adverse impact on the communities with which they might be proposed. DM9 - High Quality Design The requirement to think holistically about newly proposed developments including the requirement for Strategic Masterplans, Design Codes and encouragement for Design Review Panels is saluted, to ensure maximum integration with both the micro and macro existing communities and neighbourhoods. However, these exacting standards may impact on viability in certain circumstances which is where the flexibility within H2, para C will become of paramount importance, one assumes. We believe the ultimate aim must remain long term sustainability and the creation of "place". DM10 - Housing Design and Quality The requirement to meet NDSS space standards is accepted, giving the ability to ensure the longer-term suitability and adaptability of properties as people's needs and aspiration changes with varying life phases. However, with minimal grant available and a mission to reduce (or at least arrest) the spiralling increase in costs, it might be prudent to

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consider a mechanism which enables a relaxation of these requirements, particularly for affordable housing where it is developed by RP's and depending on the end user group if it was the difference between a scheme proceeding or failing? The requirement for balancing private/communal/amenity and indoor/outdoor space and tenure blind developments is wholly supported DM11, 16, 18, 19, 20 & 21 - 'Sustainability' The approach by the district of promoting environmental sustainability and management is supported however the proposals for increased reliance on renewables and CHP/district systems is a concern on both overall scheme viability and potentially affordability for residents. Whilst both have their place, a predisposition to reduce the need for energy in developments from inception (ie "fabric first" solutions) will also provide a practical, cost effective solution which could be considered in tandem with such things as renewables/ district systems.