

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

Stakeholder ID	4520	Name	liz	gloyn
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Letter or Email Response:

I write to register my strong objections to the draft Epping Forest Local Plan. The plan to provide roughly 1,190 new houses in Loughton, without any additional infrastructure support, is highly impractical and would result in a massive deterioration of quality of life for local residents. Given the responses gathered from the Community Choices consultation (section 4.136 of the plan), the decision to not propose a new garden village seems as if the District Council is deliberately ignoring the views of residents who will have to live with the proposed changes. First, the proposed locations for many of the new houses seem, frankly, impractical. Loughton Underground and Debden Underground station car parks and the Loughton Library and adjacent car parks are not suitable for the kind of density that proposed plan suggests; they are also critical sites for community use, and the kind of high-density building proposed would deeply disruptive. The proposal to build over playing fields, particularly Borders Lane Playing Field and the Jessel Green space, not only deprives local residents of their green space, but removes vital areas of tarmacked land which are necessary for controlling flooding risk. The amount of ground that these proposed developments would make water-tight would result in increased problems with run-off and drainage in an area already affected by the flood plain. Second, the proposed number of homes within the Loughton area is not sustainable in terms of the current infrastructure. I note that while the plan mentions the possibility of 'maximising the existing capacity' of primary and secondary schools (5.29), there is no comment on how this would be done, or how this is meant to cope with the addition of over a thousand new families and their children in a system that is already stretched and children are facing placements in schools far from their homes. Equally, the road system of the town is simply not equipped to cope with this amount of extra traffic, particularly in key rush hours; again, despite the acknowledgement that 'traffic congestion and car parking are local issues' (5.29), no attempt seems to have been made to acknowledge this. Simply maintaining car parking at its current level is insufficient at present, and would be unworkable with this number of additional houses. Similarly, doctors' surgeries are working at capacity, and the council has no ability to make extra provision in this regard. Third, while the plan rightly picks up on the Central Line as a key attraction for the area, the line is already very overcrowded and busy when it is in use. Loughton is a town with a high number of commuters already. The plan appears to wish to cater for those who wish to join their number, but that will place impossible stress on the Central Line that it will not be able to cope with. Rush hour is already an unpleasant experience; the addition of an additional thousand or so homes will increase the stress of commuting and thus lower another aspect of the town's quality of life. In sum, such a large number of proposed dwellings would easily justify their own purpose-built village. I strongly encourage the Council to consider this option rather than add to the pressures of urban life already present here.

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