

Local Plan Team,  
Epping Forest District Council,  
Civic Offices,  
323, High Street,  
Epping,  
CM166 4BZ.

3<sup>rd</sup> April, 2018.

Dear all,

**Epping Forest District Council Local Plan**

I am writing as Chairman of Epping Sports Club, located at Lower Bury Lane in Epping. As a local and active community not-for-profit group with a genuine interest in the Local Plan I am writing to ask that Epping Sports Club is involved in the Local Plan process moving forward, including being invited to speak at the relevant hearing session(s) during the Examination in Public.

Epping Sports Club, located to the east of Bury Lane, and an area to the west of Bury Lane were previously allocated for a linked development in the Regulation 18 Version of the Epping Local Plan (SR-0113B). The Epping Sports Club was supportive of the allocation, however to our surprise and disappointment the allocation was removed from the Submission Version of the Local Plan. The removal of the site from the Submission Version of the plan was undertaken without any prior discussion with Epping Sports Club. The linked development would have delivered new residential development on the current Sports Club site and new much needed sports provision on the other side of Bury Lane. The exclusion of the Sports Club from this decision is a real missed opportunity by Epping Forest District Council to have fully understood the bigger picture for the development of these sites, and to in turn secure the future of the Sports Club for current and future members.

The rationale behind the removal of the sites has only just now been made publicly available, and therefore we have previously been unaware of Epping Forest District Council's motivation for this change. The Sports Club has always been interested in the Local Plan, however during previous rounds of consultation we have been restricted in our ability to comment due to consultation taking place between meetings of the Committee and restrictions from the previous landowner.

However since the new owner of both sites, Lands Improvement, wrote to Epping Forest District Council in October 2017 outlining their intention to relocate the existing sports club and provide improved and expanded sporting facilities for Epping. I have also attached a copy of their representations made to the Local Plan process with regards to the Epping Sports Club and linked sites.

The Sports Club has a long history in Epping - with the first record of an Epping Cricket team playing a match as far back as 1768 and the Club being founded over 150 years ago (1865). The current sports facilities onsite are ageing and there is no space for the expansion to enable us to serve the existing and future population of the town. With the new level of growth proposed, in and around Epping, this should provide opportunities for the expansion of the membership of the club, however we do not

have the facilities to support this. At the time the site was removed from the Draft Local Plan we were already in discussions with the landowner over the design and provision at the new facility.

The Sports Club's future is in the balance, the existing facilities offer us no opportunity to improve our revenue streams – we cannot rent out our facilities and therefore our income is solely derived from membership fees and the generosity of certain individuals.

The linked allocations in the Local Plan provided us with a once in a lifetime opportunity to secure the long term future of the cricket, tennis and bowls clubs that comprise the Epping Sports Club, and we are incredibly disappointed with Epping Forest District Council's decision to remove the allocation, with no prior consultation with us.

We are very keen not to be excluded from the Local Plan process and we respectfully request that we are involved in the future stages of the Local Plan process including the Examination in Public. If it would be helpful, I would be happy to meet with your Policy Officers to discuss Epping Sports Club's position further. We will also be writing to the Planning Inspector in similar terms in due course.

Yours faithfully,

John Brades  
Chairman, Epping Sports Club