

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

Stakeholder ID 2474 Name Colin Pickett

Method Survey

Date

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Survey Response:

1. Do you agree with the overall vision that the Draft Plan sets out for Epping Forest District?

Disagree

Please explain your choice in Question 1:

The Vision is so high level that there is not much to disagree with, but the statements regarding how the District Council intend to achieve the vision are very worrying in that they countenance 'revision of the boundary' of the green belt'. In areas around towns like Epping this cannot but 'compromise the distinctiveness and attractiveness' of the settlement both visually and through further strain on already poor services, transport links and utilities.

2. Do you agree with the overall vision that the Draft Plan sets out for Epping Forest District?

Strongly disagree

Please explain your choice in Question 2:

Whilst the council is keen to concentrate on the Harlow proposal, this is almost equalled by the number of new homes earmarked for Epping, North Weald, Coopersale & Theydon Bois - all locations that will put significant pressure on (already poor) services in Epping, and significantly affect the landscape of this locality. The developments in Epping in particular require the occupation of significant amounts of Green Belt land. I also understand from your planning officer at the consultation event that as Epping has a tube station and these developments would be within walking distance that they would likely be permitted to be 'high density' - which is clearly not in keeping with the existing medium density housing in the areas they would adjoin, unavoidably affecting character and attractiveness. The proposed concentration of housing in areas to the south of Epping, furthest from high street services is not explained, and can only lead to a huge increase in traffic on narrow roads from people driving to the high street as there are no regular public transport alternatives and people don't like walking up hills. I also do not understand how your plans for Epping have

Response to the Draft Local Plan Consultation 2016 (Regulation 18)

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changed so drastically from the previous draft - it's almost as if you faced too much opposition from the north and west side of the town last time so you thought you'd try the south and east side this time.

3. Do you agree with the proposals for development around Harlow?

Agree

Please explain your choice in Question 3:

Harlow was built as a new town and, like Milton Keynes etc., is suited for expansion via housing development. The geography allows for new development around the edges between the existing town and the M11. Its proximity to the M11 and A414 make transport much more sustainable than the smaller towns in the district like Epping, although more must be done with the train operating companies to make it financially more attractive to use the mainline service to Liverpool Street rather than travelling to Epping to use the (cheaper but overcrowded) Central Line. More people use Epping Underground Station now than use Loughton per year (See <https://tfl.gov.uk/cdn/static/cms/documents/multi-year-station-entry-exit-figures.xls>).

4. Do you agree with the proposed shopping area in...

Epping?

No

Buckhurst Hill?

No opinion

Loughton Broadway?

No opinion

Chipping Ongar?

No opinion

Loughton High Road?

No opinion

Waltham Abbey?

No opinion

Please explain your choice in Question 4:

The plan for Epping provides no definitive replacement for the Sports Centre earmarked for housing development. Additionally with the surplus of empty units, Charity Shops and proximity of the Westfield shopping centre (20 minutes by tube) I do not anticipate a significant increase in opportunity for small retail business, particularly as the majority of residents work and shop in London, with which Epping will never compete, or will use the internet as they are never in Epping in working hours. More housing in Epping will inevitably mean more people commuting to London, and will not equate to a significant demand for new shops particularly as there is spare space available at the moment. However, if you want to build on the Sports Centre site you need to replace it within the town, especially if you will now have even more people living here. Or are you wanting everyone to 'keep fit' by driving their cars miles to get to another site??

Response to the Draft Local Plan Consultation 2016 (Regulation 18)

5. Do you agree with the proposals for new employment development?

Agree

Please explain your choice in Question 5:

No objections to the principles stated. The council must accept however that whilst the aspiration to create more employment locally is to be applauded, the area will always be dependent upon London where the vast majority of local residents are employed. Therefore the council should put proportionally more effort into supporting transport links to London than in local employment as that is the best way to support the continued employment of persons living in the district.

6. Do you agree with the proposed sites in your area?

Epping (Draft Policy P 1):

No

Please provide reasons for your view on Epping:

The proposed developments are hugely unbalanced, being concentrated to the south and east of the town away from the facilities on the High Street and the Plain. We need to understand why this has changed so greatly from the previous draft. The developments are huge and will be high density due to proximity to Epping station, which will dramatically change the character and attractiveness of the area despite the councils stated aims (visually and through sheer number of new inhabitants). Green Belt will be built on up to the edge of the Motorway, which will be visually intrusive and detrimental to the environment. The case for the vital need to build on green Belt is not made. The utilities and narrow roads in the south of Epping will not cope with the huge increase in traffic - Brook Road is already single flow only due to parked cars, and traffic exiting up onto the High Road at Bell Common is jammed at the lights at rush hour - the junction will not cope with even more. Gas pressure is already low and there is no evidence in the report of any assessment of electricity and gas capacity to the new sites. Due to the distance to the High Street up a hill without public transport people will drive up Bower Hill as a first choice, increasing noise, pollution and risk to pedestrians. Any development on the station car park cannot reduce parking or cause disruption during construction - local roads south of the station already suffer from uncontrolled commuter parking. And finally any development on the site of the sports centre without replacement of the centre with an equivalent facility WITHIN THE TOWN cannot possibly be allowed. If you want more people to live in Epping you need more facilities locally, not less,

and forcing people to drive long distances is not only a disincentive to exercise, but increasing further traffic problems. You would also be ripping the main social centre out of the town.

Loughton (Draft Policy P 2)

No opinion

Please provide reasons for your view on Loughton:

Waltham Abbey (Draft Policy P 3)

No opinion

Please provide reasons for your view on Waltham Abbey:

Chipping Ongar (Draft Policy P 4)

No opinion

Please provide reasons for your view on Chipping Ongar:

Buckhurst Hill (Draft Policy P 5)

No opinion

Please provide reasons for your view on Buckhurst Hill:

North Weald Bassett (Draft Policy P 6)

No opinion

Please provide reasons for your view on North Weald Bassett:

Chigwell (Draft Policy P 7)

No opinion

Please provide reasons for your view on North Weald Bassett:

Theydon Bois (Draft Policy P 8)

No opinion

Please provide reasons for your view on Theydon Bois:

Roydon (Draft Policy P 9)

No opinion

Please provide reasons for your view on Roydon:

Nazeing (Draft Policy P 10)

No opinion

Please provide reasons for your view on Nazeing:

Thornwood (Draft Policy P 11)

No opinion

Please provide reasons for your view on Thornwood:

Coopersale, Fyfield, High Ongar, Lower Sheering, Moreton, Sewardstonbury, Sheering, Stapleford Abbots (Draft Policy P 12)

No opinion

Please provide reasons for your view on Coopersale, Fyfield, High Ongar, Lower Sheering, Moreton, Sewardstonbury, Sheering, Stapleford Abbots:

Response to the Draft Local Plan Consultation 2016 (Regulation 18)

7. Do you agree with the approach to infrastructure provision being proposed in the plan?

Disagree

Please explain your choice in Question 7:

I have no confidence in the data used as a baseline for the current status of infrastructure - I believe your consultant has made statements about the status of the GP surgery and the Central Line which no local resident using these services would agree with. The statements in the infrastructure plan are worthless without a supporting baseline of the present situation that equates with the experience of residents, and includes firm facts regarding utilities such as Gas & Electricity capacity. Your statement in D4 / E on relocation of facilities is unacceptable in that it does not rule out the relocation of sports facilities outside of the communities they presently serve. The understandable fear is that future assessments will be biased towards the councils objectives of 'rationalising' facilities to one or two locations within the whole district just because they would then provide 'more comprehensive facilities', completely ignoring the fact that people need to be able to access these facilities easily without having to drive. Driving would be a significant disincentive to exercise for people who have little time after work. It would further worsen the traffic situation. It would also greatly affect the ability of elderly and young parents to exercise due to accessibility, and remove a key social centre from the town. The whole of Policy D4 is setting the groundwork in place to allow the demolishing of Epping Sports Centre and forcing residents to travel miles to exercise. It is full of 'get outs' which must be filled by definitive statements that will prevent the removal of sports facilities from the locality of Epping.

8. An Interim Sustainability Appraisal has been commissioned to support the Draft Local Plan. We would welcome any comments you may have on this.

None

9. Do you wish to comment on any other policies in the Draft Local Plan?

Response to the Draft Local Plan Consultation 2016 (Regulation 18)