

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

Stakeholder ID	4556	Name	Emma	Richards
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### Letter or Email Response:

Dear Sir / Madam, Response to the draft Local Plan on the development of Loughton. I am writing with my comments on the draft Local Plan and why I object to the proposals put forward to build on Loughton, particularly the Debden Estate which has in years gone past already has lost many of its 'green spaces' which were built on and it's now proposed that the last of the green spaces Debden has left be also taken away and built on: Jessel Green, Debden Station car park, Rochford Green, and Borders Lane playing field. Loss of Loughton's Green Spaces The loss of these areas will have a huge negative impact on the well-being of residents including myself and my family. We along with many residents use these areas over several times per week, for recreation, which includes (children's) play, different sports, and dog walking (which I do twice per day). There have also been many community events held over on Jessel Green too which have always been well attended. In summer months Jessel Green is a place where we frequently have social meetings with other members of the community or simply go there as a family. It is a well used and much loved area – and the only flat bit of green land in Debden so the only place you can go to play games which we do. All these things contribute towards a positive lifestyle, is positive for the mind, positive for health and wellbeing and creates wonderful memories. EFDC should we working on improving health and wellbeing for current residents as well as the future residents. Take away the green spaces and you would be doing just the opposite and creating more problems for the future - Loughton GP surgeries are currently over subscribed. There is evidence of one particular instance when a local mum phoned their GP surgery over 300 times just to get through to a receptionist – this is the norm NOW and would only get worse with additional residents. Your plans are a potential ticking time bomb. The stress and negative impact your plans would create would be seen for generations to come and you don't have the money, resources, or have made any firm plans in the draft consultation stating that new GP surgeries and dentist surgeries would be built to accommodate the new residents – and hopefully fix what is already a major problem in this town (If Brexit does go through then there will also be a lack of nursing staff available too). A document published by Essex County Council in April 2016 provided evidence that Loughton Broadway is an area with high deprivation and health inequalities. It also stated that Loughton Broadway and Loughton Fairmead are two of the four wards in the District with a higher than average percentage of children living in low income families. There have been many reports that show evidence and highlight the value of green spaces. This fact should not be ignored. What with the Debden Estate (Fairmead and Broadway) being an area of high deprivation this fact only strengthens why these green areas should not be built on. Prevention is better than cure. A report Green Spaces: The Benefits for London identified the following benefits that open spaces deliver: - Economic benefits – green spaces result in cost savings for government related health expenditure can attract businesses to locate and encourage tourism; - Health and wellbeing – green spaces can play a vital role in promoting healthy lifestyles, reducing stress and preventing illness; - Social Inclusion, community

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development – green spaces give people the chance to participate in design management and care of local spaces fostering local pride. They are places to socialise and because access is free provide an affordable alternative to other leisure activities as well as allowing children to develop socialisation and motor skills through play; Education and Lifelong Learning - green spaces provide an outdoor classroom for schools, and provide work and experience and learning opportunities in environmental management; Environment and Ecology - green spaces help counter pollution, cool the air, increase biodiversity and provide wildlife corridors, serve as 'lungs' for towns and cities, absorb noise, and lessen rainwater runoff; - Heritage and Culture - green spaces are part of the heritage and culture of local communities. They provide venues for local festivals and civic celebration. Green spaces must be located within easy reach of the communities they serve. Five minutes' walk would be considered easy reach. To say that Epping Forest is in easy reach of communities in the Debden Estate is unrealistic. The above report reiterates and confirms what I have previously stated and as a resident can confirm first hand that this report is a very true account. To also add, I do not drive and any alternative area I could go to walk my dog or to simply enjoy a green space would involve a bus journey – one which I could ill afford to do regularly and is clearly not workable when needing to walk my dog. Not also for the fact that the only bus taking you out of the Debden Estate will soon be the No. 20 bus which runs 3 times per hour weekdays and twice hourly at weekends. I would have minimal opportunity to escape the concrete jungle which it would become if built on like you propose. Other reports which confirm the benefits of green spaces include; - Natural England Commissioned Report NECR067 Green space access green space use physical activity and overweight. This was published in April 2011. - The Houses of Parliament Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology issued in October 2016 a POSTnote no 538 on Green Space and Health. - Public Health England Health Equity Evidence Review 8: Local action on health inequalities : Improving access to green spaces. This was published in September 2014. - The Land Trust: The Value of Our Green Space. This was published in January 2016. ALL above reports provide evidence on the value of green spaces, the health benefits, enhances biodiversity, supports natural environment, encourages community cohesion, provides educational opportunities, and contributes to uplifting the economic value of communities. Without doubt there are many more reports easily available which too would state similar findings. With Jessel Green, the cost of building would increase as the land is clearly bogged down and there is talk that there is a stream that runs underneath. The Cottage Loaf public house across the road to Jessel Green is 'built on stilts' therefore it's unable to have a cellar because of the ground it stands on. Transport Central line Those that commute west on the Central line (my partner included) will have a new struggle to get into work. It has been made clear by Jo Cox at TfL that they are at maximum capacity NOW and the system could not cope with additional passengers. - It is physically impossible to make carriages larger; - They cannot lengthen the number of carriages because of health and safety and the length of platforms at stations. - They cannot 'up' the frequency of trains as again, health and safety would be an issue, and because of the signalling system. Nothing can be done to accommodate extra passengers except to wait until a train arrives that has space (my partner gets to the station for 6.50am every morning and trains are already full). Waiting in hope that a train arrives that they're able to alight could be lengthy in time. This clearly would often result in persons being late for work and facing possible disciplinaries. Cramming too many persons onto a carriage, which would happen in the frantic panic of getting to work, is a potential health hazard and again all this would result in a negative impact to mental well-being and productivity in the workplace. Any one who uses the Central line frequently (myself included as I used to work uptown for 20 years) dread the journey as it stands. It is known as an unreliable and overcrowded line and adding the possible increase of commuters would be creating a whole new mess not only for passengers in Epping Forest but also passengers from other boroughs along the track heading towards London. Buses I've already mentioned about the only bus into and out of Debden would soon only be the No. 20 bus. At present even with the No. 167 still in place these buses can be extremely packed especially around school hours. Quite often I have waited a considerable length of time for a bus to arrive which is quite demoralising and this will only become worse if the 167 is taken away for the Debden part of its service. I appreciate cuts need to be made in the current climate but it's also clear that Debden is taking the brunt of any cuts or changes – the high deprivation area where people need more assistance not cuts! Cars Those that drive often find it difficult to find a parking space outside their own home as well as when visiting the local shops or High Street. Adding additional residents who would most likely drive cars, would increase this problem tenfold. A recent publication (December 2016) from the Daily Mail interviewed past proprietors of shops that have now closed and all were quoted with saying parking was a main issue as to why their businesses closed. What with high rental costs the problem with parking puts off potential customers from shopping at their local shops. Alternative means of getting to the shops will also be reduced if the 167 bus route doesn't cover Debden which will have a detrimental impact on local businesses. Other problems from cars include traffic which at

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times is simply ridiculous in and around Loughton. Adding cars to the road will only make the current problem worse. The state of the residential roads in and around Loughton particularly Debden are appalling. Personally, I have never experienced so many pot holes in one town. This ongoing problem has never been fully addressed and will only get worse if there are additional cars using the town. Extra cars on the road will clearly not be good for the environment and will not assist with the governments target to reduce carbon emissions. Water Sewage and Drainage Systems My understanding too is that what with the additional drainage system to new houses on the greens it would increase water rate costs to residents. Everyone is living with austerity but I reiterate this is a highly deprived area and even those that work and not on any benefits like my own household simply could not afford a rise in another bill. It is a concern how EFDC would manage to reduce flood risks. It is known that residents in both Willingale Road and Colson Road have suffered from floods in the past. This would only become worse and other areas put more at risk if there were housing development. Loughton is Tier 1 at risk area according to PFRA. Environment Increased housing would cause pollution and to the 'green corridor' through Loughton, which was created to encourage local wildlife. Absence of green spaces would deny local wildlife to flourish including birds butterflies and importantly bees. Taking away our green spaces would take away the 'lungs' of our community and therefore create air pollution which would have a negative impact on people's health. The new houses would not be in keeping with the current landscape. Any high rise homes built on car parks would be an eye sore and ruin any landscape. New homes built on the green would not fit in with the local houses. Housing design and cost I reiterate the design of the proposed homes won't be in keeping with current homes in the Debden area and would be an eye sore. However another concern would be the quality of the houses that are made and their cost. It has been promised that a percentage of housing would be 'affordable housing' however as these are not council homes then I can't see how they are seen as 'affordable' — these would be affordable to those who are already on the housing ladder and are looking at upgrading from a flat to a house. First time buyers would not be able to afford a house in the Loughton area even with a reduction to become 'affordable'. What is affordable is to allocate a percentage for council tenants however as it would be a private company building on the land and their main concern would be profit, we all know council homes will not be built. Obviously if the homes that are to built are then high quality you have already priced a certain amount of the community out of purchasing a home — isn't this the 'reason' you want to build these home — so our children can buy a home in the town they grew up in? The size of the current development on the Winston Churchill development is shocking and an eye sore. Original designs did not show the true scale of the building in fact I believe it wasn't as big — how could we trust that any future promises would be honest? Any building must be kept within the norm for building heights in the area (excluding the Winston Churchill development). Homes built on the car parks would have a significant negative impact to the landscape character and the physical and nature appearance of ancient landscapes. Facilities and Services My daughter goes to Hereward Primary School and my son is due to start next September. This school has already lost its Infant school due to homes being built on the land as well as losing the majority of its playing field again to build homes on it. During the autumn and winter months the whole school has to play on the front playground which clearly isn't huge. There is not room to expand the school any further (it was expanded a few years ago) unless they lose more playing field which clearly would be detrimental to the wellbeing of the students. Each year has an allocated 60 spaces. For my son's year I have been duly informed that 30 spaces out of those 60 have already been taken up by younger siblings of present students. Schools have long waiting lists and often children do not get a place at the local school within their catchment area. This is outrageous and would only get worse if we welcomed new residents to the area. The school system simply cannot cope and unless new schools are built this is a ticking time bomb for the future. As most primary school have expanded their schools this will have an effect on secondary schools. There aren't enough secondary schools in the area to offer places to all local students and it is said the consequence of this will be seen within 5-years and this is without any new homes being built. Doctors surgeries It is an ongoing issue at present that locals cannot get through to their local GP surgeries let alone get an appointment. On average it is a 3 week wait to be able to see a doctor. ALL GP practices in the area are over-subscribed at present and any additional new residents would clearly have a detrimental impact on the health and wellbeing of local residents. Emergency services Loughton Police Station has closed and the nearest police station open to the public is Harlow. I couldn't get there as I don't drive and there are poor transport links to get you there. It has been very noticeable amongst residents the impact of the police cuts (and from also losing a fire engine from Loughton Fire Station) and people are very worried about crime and personal safety as we have seen a visible increase in crime in the area. Most crime isn't reported as the new system doesn't seem to be working for us residents. Any additional residents would only escalate this problem. The West Essex and Herts Air Ambulance has landed on Jessel Green 5 times in the past few weeks to attend emergencies. Had Jessel

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Green not be there where would the ambulance be able to land. A safe landing area needs to be available for any future emergencies. Alternative suggestions for building I understand the need for additional affordable housing in the South east of the country, but oppose overdevelopment in the Loughton area and strongly believe other options should be explored further. Other towns in Essex have put forward the idea of a new garden village. If it is acceptable then a garden village at Woolston Manor Golf course should be considered although this would still not solve the problems surrounding the use of the central line GP surgeries transport, etc. Other alternatives to consider are the Metropolitan Police Club in Chigwell and the farmland that backs onto Willingale Road as the farmer is not renewing his lease – although this particular area then goes against all the reasons why Debden should not be expanded any further (there have been 7 expansions with the past few years losing substantial areas including green areas and playing fields). Ideally we would want you to consider expanding further out away from Loughton - Loughton town is full! Conclusion The proposed intensification of Loughton and in particular Debden will have a serious adverse effect on the local community. This would effect the present community as well as any future generations who would be deprived of enjoying and benefiting from any local public Greens. Alternative places are available please consider these and please listen to the people. We don't want you building on our green spaces! Finally, I ask that you take the opportunity to review the draft application and grant Village Green status to Jessel Green as part of the Local Plan. Please acknowledge residents views on this (which you would have had a better response had the plan not be rushed through to meet your deadline thus giving residents only 6 weeks to respond. Notices about the draft plan have been very weak and there are so many residents who are still unaware of the draft consultation. I expressed this at Lopping Hall to which that fact was dismissed - I hope the same attitude does not apply to the pleas of those who have responded). Save Loughton Town and keep it as it is for the sake off the current and future residents of Loughton to whom you serve. With regards ....Redacted.... (Resident for over 3-years and the reason why we moved to Debden was because of the green spaces available. I am a mother to two young children and own a dog that needs regular exercise. We use Jessel Green at least twice a day, everyday. We find this area vital for our health, wellbeing and enjoyment. My partner uses the Central line and buses daily and is a car driver. Our children both use the local school and nursery. Your decision would have a severe impact to our future). Please save Debden.

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