

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

Stakeholder ID	3520	Name	Therese	Gregory
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Method	Letter
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Date	12/12/2016
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### Letter or Email Response:

Response to Epping Forest District Council Local Plan Do you agree with the overall vision that the Draft Local Plan sets out for Epping Forest District? (See paragraph 3.26, Chapter 3). Although I agree in principal with the vision for the Epping Forest Area I do not believe that is what is being proposed under the actual plan. Where the vision states that the council will "respect the attributes of different towns and villages", I do not believe that this is what the plan will achieve. It will completely destroy the attributes of much of Loughton and in particular Debden (Rochford Green & Jessel Green and Loughton Swimming pool developments) by building on green spaces which are an integral part of the character of the area since we have lived here since the 1950s. It is not enough to just protect children's playgrounds the land attached to those playgrounds can be used by both children and adults alike. Although Loughton is within the green belt there are actually very few local tended local areas which residents can enjoy. Even in large cities, such as London and New York there are large areas of open spaces which all residents can use because the health and well being aspects of open spaces area well recognised but the plan ignores the importance of local green spaces and plans to build on green spaces will mean that these areas will be lost to present and future residents forever. This is a quick, easy fix to a real problem and will not reap real, long term benefits but will I believe cause problems in the future. Also, I understand that some of these areas that the council proposes to build on currently have applications pending for village green status, I do not see mention made of this fact. I note that there does not appear to be a proposal to build on the green spaces of Theydon Bois (the village green and the land opposite), and while I applaud and support this action to preserve these areas why has the Council not extended the same protection to Debden and Loughton? I live in Abridge where there is actually very little tended areas which are easy to walk on and enjoy and in common with much of the aging population of the area I recognise the importance of exercise for physical and mental well being and recognise I have a responsibility to exercise to prevent creating a drain on local and NHS services in the future. Therefore, on at least four occasions per week I travel to Debden so I can exercise around the green spaces of Debden, particularly Rochford Green. These areas, which are within a housing environment and provide a safe area for me, a lone woman to exercise and enjoy fresh air. This cannot be achieved in Epping Forest as I would not feel safe and the terrain is unsuitable for older people much of the year and is also not easily accessible. Epping Forest is also relatively difficult to access as it has steep hills and is by virtue of its status quite lonely. Each time I go to Debden there are always other residents enjoying the space, whether they are children playing, mothers with young children, elderly people chatting or people walking their dogs, all are enjoying the space. The importance of these spaces cannot be overestimated, if a widowed or single person is retired the simple act of getting a dog and walking it on the green spaces, allows social interaction with other dog walkers and people in general which is not possible if people walk dogs on the street. It creates a sense of community which is beneficial to both the individual but also to the

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impact that poor health and well being has on the economy of Epping Forest and would be lost if these areas are built on. Secondly, the plan states that Epping Forest Local Plan will build a more sustainable economy, yet the key infrastructure issues such as transport, schools and local health economy that would support the plan, both in the short and long term are entirely absent from the plan. The Council seems to delegate responsibility for this to other organisations, for example CCGs for health but the Council has little or no control over the direction that CCGs take for health provision. Local infrastructure is already under severe strain. It is almost impossible to travel through, to or from Debden or Loughton during rush hour (6.00 am - 10.00 am and 3.30 pm to 7.00 pm) and although the road widening scheme at Debden may have some impact in the short term with the proposed building of a retail park and the resultant increased traffic this benefit will quickly be eroded and overtaken. Do you agree with our approach to the distribution of new housing across Epping Forest District? (See Draft Policy SP 2, Chapter 3). No, the additional housing, in particular in the Loughton area, does not have a clear infrastructure strategy. Since I have lived in the area, there has been a great deal of building on both school sites, the surround land and schools playing fields, e.g. Fairmead, Willingale School Playing field, Lucton Boys and Lucton Girls and the Brook School but there has been no noticeable increase in infrastructure to support this. The roads are already severely congested with all the health implications relating to traffic fumes that go with that and the Central Line is at near capacity already. The Council's plan for employment will surely increase demand on the road network as the jobs proposed are likely to be low paid, minimum wage retail employment which will mean that employees are unable to be able to live in the area and commute by foot. If the housing in the area is to be increased where are the school places to be found? As a resident of Abridge, our children had to travel to Epping for secondary education with the growing birth rate where are the extra school places to come from as all green space seems to have been ear marked for extra housing but no areas set aside for the extra school places that families will need. In fact the Council has removed a covenant on the land opposite Epping Forest College, which was for the purposes of education, and to use the land to build on. This seems to be further evidence of a short term fix which will create a problem in the future when families in those houses need to educate their children. The current proposals are not credible or sustainable until all the other supporting structures which relate to infrastructure are clear and have been submitted to residents for comment and scrutiny. Do you agree with the proposals for development around Harlow? (See Draft Policy SP 3, Chapter 3). No comment For the two town centres and four district centres in the District the Draft Local Plan sets out a proposed primary shopping area which is intended to protect and encourage retail uses (See Draft Policy E 2 and Section 5 - Places). Do you agree with the proposed shopping areas? I am unsure how the council is to support the plan for shopping areas. Retail is struggling across the UK and in particular there are a number of shops in Abridge in Abridge has declined and been replaced with housing and Debden and Loughton High Street have empty shops and plans are now in place to replace shops in Loughton High Road with part retail part housing in order to enable developers to build houses. Any empty units tend to be replaced by either estate agents, coffee shops or national chains and there are too few independent retail units. I am not convinced that the council has adequate policies in place or in planning to deliver this proposal. Do you agree with the proposals for new employment development? (See Draft Policy E 1, Chapter 4). The vision for employment in the Epping Forest area is very limited in nature, and displays a lack of ambition for local people. The council's employment plan is limited to retail sites which will produce minimum or living wage at best. This will not enable people working in those jobs to be able to afford to live in the local area and will place further stress on the local infrastructure as people will need to commute to the area. What are the council's plans to attract high skills jobs to the area. This has not happened in the past 50 years so it seems unlikely that the council will be able to provide strategies that will bring high skilled jobs to the area in the next 50 years. The plan discusses the proposed "Cambridge to Stanstead" corridor, and the the need to attract high skill jobs to area, but there is no evidence of how the council is to provide these types of jobs in Epping Forest nor how this employment will impact on the Epping Forest area. Also as someone who has put my children through the education system in the local area I can confirm that the ability to access really good schools is a challenge and we had to look outside the area to ensure that our children received a good standard of 16 plus education and were able to go forward to university in order that they were equipped to face the employment challenges that they will undoubtedly meet in the coming years. There are too are too few schools that are good or outstanding in Epping Forest and I do not see anything within the education strategy that will address this problem to allow young residents to meet the challenges that will come in the next 50 years. Do you agree with the proposed sites in your area? (See Chapter 5) Do not feel that you have to comment on all of the areas. Although Abridge is not directly affected I do not support the proposed sites in the Loughton area. The fact that there are little to no facilities within Abridge this requires me to travel to Debden or Loughton to access shops, chemists or banks etc.

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Debden Broadway is heavily congested, with significant traffic congestion on a daily basis from Abridge to Debden or Loughton. The new retail site at Langston Park will add to this congestion and further housing will exacerbate the problems. As there is no tube station at Abridge and the bus service 481 is hourly and totally unreliable it is necessary to drive to Debden to park to travel to London. If Epping and Debden car parks are to be built on it will make it parking impossible and will force commuters to park in Debden, making life miserable for Debden residents. If parking restrictions are imposed, as in Loughton (no parking at all for one hour in the day) where will people park? Much is made of the close vicinity to Epping Forest, however as previously explained in my response, Epping Forest although lovely is not easily accessible to older people as to reach it requires a long walk, the ground within the forest is often wet and uneven and access to it from say Baldwins Hill is very steep. Also as a lone woman I do not feel comfortable walking alone in the forest area and it would deter me from exercising alone however from many of the proposed greens, the council wishes to build on, are close and easy to access and are in residential areas which are safe and a comfortable environment. Given that the council admits that the age of the local population is to increase dramatically how are people such as myself realistically expected to access the forest area as a means of recreation and to exercise? Although I live in Abridge and am surrounded by farmland there is very little areas that I can use and feel safe. This is certainly the case with Bluebell Woods which I would not use alone, hence the reason by I like to exercise in Debden. Do you agree with the approach to infrastructure provision being proposed in the plan? (See Chapter 6). It is difficult to fully respond to the question given the lack of firm details provided by the council as part of this consultation. Chapter 6 notes that an investment plan will be developed (after the consultation has finished). Residents cannot reasonably be expected to make informed choices on the future of their areas future when there is no information. Secondly how will decision made as part of the investment strategy impact on the plan? What happens if, at a later date, the council decides not to make certain investments in local infrastructure? Will this cause the Local Plan to be revised, or will the council implement the Local Plan, regardless? How will investments be funded? Will the council look to increase Council tax in order to fund a Local Plan, which is likely to be against the wishes of local people? An Interim Sustainability Appraisal has been commissioned to support the Draft Local Plan. We would welcome any comments you may have on this. (See Technical Document page). No comment. Do you wish to comment on any other policies in the Draft Local Plan? I am a reasonably intelligent person and feel passionately about the area I live in but I have found the language and the actual process of commenting on the Local Plan to be extremely difficult to understand and negotiate around in order to submit a coherent response to the plan. These proposals will have significant affect on the health and well being of Epping Forest residents and I do not feel the council has made it easy or accessible to all residents to comment and have their voice heard on such an important proposal. I feel the way that the council has put forward its proposals will have excluded and deterred sections of the community from having their voices heard. How would an elderly person with mobility problems access information points easily and the website was confusing and would deter some people which is neither fair nor good for community cohesion. I also don't feel the Council has done all that it could to advertise the local plan, simply dropping a pamphlet through the door which looks remarkably similar to leaflets which tell residents about recycling did not, I feel, convey the serious impact the plan will have on our lives. Yours faithfully [Redacted] The site currently looking over this parcel sees right over into London which could be lost with development. Access issues with the current private road. approximately 66 35/40

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