

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

Stakeholder ID 2440

Name

James

Horwood

...Redacted...

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:

While I do understand that more housing needs to be built to support the population growth in London, I believe that the plans are unreasonable and particularly disproportionately allocated in Epping and North Weald. It is unreasonable to alter the green belt zones to this extent. Congestion and parking is a huge problem in these towns as it is. To increase the populations by 30-80% without any clear direction of how you propose to tackle the strain on infrastructure and local facilities is wholly unreasonable.

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:

I believe that too much of the distribution has been designated to Epping, Theydon Bois and North Weald. These are areas surrounded by special areas of conservation and development to this extent will have a severe impact on the wildlife, habitats, pollution levels, not to mention the extra strain on rail and infrastructure. These are small towns full of character which is very important and treasured by the locals. The construction of soulless housing estates and multi-storey will compromise this greatly.

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

**Disagree**

Please explain your choice in Question 3:

While I agree that out of all of the proposed areas, the areas around Harlow are probably most suitable for development, it is clear that the roads and transport networks in Harlow are heavily under strain. The roads are gridlocked during rush hour and there would need to be another station or railway link to support the growing population.

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

Epping?

**No opinion**

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:

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

**Disagree**

Please explain your choice in Question 5:

In particular, I believe that the plans to develop North Weald Basset for employment development are very excessive. This will totally industrialise the area without regard for the surrounding forest, nature reserves, wildlife and transport links.

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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:

I feel most strongly against the proposed development of Epping. The areas targeted for development are areas in which wildlife should thrive and there is no suitable access. There are only two primary schools and one secondary school in the town. Parking is a severe problem, as well as congestion, particular by the Bell Hotel traffic lights. The town could not possibly support a 30% population increase in the next two years. The site suggested behind Kendal Avenue, Hartland Road, in particular is a hotspot for wildlife. I have seen badgers, deer, squirrels, bats, grass snakes, slow worm, adders, foxes, stoats, bees, hare, owls and many unusual birds including woodpecker. To develop here would involve deforestation which would disturb the incredible habitats that thrive here. Many of the trees here are ancient and subject to preservation orders. The area is hilly and drainage is poor and prone to flooding. There is no access to this field, with the exception of a very narrow private lane approximately 9ft in width. This is too narrow for more than one car. Far too narrow for construction vehicles or ambulances. The area near Bower Hill / Ivy Chimneys Road is also unsuitable and a beautiful wildlife hotspot. The Central Line tube would not be able to support the extra commuters. The carriages are generally full and crowded by the time the train reaches Debden. Having spoken with a professional ecologist, the following points have been raised that are applicable to every area within the development plan:

- Cumulative Ecological Effects: It is fundamental that the Council take full consideration of the ecological impacts of the proposed development both individually and with regard to the entire housing allocation which may be delivered as part of the long-term development plan. Piecemeal development has resulted in many significant and irreversible impacts on biodiversity. Many species simply will not be present at comparable levels with this level of development pressure.
- Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation/Site of Special Scientific Interest: Whilst development may not necessarily directly impact upon the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC) or Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), the effects of an additional 11,400 homes around the protected site will inevitably have an adverse impact. Whilst the basis for the SAC designation is habitat as opposed to species based, there will be considerably more public users and this will increase the risk of habitat loss and/or change. Such users will include increased dog walkers, cyclists, horse riders etc. It is presumed that irrespective of any ecological impact assessment of individual development plots that there will be an over-arching 'Appropriate Assessment' which considers the specific impact on the SAC interest features. The SSSI designation is a more all-encompassing designation which reflects the outstanding fauna of the forest. Again there will be a significant risk of adverse impact on a wide variety of fauna.
- Species Specific Concerns: Epping Forest and its surrounds supports an extremely diverse range of flora and fauna. These include many species with a highly-restricted distribution including several which are protected under both national and European legislation. The forest supports at least ten species of bats, all of which are fully protected under national and European legislation. It is very difficult to see how both individual developments along with the long-term development plan in its entirety can ever be delivered without increasing levels of light pollution, increasing habitat fragmentation, and increasing disturbance generally. In short, there will inevitably be an adverse impact on this group of species. This is also likely to be the case for the internationally protected Great Crested Newt along with other UK protected species such as Adder, Slow-worm and Grass Snake. With regard to the former species, there is little evidence that Great Crested Newt can ever survive well in close proximity to large-scale residential development. Factors such as increased habitat severance, increased predation and the increased risk of fish being introduced into breeding ponds is so high that the species can rarely, if ever, be maintained at a similar and favourable conservation status. With regard to other species, the forest and surrounds provides a very important resource for birds. The impact of an additional 11,400 homes will undoubtedly reduce these populations for a number of reasons, particularly habitat loss, loss of feeding resources, increased disturbance and increased predation from domestic cats.

Loughton (Draft Policy P 2)

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**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**

Please provide reasons for your view on North Weald Bassett:

The proposed plan for North Weald is obscene and totally disproportionate in comparison to the rest of the district. North Weald lacks facilities and wide roads and would not be able to support this level of development. The industrialisation of the entire town will have a very negative impact on the surrounding forest and nature reserves, particularly from light pollution, noise pollution and general pollution. Please also see points raised within my response to the proposed sites in Epping.

Chigwell (Draft Policy P 7)

**No**

Please provide reasons for your view on North Weald Bassett:

Chigwell has already undergone a great deal of development in recent years. It is unreasonable to propose further change.

Theydon Bois (Draft Policy P 8)

**No**

Please provide reasons for your view on Theydon Bois:

The proposed sites are areas of beauty that should be preserved as per the original aim of the green belt initiative. Similarly to Epping, the area lacks the facilities and infrastructure to sustain this level of development. The Central Line would not be able to accommodate this many people. It is already a struggling and poor service as it is. Please also see points raised within my response to the proposed sites in Epping.

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

Please provide reasons for your view on Thornwood:

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

No

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

Coopersale is my main area of concern. There are plans to build housing within the Nature Reserve. I would be concerned by the impact this will have on the local wildlife. This area should be preserved. Many of the trees here are ancient and subject to preservation orders. Please also see points raised within my response to the proposed sites in Epping.

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

Strongly disagree

Please explain your choice in Question 7:

The plans are not clear or specific enough to be able to approve.

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8. An Interim Sustainability Appraisal has been commissioned to support the Draft Local Plan. We would welcome any comments you may have on this.
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9. Do you wish to comment on any other policies in the Draft Local Plan?