

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

Stakeholder ID	4627	Name	Helen	Harris	Royal Mail
Method	Letter				
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### Letter or Email Response:

We are instructed by our client, Royal Mail Group Ltd (Royal Mail), to submit representations to Epping Forest District Council - Draft Local Plan Consultation 2016. Background Royal Mail is the UK's designated Universal Postal Service Provider, supporting customers, businesses and communities across the country. This means it is the only company to have a statutory duty to collect and deliver letters six days a week (and packets five days a week) at an affordable and geographically uniform price to every address in the UK. Royal Mail's services are regulated by Ofcom. Land use planning is an important issue for Royal Mail with regard to protecting its assets and operations, and in planning future investment across its estate and supporting its infrastructure. On this basis, Royal Mail's involvement in the plan making process and working with Local Planning Authorities to sharpen and influence planning policy is considered critical to the future success of its business and in its continued role as the UK's designated Universal Postal Service Provider. Royal Mail Properties Royal Mail has a statutory duty to provide efficient mail sorting and delivery services within the District of Epping Forest. This service is currently provided from the following freehold and leasehold Royal Mail properties: ?? Epping Delivery Office Ongar Delivery Office Royal Mail has confirmed there are no plans to relocate from any of the above properties in the foreseeable future. Representation Cushman & Wakefield has reviewed Epping Forest District Council's Draft Local Plan document in the context of its impact on the operations of the Royal Mail's properties within the district. The delivery offices are of strategic importance to Royal Mail in ensuring they are able to continue to fulfil their statutory duty for mail collection and delivery. The subject of this representation is to make Epping Forest District Council aware of Royal Mail's operations within the district. These representations made on behalf of Royal Mail are in reference to the following two key issues: 1) Housing & Employment Growth 2) Employment Housing & Employment Growth & Future Postal Provision It is evident from the New Local Plan Consultation document that Epping Forest District Council has positive housing growth targets for the period up until 2033, although it is acknowledged that the target quantum of housing is currently the subject of independently assessed housing need studies. The consultation document states in Draft Policy SP2: Spatial Development Strategy 2011-2033 that the Council will provide approximately 11,400 new homes and 10,000 new jobs through the Local Plan. Such an increase in the number of dwellings is likely to have impacts on the capacity of Royal Mail's operations, including its ability to provide effective, universal postal services across the District. As an indicative guideline, for every 500 new dwellings proposed, one additional postal round (described by Royal Mail as a "walk") is required. As such, it is considered that the expected growth targets in the New Local Plan Consultation document will potentially have major capacity implications for those existing delivery offices. As a result, Royal Mail, as a statutory provider, is likely to seek the expansion of its existing assets or require the allocation of sites for additional delivery offices, particularly in those locations where housing developments will be concentrated and where existing delivery offices are nearing capacity.

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Given the aforementioned, it is imperative that the ongoing role/functions of Royal Mail are duly considered throughout the forthcoming stages of Epping Forest District Council's Local Plan. In this way, Royal Mail must continue to be informed about proposals for strategic locations, planned expansions and growth areas to allow for appropriate and timely business development and planning. Employment The aforementioned Royal Mail sites are well established, having operated successfully for a number of years, serving a wide catchment area. Due to the nature of use, operations extend well beyond the normal working day, including associated vehicular movements. The potential juxtaposition of alternative, possibly sensitive land uses particularly residential uses adjacent or within close proximity to the sites is of direct concern to our client. Given the business functions of Royal Mail, operations often take place in sensitive hours in the early mornings and late evenings which sees delivery times and the constant movement of delivery vehicles and could therefore result in significant amenity issues should sensitive land uses, particularly new dwellings, be located nearby. Royal Mail are generally supportive of Draft Policy E1 Employment Sites where it is recognised that there is pressure on employment land from competing land uses and the Council will seek to retain and where necessary enhance existing employment sites and premises. It is agreed that the change of use of existing employment sites or premises to uses other than those for which they are designated should be resisted. We request that a robust replacement policy position is adopted by the council to ensure that any sensitive land uses proposed as part of redevelopment, including residential use, do not prejudice the future operations of existing surrounding employment uses. It is considered that additional policy wording is introduced to similarly robustly safeguard those Royal Mail properties and other employment uses which are located outside of designated strategic employment areas against the implementation of residential development or other insensitive land uses which would be contrary to, and which do not provide direct, ongoing support to, existing business operations. This approach accords with adopted Government guidance set out in the NPPF which advises that local planning authorities should help achieve economic growth by planning proactively to meet the development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21st century. The NPPF also advises that local planning authorities should support the existing business sectors, taking account of whether they are expanding or contracting. Conclusion Royal Mail would welcome further engagement with Epping Forest District Council particularly where proposals would impact on the usage of the highway and allocations / sites adjacent to the Delivery Offices coming forward for redevelopment. I trust that these representations are acceptable and would be grateful if you could acknowledge receipt and keep me informed of future stages of the adoption of the Epping Forest District Council's Local Plan and other planning policy documents.