

12 The Courtyard
Spital Road
Maldon
Essex CM9 6DX

8th January 2015

Dear David Vickery,

Maldon Society LDP hearing written statement

Although the Maldon Society has commented on the local plan often and at length during its preparation, it is worth attempting to succinctly summarise our current position prior to your hearing, for your consideration.

Justified?

The Maldon Society would have preferred a fairer distribution of development across the District, particularly with more development near settlements with railway connections. The sole justification for clustering such a high proportion of growth immediately next to Maldon town and Heybridge is if, *in reality*, it produces expenditure on already needed strategic infrastructure, in particular

- > primary ring roads and connections with the A12
- > proper flood diversion measures especially in Heybridge, and not just local amelioration

Sound and Effective?

The LDP process, at least at a later detailed garden suburb level once the principles of distribution had been established by MDC, has laudably encouraged consultation with the public. The two garden suburbs have been robustly discussed with the public. Their housing cannot however exist in isolation.

The scale of the proposals is such that it can only be deemed sound if the various responsible bodies involved, particularly health, highways, transport, and education, can both find and synchronise the significant funding required to create and extend **viable** communities, including connections with the existing High Street and local community provision, as well as the strategic provision already mentioned. Unless viable communities are to be sustained throughout the practical evolution of the plan, it cannot be considered to be either sound or effective.

Consequence of rejection?

The Maldon Society is concerned that the LDP hearing is designed to be more focussed on the legalities and processes of the plan's preparation, rather than its practical outcomes. We wish to stress that if the LDP should ultimately be deemed by yourself to be unsound or ineffective, it follows that more piecemeal development, with fewer mechanisms to enable strategic provision and effective coordination, would automatically be even **less** sound and effective.

In such an eventuality, we look to you to please phrase your judgement in such a way that it would clearly prohibit, or give grounds for the district to successfully refuse, more than mere infilling or very small scale development (less than 10 dwellings) taking the place of the LDP next to Maldon town or Heybridge.

Just as importantly, within the immediate environment of both places the terrain outside the defined suburbs, including some of the reserved land, is even less suited to development, usually because of flooding risk or undue visible prominence. A moratorium needs to be placed now and in the future on these non LDP locations and we look to you to advise MDC how this can best be done in a way acceptable to central government

In other words we would urge you to ensure that the lengthy LPP process is not ultimately made ridiculous by permitting developers to make far less worthy and less viable applications which under current interpretations of the planning process cannot be robustly refused.

Also, whatever your views on the LDP, we would ask for the CIL proposals to proceed urgently in order to generate much needed funds for our communities.

Yours sincerely,

Judith Lea, on behalf of The Maldon Society

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