

Maldon Local Plan Inquiry Submission

Matter 7:

Rural Housing and Settlement boundaries

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Hoare,
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Architects

- Issue 1 – S2, S7
- Issue 2 – S8
- Issue 3 – Latchingdon, Sharp's Farm
A Sustainable Housing Proposal

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Issue 1: Objection to Policies S2 and S7

S2:

We object to S2 as there is limited qualification as to why the rural areas should be set a restricted target of 420 new dwellings.

The policy should recognise that the rural communities of Maldon need a range of new housing and an up to date minimum figure should be identified reflecting current need. This is qualified by the Updated SHMA 2014 that suggests 39.1% of the concealed affordable housing need as shown in paragraph 12.5.18 is located within the District rural south area. This gives a good indication that a 10% allocation to the rural areas is out of balance with the overall level of required affordable housing.

We therefore request the Inquiry considers an increased figure for the rural areas.

Maldon District Council (MDC) recognise that the local area has previously provided for a very low level of housing growth. This is a threat to the long term prosperity, economic and social well-being of the District and is relevant to the principal settlements and rural villages such as Latchingdon.



This submission objects to this policy housing target. Instead, a greater buffer should be adopted to redress the poor performance in housing delivery from which the District has consistently suffered. It is recognised that Maldon suffers an acute need for housing development, particularly for affordable units and there is strong encouragement through the NPPF to meet unmet needs.

This representation seeks a review of the 4,410 minimum dwelling target and proposes that a higher buffer is used in order to better accord with NPPF requirements, with a greater allocation to the rural areas.

The District suffers from infrastructure constraints relating to highways, sewerage, flood-risk, school and health provision. Consequently there should be a requirement to consider additional sustainable edge of settlement housing development sites.

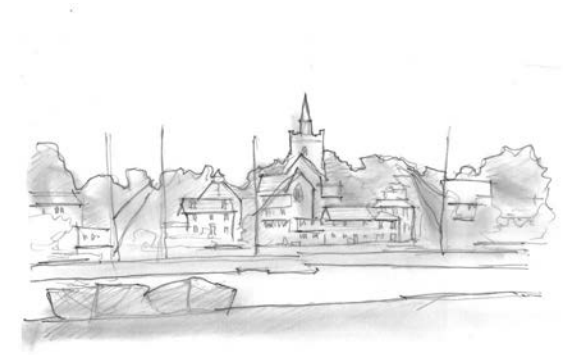
S7

We object to policy S7. This policy suggests that a Rural Allocations DPD will identify land for a minimum of 420 new dwellings. It goes on to say that North Fambridge should be specifically identified as providing 75 new homes.

As currently drafted, policy S7 does not reflect the positive position the NPPF takes in paragraphs 54 and 55 where it is identified that planning authorities should create policies responsive to local circumstances and encourage housing development to reflect local need. The NPPF recognises that market housing can also act as an enabler to facilitate delivery of additional affordable housing. In order to meet the NPPF objectives concerning rural areas, housing and economic development, a far greater allocation of the overall strategic housing figure for Maldon District should be directed to the rural villages. The identification of appropriate sites can properly take place through the use of Neighbourhood Planning proposals.

This representation therefore requests that a further criterion to policy S7 is added which could be referenced number 6 and drafted as follows:

- 6). The consideration of sustainable residential development within appropriate villages and settlements that will respond to local circumstances, provide affordable housing and will enhance and maintain the vitality of the rural community where the housing might be located.



Maldon

To be consistent with the NPPF, policy S7 should indicate that it is the ‘villages where sustainable residential development will contribute or underpin settlement vitality’ that should be identified as being capable of taking new housing development in the rural areas. The policy should recognise Latchingdon as a well-connected sustainable community of a good size which benefits from few environmental and physical landscape constraints; it is as capable as North Fambridge to accommodate growth of an appropriate scale.

In order to ensure that villages can accommodate appropriate sustainable residential development, a comprehensive settlement boundary review should be undertaken at the earliest opportunity to identify suitable sustainable residential development sites. This process might form part of the Rural Allocations DPD. We propose that the final paragraph of S7 be re-drafted as follows:

Each parish will be invited to work with the Council to identify appropriate *settlement boundaries to allow the promotion of sustainably located residential development required to support the long-term vitality and viability of the District’s villages* and to meet the needs for their area. *The objective being to promote sustainable development in rural areas, enhance the supply of rural areas’ housing and to locate additional market and affordable housing within the rural settlements where such development will better satisfy local needs whilst also facilitating long term economic improvements* Land will be allocated in the Rural Allocations DPD in accordance with the principles of sustainable development set out within the LDP and the following principles:



Risby, Suffolk – new village housing

We would also ask that the further criterion is amended as follows:

- a) Allocations will be of a scale that reflects the size and character of the village concerned, its position within the settlement hierarchy, its level of service provision, and availability of, or potential for, sustainable transport choices. *The scale of new housing and the identification of sustainable housing allocations must seek to enhance and/or maintain the vitality of rural communities.*
- b) Allocations must be acceptable within the infrastructure capacity of the settlement concerned, *or be able to properly address any infrastructure constraints through the use of appropriate planning conditions.*
- c) Allocations *should seek to protect* and, where possible, enhance the historic environment, character and settlement distinctiveness.
- d) *Where appropriate*, allocations *should* contribute towards meeting the District's affordable housing need.
- e) Allocations *should* contribute towards meeting the District's affordable housing need *subject to appropriate viability testing and agreement.*



Poundbury, Dorset - new village housing

Issue 2: Relating to Policy S8

This representation will comment on questions 8 and 9 raised by the Inspector concerning whether the hierarchy of rural villages needs to be amended to alter the status of particular settlements to ensure that they are capable of accepting new housing against the spatial strategy identified in policy S8. In addition, comment will be made on whether the settlement boundary has been correctly drawn for the village of Latchingdon.

Any growth in the rural villages should be related to a correct settlement hierarchy reflecting the size, function and physical capacity of the settlement. This is to ensure that a sustainable pattern of development emerges compliant with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) especially paragraphs 54 and 55.

To ensure that villages maintain their distinctive and varied characters, settlement boundaries should be drawn to control the location of housing development and settlement policy area alterations should allow for housing development to be well related to the core of the village without the development of locally sensitive sites.



Dedham, village centre



Dedham, 20th century housing

It is suggested that the opening sentence of policy S8 should be reworded as follows:

The Council recognise that Neighbourhood Planning should be used to reconsider whether boundary changes are appropriate to the rural villages in order to ensure settlements can properly accommodate sustainably located residential development. This is to ensure appropriate new housing may take place of an appropriate scale and character to the particular village where it is thought development could reasonably take place that will usefully underpin the long-term vitality and viability of that settlement. Following a settlement boundary reassessment, the Council will support sustainable development within the defined settlement boundaries.

Policy S8 should be further amended to better reflect a settlement hierarchy that takes into account current population, historic role, level of services and the constraints and opportunities of each place.

Policy S8 currently classifies Latchingdon as a ‘smaller village’ though its population is 1,182.

The population of the ‘larger villages’ identified in policy S8 taken from the March 2011 census is as follows:

| Village | Population |
|-----------------|------------|
| Great Totham | 735 |
| Mayland | 3,724 |
| Southminster | 4,025 |
| Tellesbury | 2,621 |
| Wickham Bishops | 3,788 |



Dedham



Latchingdon village plan showing existing services and facilities

The population figures show that Latchingdon should be recognised as a higher order settlement. As currently referenced, the policy will result in Latchingdon not fulfilling its true potential as a settlement that can accommodate residential growth.

Latchingdon is a sustainable rural settlement with a good range of local facilities and services including a school, church, pub, petrol station, convenience store, post office, take-away, bowls club and community hall. It should be identified as a 'larger village'. The LPA have recognised this in their recent pre-application response to a proposal for 46 new houses on land beyond the northern edge of Latchingdon's settlement policy area, known as Land at Bridgeman's Farm Reference OUT/MAL/13/00668. The LPA's conclusion was "*Latchingdon has a range of community support and essential need facilities to allow for development within and in this instance adjacent to the settlement boundary....therefore the site can be considered as sustainable as an edge of settlement site.*"

This submission therefore seeks an amendment to S8 settlement hierarchy schedule as follows:

Larger villages ...*Latchingdon*

Latchingdon is well served by a number of regular bus services. It is a village where land is unconstrained by tidal flooding or ecological/landscape designations. The LPA acknowledges that development on edge of Latchingdon can be considered sustainable.



Latchingdon - The Street



Latchingdon - The Street



Latchingdon - The Street



Latchingdon - 20th century housing

Issue 3 – Latchingdon, Sharp’s Farm, The Street A sustainable housing proposal

The site in question is an undeveloped greenfield site, located on the south side of Latchingdon village immediately beyond and abutting the settlement boundary. It is immediately to the west of sports pitches and the village hall.

The site is not fettered by extensive tree or shrub coverage and is regular in shape. The preliminary masterplan shows how the site could form a natural extension to the settlement and support development in a way which enhances the character and amenities of the village.

Latchingdon satisfies the NPPF’s identification of three core principles associated with sustainable development relating to fulfilling an economic, social and environmental role. The village is therefore capable of accommodating additional housing.

The subject site is in a single ownership and can be delivered. It is possible to ensure minimal impact on traffic moving through the village. In addition an option has been considered for developing this site with the adjoining village hall site, to deliver traffic relief to the existing centre.



View of Sharp’s Farm site

The site will deliver a range of significant planning benefits in terms of meeting an acute housing need, making efficient use of a sustainable site, supporting growth of a sustainable village, diversifying local area housing opportunities including affordable housing and a range of other social benefits such as contributing towards a replacement community hall, new public open space, sports pitches and improved local infrastructure.

In summary policy S8 should be amended as suggested above, placing greater emphasis on delivering housing through appropriate growth of second tier 'larger villages'. It is also contested that Latchingdon should be identified as a sustainable 'larger village' able to accommodate some growth.



Risby, Suffolk – new village housing

Section 2

Case for subject site justifying settlement boundary extension and allocation of the land for an appropriate masterplan

Preliminary Masterplan -Design Principles and Consultation

The site forms a natural internal corner to a well served village. It has obvious potential in providing space for growth of housing in the village, alongside other benefits.

The sketch masterplan illustrated in this submission developed in November and December 2014 during discussions with Latchingdon Parish Council. It shows a development of less than 20ha.

The parish council has explained the key issues facing the site and village as a whole, these forming an essential briefing on constraints to which these initial development proposals have endeavoured to respond.

The proposals have been influenced by analysis of established Essex settlements, including Maldon and Dedham, as well as other East Anglian villages. The ambition is to avoid creating anything which might be mistaken for a volume housebuilder's estate, but instead to create a place with the character of a village, and which is a beneficial extension to Latchingdon, not parasitic.



East Anglian villages and market towns – settlement patterns

The quality of space and place around the buildings will be critical. Buildings and landscaping will define distinct spaces. Consideration will be given to boundary treatments from the outset.

The design of roads, pavements and parking surfaces will be critical in slowing traffic but an over-engineered suburban environment will be avoided.

The architects and engineers who have developed the initial proposals have worked on developments which have successfully achieved this, including Poundbury in Dorset.



Poundbury, Dorset



Poundbury, Dorset - parking courtyard



Sketch Masterplan – including village ball site



Sketch Masterplan – without village hall site

Connections to the village

The preliminary layout maximises pedestrian connections with the rest of the village, via existing footpaths and tracks, integrating the new development into the village and increasing the likelihood of the existing residents making use of the new public open spaces.



View of site from The Street



Proposed site plan showing pedestrian connections to existing village

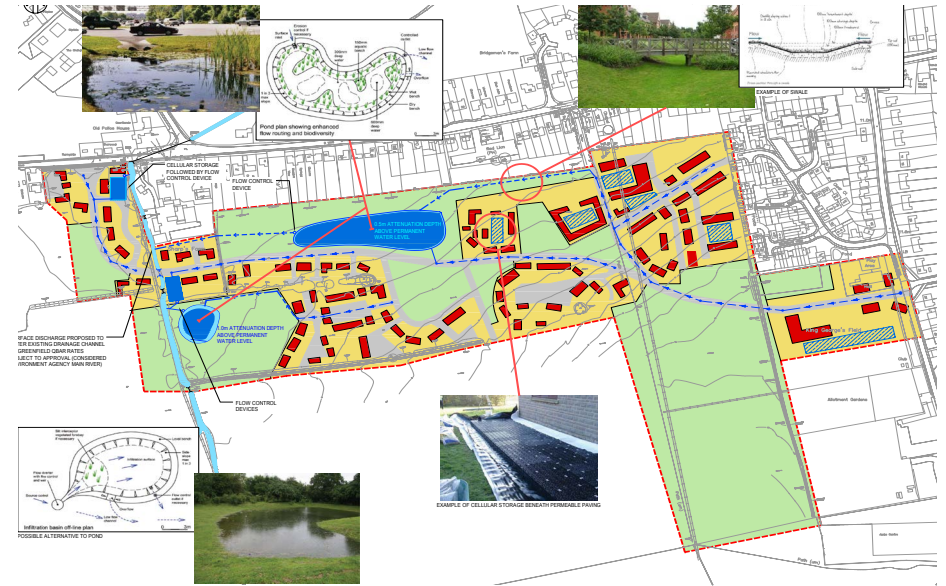
Drainage

The site falls towards the back of the existing houses which address the main street of the village. These properties are understood to experience flooding from water run-off from the farmland. There has also been a history of flooding on the main road to the north of Sharps Farm.

The Proposed development provides an opportunity to resolve these existing drainage issues. The indicative masterplan proposes swales and ponds which would hold surface and storm water and then slowly release this, protecting new and existing properties from flooding.

WSP have carried out an initial feasibility appraisal based on the sketch masterplan. They are confident that the existing situation can be greatly improved on the site by means of a proposal similar to that illustrated in this document.

There are no known restrictions in the capacity of the foul drainage system in the village.



Drainage Feasibility Study

Public open space

The site offers the potential for significant open space to be provided for the benefit of existing and new residents, around and including the swales. The swales would be broad shallow grass ditches typically only 500mm deep, except where deeper ponds are created. The swales would be dry for much of the year.

The swales and open space running along the lowest parts of the site would also provide a buffer between existing properties and new buildings, so that a generous open aspect can be maintained for many adjacent properties.

It is intended that the area including the swales would be natural grassland, rather like many East Anglian village commons, but not 'manicured'. Open areas might grass be cut for hay, with mown paths.

The sketch masterplan indicates some more regularly mown areas e.g. a new playing field to the west of King George's Field, and a village green adjacent possible sheltered housing or 'almshouses'.



Sketch view as proposed - looking East



Sketch view of proposed Almshouses

Traffic

The masterplan shows access from a new entrance to the west of Sharp's Farm. A mini roundabout access would help slow traffic approaching the village from the west.

If the village hall site (King George's Fields) were to be included in the development with the site, potential benefits could be increased. The main street of the village might be relieved of through traffic, thus creating an alternative route from the south east to the west. This road would also provide another access to new development.

Preliminary calculations suggest only 1.5 -2 cars per minute leaving the development at the busiest times of the day.

The site can comfortably provide adequate parking for all properties. Some parking is envisaged on street, some in parking courtyards, some alongside houses.

New Village Hall and Play Area

A new village hall with larger and improved facilities and parking could be enabled by the development. This could be on the village hall site or on the new development. Any reduction in green space on the village hall site caused by an enlargement of the hall or parking areas could be compensated by the new green space on the Sharps Farm site.

The play area on the current site could be improved and/or a new play area built in the new development

Health Centre

A health centre could be created. This might be located close to the main street, where there is an access wide enough for use as a shared surface. Alternatively, a health centre could be sited with the village hall, so as to share parking and other facilities. A café could be considered adjacent the health centre and/or village hall.

Employment space

The development could include employment space. Latchingdon already has a large number of self-employed people working from home. It is anticipated that new housing would include studio/office/workshop spaces ancillary to houses. In addition, more formal employment space might be accommodated adjacent the health centre or the village hall (the building groups shown grey on the sketch proposal).



Aerial Block plan viewed from the North East



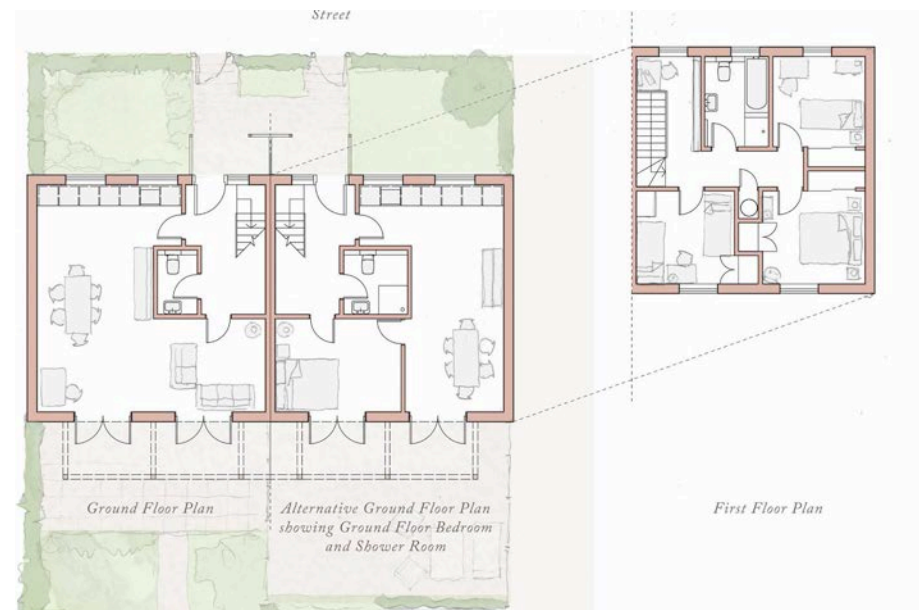
Preliminary Character Elevations

Housing

The preliminary proposal indicates approximately 150 houses. The Parish Council have advised that there is a shortage of 2 and 3-bed properties in the village. The mix of housing types would be agreed with the local authority and local community to meet local housing needs. Many of the houses indicated are currently conceived as 3 bedroom houses which could take the form of the plan illustrated adjacent this text. These houses could be semi-detached or terraced and varied with different windows and external materials (e.g. painted boarding, brick and different painted render colours). Sheltered housing for the elderly is also indicated, arranged around a courtyard in a traditional 'almshouse' group.



3 bedroom affordable house elevation – semi-detached with weatherboard



3 bedroom affordable house plan