

7/0085

Examination of the Maldon District Local Development Plan

Hearing Statement

Submissions of Mr M S Jackson on behalf of Mr Mendel

Prepared by
Mark Jackson Planning
Gateway House
19 Great Notley Avenue
Great Notley Garden Village
Braintree
Essex CM77 7UW

Tel Braintree 01376 341854
Tel Nottingham 01159068113
Email mark.jackson@mjplanning.co.uk

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Statement deals with Matter 7 Issue 1 and 2.

1.2 I have cross referenced with the Inspectors Matters, Issues and Questions.

1.3 My experience and qualifications are set out in the attached appendix 1 to this Statement. My client is agent to the owners of land at 'Willow Grange' Latchingdon. The owners are promoting the future allocation of land to the west of the village for housing, a medical centre and children's nursery school. Location Plan attached as Appendix 2.

2.0 Matter 7 Issue 1

2.1 I made submissions at the Pre Submission LDP Consultation contending that in plan-making, local authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet development needs of their area; Paragraph 14 of the NPPF refers. My comments on paragraph 2.28 and policy S8 of the Plan refer. It is a Core Planning Principle within the NPPF that, whilst recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside the planning system must, at the same time, support thriving, rural communities within it. A large part of Maldon District is rural in character.

2.2 The Sustainability Appraisal SD03b states at para 4.2.1 "The main towns and settlements are Maldon, Heybridge and Burnham-on-Crouch with the

majority of the population living in the rural villages”. The Inspectors attention is drawn to the key issue and problems and opportunities identified in the document on page 22 dealing with rural isolation.

2.3 Within the rural areas there are many villages some of which support a reasonable range of services and population. These services should be maintained. There is a clear risk that if the rural areas are allowed to stagnate they will ultimately perform poorly as communities.

2.4 This approach appears to be recognised by the Council in so far as they do make a minimum allocation (420 dwellings) for the rural areas. However, it is far from clear how this level of proposed development has been determined. There does not appear to be an attempt to identify the capacity and to some extent the sustainability of individual villages and the degree to which additional development would ensure thriving communities within them. A report was produced in 2011, Rural Facilities Survey EB038, but this does not thoroughly address the issue of capacity and sustainability, rather it is an assessment of existing services. The SHLAA (EB056a) concentrates on assessing individual sites rather than the capacity and sustainability of the villages. In my Pre Submission LDP Consultation response I have expressed that, in my opinion, the Council are failing in their responsibility by not addressing the future development needs of the rural area as part of the Local Plan.

2.5 The Sustainability Appraisal SD03b when dealing with policy S7 para 7.3.7 which includes reference to the drafting of the future rural areas plan and the number of dwellings for the villages states that the policy is “likely to result in a minor positive impact on housing mix and the reduction of rural isolation”. The evidence here is that this policy and the allocation will not positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of the area supporting thriving, rural communities.

2.6 The failure of the Council to properly assess the needs and/or the suitability of villages for development is clearly demonstrated by the allocation at North Fambridge. There are now concerns that the village lacks the necessary infrastructure to support additional growth. There are also limited services available at North Fambridge. These include a public house, marina, church and train station. This is significantly less than the services, shopping and employment opportunities available at Latchingdon. This allocation is illogical and contrary to the evidence available. It makes the Plan unsound.

2.7 The rural allocation of a minimum of 420 dwellings is a key part of the Council’s strategy to meet its objectively-assessed needs. The Council appear to have no clear timetable for producing a rural areas Local Plan and ultimately adopting it. One cannot, therefore, be confident that it will be realistic to expect a significant contribution from the rural areas in the year 2016/2017. Indeed in the latest trajectory figures and modification to policy S2 in the document reference CED 10 the report states that “Delivery of Rural Allocations sites are not expected until reporting year 16/17 after the

completion and adoption of the Rural Allocations Development Plan Document". The suggested modifications is that the projected delivery will fall from 190 units to 154 during the first 5 years for the rural area. Furthermore, if the rural areas are to provide suitable locations for development within this specified period, the Plan should have identified sites at this stage which are achievable with a realistic prospect that the housing will be delivered and viable. Other than North Fambridge, no sites have been allocated. Paragraph 47, bullet point one, footnote 11 of the Framework refers. The NPPF requires the Council to significantly boost the supply of housing now. The Council should, therefore, prepare one composite Plan as a matter of urgency.

3.0 Matter 7 Issue 2

3.1 I made submissions at the Pre Submission LDP Consultation that the Council should have re-examined the status of Latchingdon in the hierarchy / classification of settlement. Reference Paragraph 2.99 and Policy S8 of the Plan. It is entirely wrong to classify Latchingdon as a smaller village. The Council specify a smaller village in paragraph 2.1000 of the Plan as a defined settlement containing few or no services and facilities, with limited or no access to public transport and very limited or no employment opportunities. This is entirely wrong so far as Latchingdon is concerned. The Council did indeed suggest themselves in 2013, as one of 8 scenarios for the District, the development of 700 residential units at Latchingdon. Reference document EB037.

3.2 There is, within Latchingdon, an excellent level of services. As I have previously stated the Parish has 1,232 residents and a projected increase in population to 1,631 by 2033 according to the Council's evidence base the Rural Facilities Survey 2011. (EB038).

3.3 There is some employment within the village, but in particular a short distance outside the village there are two substantial commercial complexes to the North West comprising 'Mayfair Industrial Area' and to the south is 'Red Lions Business Centre'.

3.4 Latchingdon village has a post office, shops, petrol filling station, public houses, cafe / restaurant, Places of worship, village hall, sports fields, public open space, children's play areas and allotments.

3.5 I conclude that in terms of services, size and employment the settlement compares well with the other larger villages set out in Policy S8. Furthermore, it is also more readily accessible and sustainable than the village of Mayland, which is defined as a larger village, as it is positioned at the juxtaposition of five roads serving the Dengie and wider North West area of the District. This may well have been one of the reasons for one of the growth options for 700 dwellings to be allocated in Latchingdon. Reference EB037.

3.6 Moreover, Latchingdon is only 4km from Althorne Railway Station where there is a reasonable service including a commuter service to London. The train services operate every 40 minutes at peak rush hour and 50 minutes for

the return from London. The station provides access on the Southminster Branch Line to the east to Burnham and Southminster and to the west the towns of South Woodham Ferreres, Wickford, Stratford and London Liverpool Street. In addition, there is an excellent bus service with buses to Maldon, Chelmsford, Burnham on Crouch and South Woodham Ferrers at least every hour.

3.7 For these reasons, it is my submission that Latchingdon is markedly different in character, sustainability and the level of services it affords than nearly all of the other villages mentioned in the 'Smaller villages' category.

3.8 Thus, it is abundantly clear that Latchingdon meets the definition of a 'larger village' with a range of services and opportunities for employment, retail and education.

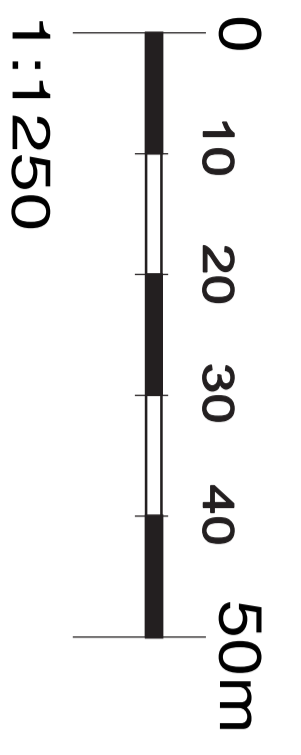
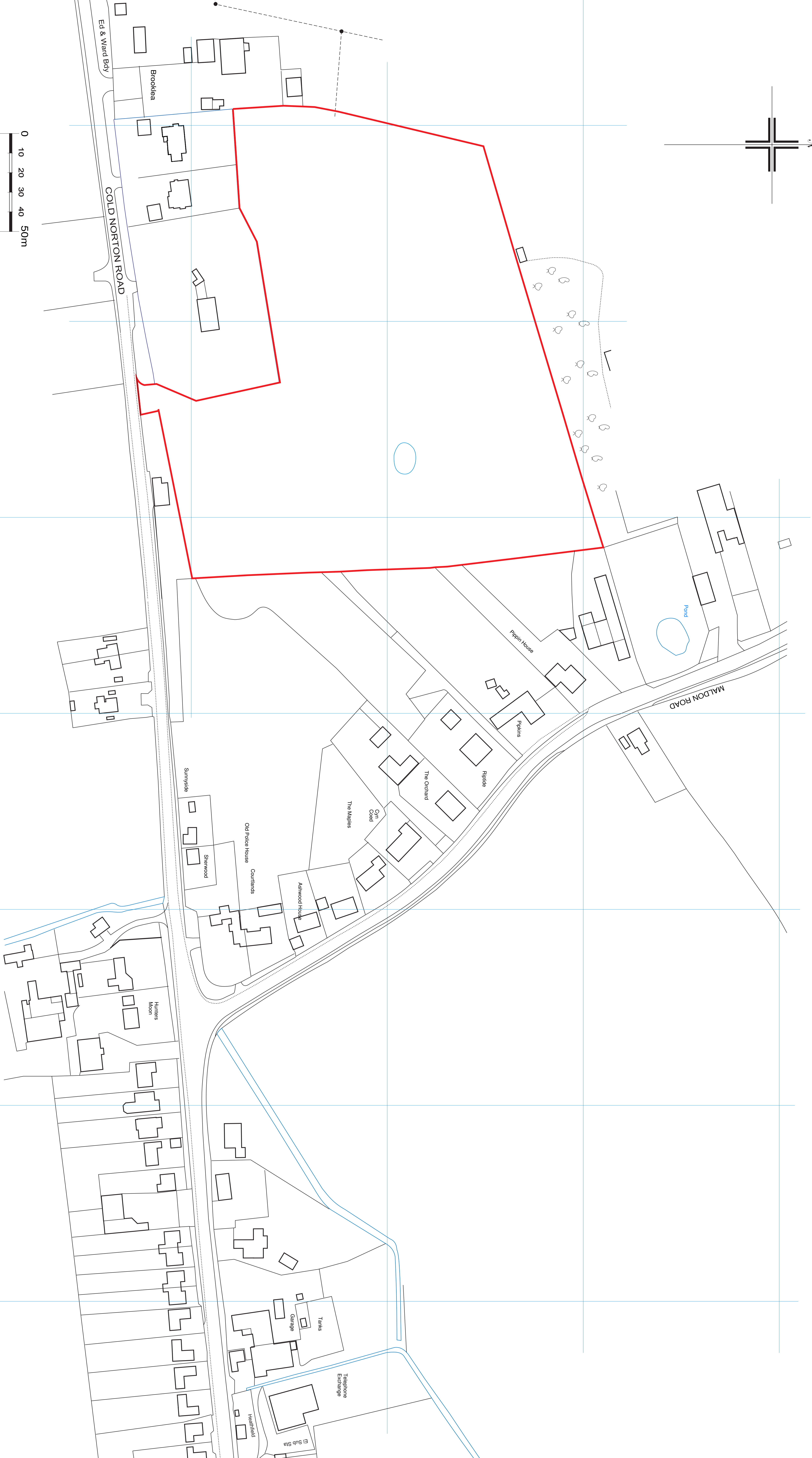
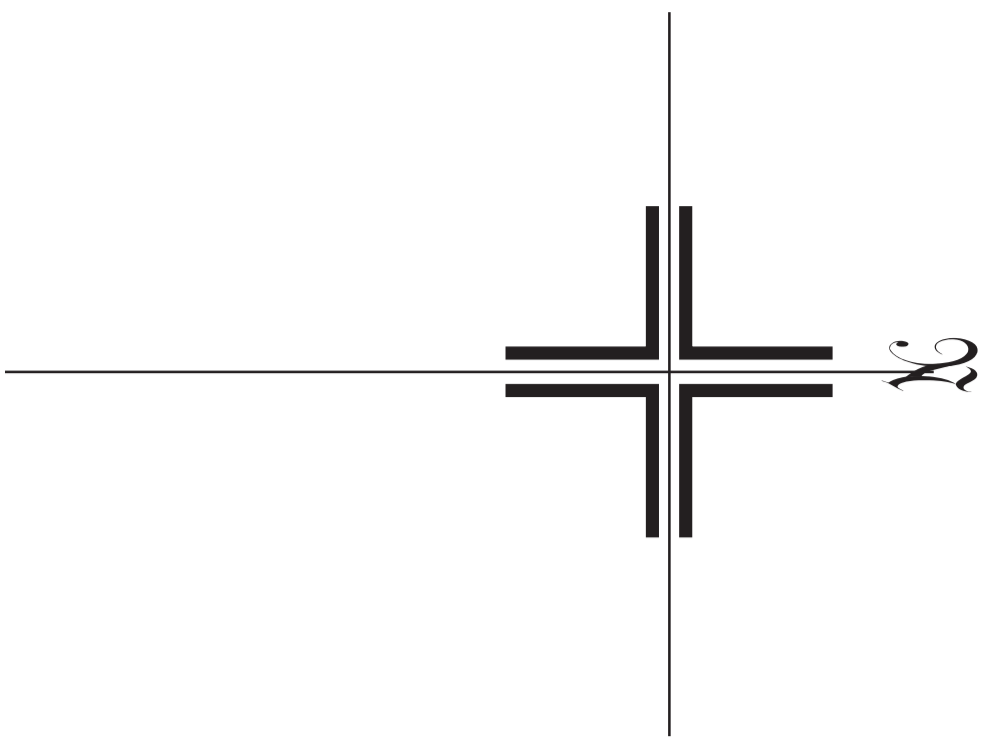
3.9 The classification of Latchingdon as a smaller village does not, therefore, accord with the evidence. In this respect, the Plan is, therefore, unsound. The Council should modify the Plan so as to include Latchingdon within the classification of larger villages.

Mark S Jackson BSc [Hons] Environmental Planning MRTPI

Appendices to 7/0085 M S Jackson

Appendix 1 CV M Jackson

Appendix 2 Location Plan



LOCATION PLAN



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CLARK PARTNERSHIP

ARCHITECT : INTERIOR DESIGNERS

14 WINDWARD WAY, 50/TH WOODHAM HEATHS,
CHELMSFORD, ESSEX, CM3 5YU
TEL : 01 245 32 95 95 MOBILE 077 588 16612

HOUSING PROPOSAL

Cold Norton Road
Latchingdon Essex

SCALE as shown
DATE 13/1003/01 Mar '13