

## Maldon District Local Development Plan

Maldon District Council has received a long awaited response from the Secretary of State, The Rt Hon Greg Clark MP, dated 6<sup>th</sup> March 2016, in respect of the Local Development Plan.

The letter, sent to the District Council on Monday afternoon, reiterates the importance of Planning Inspectors working pragmatically with Councils towards achieving a sound Local Development Plan. The Secretary of State also responded that after careful consideration he has confirmed that he disagreed with the former Inspector's findings, stating that the Maldon District Local Development Plan was unsound and concluded that it was disproportionate as the former Inspector 'had not' examined the whole Plan.

He noted that in respect of the five year housing land supply, the former Inspector had raised nothing in his report to suggest that Maldon District Council had not undertaken a comprehensive and full objective assessment of housing needs.

Maldon District Council Leader, Councillor Miss Miriam Lewis met with the Planning Minister, Brandon Lewis MP and the Secretary of State, Greg Clark MP as recently as last weekend and became aware that a decision was imminent.

Councillor Miss Miriam Lewis said, "We were very concerned at the stance taken by the former Inspector Vickery with his initial findings and the conclusions he had formed, not least that he did not identify any issues other than the Gypsy and Traveller assessment. This did not give the Council a full opportunity to address any perceived issues. We considered his interim findings were not balanced or proportionate and alerted the Secretary of State via our two MPs, Priti Patel and John Whittingdale.

Maldon District Councillor Mrs Penny Channer has been Chairman of the Maldon District Council Planning and Licensing Committee throughout the Plan preparation period and was delighted at the welcome news from the Secretary of State.

Councillor Mrs Penny Channer said, "Maldon District Council feel vindicated by the response by the Secretary of State, as we felt we had submitted a robust plan. I am particularly pleased for all of the Officers and Members who worked tirelessly to put the Plan together."

As the previous Inspector has now retired, the Secretary of State intends to appoint a new Inspector to continue to examine the Plan going forward and for that person to reach their own view on what further evidence may be needed to complete the process.

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