



## Your Views

Maldon District Council would like your views on the Draft Charging Schedule and in particular the following areas:

- The proposed rates set out in the Draft Charging Schedule (Annex A of the consultation document);
- The inclusion of the proposed Draft Discretionary Relief Policy (Annex B of the consultation document); and
- The inclusion of the proposed Draft Instalments Policy (Annex C of the consultation document).

Please provide your comments in the space below; which will expand to fit your comment. Any supplementary sheets or information are welcome, please label them suitably.

The Country Land and Business Association (CLA) represents 34,000 members in England and Wales, and is the leading authority on the rural economy. Our members both live and work in rural areas, operating a wide variety of enterprises, and in the East of England, the CLA represents 6500 members.

For clarity, we would like to comment on each of the proposed charges as follows:

### **Residential - £70/sq.m**

We are concerned that this category covers all residential development. There are a number of situations where new rural dwellings are required to accommodate those employed in agriculture, horticulture and forestry. Such properties are not sold for development gain and so the charge would simply be an additional cost of construction and is likely to render many such projects unviable. As these properties are crucial to the operation of rural businesses and sustainable rural communities, we ask that they be considered separately, based on a suitable viability assessment.

### **Supermarkets & Retail Warehouses - £150/m<sup>2</sup>**

We are concerned that there is no clarity on the size of premises that constitutes a supermarket. Charges as stated on the draft charging schedule could have an adverse impact on the provision of rural retail outlets, be it a village store or farm shop. Such businesses are usually relatively small enterprises generating marginal returns, but they do provide essential facilities for rural communities. Without such shops, residents from rural settlements are forced to travel to the nearest market town and usually by private car which puts more pressure on the local infrastructure. By encouraging the provision of rural retail, the impact on infrastructure could actually be reduced. The current level of charges proposed for retail is likely to make most new rural shops uneconomic. We therefore ask that rural shops be given separate consideration, based on a suitable viability assessment.

### **All Other Development - £0/m<sup>2</sup>**

The All Other Development category must clearly include buildings erected for agriculture, horticulture and forestry purposes. By not being expressly stated, there is a risk that its inclusion or otherwise will be left open to interpretation. Many buildings required by rural businesses are replacing obsolescent ones with no consequential impact on infrastructure at all. Any increase in the value of the property is directly related to the costs of the new building and there is little or no enhancement in the overall land value. We propose that "agricultural, horticultural and forestry development" is added as a separate category at a zero charge to avoid any confusion over the matter. This is the approach already taken by other local authorities, including Newark and Sherwood District Council and therefore would be more consistent.