

27th October 2016

Response to Maldon District Council LDP Consultation Sept 2016.

Whilst I am Chairman of **Althorne Community Together** (ACT), an organisation which, among other things, has produced the Village Design Statement for Althorne, the comments and views expressed here are personal, and due to time constraints and lack of consultation are not fully endorsed by ACT members, however a significant number of them have seen this letter and are supportive, with no objections. Some of my comments centre particularly on the Parish of Althorne, although many concern the general format and administration of the LDP.

Extracts from the various documents presented for the consultation are attached to this letter for easy reference without searching the documents.

Sustainability Assessment criteria.

Ref Appendix C. Item 4 on the SA/SEA Objectives for Sustainability ranking is:-

'To reduce rural isolation and social exclusion geographically and demographically through encouraging viable and vibrant communities'.

There seems to be a basic misunderstanding of why people choose to live in rural locations. If I wanted to reduce geographic isolation and experience more vibrancy, I would move back to London. People make conscious decisions to move to or stay in rural locations, and accept the disadvantages for the benefits of peace and tranquillity, and do not want to see that environment destroyed.

Change from Rural Allocations to identifying individual Sites. (Ref Appendix A, Page 23, Policy S7, Items 133,134 & 015)

This part of Appendix A informs us that the Parish Councils will be fully involved in the selection of suitable sites for development, and will get assistance from MDC to prepare supporting documents such as Neighbourhood Plans, and yet Appendix C indicates that a number of sites that appear on the latest SHLAA have already been chosen and had Sustainability Studies carried out on them.

This poses the questions:-

- Is there a contradiction here?
- What 'say' will the Parish Councils have on selecting the sites?
- Why were some of the SHLAA sites in the Parish areas not selected? I think if the Parish Council were asked to select sites from the SHLAA, but outside the existing Development Boundaries, they would have chosen differently.
- Must any sites that are selected appear on the SHLAA first?
- What role has the Neighbourhood Plan got to play in the planning & development of these sites?

The initial concept of the LDP, we were told, was that MDC would inform the Parishes and Parish Councils of the number and type of dwellings required, who would compile Neighbourhood Plans to accommodate them. The Parish Councils would run through a defined process of consultation with Parishioners, carry out Sustainability and Infrastructure studies, to reach a consensus on the Neighbourhood Plan which would be agreed with MDC. It now appears that MDC will choose the sites.

Using the SHLAA as the only source of development land could be restrictive to the supply. There may be village residents who would wish to apply for planning permission to develop their property to provide extra dwellings, but who are currently restricted by Village Development Boundaries. Applications in this category could initially be considered by the Parish Councils.

Questions on the administration of the LDP.

- If a site is selected for development by MDC, must it be filled to capacity? Site S29 Land North of Althorne Station, will apparently accommodate 150 houses, which would be a considerable development for Althorne and a much larger allocation than is reasonable, particularly if S19 Land South of Button Hill is also selected.
- When a site is selected for development will it automatically be granted outline planning permission by MDC, or will the owner of the land have to apply for it? Could this application then be turned down by MDC or the Planning Inspectorate?
- If the owner of the site decided to sell it once it was selected, would it be with or without Planning Consent?
- Would the Parish Council or local residents be able to object to the granting of Planning Permission?

Appendix A, Page 2 (of pdf) Chapter 1 - Ref 130.

It is noted that the LDP will replace 2005b – Maldon Replacement Local Plan. The saved policies from this restricted development in, and provided protection for, the Coastal Zone and views across the Special Landscape Area. Consideration of site S29 Land North of Althorne Station, which is within the currently protected area, for development as part of the LDP would remove the protection of this asset, which is not only of value to the local parish, but also visitors and people passing through on the B1010. It is a major feature of the Parish, and preservation of the open views is part of the Village Design Statement (VDS) adopted by MDC as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Will these areas continue to be protected by the LDP? This is of real concern to the village.

Incidentally Station road is shown on the map on Appendix D (Page30) as a Minor Road, but is actually a Private Road (Network Rail) but publically accessible.

Appendix A, Page5 (of pdf) Policy S2, ref 045 Monitor and Review.

It should be made clear that this review action will be carried out against existing targets at the initiation of the LDP, and not against any revised targets set by central Government in future years, otherwise the targets could be ramped up and simply accommodated by releasing another identified site for development. The proposal to review progress, coupled with the ability to approve far more sites than necessary to meet initial targets seems to be open to abuse, to introduce far more development than initially envisaged.

Waste Water Treatment - Appendix A, Page 17(pdf) Ref 009 & 062

This section does not address issues specific to Althorne, and it is unclear whether Althorne is considered 'South Of Maldon', but there is an existing issue in Althorne where existing sewers are overloaded, resulting in sewage flooding the properties to the North of the village. Anglian Water is aware of this and is attempting to mitigate the issue, but it is clear that the present sewage infrastructure is at its limit.

There is no sewage system south of the B1010, apart from dwellings that line the south of the road, and all piped mains sewage from within the Parish boundary is channelled down Summerhill and eventually to the Water Treatment facility at Mill Road Mayland.

The cost of adding additional facilities to connect, say, the site S29 North of Althorne Station to the existing system, plus the upgrade required to the existing system, should be evaluated prior to considering this and any other sites.

All of these issues would be considered in a Neighbourhood plan developed by Althorne Parish Council, plus other infrastructure considerations such as Broadband, electricity supplies, water & gas supplies and roads, but it seems that this process may have been bypassed.

Conclusion

The current documentation on the LDP as presented for consultation is contradictory, confusing, difficult and time consuming to evaluate fully by the people it affects.

I believe that the questions presented here should be answered, and a revised consolidated set of documents presented for another Consultation before it is presented to the Inspector again.

I hope that these comments have been helpful, and will result in some clarification and progress.

Yours Sincerely.

Terry Inkpen (Chairman ACT)

References for Consultation Reply on LDP.

Change from Rural Allocations to identifying individual Sites.

(Ref Appendix A, Page 23, Policy S7, Items 133,134 & 015)

A Site Allocations DPD will be produced to allocate land for a minimum of 420 dwellings in and around the District's villages ... The Site Allocations DPD will also include provision for village-scale employment, retail and community uses to serve an identified settlement and its rural catchment area where necessary and appropriate.

Each parish will be invited to work with the Council to identify appropriate land to meet the needs for their area. Land will be allocated in the Site Allocations DPD in accordance with the principles of sustainable development set out within the LDP and the following principles: ...

Existing community led plans including Neighbourhood Plans, Village Design Statements (VDS), and where appropriate Parish Plans, will inform the production of the Site Allocations DPD. The Council will produce a separate Site Allocations DPD to provide further details in relation to rural housing, employment and other developments.

The Council will provide assistance in the production of community-led plans in accordance with the protocol, including any neighbourhood plans which set out future planning guidance on a parish / town level. The Council will expect these plans to be in compliance general conformity with the strategic policies set out in the LDP and comply with the planning principles set out in the LDP and other national and local planning policies and guidance.

Appendix A, Page 2 (of pdf) Chapter 1 - Ref 130.

Once the LDP is adopted it will replace the Maldon District Replacement Local Plan (MDC, 2005b) saved policies. The LDP, together with the forthcoming Rural Site Allocations DPD, the Essex Replacement Minerals Local Plan (RMLP) and the Replacement Waste Local Plan (RWLP), will form the statutory adopted 'Development Plan' for the District.

Appendix A, Page5 (of pdf) Policy S2, ref 045.

Monitor and Review

Housing delivery against Policy S2 will be monitored on an annual basis and the Council will use the monitoring data to assess whether actions may be required to increase housing land supply.

If any monitoring data produced after two years from the adoption of the LDP demonstrates that there is a 20% deviation in housing delivery for 2014-2019; and 2019-2024; and a 10% deviation for 2024-2029, the Council will introduce management actions to address housing delivery shortfall which could include working constructively and proactively with developers and stakeholder to bring forward committed or allocated sites; review phasing of allocated sites; reviewing housing targets and associated policies; consider releasing Reserve Sites; and allocate additional sites to meet target if required.

Appendix A, Page 17(pdf) Ref 009 & 062

Waste Water Treatment

All sewerage south of the River Blackwater is pumped to the north towards Maldon Works which has sufficient capacity to accommodate additional foul water generated by the proposed growth. However, there are capacity constraints associated with the sewerage network in the Maldon and Heybridge area. Strategic growth in the Heybridge area will require a new upgrades to the existing foul main that connects to the Maldon Treatment Works; strategic growth to the south of Maldon would require a sewerage strategy to identify the appropriate mitigation and infrastructure measures that will be necessary to support new development. Anglian Water has indicated that there are a variety of possible solutions that will need to be explored to establish the most cost-effective and appropriate measures for addressing sewerage constraints on land to the south of Maldon. The final solution taken forward will need to be agreed by Anglian Water and the Environment Agency.

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