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Maldon District Local Development Plan



The acceptance of sub-regional population projections of the Office for National Statistics and the lack of overall strategic view due to the deficiencies of the Duty to Consult with other Local Planning Authorities has made it almost impossible to formulate a LDP that makes sense in planning terms. It fails to recognise the disadvantage of Maldon/Heybridge as a coastal town in trying to generate new employment and does not look beyond the current pattern of settlements. As a consequence it cannot meet any of the three conditions required under Policy S1.

The Plan should not accept the large increase in population implied by the ONS projections, which go well beyond any definition of 'need', but recognise that the 'adverse impacts outweigh the benefits' of development. Such a large increase requires a more fundamental approach to settlement strategy. (Policy S2).

Treating the academic notion of settlement hierarchy as a guideline for policy on location for new housing does little to recognise the benefits of expanding smaller villages so that they may become more coherent communities and warrant a higher level of local facilities and services (Policies S7 and T1).

It is extremely doubtful that the South Maldon garden suburb could be either self-sustaining as a community or relate closely to the rest of the town because of the role of Limebrook Way as ring road and by-pass, the distance from the High Street and poor access to Plume Academy (Policy S3).

It is doubtful that SUDS or the unspecified and nebulous flood alleviation measures referred to could cope with the kind of flash floods that are expected to become more frequent and intense. This applies to both garden suburb locations. Indeed, one might question why any significant residential development should be contemplated in flood risk zones. (Policies D2 and D5).

The scale of development envisaged for Maldon and Heybridge throw the spotlight on other infrastructure issues: the capacity to handle effluent, for which solutions have yet to be 'explored'; and the capacity of Plume to accommodate an additional two forms of entry without compromising education provision. Given its central location in the

main urban area a significant increase in its roll, which is already large, should suggest either a need for a second school in the district or relocation to a larger site (Policy S4).

With regard to Primrose Meadow, part of which is owned by Plume Academy, the Planning Brief (Policy I3) treats it as essential to the expansion of Plume, yet it is apparently expected to be sold for capital gain. The area is not only a green space, which would no longer be peripheral when the garden suburb is developed but rather a valuable central green space, but it has also an important function in handling flood water, with the ditch and stream at the southern end (itself in a flood risk zone) treated as a 'main river' by the Environment Agency serving the Critical Drainage Area of that part of Maldon.(Policy D5).

It is difficult to see how development of even part of Primrose Meadow could meet Policy N3. The box-ticking exercise carried out by Haskoning is not convincing: a summation of numerous negative, neutral and positive points is no substitute for considered judgement.

With regard to sites for Travellers (Policy H6) statements by DCLG since the date of the original Draft Plan have indicated that more stringent criteria should be used in assessing the genuineness of claims for pitches. This might be expected to reduce demand for pitches: it is certainly difficult to see a justification for additional pitches, especially in the light of the requirement that Travellers should be of 'nomadic habit'.

