

Cold Norton Parish Council

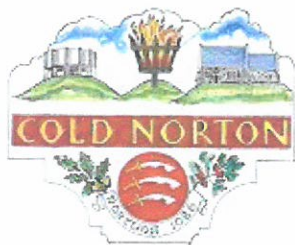
Parish Clerk/RFO: Mrs. M Dyer
Exordium

30b Latchingdon Road
Cold Norton
Chelmsford

Essex CM3 6JG

Phone: 01621 829566

E-mail: mariadyr30@yahoo.co.uk



Our reference: MDC LDP 071013.5

7th October 2013

Planning Policy Team,
Maldon District Council,
Princes Road,
Maldon,
Essex CM9 5DL

Dear Sirs,

DRAFT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2014 – 2029 – CONSULTATION

Cold Norton Parish Council has considered the Local Development Plan for 2014 - 2029 as proposed in the draft issued by Maldon District Council last month. Below is the opinion of Cold Norton Parish Council for consideration by Maldon District Council.

Cold Norton Parish Council generally supports the vision and objectives set out in the consultation document if it is constrained by the Government demands for growth in housing.

It is recognised that growth is necessary to ensure a sustainable balance of population, employment and services into the future, but the demands for the scale of growth may not have been justified for those purposes. In particular, to meet that need for mixed balance of population there is a considerable need for small housing for new and growing families. It is not obvious that the emphasis on affordable housing, which is hard to define in a meaningful way, is directed wholly towards small housing.

The Parish Council's comments on the detail of the draft plan are as follows, and for ease of reference/analysis the numbers referred to relate back to those in the Draft Local Development Plan Consultation Document:

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

Local Context and Spatial Profiles

1.27: Our Spatial Interactions: It is recognised that there needs to be strong spatial connections, but in fact the actual connections by road and rail are very poor. The roads just beyond the District boundaries, from the point of view of Cold Norton particularly through South Woodham Ferrers and Danbury, are already congested at peak hours and additional population growth in the District will severely worsen the situation.

Contd...

1.30: Our People: In view of the considerable remoteness of parts of the District from centres of employment and services, it is not surprising that the population density is relatively low. An attempt to increase the density to numbers similar to more central parts of the county will lead to further problems degrading the quality of life and becoming increasingly unsustainable.

1.37: The North and West Area: It is odd that Cold Norton, which, although westerly, is part of the Dengie Hundred and is located well to the south in the District, should be included in the northern and western area.

1.39: The North and West Area: In so far as it is relevant to refer to the Domesday book, it should be noted that Cold Norton is also mentioned under the name of Nortuna.

SPATIAL VISION AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Policy S2 Strategic Growth

2.15: Policy S2: It is recognised that some population growth will be necessary to support local housing needs, and in Cold Norton some modest developments have recently, and are currently taking place. There is an undeveloped site within the current housing area. However, in relation to Cold Norton it must also be noted that an area previously devoted to small businesses has recently been reallocated for housing, reducing local employment opportunities.

Moreover, the proposed number of homes for North Fambridge is of major concern to Cold Norton Parish Council as the implications will be detrimental to Cold Norton. Whilst it has been noted that Maldon District Council has significantly scaled back the number of proposed homes in North Fambridge, the choice of North Fambridge as a proposed development village and the number of proposed new homes, conflicts with nine out of the thirteen (i.e. nearly 70%) of MDC's key principles for selecting development areas as laid down in Policy 1 Sustainable Development (Page 14):

Key Principle 2) states: Deliver a sustainable level of housing growth that will meet local needs and deliver a wide choice of high quality homes in the most sustainable locations.

North Fambridge is not a sustainable location; it is unsustainable on ecological, landscape and environmental grounds. North Fambridge is badly served by road. Existing usage of the railway station is limited; most commuters drive on congested roads to Wickford to ensure flexibility on return.

Key Principle 3) states: Promote the effective use of land and prioritise development on previously developed land and planned growth at the Garden Suburbs and Strategic Allocations.

The use of land in North Fambridge is not efficient as it is currently undeveloped and subject under current planning guidelines to a number of protective measures because of its visual and ecological importance. Less sensitive land should be considered in preference

Key Principle 4) states: Support growth within the environmental limits of the District.

Debatable because of the risk of flooding. Much of Fambridge is at or around sea level

Key Principle 6) states: Create sustainable communities by retaining and delivering local services and facilities.

North Fambridge is unsustainable on ecological, landscape and environmental grounds; it is badly served by road. Existing usage of the railway station is limited; most commuters drive on congested roads to Wickford to ensure flexibility on return

Key Principle 7) states: Enable and adapt to the effects of climate change by limiting greenhouse gas emissions through the efficient use of energy and use of renewable alternatives, coastal management, and mitigating against flooding.

North Fambridge is unsustainable for reasons given above; poor roads, poor train service, in the flood zone, subject to coastal management. It's hard to think of a worse site from a sustainability perspective

Key Principle 8) states: Conserve and enhance the natural environment, by providing protection and increasing local biodiversity and geodiversity, and effective management of the District's green infrastructure network.

North Fambridge is a location with a number of protected sites: RAMSAR, Essex Wildlife Trust and MDC's own planning policies. Again it is hard to think of a worse site to develop from the perspective of the natural environment than North Fambridge.

Key Principle 10) states: Identify the capacity and constraints of local infrastructure and services, and seek to mitigate identified issues through developer contributions including Section 106 agreement and/or Community Infrastructure Levy and other funding sources.

The local infrastructure in North Fambridge is poor and at capacity in terms of roads and drainage. The train service is insufficient to encourage most commuters to not drive to Wickford

Key Principle 11) starts: Maintain the rural character of the District without compromising the identity of its individual settlements.

The identity of North Fambridge will be severely compromised by these proposals

Key Principle 12) states: Minimise the need to travel and where travel is necessary, prioritise sustainable modes of transport and improve access for all in the community.

There is a lack of facilities in North Fambridge; no shop, poor buses, no school, a poor railway service, poor roads. Virtually every journey in or out of North Fambridge is and will be by road. It is hard to consider a worse site than North Fambridge for this scale of proposal

As demonstrated above the choice of North Fambridge for such a large disproportionate percentage of the rural allocation of 420 goes against almost 70% of Maldon District Council's criteria for selecting a sustainable development site, and means that Cold Norton, because of its immediate proximity, will suffer from the majority of the ill effects of this ill-conceived proposal.

(Given the above it is extremely unclear why North Fambridge is considered suitable for 75 proposed homes – what are the reasons that have led Maldon District Council to come to this conclusion?)

Cold Norton Parish Council is of the opinion that all the rural communities (including North Fambridge) should adopt a policy of proportionate growth across the District, i.e. that the rural allocation of 420 should be distributed more equally in line with Maldon District Council's very sensible criteria for development.

Policy S8: Settlement Boundaries and the Countryside

Context

2.91 Policy S8: Policy S8 states that, for smaller villages like Cold Norton, the District Council will support sustainable development within the defined settlement boundaries. The Parish Council supports this policy. Cold Norton falls within the smaller village category as described in §2.92.

Cold Norton has an oversubscribed primary school, secondary school children have to be bussed or travel in other ways to schools at a distance. There is one general store, located outside the village centre with a dangerous walking route to it.

There is an hourly, business hours bus service 6 days a week to Maldon, and a demand responsive taxi service to South Woodham Ferrers operating until 2000hours. There are also very restrictive transport routes to Chelmsford and Broomfield Hospital. There is no reasonable public transport way to join the railway. Doctors are available only in Maldon or South Woodham Ferrers.

The limited weekday, day time hours public transport means that there has to be reliance on car travel, with those young and old without that possibility being largely isolated. Moreover growth farther east into the Dengie Peninsular will increase road congestion and overload, despite the road hierarchy, notable at the T-junction onto the Lower Burnham Road at Saltcoats Hill, and along the narrow unclassified Hackmans Lane which provides a route towards Chelmsford.

These reasons, and considering other local services and facilities, make sustainable development questionable.

DESIGN AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Policy D6 Advertisement

Context

3.56 Policy D6: Cold Norton Parish Council supports this policy.

Contd...

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Policy E3 Community Services and Facilities

Context

4.27 Policy E3: Cold Norton Parish Council supports the policy to retain and enhance community facilities.

HOUSING

Policy H1 Affordable Housing

Context

5.1 to 5.11: Earlier, the Parish Council commented on the definition of affordable housing. Associated with this, and perhaps of more significance, is the need to ensure an adequate supply of small housing, and ways need to be found within the planning framework to be able to influence development proposals to ensure that this need is met. This is reflected in §5.14 and Policy H2 (Housing Mix), and this should also be applied to very small developments of just a few dwellings.

Policy H3 Accommodation for 'Specialist' Needs

Context

5.19 to 5.24: The agreed need to provide close proximity to everyday services means that such specialist accommodation could not be met in a small village such as Cold Norton.

Policy H4 Effective use of Land

Context

5.25 to 5.40: Cold Norton Parish Council supports the various provisions of Policy H4.

Policy H6 Provision for Travellers

Context

5.41: This paragraph defines travellers as "Persons of nomadic habit of life travelling together as such". From this definition the static mobile homes at "The Birches " and "The Poplars" in Cold Norton are not occupied by "travellers", and the sites are not travellers sites. The occupants of these dwellings have chosen to live permanently in what may be thought of as mobile homes, but are permanent fixed residents, in one case for more than 50 years. These two sites, listed in Policy H6, should not be designated as traveller sites.

Contd...

TRANSPORT AND ACCESS**Policy T1 Sustainable Transport****Context**

7.1. to 7.9: The transport aspect has already been discussed in this response. It is noted that the provision of bus services is currently under review by the County Council so that even the current limited services are under some threat. An important aspect of sustainability is assurance of future regular reliable public transport with extensions into the evenings and on Sundays to both Maldon and South Woodham Ferrers. An important part of this would be reliable connections with rail services at South Woodham Ferrers.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING**Policy I2 Health and Wellbeing****Context**

8.15 to 8.29: Cold Norton Parish Council fully supports the provision of a new or enhanced community hospital in the Maldon area, providing a wide range of services and out-patient facilities.

Yours sincerely



Maria Dyer
Clerk/RFO to Cold Norton Parish Council