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



6 October 2013

Dear Planning Policy Team

Maldon District Draft Local Development Plan 2014-2029

I have read through the Maldon District Council's Draft Local Development Plan 2014-2029. I have completed the questionnaire on line, but wish to add two general comments and one specific concern illustrated in the copy document accompanying this letter. I should add that I was a district councillor for 25 years, representing the area including Woodham Walter, and much involved with land use planning.

In general, I deplore the way in which this government is gradually diminishing the UK's planning system. Of course I know it was not perfect by any means, but I think it has served us well and is respected and admired by many other countries; and I believe many people will live to regret its destruction.

Given the central government requirements imposed upon the Maldon District, I think members and offices have done a good job in preparing this draft, and I suppose my overall opinion could best be expressed (if you had such a category) by ticking a box saying that I "reluctantly agree" in answer to most of your questions. My exception to that view is in connection with the garden suburbs. I have lived in two such suburbs and know they can succeed when attached to huge cities that can provide all possible facilities to those dwelling in garden suburbs. I believe it is unrealistic to think they could work with the limited little towns of Maldon/Heybridge as their centres. So my objection to these proposals should be read as an objection to the lack of realism in the background information: they will require a whole lot more investment than you assume and necessitate vast improvement to all social facilities in both Maldon and Heybridge to have any chance of success.

I do have one point of serious concern which is not so much a criticism as a request for the inclusion of an explanation. I have also written to the District's county councillors about it, because the matter closely concerns Essex County Council.

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Back in 1994, the ECC gave planning consent for the Woodham Walter gypsy site. After I retired as a Maldon District Councillor, I deposited all my planning papers at the Essex Record Office, but did keep a few documents that recorded vital matters. Here is one. The second paragraph refers to the County Council's undertakings in respect of the permission for the gypsy site. In the light of these undertakings, I strongly object to the sequential approach in **Policy H6** being applied to the Woodham Walter site. I feel sure that most people in Woodham Walter will also object, since the ECC promises are still well remembered here. Our gypsy site is probably the best in the County; it is hugely successful; it should be a model for others. BUT, the ECC undertakings must be referred to in the Maldon District Plan and the Woodham Walter site therefore specifically *excluded* from the sequential approach for further gypsy site provision.

I hope that upon research you will find that the District has a copy of the ECC planning consent. If not, I feel sure that the County Council will certainly hold formal records of their 1994 undertakings.

I therefore formally request that, in light of the 1994 County Council undertakings, you add an explanation to your background material in Policy H6, and specifically exclude the Woodham Walter site H6(a) from considering locations for additional or new gypsy sites.

Yours sincerely

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Copy to Councillor Mark Durham