

The Chief Planning Officer
Local Development Plan Preferred Options Consultation
Maldon District Council
Princes Road, Maldon
Essex, CM9 5DL

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11 October 2013

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Local Development Plan Preferred Options Consultation – North Fambridge

I note that the Draft Local Development Plan 2014-2029 Second Consultation still identifies 75 new houses for North Fambridge within a five-year span. The village is unable to cope with this volume of new houses and I object to this allocation for the following reasons:

Housing Density – Although the consultation discusses a diversity of housing the focus is on 1-2 bedroom dwellings, 40% being affordable. The density is 30-50 per hectare. At 30 per hectare this would provide terraced housing or flats and some other smaller houses. At 50 per hectare this could only allow flats. This is out of keeping with the rest of the village and does not comply with the stated objective to “retain the identity of our villages”.

Schools – The current catchment school for the primary age group is Purleigh. Children are taken by bus to it and it is already oversubscribed. The proposed catchment school is Latchingdon which is a faith school and may not be acceptable to residents. Children of secondary school age group would have to be taken by bus 7 miles to Ormiston River Academy in Burnham. Burnham is allocated an additional 450 houses and it is doubtful that the school would be able to cope with this and 75 extra houses in North Fambridge.

Highways – The B1012 is already a dangerous road with several recent accidents including a fatality last month and 2 fatalities last year. There is only one narrow road into the village. The turning into North Fambridge is recognised as an accident reduction zone but is incapable of improvement. The turning is very difficult to get into and out of at busy times and is very dangerous. Motorists travelling too fast from the Burnham direction cross the middle white line and cause accidents with cars waiting to turn into North Fambridge from the South Woodham Ferrers direction. The combination of 75 houses in North Fambridge and 450 in Burnham would seriously increase road usage and accidents. Any upgrades would be at the expense of the developer.

Transport and Sustainability – Despite a train service, transport links are poor. Shift workers cannot use the train as the last train from Liverpool Street departs at 2200. Trains are only one an hour and many workers who commute to London drive to Wickford to catch the train. Links to workplaces in Maldon, Chelmsford, Basildon and further afield in the county require a car. The cost of an annual season ticket to Liverpool Street is £3,800 and rising and requires employment in a relatively well paid occupation.

Hospital Links – Transport links to Broomfield Hospital in Chelmsford are very poor and even with the provision of an on demand bus/taxi service, long journeys by bus with at least 2 changes are required. Most villagers require transport by car. There are only very limited medical facilities at St Peter's Hospital in Maldon, which is difficult to get to without a car, again requiring the on demand taxi service and then a change in Althorne for the bus.

Employment - There is little employment in North Fambridge with a few positions in Deerlands Nursery, Yacht Haven, the Ferry Boat Inn and Roe's Jetting Services. There is very little opportunity for the unskilled and they would have to seek positions outside the village involving difficult and expensive travel. There is no provision in the draft Local Development Plan for the expansion of employment opportunities.

GP Services – The Local Development Plan admits that GP services in the Maldon District are already oversubscribed, including the surgeries at Burnham and Maldon; despite this it states that in relation to North Fambridge “there appears to be existing capacity to accommodate the demand for medical provision”. This is clearly not the case for the extra 75 dwellings. This is an insufficient number for an additional GP but too much pressure for existing medical practices. It is difficult to envisage the nature of the enhanced medical provision stated in the Consultation document.

Flood Risk – Much of North Fambridge is within the flood zone. An additional 75 houses would increase the risk of surface water flooding even if the SUDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems) approach is used.

Sewerage and Surface Water – Since 1974 the Parish Council/Residents have been in dialogue with the local MP/Maldon District Council/Anglian Water/OFWAT regarding the inadequate sewerage system in North Fambridge. Flooding and/or backing up have occurred on a regular basis because of the inadequate infrastructure. Any more housing will increase pressure on an already overloaded system and will make it even more “unfit for purpose”. Surface water issues cause backing up of the sewer system and flooding of gardens at Franklin Road causing a health hazard and damage to property.

Environmental Issues – North Fambridge has extensive SSSI sites, a Ramsar site and an Essex Wildlife Trust reserve. The building of 75 houses must impact on the wildlife in the area with the loss of agricultural land, for example the resident barn owls and bats will have reduced areas over which to feed. The draft Local Development Plan does not mention specifically the environmental significance of these areas in North Fambridge.

Lighting – Any new development would be required to install street lighting.

Lack of amenities – There are no shops and a lack of other amenities such as post office, bank, dentist, leisure centre etc and in order to access these amenities travel outside the village mainly by car is necessary.

There is no reference in the Consultation Document to the North Fambridge Village Plan and Village Design Statement.

The reason for the allocation of 75 houses is stated to be because of its proximity to a higher level of services in South Woodham Ferrers, the railway station and access to employment opportunities in South Essex. Many of these facilities are only accessible by car or a long walk from SW Ferrers railway station. Other villages are in close proximity to services in Burnham on Crouch or Maldon and have access to employment opportunities in South Essex, Maldon, Chelmsford or Burnham so there is no coherent rationale for singling out North Fambridge for the specific allocation of 75 houses.

For all the above reasons the proposals for 75 additional houses in North Fambridge are poorly thought out, are unsustainable, cannot be supported and should be scrapped.

Yours faithfully

