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14 October 2013

National Trust

Planning Policy Team,
Maldon District Council,
By email:
policy@maldon.gov.uk

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: MALDON LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION

The National Trust is a charity founded in 1895 to promote the permanent preservation of places of historic interest and natural beauty for the benefit of the nation. Although independent of government, we have been given the unique ability to declare our property inalienable – meaning that it cannot be sold and that it will be protected for ever, for everyone.

With over 4 million members and an annual turnover of more than £400 million the National Trust is also Europe's largest conservation organisation. We manage over 250,000 hectares of countryside, several hundred historic houses, gardens and parks and more than 700 miles of coastline across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The National Trust has significant landholdings on the coast of Essex, Suffolk & Norfolk. Each of these National Trust properties attracts large numbers of visitors each year who come to enjoy the wildlife, wilderness and leisure opportunities that they provide. The estuaries of the Essex coast are among the most highly designated and protected land and marine areas in the UK, nationally and internationally protected through their designation as NNR, SPA and SAC and providing habitat for abundant birdlife, many of which are protected species.

The National Trust owns Copt Hall Marshes & Horsey Island on the Blackwater estuary, significant for their birdlife and as the oldest battlefield site in Britain. Their value is greatly enhanced by the wilderness quality of the surrounding area, much of which is owned and managed as wetland nature reserves. It is essential that any proposed development in this area fully considers, mitigates, and where possible, enhances this high quality area.

Against this background the National Trust wishes to make the following comments:

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Registered charity number 205846

1. Format of the consultation

The National Trust has chosen to make comment by letter rather than utilise the online consultation form as it severely limited the word count and commentary we would have been able to make.

2. Sustainability Appraisal

The SA incorporates both SEA and the Habitats Regulations Assessment. The HRA identifies that cumulatively with other Districts' growth proposals there are possible negative impacts of growth on designated wildlife sites in and within 20km of Maldon District. It suggests that negative impacts can be minimised by providing for recreational open space close to where people live - consequently garden suburbs and the provision of recreational open space within or close to the proposed development sites forms part of the overall strategy for Maldon. While the National Trust is supportive of the principle of including open space near where people live, it will be inevitable that sites designated and protected for their nature conservation value will come under increasing pressure from the visiting public as population grows.

Northey Island is located just to the south of the large allocations at Maldon. Consideration should be given to whether the developments should provide funding to cover increased maintenance and management associated with increased visitor pressure on National Trust and other nearby conservation sites due to development on the doorstep.

3. Maldon Housing Sites

The Park Drive site (120 homes) is within walking distance of Northey Island and there is an existing footpath which leads from the development towards the access road. It is highly likely therefore that it will lead to increased visitor pressure and it may well be visible from and impinge on the setting of this historic battlefield site. The relationship of this site to Northey Island and the seawall and riverside needs careful consideration and it is therefore of great concern that the Council does not propose to produce a masterplan for this allocation. There is no information available on the website to show that the Council has considered the wider effects of this site and I am not aware that there has been any attempt to contact the National Trust as a stakeholder in the site identification process. This needs to be rectified.

Similarly I note a masterplan is proposed for the large garden suburb proposed to the south of Maldon and the National Trust wishes to be added to the list of stakeholders to be consulted.

4. Policy D4 , Energy

Policy D4 on Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Energy Generation sets out an intention to produce SPD guidance on the siting of renewable and low carbon energy

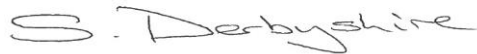
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projects. The National Trust would like to be added to the list of consultees for this forthcoming guidance.

Policy D4 suggests the Council *“will strongly support the principle of a new nuclear power station at Bradwell-on-sea”*. However paragraph 3.43 acknowledges *“Given the uncertainty of the project, the possibility and impacts of a new nuclear power station in the District will not be considered further at this stage.”*

The National Trust request that we are involved as a key stakeholder as and when there is any further progress on this development.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. Derbyshire". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.

Sian Derbyshire BA (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

Planning Adviser for East of England

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