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Mr Derek Lawrence
Head of Planning Services
Maldon District Council
Princes Road
Maldon
Essex
CM9 5DL

2nd October 2013

Dear Mr Lawrence,

I am writing in response to the Draft Local Development Plan, with a particular focus on the council's proposal to build 75 new residential units in North Fambridge.

I have a number of objections to this scheme:

1. The density of the proposed development is out of keeping with the village and will undermine the rural character of North Fambridge.
2. An additional 75 households in the village will precipitate a large increase in cars and traffic on the already busy and dangerous Burnham Road, not to mention increased noise pollution within the village itself.
3. The sewer system in the village has, since the 1980s, been recognised as being inadequate and an additional 75 households would place a tremendous strain on this infrastructure.
4. The presence of a railway station is used to justify the development at North Fambridge, however:
 - a. The branch line does not link North Fambridge to the main areas of employment in the district or wider region and therefore is not a viable commuting option for most villagers, who are forced to drive to their places of work. Its limited hours of operation mean it is not a viable option for shift-workers.
 - b. Likewise the branch line does not link the village to the main local amenities. Maldon is inaccessible on the train. Villagers thus rely on cars to visit the dentist, doctor and for grocery shopping etc. Although South Woodham Ferrers has a station, it is a twenty minute walk from the town centre and thus not viable for shopping. I note that the district council recognises this and runs a shopper service from Fambridge to the South Woodham ASDA. The train is not a viable way to reach medical amenities. When our neighbour had a stroke and was in hospital in Broomfield and then at St. Peter's in Maldon, his wife, who does not drive, was reliant

- on lifts from neighbours, as the railway does not link the village with these important medical facilities.
- c. Despite the high cost of fuel, high ticket prices mean travelling on the train is normally more expensive than driving. Season tickets from North Fambridge to Liverpool Street are prohibitively expensive (currently £364.80 per month or £3800 per year) meaning that commuting to London is only possible for those in highly remunerated jobs.
 - d. The railway does not link the village to the employment and retail markets in South Essex, cited in the Plan as a reason for development at Fambridge, and a car is required to access these markets.
 - e. Problems on the mainline badly affect the Southminster line, so that trains on the branch line are often subject to delay and cancellation. Given that the line is single track with only one passing place at North Fambridge small problems quickly lead to severe delays. The service is also unreliable. In the past week the 07:03 into London has been cancelled on two occasions. The next train does not run until fifty minutes later at 07:52, leading to an unacceptable delay in arriving at work.
5. I am very concerned that the site of the proposed development in North Fambridge has yet to be decided. It is clear that the site will be outside the current village development boundary and in all likelihood negatively impact on the amenities of occupiers of neighbouring properties. Building to the West of North Fambridge would have an unacceptable impact on two footpaths often used and much valued by the village community. Their rural character would be completely destroyed by development of the density suggested in the LDP. Developing to the South or East of North Fambridge would encroach upon the Blue House Farm nature reserve, an important site of Special Scientific Interest and, in addition, devastate the beautiful and exhilarating footpath along the north bank of the River Crouch. As one of the stated aims of the council is to promote tourism in the area, ruining the very paths that are likely to attract people to visit the area seems particularly ill conceived (indeed these footpaths are on the route of the Saltmarsh 75, a walking/running event designed to attract tourists to the District).
 6. Planning permission is currently being sought by two developers for a total of 67 residential units in the village. If these two schemes were to get the go-ahead in addition to the development suggested in the LDP, the character of the village would be irrevocably changed.

In addition to these objections I am deeply concerned about the speed with which development is planned for North Fambridge, with all 75 units to be constructed between 2014 and 2019. I am unconvinced there is a big demand for housing in North Fambridge. Properties for sale in the village have remained on the market for many months. The village's lack of amenities, extremely limited employment opportunities and inadequate public transport links are not to everyone's taste. I am genuinely concerned that development on this scale and in the suggested time frame could lead to an a densely developed area on the

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edge of the village that is not only completely out of keeping with the rest of the village, but also sparsely populated. I accept that some development in the village is inevitable and think that it is important the development also includes an appropriate amount of affordable housing. However, I believe that the current plan risks creating a 'ghost' estate in North Fambridge, and that any development in the village must happen over a considerably longer time frame.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted name]