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Church Road  
North Fambridge  
Chelmsford  
CM3 6LU

13 October 2013

Chief Planning Officer  
Local Development Plan Consultation  
Maldon District Council  
Princes Road  
Maldon  
CM9 5DL

Dear Sir

### **Maldon Development Plan**

On reading the Maldon Development Plan I was at a loss to understand how the development at North Fambridge could have been realised by adherence to the national Planning Guidelines. In previous plans produced by Maldon North Fambridge has always been considered to be poorly connected to the existing infrastructure and lacking in the basic requirements to support a sustainable settlement.

The current proposal does little to address these concerns.

In more detail:

#### **Size of Development**

Although the Plan bases the required number of houses on evidence based data, this is only applied to the District as a whole. No evidence based assessment has been made for the housing needs of North Fambridge. Such evidence is available from the work done to produce the Village Plan and this shows in some detail the requirements of the village. No account seems to have been taken of this document and thus the proposals are without the benefit of the required evidence based assessment.

#### **Location**

North Fambridge enjoys the greatest concentrations of environmentally sensitive areas within the county, including SSSI and RAMSAR sites. The margins of the proposed development area include a wood containing a heronry and bats and to the south an established rookery. The development proposed by this plan will inevitably lead to greater intrusion into these sensitive areas to their detriment.

Much of the area around the village is within the flood zone, including part of the only access road. With the limited maintenance that is now performed on the sea wall the flood hazard to the village will increase. Development within such an area is not recommended or sustainable.

## **Transport**

### **Road**

North Fambridge does not enjoy good links to arterial roads. This is supported by the fact that commercial premises in South Woodham Ferrers are unable to be sold to enterprises that require such links.

The main road link is by a small B road from Burnham to SWF. At peak times this road is congested and suffers from delays both at SWF and Rettendon Turnpike. The Plan calls for additional houses both at Burnham and North Fambridge. The additional traffic arising will exacerbate an already unacceptable situation. There is no evidence in the plan that any remedial action has been considered

The road link to Maldon in the north is by minor roads only, with restricted width. These are unsuitable for commercial traffic and inadequate for the increased domestic traffic which will result from the urban development of Maldon. None of these considerations has been taken into account by the Plan.

### **Rail**

North Fambridge is situated at the passing place of the single track branch lines that serve the Dengie peninsula. The journey time on this line between termini is about 40 minutes. This limits the frequency of the available service. In peak times the trains are crowded with standing room being the only provision. The Plan sees this link as a primary and sustainable route to provide access to employment for the planned new populations in North Fambridge, Burnham and possibly Maldon. By the service providers own figures this is not feasible. This will force additional traffic onto the inadequate road network. This is not a sustainable proposal.

## **Telecommunications**

North Fambridge is served by two copper telephone cables which carry both telephone and internet services. The broadband speed available to the village peaks at 3Mb/s, though the more usual speed is closer to 1Mb/s. Doubling the population would lead to a deterioration of the service to an average speed little better than that which was available on dial-up. It would be a far cry from the speed the government proposes as a minimum acceptable, and as such would be a disincentive to any commercial activity within the village to say nothing of the restriction it would place on domestic use. British Telecom have no plans to upgrade the service to the village making this aspect of the proposal unsustainable.

## **Energy supply**

North Fambridge is not supplied by mains gas. Most of the houses rely on oil, a few on LPG and others are fully electric. There is no prospect of mains gas being supplied to the development, it is not considered at all in the Plan. Oil is hardly a sustainable fuel and is not suitable for the density of houses proposed. The conclusion is that the energy needs of the development will be served principally by electricity. Whilst the modern technology of heat pumps may be able to provide an arguably sustainable energy supply, the technology is expensive and noisy and not appropriate for the affordable homes that the Plan proposes.

## **Building Conditions**

The land around North Fambridge is principally alluvial clay and experience has shown that the only suitable foundations are piles. There are examples in the village of adjacent houses being built, one on piles the other on strip foundations and the strip foundation requiring subsequent underpinning. As part of the development is intended for affordable houses the necessary building technique will add additional cost, defeating the objective of the scheme.

## **Employment**

The provision of an additional 75 dwellings implies that at least that number of jobs will be needed and possibly twice as many. Employment opportunities within the existing community are very limited and the Plan makes no proposals for additional job creation within the village. The implication is that an additional people will be exiting the village daily to reach their workplaces. Though work exists in London the rail fare is now around £4000 per year and only those with well paid jobs can afford this out of taxed income. It is unlikely that the potential occupiers of affordable housing would be in such a category.

The alternative is to seek work in the nearby settlements, SWF, Maldon, Heybridge and Burnham. With the exception of SWF these communities are already targeted for additional housing, so it is difficult to see any opportunity for employment there. SWF is now an established community but offers no significant opportunities for employment.

The conclusion is that the provision of employment demanded by the development is neither sustainable nor deliverable.

## **Sewage and Surface Water Drainage**

It is well known to both MDC and Anglia Water that significant problems already exist in North Fambridge both with regard to sewage and surface water. Frequent attendance at the pumping stations in The Avenue and in Franklin Road is needed to supplement the operation of the system. In Franklin road the problem is so acute that one property has had to be vacated whilst repair work is undertaken, but with no assurance that the problem has been identified and remedied.

In The Avenue a continuing problem exists with foul smells and sewage backup. The remedies offered by Anglia water only address the symptoms and not the underlying cause of the problem which remains unstated.

The Latchingdon treatment works is reaching capacity and in any event the pumping capacity at North Fambridge is limited by the pipe size and is already at its limit.

It is difficult to see how such a system could cope with a strategic imposition of 75 houses plus any additional development that occurs before the adoption of the Plan.

## **Access to Emergency Services**

Access to North Fambridge is by a single narrow road, which if obstructed cuts off the entire community preventing the access of emergency services or the evacuation of the residents. Unless this concern is addressed it renders the development unsafe and

unsustainable.

North Fambridge relies on the fire stations at SWF, Burnham and Maldon in the first instance. None of these station is permanently manned and the proposed development would put additional demands upon them. This has not been addressed in the Plan.

Emergency ambulances are based at SWF from where a timely response is normally available. However the area as a whole is remote and critical emergencies always invoke the use of the rescue helicopter (a charity provided facility). Additional development will place more demands on this service and could lead to a reduction in the availability of this essential service.

## **Education**

No primary schools are available in North Fambridge, these children are bussed to other village schools. The only school with a significant number of vacancies is Latchingdon. This however is a faith school and may not be appropriate for all residents. There are no other proposals to accommodate the children the development will attract and thus this aspect of the plan is not deliverable.

Secondary education is provided principally by schools in SWF and Burnham. Though SWF is nearing capacity it is thought that there are places at Burnham, though these may be filled by the proposed developments in that area

## **Retail**

North Fambridge has no retail outlet. Significant retail outlets are available at SWF, Maldon, Wickford, Burnham and Chelmsford. For the purpose of shopping these are only realistically accessible by car. The Plan does not suggest any retail development and so the majority of shopping will continue to be conducted at remote major outlets necessitating journeys by car along the poor road network. This is not a sustainable activity.

## **Leisure**

With the exception of boating, North Fambridge offers very few sporting facilities, lacking even changing rooms for the small playing field that is available. A wide variety of entertainment facilities are available elsewhere at the major population centres, but are accessible principally by car as there are no late train services, and no buses at all. This again is not a sustainable situation.

In conclusion, the plan proposed is neither sustainable nor deliverable. The position is succinctly summed up by a recent rejection notice from the planning committee as below:

I trust that this proposal will go no further.

Yours faithfully

Richard Edwards