

## Response to Tendring District Council's Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation Document

From the Wivenhoe Neighbourhood Plan Group

Date: 13<sup>th</sup> October 2015

Dear Sirs

We should like to offer the following observations in response to your Issues and Options Consultation. In particular we would like to offer comments on the proposal contained in Section 8.3 final paragraph. I have repeated the text of the relevant section here:

SECTION 8.3: A new settlement will be built on land crossing the Colchester/Tendring border planned for jointly by Tendring District Council and Colchester Borough Council (duty to cooperate) which will deliver approximately 2,000 new homes between now and 2032 of which 1,000 would count towards Tendring's housing requirements and 1,000 would count towards Colchester's with the potential for further phases of development in the longer - term beyond 2032. The development would be accompanied by new schools, medical facilities, a link road between the A120 and A133 and rapid bus services into Colchester town centre. The development would maintain a countryside gap around the valley of Salary Brook on the edge of Colchester and around the village of Elmstead Market.

1. We note that this proposal for an extra 2,000 homes between the east side of Colchester and Elmstead Market appears in all 4 Options presented by TDC and therefore does not really represent an option at all.
2. We note it is a joint proposal between Colchester Borough Council and Tendring District Council with 1,000 homes contributing to the target housing requirement of each Council. For this reason we are also copying this document to CBC.
3. We also note that the document recognises that homes will also only be built to meet the demand for them. Therefore it could take many years before this overall number is reached. This gives rise to our principal concern outlined in para 4.

The following concerns are based upon the evidence from a survey of Wivenhoe residents conducted in November 2013 (for results see

<http://wivenhoeneighbourhoodplan.org.uk/document-register/survey-findings/introduction-whats-wivenhoe-like-as-a-place-to-live/> ).

In response to the question: What is Wivenhoe like as a place to live? Out of 980 people who filled in the survey 39% feel Wivenhoe is an excellent place to live, 46% feel it is good, 9% that it's 'OK'. Only 2 people (0.2%) though it was bad. When asked to choose one thing they would change, the overwhelming majority cited issues related to traffic, congestion, and parking. This was followed by the need for more services, and to limit new housing while preserving the open areas. Concerns were expressed about adequate infrastructure, both now and in the event of further expansion.

The concerns we have about developing new homes in this location are as follows:

4. New homeowners at least in the early phases of development won't find facilities such as new schools and medical facilities in place until sufficient scale has been achieved. ECC has advised us that they will only consider building a new school when there are 900 new homes. Wivenhoe has been arguing for a new medical centre for at least 15 years. New homeowners will therefore look to neighbouring communities for these facilities. It is likely that Wivenhoe

will be most attractive to them but given the response shown above from Wivenhoe residents, facilities here are already operating at capacity or very near to capacity.

5. Wivenhoe's Neighbourhood Plan Group are already contemplating an extra 250 homes in the same Plan period to 2032 which are likely to take up the 78 places at Wivenhoe's three primary schools which are presently occupied by children who do not live at Wivenhoe postal addresses.

**Key point:** We suggest that if TDC want to pursue this proposal, greater priority has to be given to the building of schools and medical facilities **at an early stage** at this location as a condition of planning consent.

6. **Traffic implications.** TDC acknowledge that job creation in the future is more likely in low-wage sectors. Therefore Wivenhoe can expect:

- 6.1 More people wanting to travel by train to London or other large towns in search of higher paid employment and using Wivenhoe train station in consequence putting pressure on commuter car parking in Wivenhoe where commuter car parking is already at capacity in the station locality.
- 6.2 More traffic on Wivenhoe's principal roads at peak times (Note: this is already negatively impacted by other residential development in the Tendring area)

**Key point:** We suggest that TDC should expand the number of new dwellings in a location as Weeley and discuss with Network Rail and the train operator to make Weeley a key commuter station in Tendring, and provide excellent car parking facilities and a fast train service to main stations Colchester, Chelmsford, Stratford and London, in preference to building new homes in the Wivenhoe area.

And Wivenhoe and Colchester can expect:

- 6.3 More traffic on Clingoe Hill at peak times arising from people looking for employment in Colchester as well as people taking children to secondary schools during term time unless of course residents on this new development will not be allowed direct access to the A133 but encouraged to use the Bromley Road.

**Key point:** Confirmation that a link road between the A133 and the A120 will be built as part of this proposed scheme and

- a) built before any significant number of homes are constructed
- b) that a traffic impact study confirms through modelling of potential traffic flows that existing congestion on Clingoe Hill will be alleviated by the construction of this link road and that the volume of additional cars using this road will not make this congestion substantially worse.

7. **Countryside**

- 7.1 We note a countryside gap is proposed in the Salary Brook valley. This is in line with a recommendation we intend including in the Wivenhoe Neighbourhood Plan since this land is contained within the agreed Wivenhoe Neighbourhood Plan area. We therefore

welcome this proposal, presuming the gap to be much wider than just the land presently designated as Nature Reserve.

- 7.2 However we believe both CBC and TDC authorities should do more to preserve the feeling of entering the countryside when leaving the Greenstead roundabout by car or bus and heading along the A133 in the direction of Elmstead. We would like to see a significant planting of trees and bushes alongside the full length of the dual carriageway between Greenstead roundabout and Elmstead Market in a dense border wide enough to screen off this new proposed residential development. This border must also be wide enough and planted in such a way to function as an element of green infrastructure that it will be an important wildlife corridor to maintain connectivity in the landscape, prevent further fragmentation of existing habitats and so enable movement of wildlife through the area.

It seems to us in Wivenhoe there is a real danger that this joint development will simply become another suburb of Colchester without any significant identity of its own and therefore we will all lose that present sense of countryside which currently exists in that area.

**Key point:** If this development scheme proceeds, as a planning condition, require any developer of this land to provide a dense planting of trees and bushes alongside the A133 on the north side between Greenstead and Elmstead Market that is wide enough to preserve a sense of countryside for travellers along the A133 as well as be wide enough to benefit wild life.

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13<sup>th</sup> October 2015