



LOUGHTON RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Press Release

Epping Forest District Local Plan halted!

Yesterday in the High Court, CK Properties (Theydon Bois) Limited, a property developer, asked a judge to allow it to take the District Council to Judicial Review over the way the Council had treated the developer's proposal that the Council should include a parcel of land in Theydon Bois among the sites listed in the Plan for housing developments.

The Conservative-led Council had rushed the approval of the Plan through at a full Council meeting last December, in order to submit the Plan before a Government deadline which would otherwise have meant a sharp increase in the number of dwellings which would have to be built in the District.

The developer asserted that Councillors at the December meeting had not been given full information on why particular sites had, or had not, been included in the Plan for development, and therefore that the process had been seriously flawed.

The court decided that the case should be heard in full, and the Judicial Review hearing will be held on May 23rd and 24th 2018. Until then, the Council will have to defer submitting the Plan to the next stage of the process.

Fortunately, the Government's previous deadline has now been extended to much later in the year, removing the immediate threat of extra housing being required.

LRA is contesting a number of points on which we feel that the Plan is unsound. In particular, we object strongly to the Council's proposal to build housing on Jessel Green.

David Linnell for Loughton Residents Association.

21/03/18

20 Eleven Acre Rise

Loughton

Essex IG10 1AN

david.linnell@loughtonresidents.co.uk

07958 984 278

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The court case

The developer submitted that a “key” part of the evidence on which the Plan was based – Appendix B of the Site Selection Report - had not been available to District Councillors when they made their decision on the Plan on 14 December 2017.

Nor could other interested parties, such as developers, tell whether or not sites had been fairly and consistently treated.

The Council responded that any resulting problems could be dealt with at the next stage of the process, when the Plan is examined by a Planning Inspector in a public hearing, and so no-one would have been disadvantaged.

2. The Local Plan

The Local Plan sets out the strategy for the next 16 years to meet the economic and housing growth in the District, identifying potential sites for development and regeneration and sets out the development management policies. The process of developing the Plan has taken many years.

3. LRA’s objections to the Plan.

As part of the process leading up to the December Council meeting, LRA submitted a number of objections to parts of the Plan which we felt were unsound and needed amendment.

In particular, we strongly supported residents’ objections to the Council’s proposal to put housing on half of Jessel Green.

The District Council first raised the idea of building on Jessel Green in 2008. Since then they have consistently ignored widespread objections from residents and Councillors. The proposal conflicts with the rest of the Local Plan’s provisions on green spaces.

Because it has completely ignored the responses to its consultations, we consider that the Council has failed to follow a proper democratic process.

We are preparing to press our objections when the Plan goes to the formal hearing in front of a Planning Inspector.

4. The December 14th 2017 District Council meeting.

At the meeting, LRA Cllrs proposed the removal of Jessel Green, Debden, from the list of sites for development. However, the Conservative-led District Council demanded that Cllrs approve the Plan without making any changes.

5. The full site details.

The full site details have only been made publicly available by the Council in the last few days. They can be seen at <http://www.efdclocalplan.org/technical-information>

6. About Loughton Residents Association

Loughton Residents Association is a very active group of local residents who care for Loughton and its environment. Our membership is around 1,000 households, and we have been in existence for over 35 years.

We are independent of any national political party. We seek, and listen to, the views and concerns of Loughton residents and take action in support.

We have a majority of the councillors on the Loughton Town Council, and councillors on Epping Forest District Council & Essex County Council.

We provide information to residents through social media and in our own regular printed and email newsletters.

We have our own website, www.LoughtonResidents.org.uk