

**Ongar Neighbourhood Plan  
Community Group**

*Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Community Group (ONPCG) was set up in May 2017 to produce Ongar Neighbourhood Plan on behalf of Ongar Town Council. Ongar Neighbourhood Plan expects to be going to Consultation (Reg. 14) late Spring 2019. Ongar Neighbourhood Plan aims to be ‘made’ around the time EFDC Local Plan is adopted in order to exert its legal place in Planning Applications for the imminent proposed new development in Ongar (which will increase the housing stock by approx. 1/3<sup>rd</sup> from 2011-2033). ONPCG Reg 19 Representation and Appendices is ref: 19OTH0042.*

Please find our Statement as follows:

	<b>Matter 7 Place-Shaping and General Masterplan Approach Issue 1 Question 2, Question 3, Questions 4 and Question 5</b>
	<b>Issue 1 Question 2</b>
<b>Applying SP3 to all sites including smaller sites and windfall sites will ensure green space, community facilities etc. will be delivered. More of a priority than actual numbers per site.</b>	Unfortunately the fine sentiments and objectives in the explanation leading to the actual Policies of EFDC Local Plan is unlikely to be deliverable for Ongar, because of the ‘Residential only’ sites and the lack of initial Place-Shaping holistic process applied to development in Ongar. Developers will no doubt argue the difficulty of relatively small sites being economically unviable to provide good open space, green corridors, and enhancing biodiversity, character and community assets etc. and being able to deliver the net housing numbers suggested by EFDC in the Local Plan. Developers are likely to use a relatively small sized plot to argue for providing the cheapest ‘benefit’ to the community. Thus from this aspect we consider it is imperative to apply the Policy to all sizes of plot including windfall plots, to ensure that community benefits are delivered and the Objectives of EFDC Local Plan delivered. From that perspective we consider that delivering the Objectives relating to SP1 social and environmental should outweigh the proposed housing numbers per site. This would help us get away from some of the mistakes of the recent past, which have provided soulless generic housing estates, out of keeping with the character of the local settlement, not conducive to people’s wellbeing and providing little or no green corridors or community facilities.
	<b>Issue 1 Question 3</b>
<b>Ongar is a rural town of only just over 6000 population. Its sites are edge of settlement. Lower density should be applied according to SP3 B part (iv), but is not.</b>	As a rural Neighbourhood, Ongar is concerned about the stipulated densities applied to the Site Allocations in Ongar. Firstly Ongar’s densities have been allocated without consideration for the Character and town Proforma of the Historic Town of Chipping Ongar, so have been allocated as just a desk exercise. They average 40pha, despite Ongar’s sites being only at the ‘edge of settlement’ and in a rural area. They will mostly form the new boundary for the Green Belt. Recent 3 storey town houses were inappropriate and have harmed not only the Openness of the Green Belt but also the Historic character of the town and nearby Conservation Area of Chipping Ongar town centre. Ongar does not want this type of inappropriate over- intensification to continue and cause more harm to the small historic rural town. Thus it should be stipulated that Ongar would qualify in Policy SP3 B (iv) for lower density development. This is justified to fit in with the existing rural low density housing with good sized gardens to grow vegetables etc. (until recently). This is the reason many young families

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	<p>choose to live in our rural town rather than a more urban town with more amenities. As already commented in this Statement, Chipping Ongar is recognised in EFDC evidence documents as having fewer facilities than other town centres and small district centres in EFDC. This is compensated for with the accessibility of the rural countryside and, until recently, typical rural densities to allow for gardens and accommodate cars to be parked off the road. In defining terms (cf Essex Highways), Ongar with a population of just over 6,000 is not considered to be ‘urban.’</p> <p>Ongar’s Landscape Characterisation lists the surrounding countryside as of ‘high landscape sensitivity unable to absorb development without significant character change’. Without a lower density being stipulated, developers push for higher density to achieve higher profits, rather than provide what best suits and enhances our historic town. Hence this must be clear in EFDC Local Plan.</p>
	<p><b>Issue 1 Question 4</b></p>
<p><b>Conserving and enhancing the historic environment is weak in EFDC Plan so should be included in SP3</b></p>	<p>ONPCG would welcome the criteria to include specific reference to the need to enhance the historic environment in a similar way to other paragraphs in SP3 A for the natural environment etc. (xi) is too weak to be applied to our historic environment. As one of the first Town Centre Conservation Areas in Essex with a wealth of Listed Buildings and one of only three Historic Towns in the District, we are acutely aware of the lack of knowledge and understanding about protecting Heritage Assets and their Settings. Development and alterations to nearby non-listed buildings can also have a devastating permanently harmful effect on Listed Buildings’ and Ancient Monuments’ Settings. This has already been seen recently in Ongar.</p>
	<p><b>Issue 1 Question 5</b></p>
<p><b>Promoting healthy communities needs strengthening including enabling new community amenities to be located in or near town centres hubs for small towns</b></p>	<p>The Local Plan does not respond sufficiently to requirements of Section 8 of the NPPF. Para 69 promotes ‘mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres and active street frontages which bring together those who work, live and play in the vicinity’. This needs strengthening.</p> <p>As far as Ongar is concerned Place-Shaping and Masterplanning has not been carried out for our community, despite over another 750 new homes expected by 2026. A Neighbourhood Plan for Ongar could have assisted in doing so if EFDC had not allocated the sites for housing themselves. The criticism of Ongar’s allocation is also :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EFDC has allocated Residential Only sites rather than applying Place-Shaping/ Masterplanning principles. EFDC allocated sites for Ongar are:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Not mixed use</li> <li>○ Are located away from the town centre, exacerbating a recent long linear/dumbbell shape growing, rather than clustered round the medieval town plan and historic core which resulting in</li> <li>○ Most new housing estates not being within a comfortable walking distance of the town centre</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Unless there is intervention to locate at least some of the ‘essential’ identified Community facilities and amenities in Chipping Ongar historic town centre, it will ultimately result in the rapid decline of the Chipping Ongar town centre because there is little reason to visit. This could have been an opportunity to fully embrace the NPPF, act on the objectives in the Local Plan for Place-Shaping</p>

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	and regenerate Chipping Ongar at a time when such a large influx of new residents need to be included into the cohesive community.
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