

Our Ref: RJC/EFDC/LP
Date: 30 April 2019
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Email: rich.cooke@essex.gov.uk

Ms Louise Phillips – Planning Inspector
Epping Forest District Council: Examination of the District Local Plan, 2011 – 2033

By email louise@poservices.co.uk

Dear Ms Phillips

Re: EFDC Local Plan Examination – Essex County Council representations on Harlow and Gilston Garden Town policies for the EFDC Local Plan

Thank you for providing an opportunity for Essex County Council (ECC) to discuss its representations on the above Local Plan (LP) through the examination hearings process. This letter relates to the ECC representations referenced by EFDC as no. 14. This concerns the EFDC LP approach to the Garden Town growth and in particular, that of Policies SP 4 (Development and Delivery of Garden Communities in the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town) and SP 5 (Garden Town Communities). ECC suggested alternative wording for paragraph 2.107, that it understands is acceptable, by itself (and in isolation) to EFDC, as well as to Harlow Council (HC). I hope that ECC articulated the importance that it attaches to this matter through its representations, hearing statements and oral evidence. At the hearing session held on 21 March 2019, you advised the main parties (ECC and EFDC, plus HC) to seek agreement on this matter. I am not repeating the full text and detail of the ECC representations on this matter, since this has been provided previously to you by EFDC, alongside all other representations.

Some discussions have been undertaken between ECC and EFDC to resolve this issue but a substantial agreement could not be reached. The same issue has now also been considered and discussed at the HC Local Plan examination hearing session where ECC made similar representations. By way of update, ECC can advise that an EFDC participant at that hearing session on 29 March 2019 advised the Inspector that whilst EFDC might be willing to make a minor text change such as that proposed for paragraph 2.107 of its Local Plan, it would not be willing to accommodate or reflect that change in any of its specific Local Plan policies. HC has agreed to make some changes to individual policies, which help to clarify the position. These are being compiled into a full schedule of proposed modifications. However, HC do not intend to change the use of the expression 'Garden Communities' for the planned strategic developments.

Consequently, whilst ECC welcomes the proposed amendments to paragraph 2.107, as agreed with EFDC, they remain lost within the context of the more substantive unaltered Local Plan policies SP 4 and SP 5. Given the clearly stated stance of EFDC on this matter, and an unwillingness to amend Policies SP 4 and 5, ECC considers that it is unlikely that agreement will be able to be reached by both parties. Commentary on the stance of both Councils is provided within Appendix 2 (outstanding representations) of the

SoCG between EFDC and ECC, making clear that the matter could not be resolved by agreement (see document details below).

Concluding Comments

ECC has invested a considerable amount of time and effort in seeking to resolve its outstanding representations on the EFDC LP with EFDC officers, in line with the duty to co-operate. This work has been outlined in an updated, expanded and signed Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) between ECC and EFDC as published on 30 April 2019 (document references ED37; ED37A and ED37B). However, given the considerations outlined above, ECC needs to advise that its only option in this particular matter is to maintain its outstanding representation for the purposes of the EFDC LP examination. We therefore trust that you will give this representation and ECC's submissions due consideration in your deliberations on the EFDC Local Plan and hope that if supporting the amendment outlined in ECC's representation (or a change to similar effect) that this will be reflected consistently in relevant policy wording that relates to the Garden Town developments (including Policies SP 4 and SP 5).

If any queries or other matters arise in response to the contents of this letter, please contact me via the contact details provided above or below. A letter to explain this position is also being provided to the Harlow LDP examination inspector.

Yours sincerely

Rich Cooke
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