



Theydon Bois Parish Council

Parish Office, Village Hall, Coppice Row, Theydon Bois, Essex CM16 7ER

Hearing Statement in relation to Matter 11: Housing:

Issue 1 (Wednesday 22nd May 2019)

24th April 2019

Dear Mrs Louise St John Howe,

Thank you for your email of 5th April 2019, explaining the procedures set out for the continuation of the Hearing Sessions of the Examination in Public for the 'Epping Forest District Local Plan, 2011-2033'. In our representation made at the time of the Regulation 19 Consultation, the Parish Council made reference to a number of Policies, and related aspects, which we hoped would be considered further during the time of the Hearings.

We included, with that representation, reference to **Policy H1: Housing Mix and Accommodation Types**, and indicated that we would like to speak at the Hearing. However, we note that we were not, initially, included on the list of participants, but would very much like to attend this session, if it is possible to do so. We have cross-referenced our earlier representation with just two of the Planning Inspector's questions, as these are the most relevant to the concerns we previously raised.

Please let us know if it would be appropriate for the Parish Council to be included on the list of participants for the morning session, and thank you again for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Caroline Carroll, Clerk to the Council

HEARING STATEMENT - MATTER 11 - Housing:

We note the Planning Inspector's reference to Housing: Issue 1:

Will Policy H1 be effective in securing an appropriate mix of housing ?

2. Does the policy, and the Plan generally, do enough to support the specific needs of older people ? and:

5. In Part E, should the term "specialist accommodation" be defined ?

In our response to the Regulation 19 Consultation, the Parish Council stated that it broadly welcomed the inclusion of this new Housing Policy and, in particular, under Policy H1 F, the recognition of the significance that bungalows play in providing a balanced dwelling mix to meet the needs of the different settlements.

Theydon Bois has an ageing population and currently has a large number of family homes being occupied by one person of pensionable age. It is anticipated that a number of these people would like to downsize but, due to lack of suitable properties, this has not been possible. Theydon Bois has consistently seen its stock of bungalows eroded, either by demolition, and replacement by larger homes, or by excessive extensions.

However, with respect to Question 2, the Parish Council believes that more detailed guidance is required, in order to provide clarity as to how the provision of accommodation for older residents may be retained, and encouraged, to accord with this Policy, both within the established settlements and on new development sites.

We think the definition of "specialist accommodation" (Question 5) would most likely provide for (but not be limited to) housing for older people, including Independent Living apartments, retirement homes (where designated for occupation by those over 65), single-level bungalows, sheltered accommodation, and Care Homes, and those properties which are either specifically designed for those with disabilities and support needs, or those which may be adapted accordingly.

We would also be keen to see provisions put in place to secure the retention of existing Care Homes, with clear criteria set down to ensure that these cannot be re-developed, or converted to other forms of residential occupancy, without exceptional circumstances first being taken into consideration.

One further aspect, briefly mentioned in our earlier response to the Regulation 19 Consultation, relates to ongoing concerns, now recognised within a number of settlements within the District, with respect to the design of ancillary accommodation often referred to as 'granny annexes'.

Epping Forest District Council ('EFDC') presently has no guidance on such developments which, if proposed as sizeable outbuildings within the confines of residential gardens, and clearly separated by some distance from the main dwelling, have lead to significant concern from neighbouring occupants, particularly if these have been designed to create an independent living facility within an area otherwise reserved as a quiet private amenity space. In these instances, outbuildings for uses 'incidental' to the dwelling

house would be acceptable but, unlike an 'annexe', these would not result in continuous use, nor occupation on a permanent basis, which can cause disturbance to nearby residents.

It is also questionable as to whether the appropriate level of care may be provided to an elderly, or less-able, relative in a building which is positioned at the end of a garden, when the preferred standard of accommodation would be that provided within an extension to the main dwelling house, or a building immediately adjoining it.

However, we note that Harlow Town Council, with whom Epping Forest District Council has a 'duty to co-operate', has included within the Housing Policies of its Local Development Plan (Pre-submission Publication, May 2018), a policy specifically in this regard, which is broadly consistent with that adopted by other Local Authorities. This policy, known as 'H7 - Residential Annexes', requires that such developments have a clear functional and physical dependence on the principal dwelling, are subservient to, and in the same ownership as, the principal dwelling, are occupied by a relative dependent on the occupier (or their carer), provide sufficient car parking to meet the adopted Vehicle Parking Standards, and have regard to the character of the existing property and the surrounding area.

Therefore, in the light of the views expressed above, the Parish Council would suggest that a Supplementary Planning Document is required to provide more criteria associated with such development, in order to ensure that a high standard of accommodation may be provided for older, or dependent, relatives, in a form that also respects the amenities of neighbouring properties and the area in which such development would be located.