

Contribution Concerning**Matter 6e (paragraph 71) Of the Independent Examination Of****The Chelmsford Draft Local Plan (Week 2)**

Site Selection Of GT1

This site does not have planning permission for its proposed purpose and thus cannot presently be regarded as “effective”. The Planning Application (18/01476/FUL) is running concurrently with this Examination. This site arose as part of an S106 Agreement attached to the Channels/Beaulieu development which is guided by the Approved North Chelmsford Area Action Plan {ANCAAP} which had allocated site SA12, adjacent to Essex Regiment Way, for the identical purpose.

The documentation (paragraph 44 of the Neighbours part of the Consultations section of Item 5 of the “Report For The Planning Committee” dated 27th November 2012) which first mentions the Drakes Lane site (now termed GT1) in replacement for site SA12 contains an error which has been pointed out to the Council at each and every phase of consultation leading up to this Examination but, even so, it remains as an active error at this stage and is perpetuated in the Planning Application now under consideration; the error that is made is that the site GT1 is outside of the ANCAAP whereas the truth is that it is inside. The relevance of this fact to the site selection process is that the ANCAAP, at para 3.73 states “.....The Borough Council will pursue this [SA12] as an allocated site **unless a more suitable** and deliverable site location arises **as a result of detailed analysis and site planning**.”. Further, paragraph 3.70 of the ANCAAP makes it clear that the “detailed analysis and site planning” is concerned with the Channels/Beaulieu development and not with some other site outside of that development.

Thus, the “error” in stating that the GT1 site is outside of the ANCAAP can be regarded as a constructive error designed to avoid the requirements, stated at paragraphs 3.70 and 3.73, that any replacement site for SA12 shall be both within the locale of the Channels/Beaulieu development and shall be MORE SUITABLE than site SA12.

The Site Assessment for site GT1 pertinent to this examination entirely fails to show any comparative assessment of its benefits vis a vis site SA12. Indeed, it requires almost no thought process to understand that site SA12 was selected by the Planning Authorities in very complete satisfaction of all National and Local Policy criteria whereas site GT1 fails on many, many counts. The basic point in this regard is to understand that site SA12 would have been integrated with a development of some 3000 housing units, shops, schools, medical facilities, public transport etc., thereby leading to the satisfaction of the National intent for INTEGRATION of the G&T community with the “settled” community, whereas site GT1 is in the countryside, does not have equivalent local access to shops, schools, medical facilities (or public transport to these facilities) and thus directly leads to the perpetuation of the ISOLATION of the G&T community from the “settled” community with all the negative consequences that flow from this.

Not only does site GT1 fail to satisfy the Policies designed for the direct benefit of the G&T community but it also fails the Policy designed to protect the community already resident in the countryside from being “overwhelmed” (When assessing the suitability of sites in rural or semi-rural settings, local planning authorities should ensure that the scale of such sites does **not dominate the nearest settled community**.); the fact is that the local community around about site GT1 are, due to planning constraints that have grown up over the years, single dwellings that are significantly isolated from one another. Thus, the present community around about site GT1 will be “overwhelmed” by this large (compared to them individually) new development.

In the light of the above information it is contended that the provision of this site is not “sound”; it is not correctly “justified” and it is not “consistent with national policy”.

It is therefore requested that the Examiner requires the Council to correct the error that states that site GT1 is outside of the ANCAAP; to require that, in consequence of correcting the error and thereby through the applicability of para 3.73 of the ANCAAP, the Council shall execute an objective comparative evaluation of the relative merits of sites SA12 and GT1 and to reject GT1 if it is not at least as suitable as site SA12; to require that, in consequence of correcting the error, the Council shall require the Channels/Beaulieu developers to allocate a G&T site within the Channels/Beaulieu development or, if this is now genuinely impossible, to allocate a site of equal or better merit to site SA12 within the new Local Plan being examined here and not to allocate a site which actively contributes to the perpetuation of the ISOLATION of the G&T community or which contravenes the Policy not to overwhelm a local community in a rural setting.

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