

## Issues and Options Consultation – Community Choices

### Theydon Bois Parish Council Planning Committee - Answers by Reference to Numbered Questions - Community Choices Questionnaire:

- (1) No. There is no reference to the concept of ‘Localism’.
- (2) Yes
- (3) 3.14 Yes. NB. It is map 3.1 not 2.1 as stated.
- (4) 3.15 Yes.
- (5) Consider selection of Options b, c, d, e, f and h. We would stress the importance of e and f.
- (6) No. We believe there should be a further strategic gap between Theydon Bois and Abridge (East of the Central Line) to prevent ribbon development along the Abridge Road and breaching the distinct Green Belt Boundary of the railway line.
- (7) No. Clearly land situated adjacent to Epping Forest/Buffer Land will be richer in biodiversity than other sites.
- (8) No comment.
- (9) No. Reference to the proposed Conservation Area for Theydon Bois has been omitted. Please see answer to Q97 for our comments on the unique character of Theydon Bois and for the importance of the contents of the recent Village Design Statement and the Dark Skies Policy.
- (10) No. The views of the community in Village Design Statements should be considered and given weight.
- (11) Agree all: **a, c, d, b, e.**
- (12)& No. Ensure, by policy, the ‘ring fencing’ of affordable housing.
- (13) Whilst it is recognised that we have an ageing population the living and health needs of the elderly are not necessarily met by the provision of dwellings for single occupation thus we do not necessarily agree that the factor of an ageing population leads to an assumption that potential housing targets should be greater.
- (14) Full recognition should be given for windfall sites on an ongoing basis.
- (15) No comment.
- (16) Yes.
- (17) Yes with reference to HAR-B and HAR-E. **No** with reference to HAR-D.
- (18) Support B and E because these represent the most sustainable options for Harlow and the surrounding areas and are most likely to provide Harlow with opportunities for regeneration and economic development. HAR-B offers opportunities for integration into the existing infrastructure. Object to HAR-D which is sited the wrong side of the ‘ridge’ and development in this location would be intrusive in the Green Belt.
- (19) Spatial option 4
- (20) Yes. 4 and 5.
- (21) Yes. There should be Spatial Distribution Patterns based on a comprehensive Regional Transport Strategy. See answer to Q97.
- (35) No. Epping F and G should not be included. (See answer 39)
- (36) No comment.
- (37) No comment
- (38) Object to F and G.
- (39) Epping F and G fall at least in part within the strategic Green Belt Gap indicated in blue in diagram 3.1; there would be an adverse impact on the Green Belt and Theydon Bois.

## **Theydon Bois**

- (61) Theydon Bois. (No) See (62) and (63).  
(62) No to all i.e. object to TBA-A, TBA-B and TBA-C.

(63) **Theydon Bois A**

### **Impact on Green Belt and Landscape:**

Given the visually significant slope and lie of the land, any development of this site would be very highly conspicuous thus being to the severe detriment of the openness of the Green Belt (both when viewed from the surrounding Green Belt and from the built environment within the Village of Theydon Bois.)

In terms of the boundary between this site and the existing built settlement there is a very distinct and established boundary comprising a public footpath, watercourse and ancient tree/hedge line.

This is good agricultural land still in use and should be retained for this; This should form part of the strategic Green Belt Gap shown in Diagram 3.1 – but not shown on page 143.

Developing this land would be in conflict with the extant Theydon Bois Tree Strategy and some of the policies in Appendix A (page 27).

This is contiguous with the Epping Forest Buffer Land and their associated Bio Diversity issues.

### **Traffic impact:**

Access to the site constricted by narrowness of approach road, Forest Drive/Dukes Avenue, and throughout village;

Residents are likely to be commuters to London and this would have an impact on the Central Line and Theydon Bois station. This is recognised in Q 19 – (Harlow Option 4/5 and para 7.6, page 186) where development should be away from the Central Line.

### **Impact on Services:**

Primary school is at present at capacity;

The Doctors' surgery in our village is a satellite of the Limes, Epping already it closes for long periods without notice due to lack of Doctors. Villagers already have difficult in making early appointments in both Theydon Bois and Epping.

### **Impact on Utilities:**

Sewage system already exceeds capacity on occasion with many blockages and flooding particularly in Poplar Row and Coppice Row. Majority of sewage pipes throughout village are as originally installed at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and are inadequate.

Similarly, electrical supply restraints (at present power cuts are often). The Supply Company continually have to repair the wiring infrastructure much of it dating from 1928.

### **Flood risk:**

Building on this land would further aggravate surface water flooding in the village caused by water run-off from the forest in times of heavy rainfall.

**Heritage:**

Theydon Bois is a Forest Village with an important Village Green. A new Conservation Area for the village has been recommended in para.3.14 (page 16) and therefore major infrastructure changes and increased traffic would adversely impact on this conservation area.

Developing this land would be in conflict with the extant Theydon Bois Tree Strategy and some of the policies in Appendix A (page 27).

**Impact on Residential Amenities:**

New development would be intrusive to residents in Dukes Avenue, as the site is on a slope overlooking many dwellings.

The land on the site rises steeply to the north east and any dwellings here would mitigate against the present Dark Skies Policy.

**Other:**

This site has a long established and valuable amenity value to local residents. There is a long history of all year round use for recreational activities.

**Theydon Bois B**

Impact on the Green Belt: although this is a small site, it abuts the forest. Epping Forest is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and also a Special Area of Conservation, under the European Union's Habitats Directive.

Previous planning applications have been rejected here because of inadequate highway sight lines on Coppice Row.

**Theydon Bois C****Impact on Green Belt.**

NPPF states that Green Belt boundaries should be clearly delineated.

The railway line to the east of the village is one such boundary;

As we stated in our answer to Q (6) there should be a strategic Green Belt Gap between Theydon Bois and Abridge to prevent 'ribbon development';

This is important agricultural land abutting the Thrifts Hall Farm Ridge as set out in the Theydon Bois Tree Strategy (page 8);

This site is close to the new Theydon Wood and would impact on biodiversity movement between Epping Forest and that wood. The new wood itself forms part of the 'London Green Arc'.

**Traffic impact:**

Access and particularly egress to/from the site from Abridge Road would have an adverse effect on highway safety as has been recognised in refusal of planning applications for developments adjoining Abridge Road. Weight of traffic is already an issue at peak times on the B172 between Abridge and Theydon Bois and backlogs and tail backs of traffic are not uncommon.

Residents would likely be commuters London and this would have an impact on the Central Line and Theydon Bois station. This is recognised in Q 19 – (Harlow Option 4/5 and para.7.6, page 186) where development should be away from the Central Line.

Access and egress from Poplar Row and over the bridge in Green Glade would be constricted by the narrowness of the roads.

### **Impact on Services:**

Primary school is at present at capacity and a second and much larger school would be needed to accommodate such a development.

The Doctors' surgery in our village is a satellite of the Limes, Epping already it closes for long periods without notice due to lack of Doctors. Villagers already have difficulty in making early appointments in both Theydon Bois and Epping. At least one much larger surgery would need to be built in Theydon Bois to accommodate the increased population. Population growth in Epping would also impact on Theydon Bois.

### **Impact on Utilities:**

Sewage system already exceeds capacity on occasion with many blockages and flooding particularly in Poplar Row and Coppice Row. Majority of sewage pipes throughout village are as originally installed at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and are inadequate.

Similarly, electrical supply restraints (at present power cuts are often). The Supply Company continually have to repair the wiring infrastructure much of it dating from 1928.

### **Heritage:**

Theydon Bois is a Forest Village with an important Village Green. A new Conservation Area for the village has been recommended in para.3.14 (page 16) and therefore major infrastructure changes and increased traffic would adversely impact on this conservation area.

Developing this land would be in conflict with the extant Theydon Bois Tree Strategy and some of the policies in Appendix A (page 27).

This site is rich in ancient and important trees. There are approximately 50 Tree Preservation Orders on the site.

Land comprising this site was referred to in EFDC's 'Landscape Sensitivity Study 2009' as a 'Sensitive Historic Landscape – 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> Century Enclosure'.

### **Impact on Residential Amenities:**

A large scale development of up to 1,000 homes on this site would be detrimental to the Dark Skies Policy.

### **Other:**

Public footpath 10 traverses the site. Any development would adversely affect the amenity and enjoyment of this footpath. Loss of farmland and rural employment.

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- (74) No. There is insufficient clarification on provision for Gipsies and Travellers.
  - (75) No. Densities must be more closely tied to the existing density of the location in question.
  - (76) Yes, but see response to Q (75).
  - (77) Mixture of densities.
  - (78) Yes.
  - (79) Should be higher. (Overall higher, but with regard to Q (77) answer.
  - (80) Yes.
  - (81) No. see response to Q (74). Research shows that neither community wishes to live next to one another.
  - (82) No. Impact of the development of 'out of town' supermarkets that are within district is not properly addressed.
  - (83) Yes.

- (84) No comment.
- (85) No comment.
- (86) No. The importance of Farming has not been considered.
- (87) No. see response to Q (86).
- (88) No comment.
- (89) No comment.
- (90) No. Address integration of fare structure between National Rail and Transport for London to reduce cross district car commuting. No acknowledgement made of use of existing bus services. Impact of Junction 5 M11 Junction structure not taken into account. The practical effect of the present Junction arrangement puts traffic through the Forest.
- (91) No. Are two parts of 7.6 contradictory? Development should be away from the Central Line.
- (92) No. The for instance of Theydon Bois C would need direct large scale infrastructure improvements funded by central government to be viable. There is a need to ensure that guarantees regarding infrastructure are made before development can proceed.
- (93) No. The direct relationship between water supply shortfalls and housing numbers proposed is not properly addressed.
- (94) No. See 93.
- (95) Yes.
- (96) No. More weight should be given to Village Design Statements.
- (97) Yes – see below**

## **Transport and Infrastructure**

We strongly believe that the Local Plan must be supported by a comprehensive Regional Transport Policy without which expansion is unrealistic. Similarly, existing infrastructure (in particular water, drainage and electricity services) in our Village is old and lacking in capacity. Huge investment would be required to support new dwellings on the scale envisaged and we do not consider such development would be achievable purely on the basis of the proposed Infrastructure and Community Levy.

## **Unique Character of Theydon Bois**

As detailed in the very recent Theydon Bois Village Design Statement, the following extracts (written by residents) give some flavour of the unique character of Theydon Bois. The Village Design Statement which was prepared with extensive public consultation and feedback reinforced the desire for stringent control of Green Belt Policy:

- *‘In every direction the village of Theydon Bois is bordered by scenic countryside.....’*
- *‘The approaches from Epping and Abridge offer particularly fine views of the village nestling in a hollow with the wooded hills beyond.....’*
- *‘Tranquillity is regarded as an important feature of the rural environment....’*
- *‘Theydon Bois has an intrinsically dark landscape’.... This being due to its ‘Dark Skies Policy’....*
- *‘The boundary of the built up area of Theydon Bois although irregular is well defined.....’ Theydon Bois can rightly be called a*

*'Forest Village' because the 6.31 hectare Green at its heart is actually part of Epping Forest....*

- *'Theydon Bois is surrounded by Metropolitan Green Belt; these green spaces on our boundaries define the village and help create the rural feel that residents value most highly.....'*

## **Conclusion**

**In conclusion, Theydon Bois is seen as a very special place by its residents and can be defined by its location as a forest village entirely surrounded by green space. The village and its landscape are highly valued and greatly admired and it is essential that all future development is handled very sensitively. We have received many passionate responses in support of this submission and in defence of the Green Belt surrounding our village. Strength of this feeling is perhaps best encapsulated by the attached letter which we have received from a resident and which is extracted and appended hereto with his kind permission.**

Sally Crone, Planning Clerk on behalf of Theydon Bois Parish Council Planning Committee  
14.10.2012

***'I am writing to you in response to the proposals outlined within the "Planning Our Future Consultation Document July 2012, and to register my objection to the proposed further development within Theydon Bois in particular.***

***Having read the document I am concerned along with everyone else as to the impact upon infrastructure and services that these proposals raise. However, I wish to raise a point that may does not specifically address these issues but does concern me greatly as to the future of our village.***

***Prior to moving to Theydon Bois some 7 years ago, I lived in Romford, and Grays. Both of these areas have undergone massive expansion in the last few years and this has impacted upon every aspect of life. Infrastructure, health facilities, transport, congestion all of these areas buckled under the weight of the combined onslaught of over development. One of the small pleasures one was able to enjoy as a break from the constant pressure and "white noise" of living around London was to travel to Theydon and enjoy the peace and tranquillity of this oasis within the M25. The open spaces, the quiet places, the dark skies all added to the special nature of this sanctuary for London.***

***Having grown in up in Gidea Park I have witnessed the gradual erosion of development. Like a cancer spreading around the South East, I saw Gidea Park a once pleasant and green area of suburban London transform over 20 years into the dormitory town, rat run that it has now become. All character, and tranquillity has been trampled on in this once beautiful part of London and the green spaces and sense of openness is now gone forever. I have no doubt that a handsome profit was secured on this development by the few, but at the permanent cost to the many.***

***There are so few spaces within the M25, accessible by public transport, that can allow anyone from the surrounding area to enjoy the very special ambience of Theydon. It would be a crime against future generation, who I have no doubt will need Theydon as a place of retreat and tranquillity in an ever bustling world if we allow this most special part of London to be swept away under the catch all proviso of necessary growth and expansion. There will always be a need for more housing, more roads, more encroachment upon the green and the tranquil until we put a stop to the ridiculous policy of continual growth ad infinitum. We are a small island, the second most crowded country on the planet I believe? This alone means we must fight vigorously to protect those special enclaves and places of beauty that we still have whilst we still have them, and particularly those in close proximity to London lest it be necessary to drive for a hour just to see a bona fide open place.***

***..... The founding fathers of modern planning understood the need for a City like London to have "lungs" and space for people to walk and see the night sky and commune with nature. Not in some antiseptic local park, or facility surrounded by roads and houses but by the authentic experience of space and greenery.***

***To further develop Theydon, or for that matter the few remaining parts of London within the M25 that offer this unique escape and experience to its citizens would be nothing short of criminal negligence and therefore I wish to object in the strongest possible terms to this proposed development.'***