

THEYDON IS UNDER THREAT HELP PROTECT OUR VILLAGE NOW



The New Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) Draft Local Plan proposes **360 new homes in Theydon Bois** much of it on our Green Belt. This is a 23% increase to the size of our village. It will destroy its unique character and our rural setting and do irreparable damage to our Green Belt.

EFDC are carrying out a consultation on this Draft Local Plan now. The closing date is 5pm on 12th December 2016. If we are not to get an unacceptable amount of development in Theydon Bois then we need as many residents as possible to **reply to the consultation now**. EFDC are asking you to respond to nine questions. You do not need to answer all of them, and using their tick boxes is optional.

Please make your views known now. Other towns and villages will.

To help you make a response the Parish Council in association with Theydon Bois & District Rural Preservation Society and Theydon Bois Action Group have prepared some suggested guidance to answering the questions. Please do not just use these as your answers. Please expand on them and more importantly put them into your own words so they will count. Further and more detailed Guidance is available on the Local Plan Page of the Village Website www.theydon.org.uk where links can be found to the EFDC Draft Plan & Information. Their response form can be found at:

<http://eppingforest.consultationonline.co.uk/feedback/>

You do not have to use the online form. You can get a hard copy of the questionnaire from the council offices in Epping, send an E-Mail or write a letter. These must not be anonymous if they are to be valid. Write to Planning Policy Team, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping, Essex, CM16 4BZ.

Hard copies of the questionnaire are available from the Theydon Bois Parish Office and if these are returned to the office by 11th of December we will transfer them to EFDC by the closing date.

1. Do you agree with the overall vision that the Draft Local Plan sets out for Epping Forest District? (See paragraph 3.26, Chapter 3). No. The vision seeks to protect the Green Belt, but the draft local plan fails to do this and will result in the loss of many clear and definable Green Belt boundaries.

2. Do you agree with our approach to the distribution of new housing across Epping Forest District? (See Draft Policy SP 2, Chapter 3). No. The incursions into the Green Belt have been ill-thought out, and there is no detailed justification for 360 new houses in and around Theydon Bois.

None of the evidence produced by EFDC supports their new approach to sustainable development with regard to Green Belt Boundaries and it is not in line with government thinking.

It is not logical to distribute housing allocation and other development around all of the settlements in the District. New development should be focussed on the towns in the District where they will benefit from strong existing infrastructure and facilities. These are better suited to provide additional associated development such as increased school capacity or larger doctors surgeries’.

3. Do you agree with the proposals for development around Harlow? (See Draft Policy SP 3, Chapter 3). While we believe it is more sustainable to focus development on towns, any approach that encroaches into the Green Belt is not welcome.

4. For the two town centres and four district centres in the District the Draft Local Plan sets out a proposed primary shopping area which is intended to protect and encourage retail uses (See Draft Policy E 2 and Section 5 – Places). Do you agree with the proposed shopping areas? Creating Primary Shopping Areas should help focus retail development in these areas, but it should be implemented so as not to undermine existing local facilities that are found within the smaller settlements of the District.

EFDC’s approach to the location of housing and employment sites undermines the Primary Shopping Areas. The strategy of the local plan should support Primary Shopping Areas by focusing housing and employment development in the towns and settlements with Primary Shopping Areas.

5. Do you agree with the proposals for new employment development? (See Draft Policy E 1, Chapter 4). No. EFDC’s plans for employment development on Green Belt sites are not sustainable and will have adverse impacts on transport links, infrastructure

and local job opportunities. New employment opportunities should be directed towards the larger allocated sites close to, and within the towns of the District or settlements which are keen to expand in a sustainable manner.

NB. In planning terms “Sustainable Development” is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

6. Do you agree with the proposed sites in your area? (See Chapter 5) Do not feel that you have to comment on all of the areas. No. Four of the Theydon Bois sites are in the Green Belt and these parts of the Green Belt have been identified as suffering a high or very high levels of harm should they be allocated for housing. This harm will result in encroachment into the countryside and undermine the rural character and setting of our village.

360 new houses in and around Theydon Bois is a disproportionate allocation and amounts to a 23% increase in the size of our village which would destroy our present character and therefore not comply with EFDC’s ‘Vision’. Present and foreseeable infrastructure cannot support this amount of growth.

NB. This would be an appropriate place to add your own knowledge or evidence of the present infrastructure problems in Theydon, e.g. Public Transport, School Provision, Doctors, Water supply, Electricity supply, Sewage removal, flooding etc.

The sites are only in the local plan because they have been put forward by landowners. This is not the way an effective sustainable development strategy is produced.

7. Do you agree with the approach to infrastructure provision being proposed in the plan? (See Chapter 6). No. The plan does not state what the specific requirements for infrastructure will be. At best this subject is generalised and difficult to quantify as part of a new development. There are no provisions to ensure that the infrastructure needed will be provided in the right place at the right time.

8. An Interim Sustainability Appraisal has also been commissioned to support the Draft Local Plan. We would welcome any comments you may have on this. (See Technical Document page). The Interim Sustainability Appraisal does not support the wide dispersal of development in and around the large and small villages of the District. In respect of Theydon Bois the transport links are already at capacity and the underground is well over capacity at peak times. The underground station is poorly served by the existing road network and bus services, such that new development designed and located to

use the station will further add to the congestion and over-crowding already experienced around the station and on the trains.

The large increase in Theydon's population will still have to rely on the larger settlements for a wide range of facilities. Due to overcrowding and poor transport links this will result in a substantial increase in car journeys that will add to congestion and cause further damage to the local roads. The Sustainability Appraisal recognises that the use of Green Belt sites would give rise to sustainability concerns. This is particularly relevant for the villages around the District. The Sustainability Appraisal states the approach to the Green Belt sites will protect the most high value sites from development. The document then contradicts itself by stating high quality Green Belt land will be lost.

Case Law has concluded that housing numbers alone are not classed as a very special circumstance for development in the Green Belt. All clear and defensible green belt boundaries should be maintained.

9. Do you wish to comment on any other policies in the Draft Local Plan? The policies are severely lacking for example, there are no detailed Green Belt policies to define disproportionate extensions to properties in the Green Belt, or direct what is meant by 'materially larger'. How do we approach redevelopment of previously developed land in the Green Belt?

What is required is a consistent approach at District level and more detail regarding such policies as those on design and the infrastructure. This should ensure that local character of villages such as Theydon is maintained or improved. How will you stop planning applications for the new housing from coming forward before a 'masterplan' has been produced for the site?

Parking provision is not mentioned in the detailed policies of the local plan.

**THE FUTURE OF THEYDON BOIS IS
IN YOUR HANDS, PLEASE SEND
YOUR RESPONSE NOW**