

**Report to District Development
Management Committee**

Report Reference: EPF/0637/18

Date of meeting: 1 August 2018



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Address: The Lodge, Woolston Hall, Abridge Road, Chigwell, Essex IG7 6BX

Subject: Planning Application EPF/0637/18 – Residential infill comprising 12 no. residential dwelling houses with associated off-street parking, garden space and external landscaping.

Officer contact for further information: J. Doe (Ext 4103)

Democratic Services Officer: S. Tautz (Ext 4180)

(1) That planning application EPF/0637/18 at The Lodge, Woolston Hall, Abridge Road, Chigwell be Refused Planning Permission for the following reasons:

1. The proposed development constitutes inappropriate development detrimental to a fundamental aim of the Green Belt to safeguard the countryside from encroachment. The proposal would have a materially detrimental impact on the openness of the Green Belt contrary to the purposes of including the land in the Green Belt and does not meet any exception to the principle of Green Belt policy. The change of use of landscaped area to housing would be detrimental to visual amenity due to its urbanising effect and would unduly diminish the rural character and openness of the landscape. There are no very special circumstances that outweigh the harm from the development. The proposal is contrary to Policies GB2A; GB7A; CP2 (i), (ii), (iv), and (v); DBE4 (i); and LL1(i), LL2 (i) and (ii) of the adopted Local Plan and Alterations; Policies SP 6 and DM 4 of the Epping Forest District Local Plan Submission Version (2017); and, the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

2. The proposal would fail to provide any on site Affordable Housing, contrary to Policies H5A, H6A, H7A and H8A of the adopted Local Plan and Alterations; Policies H1 D. and H2 of the Epping Forest District Local Plan Submission Version (2017); and, the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework, particularly at paragraph 50.

3. The proposal is not within a sustainable location and would therefore result in a development heavily reliant on private motor vehicles. As such the proposal does not sufficiently meet the measures identified in policy regarding sustainable development, in particular with regard to policies CP1 (v), and CP6 (iii) of the Epping Forest District Local Plan and Alterations (2006); policy T 1 B. of the Epping Forest District Local Plan Submission Version (2017); and, the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework, particularly at paragraph 95.

4. The application does not provide sufficient information to satisfy the Council, as competent authority, that the proposed development will not

adversely affect the integrity of the Epping Forest Special Area for Conservation and there are no alternative solutions or imperative reasons of overriding public interest why the proposed development should be permitted. As such, the proposed development is contrary to policy NC1 of the Epping Forest Local Plan (1998) and Alterations (2006), policies DM2 and DM22 of the Epping Forest Local Plan Submission Version 2017 and the requirements of the Habitats Regulations 2017.

Report:

1. This application was considered by the Area Plans South Sub-Committee on 27 June 2018 but has been referred up to this committee for consideration. The officers' recommendation to refuse planning permission still remains and the minutes to the 27th June state, "*This application was deferred to District Development Management Committee under a minority reference, with a recommendation that planning permission be refused in accordance with Officer's recommendation.*"
2. In addition to the content of the report below, Members are also asked to consider a fourth reason for refusal, which has only come to light recently and therefore not part of the report to Area Plans Sub-Committee South, but cannot be ignored. The background to this is that a significant part of the Epping Forest (the Forest) is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) under the Habitats Regulations, which provides the highest level of protection for designated sites in the United Kingdom. The Council has a duty as the 'competent authority' under the Habitats Regulations to protect the Epping Forest SAC from the effects of development (both individually and cumulatively). Two specific issues in particular have been identified that could have a likely significant effect on Epping Forest SAC, which are:-
 - The result of increased visitors to the Forest arising from new development.
 - The result of damage to the health of the flora, including trees and potentially the heathland habitats, from air pollution generated by vehicles.

A zone of influence of 6.2km is being used to determine whether residential applications will have a recreational impact on Epping Forest SAC, based upon a visitor survey. Unlike the findings of the visitor survey the potential impacts from air pollution applies to developments of all types in all locations within the District. Therefore all residential and employment proposals within Epping Forest District will likely have an air pollution impact on Epping Forest SAC.

3. Whilst the Council is currently liaising with Natural England and the Conservators of Epping Forest in order to agree a Mitigation Strategy to mitigate the above effects, at the current time the Council is unable to grant planning permission on any planning applications resulting in additional residential development which are within 6.2km of Epping Forest SAC and all proposals that result in additional residential and/or employment development within the entire District likely to have an air pollution impact on Epping Forest SAC (when considered alone and in combination with other plans/projects), until such a time that an appropriate financial contribution to mitigate against the adverse impact that it will have on the Epping Forest SAC has been agreed. The Council is awaiting at the time of preparing this report for the Conservators of Epping Forest to identify projects and costings for mitigation.
4. No Air Quality Assessment has been submitted with the application providing full justification that the development will not result in any increase in air pollution or that the impacts from air pollution would be adequately mitigated. All submitted information would

though need to be agreed by Natural England prior to granting an application in any case. The applicant could agree to enter into a legal agreement to pay a financial contribution towards appropriate mitigation measures as a result of the resultant increase visitors to The Forest, but at the current time the monetary figure has not yet been determined and therefore the Council can only resolve to grant planning permission subject to a legal agreement. It will not be possible to finalise the legal agreement or issue a decision notice until the mitigation strategy and the financial contributions required have been agreed.

5. The application therefore does not provide sufficient information to satisfy the Council, as competent authority, that the proposed development will not adversely affect the integrity of the Epping Forest Special Area for Conservation and there are no alternative solutions or imperative reasons of overriding public interest why the proposed development should be permitted. As such, the proposed development is contrary to policy NC1 of the Epping Forest Local Plan (1998) and Alterations (2006), policies DM2 and DM22 of the Epping Forest Local Plan Submission Version 2017 and the requirements of the Habitats Regulations 2017. This carries substantial weight. This is set out as reason 4.
6. If, following consideration of the application this Committee decides to grant planning permission, it will be necessary to refer the application to the National Planning Casework Unit in order that the Secretary of State can consider whether to exercise his call-in powers. That is because the proposal amounts to a significant departure from the adopted Local Plan. Members are advised the proposed development is also a significant departure from the Submission Version of the Local Plan and the adopted Local Plan.
7. The report to Area Plans Sub Committee South is reproduced below.

This application is before this Committee since it has been 'called in' by Councillor Brian Sandler (Pursuant to The Constitution, Part Three: Scheme of Delegation, Appendix 3)

Description of Site:

The site is an open parcel of land to the northwest of The Lodge. The southwestern boundary is an access road to Woolston Manor. The north-eastern boundary is an avenue leading to a leisure complex. To the northwest of the site is a building, a former motel, accommodating flats. The site is off the highway of Abridge Road, between the village of Abridge, to the northeast, and Chigwell, to the southwest.

The site is within the Green Belt.

Trees along the avenue to the northeast are the subject of Tree Preservation Orders. The Lodge is a locally listed building. The northernmost boundary of the site is some 120m from a Listed Building.

Description of Proposal:

Residential infill comprising 12 no. residential dwelling houses with associated off-street parking, garden space and external landscaping.

The houses would be laid out in four terraces each of three houses. The terraces would run north/south, parallel with and facing the vehicular access to Woolston Hall. Each terrace would have its own appearance of though with an overall unity of design to all four. All the houses would have three storeys, an integral garage and four bedrooms.

The site would include an area of communal open space at the southernmost end of the site.

Relevant History:

EPF/1390/17 - Residential infill comprising 12 no. residential dwelling houses with associated off-street parking, garden space and external landscaping – Withdrawn 04/12/2017

The application was considered by the Area Plans South Sub-Committee on 27th September 2017. The application was referred up to the District Development Management Committee to decide having regard to a validated viability assessment demonstrating what an appropriate contribution (related to Affordable Housing) could be, and Officers' recommendation (of refusal). The application was considered by the District Development Management Committee on 29th November when a decision was made that the application be referred to full Council with Officer recommendation for planning permission to be refused. The application was withdrawn by the applicant before the meeting of full Council took place.

The site forms part of land put forward by developers in the "call for sites", reference SR-0492, in connection with the preparation of the draft local plan. The site formed part of the proposal for a Roding Garden Village on the wider extent of golf club land. However, the site was not allocated as a potential development site in the Draft Plan.

Policies Applied:

Adopted Local Plan:

CP1	Achieving Sustainable Development Objectives
CP2	Protecting the quality of the rural and built environment
CP3	New Development
CP4	Energy Conservation
CP5	Sustainable Building
CP6	Achieving Sustainable Urban Development Patterns
CP9	Sustainable Transport
GB2A	Development in the Green Belt
GB7A	Conspicuous Development
HC12	Development Affecting the Setting of Listed Buildings
HC13A	Local List of Buildings
H2A	Previously Developed Land
H3A	Housing Density
H4A	Dwelling Mix
H5A	Provision for Affordable Housing
H6A	Site Thresholds for Affordable Housing
H7A	Levels of Affordable Housing
H8A	Availability of Affordable Housing in Perpetuity
H9A	Lifetime Homes
DBE1	Design of New Buildings
DBE2	Effect on Neighbouring Properties
DBE4	Design in the Green Belt
DBE6	Car Parking in New Development
DBE8	Private Amenity Space
DBE9	Loss of Amenity
LL1	Rural Landscape
LL2	Inappropriate Rural Development
LL10	Adequacy of Provision for Landscape Retention
LL11	Landscaping Schemes

ST1	Location of Development
ST2	Accessibility of Development
ST4	Road Safety
ST6	Vehicle Parking
I1A	Planning Obligations

Essex County Council Revised Parking Standards 2009 SPG

Epping Forest District Council – Waste and Recycling provisions for new residential & business developments, Good practice guide for developers.

Chigwell Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2033, Submission Plan, March 2018

NPPF:

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has been adopted as national policy since March 2012. Paragraph 215 states that due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with the framework. The above policies are broadly consistent with the NPPF and should therefore be given appropriate weight.

Epping Forest District Local Plan (Submission Version) 2017:

The Epping Forest District Local Plan (Submission Version) 2017 has been approved for publication and is the Plan the Council intends to submit for independent examination. The policies in the Plan are considered to be up to date and accord with national policy and therefore should be given substantial weight in the consideration of planning applications in accordance with the Council's decision on 14 December 2017 and paragraph 217 of the NPPF. The policies and the Plan are supported by up to date and robust evidence – the evidence should also be treated as a material consideration. The relevant policies in the context of the proposed development are:

SP 1	Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
SP 2	Spatial Development Strategy 2011-2033
SP 3	Place Shaping
SP 6	Green Belt and District Open Land
SP 7	The Natural Environment, Landscape Character and Green and Blue Infrastructure
H 1	Housing Mix and Accommodation Types
H 2	Affordable Housing
T 1	Sustainable Transport Choices
DM 1	Habitat Protection and Improving Biodiversity
DM 2	Epping Forest SAC and Lee Valley SPA
DM 3	Landscape Character, Ancient Landscapes and Geodiversity
DM 4	Green Belt
DM 5	Green and Blue Infrastructure
DM 6	Designated and Undesignated Open Spaces
DM 7	Heritage Assets
DM 9	High Quality Design
DM 10	Housing Design and Quality
DM 11	Waste Recycling Facilities in New Development
DM 15	Managing and Reducing Flood Risk
DM 16	Sustainable Drainage Systems
DM 18	On Site Management and Reuse of Waste Water and Water Supply
DM 19	Sustainable Water Use

DM 21	Local Environmental Impacts, Pollution and Land Contamination
DM 22	Air Quality
D 1	Delivery of Infrastructure
D 3	Utilities
D 5	Communications Infrastructure
D 6	Neighbourhood Planning

Consultation Carried Out and Summary of Representations Received

Number of neighbours consulted: 29

Site notice posted: 10/04/2018

Responses received:

1 WOOLSTON MANOR – Object, inadequate infrastructure, construction process would cause disruption, noise disturbance, over crowding, over development, out of character with the area, overlooking.

2 WOOLSTON MANOR – Object, noise and other disturbance, significant disruption to our local living environment whilst a development project runs its course, traffic generation would impact of public safety.

6 WOOLSTON MANOR – Object, increased traffic would cause noise/ air pollution, would generate traffic to beyond a safe and acceptable level, construction process would cause disruption.

19 WOOLSTON MANOR – Object, inadequate infrastructure, construction process would disrupt access and traffic, will add to blockage issues with water supply and sewerage, would add to inadequacy of broad band connectivity.

26 WOOLSTON MANOR – Object, drainage and sewage system is clearly at its limits, road system cannot deal safely with the additional traffic, adverse impact on general aesthetics, inadequate connection to communications.

CHIGWELL PARISH COUNCIL: No objection

NATIONAL GRID: No objection.

ECC Archaeology: Recommend a condition to secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological work to any planning permission.

Thames Water: No objection.

Main Issues and Considerations:

The main issue with this proposal is considered to be Green Belt policy. Other considerations are Affordable Housing, strategic implication to the Submission Version of the Local Plan, affect to the setting within the landscape, sustainability, the quality of the design in terms of appearance, highway matters, any affect to heritage assets, any impact to neighbours, and whether the proposal would offer adequate amenity to future occupiers.

Matters which are not considerations are planning obligations (notwithstanding Affordable Housing) since the circumstances are not appropriate for the securing of community benefits.

A financial contribution for Affordable Housing of £1,624,533 is offered by the applicant. This figure has been verified by a consultant acting for the Council, Kift Consulting Limited. However, no legal agreement has been submitted as part of this application to date. Policy I1A requires that, in appropriate circumstances, a legal agreement is in place prior to the grant of a planning permission.

Green Belt

The application site is within the Green Belt. Impact on the openness of the Metropolitan Green Belt is considered to be the main issue. The NPPF states, at paragraph 79, that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.

The proposal would replace open land with the built form of four terraces of houses. The proposal is therefore fundamentally contrary to Green Belt policy.

However, the applicant's agent makes the argument that there are very special circumstances such that the proposal would not be inappropriate in the Green Belt. The circumstances are summarised at page 3 of the planning statement submitted as part of the application documentation.

Within the application the argument is made that the site is former garden land of The Lodge and therefore should be considered to be brownfield land. However, based on a site visit the site certainly does not have the character of previously developed land. The site is simply an area of short, but not mown, grass. The site appears to be part of the general landscaping leading to a golf club and similar leisure uses located further beyond Abridge Road. Furthermore, even if the site were accepted to be brownfield land it would also be necessary for the proposal to have no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt. An exception to development within the Green Belt being inappropriate includes limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development. However, in this case there would be a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt; the land is now completely open.

Within the application the argument is made that the site is an infill development between Woolston Manor Lodge and Woolston Manor Apartments. Paragraph 89 of the National Planning Policy Framework sets out exceptions to new buildings being inappropriate in the Green Belt. One such exception is limited infilling in villages. However, the site cannot be described as limited infilling in a village. The site is of a substantial size and is not in a village. The site is situated within an isolated rural location, distinct from the built up area of Chigwell.

In relation to a previous planning application (EPF/1390/17), an opinion was expressed in a draft document by a barrister, who was considering a question regarding Affordable Housing provision, that the application site was situated in a settlement (paragraph 45 refers). Elsewhere in the draft document (paragraph 20) there is a suggestion that the term settlement could include a small village.

It is accepted by officers that the site is not in the open countryside. The surrounding area comprises of a house to the immediate southeast and an apartment block to the immediate northwest, with a golf course to the west and some open shrub land to the east beyond which is the Top Golf driving range. North of the site is a small complex of indoor D2 uses – restaurant, building for function hire, fitness centre, leisure use building which includes the driving range that in turn includes a bar, shop and restaurant. It is otherwise surrounded by open countryside.

Nevertheless, the site could not be described, by any stretch of the imagination, as being limited infilling in a village, as required by bullet point 5 of paragraph 89 of the NPPF in order

to be considered an exception to being inappropriate in the Green Belt. No definition of the word limited in this context is provided though it is generally accepted that a single dwelling would, in the relevant context, constitute limited infilling. The proposal is for twelve dwellings. The site is not in a village - though it could be said to be on the edge of or even in a cluster of built forms.

With regard to bullet point 6 of paragraph 89 of the NPPF, the site is not a previously developed site (brownfield land). The land does not appear to have been previously developed and historically formed part of the Woolston Hall Estate. It is now part of the Woolston Manor Golf Club and is set over to grass. Aerial photos and historic maps do not show that this field has at any stage been incorporated into the curtilage of The Lodge, and its use appears to have been farmland / pasture / parkland, and is now green space associated with the golf course. The history of the site has been examined with regard to any ground contamination and the relevant team has commented that records indicate that the site formed part of an undeveloped field.

None of the other bullet points at paragraph 89 are applicable to the application site.

In conclusion with regard to Green Belt policy, the proposal is contrary to policy and no exception to Green Belt policy is applicable in this case.

Affordable Housing

In 2017, the Council adopted its new Housing Strategy that includes a number of policies relating to the delivery of affordable housing. This Housing Strategy was adopted at a meeting of the Council's Cabinet on 12 October 2017, following detailed scrutiny by the Council's Communities Select Committee. A copy of the Housing Strategy 2017 – 2022, which provides further background to these policies can be found here:

<http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/home/file-store/category/436-businessplans?download=4700:housing-strategy-2017-22>

Under Policy H2 - Affordable Housing of the Local Plan (Submission Version) 2017, the Council requires 40% of dwellings on new housing developments to be for affordable housing provided on site. Since this proposal proposes 12 dwellings, the applicant would normally need to provide at least 5 of the overall number of homes as affordable housing.

The applicants have offered to make a financial contribution in lieu of affordable housing on site towards provision of affordable housing elsewhere in the District. Policy H2 allows for this only in exceptional circumstances where it is inappropriate to provide the affordable housing on site. The applicant's argument in support of this is that the 4 bed houses have been offered to the Council's Preferred Partner Housing Associations and none has expressed an interest. However, the reason for this is that there is very little need for 4 bed houses from those on the EFDC Housing Register and 4 bed houses would therefore be difficult for housing associations to let.

The applicants have put forward the argument that there is a demand for 4 bed properties in the locality. However, planning applicants are required under Local Plan Submission Version (SV) Policy H1 to justify the mix of new homes taking account of local housing need, backed up by evidence, and to include affordable housing in accordance with Policy H2 as set out above. Therefore the affordable housing must meet local needs, which will mean applicants on the Housing Register. The need in this area is for 1, 2 and 3 bed units; 4 bed units are not required. Therefore, the scheme should be redesigned to meet this need and to provide a reflective mix as required by the Local Plan (SV). At least one of the Council's Preferred Partners would be interested in purchasing the affordable housing but only if the dwellings were to be 3 bed houses or smaller.

The applicant has produced a Financial Viability Appraisal which has concluded that the scheme can make a financial contribution of £1,548,800 and still make a healthy surplus. This figure represents an estimate of the increased development value if affordable housing is not provided on site. This is in line with Local Plan (SV) requirements for calculating affordable housing financial contributions in lieu of on-site affordable housing. The appraisal has been validated by Kift Consulting who have concluded that the appropriate financial contribution should be £1,624,533. The applicant has accepted the findings of Kift Consulting and has increased the offer of a financial contribution to £1,624,533.

Specialist advice on Affordable Housing recommends refusal of this planning application from an affordable housing point of view. This is because it would be viable to provide a 40% affordable housing contribution on site if the proposed development were to be redesigned to incorporate 3 bed affordable houses or smaller. There are no exceptional circumstances to justify providing a financial contribution in lieu of on-site affordable housing.

Emerging Policy Documents

The site is not allocated for housing use in the Submission Version of the Local Plan nor the Chigwell Neighbourhood Plan Submission Version.

Impact to neighbours

The flats of Woolston Manor Apartments would have an isolation space from the nearest proposed house of some 16m in the form of a car park to the flats. The Lodge would be orientated to the south of the proposed houses and have an isolation space of nearly 20m in the form of an area of communal open space.

Given the isolation spaces in conjunction with the scale, layout and detailed design of the proposed houses, it is considered that no material adverse impact would result to occupiers of neighbouring properties.

Sustainability

With regard to sustainable building techniques and energy conservation, no particular feature is apparent. The proposal is contrary to policy CP5.

Furthermore, the proposal is not within a sustainable location and would therefore result in a development heavily reliant on private motor vehicles. Each house would have an integral garage and two parking spaces on a drive leading to the garage. As such the proposal does not sufficiently meet the measures identified in policy regarding sustainable development and would be detrimental to public amenity and contrary to Policies CP1 (v) and CP6 and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework, particularly at paragraph 96.

The Epping Forest District Local Plan Submission Version (2017) pursues sustainability through numerous policies, for example those relating to sustainable drainage systems, sustainable water use or air quality. The proposal as currently presented addresses none of these requirements.

Design and landscape

The terraces and houses within them would have a very good appearance, albeit with a somewhat urban character.

The Trees and Landscaping Team has been consulted on the application. In response an objection is raised on the grounds that the proposal would have a greater visual impact and would unduly diminish the rural character and openness of the landscape and as such would be contrary to policies CP2 (i, ii, iv, v.), LL1 and LL2 of the adopted Local Plan and Alterations and policies SP 7 and DM 3 of the Epping Forest District Local Plan Submission

Version (2017).

With regard to tree matters, it is acknowledged that there are no trees within the site, and that the submitted tree reports show that trees the subject of Tree Preservation Orders along the driveway are at sufficient distance that they should not be adversely impacted by the proposal.

However, it is the impact on the openness of the landscape that leads the Trees and Landscaping Team to assert that this site is not appropriate for development. Furthermore, to develop this field would set a perilous precedent for the whole extent of agricultural fields between Chigwell and Abridge -it would compromise the openness of the Green Belt and would not safeguard the countryside from encroachment.

Overall the proposal appears intrusive, inappropriate, and detrimental to the appearance and setting of the locality. This view is supported by the Chris Blandford 'Settlement Edge Landscape Sensitivity Study' (Jan 2010) which concludes that this site provides a –

- 'major' contribution to the openness of the greenbelt
- 'moderate' role in checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas – i.e. the landscape setting provides open land between areas of built development.
- 'major' role in preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another.
- 'moderate' role in assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment to retain the predominant sense of openness.

Highway matters

The Highway Authority has no comment to make on this proposal as it is not contrary to the Highway Authority's Development Management Policies, adopted as County Council Supplementary Guidance in February 2011, and policies ST4 and ST6 of the Local Plan. The Highway Authority comment that the site is well served by the existing access to the Golf Club and the traffic movement from the proposal will be insignificant in highway terms. Consequently the proposal will not be detrimental to highway safety, efficiency or capacity at this location. Notwithstanding this, there is no turning facility within the application site; each dwelling would have vehicular access to parking spaces, one behind the other, directly off an access way just beyond the boundary of the application site.

Amenity of future occupiers

The proposal would offer a high degree of residential amenity to future occupiers.

Other matters

The application documentation makes great play of the importance of the provision of a five-year supply of land for housing. The Council's Housing Implementation Strategy, published in December 2017 (<http://www.efdclocalplan.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Housing-Implementation-Strategy-Epping-Forest-District-Council-December-2017-EB410.pdf>) explains that, in accordance with paragraph 47 of the NPPF, the Council has identified a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of housing against the housing requirements in the LPSV. On 14 December 2017, at an Extraordinary Full Council meeting, Members approved the Local Plan Submission Version (LPSV) for publication under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) ("the 2012 Regulations") and for submission to the Secretary of State for independent examination under section 20 of the PCPA 2004. The LPSV comprises a series of up-to-date strategic and development management policies for the District, together with site allocations. It sets out the strategy for meeting the District's objectively assessed needs for housing, employment and infrastructure from 2011 up to 2033. The LPSV is based on up-to-date evidence and the results of the previous Local Plan consultations undertaken in 2010/11, 2012, and 2016. Once adopted, the Plan will form part

of the statutory development plan for the District and will replace the saved policies of the adopted Local Plan (1998) and Alterations (2006). Any approval of the application proposal, which is a “major” application for more than ten dwellings, could prejudice the delivery of the emerging allocations. Given the substantial and extensive up-to-date evidence and site selection work which underpins the housing allocations in the LPSV, officers generally advise against any support for proposals for development outside of settlement boundaries which are not part of the LPSV allocations, or which are not in accordance with the Local Plan Rural Exceptions policy with respect to housing, or which do not comply with national and local policies concerning Green Belt and brownfield land. Larger scale developments within settlement boundaries which come forward on sites which are not allocated will be assessed against national, adopted Local Plan, and LPSV policies; consideration will be given as to whether the proposal would in any way prejudice the implementation of site allocations within the LPSV.

No objection is raised with regard to ecological matters, subject to conditions to any planning permission addressing an enhancement scheme, protection of nesting birds, retaining the current ecological value until development commences and a bat survey if there were to be any change to trees on the eastern boundary.

As set out in Policy DM 2 and DM 22 of the emerging Local Plan, issues have been identified with respect to the effect of development on the integrity of the SAC as a result of increased visitor pressure arising from new residential development, and from relatively poor local air quality alongside the roads that traverse the SAC. The Council is currently developing with partners an interim strategy for the management and monitoring of visitor pressures on the SAC. This will include measures to be funded through the securing of financial contributions from new development in accordance with Policy DM 2. Notwithstanding the fact that this work is yet to be completed the applicant would be required to enter into a S106 agreement with the level of contribution being agreed after the committee. However, this issue is redundant since the recommendation is one of refusal.

A Flood Risk Assessment and a Drainage Strategy has been submitted as part of the application documentation. The application form states, in response to question 12, that surface water will be disposed of by a sustainable drainage system.

Specialist archaeological advice for the previous planning application was that any planning permission should be subject to a condition regarding archaeology.

Gas pipelines are near the site though no objection is raised by the relevant authority.

With regard to heritage assets, the site is considered to be sufficiently distant from them such that there would be no material adverse impact to character.

Comments from local residents suggest that internet access is inadequate in the locality. Policy D 5 A. of the Epping Forest District Local Plan Submission Version (2017) requires applicants for major development proposals to demonstrate how high speed broadband infrastructure will be accommodated.

Conclusion:

The proposal is contrary to Green Belt policy; fails to provide required on site Affordable Housing; and, does not represent sustainable development. The proposal is contrary to policy set out in both the adopted Local Plan and the Submission Version and would be detrimental to public amenity by virtue of failing to use natural resources prudently and failing to mitigate and adapt to climate change; the proposals would not represent moving to a low carbon economy. Refusal is recommended.