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To: [REDACTED]@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Case Ref: [AB17683 \(Change\)](#)

Inquiry from Alex Burghart MP - Local Housing Need and Local Plan (Case Ref: AB17683)

Good afternoon,

Alex trusts you and your team are keeping well.

Alex has received several emails from a constituent expressing their concern for the numbers stated in the Local Housing Need when compared to that of the Local Plan. Alex would be grateful for any insight you can provide to enable him to respond to the constituent.

Please see below the contents of the constituent's correspondence:

"I see from the indicative Local Housing Need 1 April 2021 states Epping Forest as a figure of 953. Can you explain that please as it is very different to that being presumed to be needed in the Local Plan. From Local Plan they seem to be using a figure of 518 per year table 2.3 of Local Plan in para 2.67 p 29. Am I reading this incorrectly...I do hope so!

Relating to density is how many homes EFDC are now expected to provide. I note that the ONS 2014 prediction is now to be the benchmark used in SHMAA rather than ONS 2018 figures and with a 35% uplift for certain urban towns and cities. Can you please find out what EFDC and/or its SHMAA grouping is expected to provide (Within that grouping Harlow wanted to expand so took some of our predicted growth numbers).

I am also concerned that to get the numbers EFDC is pushing for more 1 and 2 bed homes than the mix already stated (and currently that in Ongar) The cost of moving has generally meant people miss out a stage in the ladder if possible. Ongar's demand is for 3 bed family homes with good sized garden and decent parking. Flats don't sell even 2 bed and neither do 3 bed homes with only 1 car park space (source John Sear estate agent and residents surveys). I am sure too that Covid and home working has added to Ongar's increase in demand for family homes. Youngster may want starter homes in towns like Brentwood or cities where there is a lively nighttime economy and/or good public transport."

Any advice or assistance you may be able to provide would be gratefully appreciated and Alex looks forward to hearing from you.

Thank you in advance.

Yours sincerely,

Joseph

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## Response from EFDC CEO (extract)

The figure referred to in your email of 953 homes per year relates to the Standard Methodology Calculation for assessing housing need which was first published in 2018. The figure of 518 homes quoted in the Local Plan Submission Version 2017 (LPSV) is the Local Plan Housing Requirement. Transitional arrangements between the 2012 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the 2019 NPPF meant that if an emerging Local plan was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate before 24 January 2019, then the Plan would be examined under the 2012 NPPF and councils could rely on housing need calculations based on existing planning practice guidance methodology rather than the figures calculated through the Standard Methodology. Since the Council submitted the LPSV to the Planning Inspectorate for independent examination on the 21 September 2018, it meant the figure of 11,400 (518 dpa) could be used.

Following the Examination Hearings, the Local Plan Inspector has confirmed within her initial advice (02 August 2019 ED98) that the District's housing requirement for the period up to 2033 should be 11,400 (518 dpa) new dwellings as the Council sets out in Policy SP 2 of the LPSV and should not be increased further (paragraph 20).

Your email refers to the Office for National Statistics 2018-Based Household Projections. These were published in June 2020 and in July the Inspector for the District's emerging Local Plan invited the Council to comment on whether the revised projections reflected a meaningful change in the housing situation and therefore have any implications on her assessment of whether the Plan's housing requirement is sound. As a result, the Council undertook work jointly with its Housing Market Area (HMA) partners (Harlow, Uttlesford and East Herts) to consider these revised projections and whether there were any implications for the respective Local Plans (ED114A). As set out in the Council's response to the Local Plan Inspector on 4 September 2020 (ED114) the Council's position following this review is as follows:

*"The conclusion of this work is that the 2018-based household projections, while demonstrating some variation from the 2014-based household projections, does not represent a meaningful change in the housing situation from the one which informed it. On this basis the Council consider that the housing requirement in the Local Plan Submission Version 2017 does not need to be adjusted. Given this conclusion the Council does not consider that it affects the justification for the plan's proposed Green Belt releases."*

The written statement sitting behind the Council's response (ED114A) sets out the detail behind this position. As the email from your constituent indicates, the District's emerging Local Plan plans for less than the District's share of the housing requirement at approximately 11,400 dwellings (rather than the full identified need of 12,573 homes). This took into account the District's infrastructure constraints and specifically the capacity on the highway network, impact on the Green Belt and the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation. As above, the Inspector has, upon considering all evidence in respect of housing need, confirmed acceptance of the District's housing requirement of 11,400 and that the requirement of 11,400 dwellings should not be increased.

The District's Housing Mix, as defined in the emerging Local Plan, is based on the EFDC Housing Mix that is defined in the SHMA (2015). This Housing Mix sets out that in the case of market housing, over 75% of new residential development coming forward will be comprised of 3+ bedroom housing. This target is further supported by the indicative densities that are set for individual allocated sites within the Local Plan. In the case of Ongar, the allocated sites all have indicative densities that would suggest housing with 3+ bedrooms. When applications are made where the proposed mix for a new development deviates from that in the Local Plan, the applicant is required to provide a justification that takes in to account both quantitative (evidence based) and qualitative reasons.