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Via e-mail -

Dear Mr Stebbing,

Earls Colne Neighbourhood Plan Examination.

Thank you for your letter dated 6th January 2025

Question 1 – Policy ERCOL3 – First Homes Exception Sites and Community Led Housing (Page 23)

In light of the changes to national policy concerning the delivery of Affordable Housing , can the District Council please confirm that draft policy ERCOL3, and more specifically its policy criteria A i) ii) and iii), remains in conformity with the Districts Council's policies and strategies for Affordable Housing in this part of the District for the duration of the Neighbourhood Plan period up to 2033.

Braintree District Council Response;

The Council consider that policy ERCOL 3 is in general conformity with policy LPP32 – Affordable Housing in Rural Areas, as both policies to provide schemes to provide affordable housing. The use of the word schemes would permit consideration of proposals for First Homes.

The December 2024 NPPF update removed the terminology First Homes, however the definition of Affordable Housing still contains reference to discounted market sales housing. The Braintree District Local Plan was examined in the context of the 2012 NPPF and as such policies on affordable housing did not contain reference to First Homes.

Question 3 - Policy ERCOL9 – Key Movement Routes

Can the District Council please provide me with a note setting out the status of the proposed Earls Colne to Coggeshall via Marks Estate cycleway project that is referenced in Part D of this draft policy, and whether it is a project for which the Council is seeking appropriate developer contributions that are linked to relevant planning permissions within the Plan area.

Braintree District Council response;

The proposed cycle route is not included in the current adopted Local Plan, however

this could change when the plan is reviewed, as we are expecting representations on this matter through our current Issues and Options consultation..

The project has received some funding for a design and tender stage for the route from the Local Highways Panel (Meeting 3rd October 2022) linked below.

<https://www.essexhighways.org/uploads/lhp-archive/braintree%20lhp%20report%20september%202022%20updated.pdf>

The Council's Potential Open Spaces Improvement (POSI) document, lists projects in the area which the Council will seek funding from appropriate planning applications. These projects are limited to the provision of or improvement to recreational uses which would include cycleways.

<https://www.braintree.gov.uk/downloads/file/3499/potential-open-space-improvements-july-2023-formerly-open-spaces-action-plan->

For Earls Colne this includes references to proposals for all weather cycle paths between Earls Colne and surrounding area including Marks Hall. As such if appropriate planning applications were submitted then contributions could be sought for a cycle route.

Yours faithfully,

Alan Massow - Principal Planning Policy Officer