

## **Response from Wivenhoe Town Council to Suggested Amendments to the Section 1 Plan EB/091B**

WTC believes that it has been demonstrated that the evidence base is insufficient to justify the current plans, and a development on garden community principles cannot be delivered to a standard to match what has been described to the public. Furthermore, the policies are not robust enough to 'hard wire' these guiding principles and it will not be an easy task to retrofit them via modifications. For this reason, we do not attempt to offer policy wording at this stage.

Additionally, the policies need to defend against political instability at Colchester. The current Coalition retains power by only one seat and there are elections in May. The last vote at Colchester full council on providing monies to NEGC did not pass. This political instability also threatens the duty to co-operate. A duty to co-operate that will be further challenged by the Uttlesford decision and current imbalance in government grant support across the sites.

At such an early stage of an unprecedented large scale project it is extremely worrying that so little of the original aspirations are being shown to be achievable, and are now unenforceable. Despite having spent 5 years beta testing this plan for the authorities, they continue to ignore the reality that it just won't be any better than any existing models and our fear is the government financial support has been too attractive for them to face up to the reality they are not competent to deliver what they have promised.

We are very conscious that on the one hand Borough Cllrs have been told these new towns will work on an infrastructure first basis, however there is still a £220million (over two thirds) shortfall of infrastructure grant funding. In particular, policy does not ensure permissions will be withheld without all the necessary infrastructure. Every element of major infrastructure requires a full definition, timescale and costs to be prescribed. There should also be provision for 'soft infrastructure' as it is very often this that makes the difference to people's lives.

At the very least policy should reflect what is stated in the NPPF - i.e. that it is "important to ensure that there is a reasonable prospect that planned infrastructure is deliverable in a

timely fashion”.

Therefore, trigger points, completion dates and specifications are essential for all the elements the general public and the councils have been promised. These include schools, community building, health care centres, a segregated and fully funded RTS, water supply and treatment plants, cycle and walking paths, parking, and roads as well as their own sporting venues to build identity. In particular and in detail the A133 A120 link road, A12, A120 and any and all associated surrounding works.

If specific or symbiotically necessary areas of infrastructure do not come forward, there **MUST** be a means of reviewing and terminating the plan. This is so much more important for a plan that spans several plan periods. It is imperative that existing communities are not overburdened and their character and identity destroyed for soulless housing estates in locations chosen because of compliant landowners rather than their suitability.

We conclude that currently the policy is simply not robust enough to deliver in accordance with Garden community principles.