

Tiptree NP Closing Statement

Presented by Jonathan Greenwood, Chairman, Tiptree NP Steering Group

With respect to:

Appeal by Strutt & Parker on behalf of Marden Homes

LPA reference: 190647

Reference: APP/A1530/W/21/3278575

**Site: land adjoining, The Gables, Kelvedon Road, Tiptree, Colchester,
CO5 0LU**

Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan (NP) Steering Group is a Working Group of Tiptree Parish Council and has the full support of the Parish Council and strong support from the residents of Tiptree.

I would like to record my thanks to the Inspector and to John Barrett of counsel for Marden Homes in allowing me the opportunity to make this statement.

Firstly, I would like to reiterate, Tiptree Parish Council (TPC), as the qualifying body, is committed to completing the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) by the end of this year and has the full support of Colchester Borough Council (CBC). Tiptree NP is currently in Regulation 14 Consultation and, having learnt from past experience, we are confident that the Plan can progress efficiently through the remaining stages. It is reinforced by three traffic studies in support of the northern link road and a letter provided by Architecture Design Planning (ADP) on behalf of our lead developer, Mersea Homes, confirming the deliverability of the selected NP development sites. The Plan is also supported by a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) prepared by AECOM, this has been commissioned through Locality the government support body for neighbourhood plans. All of these are among the documents to be submitted to Colchester Borough Council and for Independent Examination.

I would like to confirm the position of the NP steering group with regard to the following issues raised during the course of this inquiry:

1. The Plan provides for a minimum of 400 homes in addition to the 200 homes allowed, on appeal, at Barbrook Lane.

The Colchester emerging Local Plan (eLP), paragraph 14.219 does not express the number as a minimum. I quote, 'it has been agreed that Tiptree will deliver 600 new dwellings over the plan period.... This is considered an appropriate level of growth for Tiptree'. Similarly paragraph 14.220 (tracked changes version) does not express the number as a minimum. Whilst in Policy SS14 the number *is* expressed as a minimum, it is clear this figure also represents what was considered to be sustainable growth for the community of Tiptree during the Plan period. The figure was not randomly assigned to Tiptree. It was the result of a consideration of existing infrastructure that would be needed to support the development plus additional infrastructure that could realistically be expected to be delivered over the same period. There was never an expectation that this figure would be greatly exceeded.

It follows that there *is* evidence that a total of 600 new homes may be acceptable but that a total of 730 is not. It includes the following:

- There are already serious pressure points - notably our health centre is over-subscribed. I have previously referenced the 1 million pounds needed to make up the existing floor space

deficit, let alone that which is required during the NP plan period. I also referenced the statement by Jane Taylor, Senior Estates Development Manager, N E Essex Clinical Commissioning Group, who states, 'there remains concerns by partners at the practice regarding increasing capacity and the existing premises currently stand at requiring an additional 490m² of space just for the current anticipated growth. Therefore, **the CCG would object to any additional housing over and above that captured in the Neighbourhood plan of 600 homes.**' In a similar vein, it is generally not possible for new residents to register with a dentist in the village and our primary and secondary schools require expansion.

- Both the Neighbourhood Plan (2020) examiner and the eLP inspector had reason to advise that 200 homes should be removed from the NP housing allocations in the light of the Barbrook Lane appeal. Are we now to be told that we should put 130 homes back in?

2. Conformity to the Local Plan

Whilst the eNP may carry little weight at present, the eLP Policy SS14 specifies that the Tiptree NP will:

- i. Define the extent of a new settlement boundary for Tiptree
- ii. Allocate specific sites for housing allocations to deliver a minimum of 400 dwellings

Policy SS14 also states, 'Proposals for development outside of the settlement boundary, or settlement boundary defined by the Tiptree NP once adopted will not be supported.' When a settlement boundary is breached, it should be in line with emerging plan policy as has been the case in Colchester. In this case the eNP should guide any breach of the Tiptree settlement boundary. There is no expectation in Policy SS14 (post modifications) that the 'preferred direction of growth' arrows should dictate the position of development outside the settlement boundary.

3. Issues of Design and optimal use of land

The NP Steering Group agrees with CBC that the design is out of character for Tiptree. Tiptree is characterised by lower density, one or two-storey, plot-based, 20th Century design, set-back from the road and with open vistas. This is especially true away from the village centre and towards the village boundary. We also agree that the efficient and optimal use of land is not simply about high density housing but includes creating beautiful designs with sustainable open spaces. The open space provided in the current proposal is the statutory 10% (another example of a minimum value being considered a ceiling). We believe it is unrealistic to expect an area of this size to provide for family recreation, children's play and dog walking, whilst also providing a wild-flower meadow that increases biodiversity. The fact that the area is also set lower than the surroundings will make it susceptible to water-logging and flooding - as was evident on the site visit.

Furthermore, piecemeal development, such as the proposal that is the subject of this appeal, leads to designs that do not integrate well with the rest of the community and which fail to open up other areas for future development and therefore over the wider area do not result in the efficient or optimum use of the land. A plan-led approach, involving adjacent land promoters, would open up other land parcels and create opportunities for aggregated open space, additional wildlife areas and a link road. Such a road would help to integrate the development with the rest of the village. This is why the appeal site, with other land parcels, previously formed the Tower End allocation in the earlier iteration of the Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan. The granting of this 'piecemeal' proposal would permanently preclude that possibility or potential opportunity in the future.

Given that CBC has a new, imminent, Local Plan and a five year Housing Land Supply (HLS), there is no presumption in favour of development in this case. As this proposal is demonstrably not good for Tiptree and will prejudice future opportunities to make far better use of the land in the Tower End area, we would ask the Inspector to reject this appeal.