

## **JOINT PARISH COUNCILS STEERING GROUP**

Ham Cottage  
Woodend Green  
Henham  
Nr Bishops Stortford  
Herts  
CM226AZ  
8<sup>th</sup> December 2014

Mr John Mitchell  
Uttlesford District Council  
Council Offices  
London Road  
Saffron Walden  
Essex CB11 4ER

### **Failure of the Draft Local Plan**

On Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December Inspector Roy Foster took the extraordinary step of stopping the examination of the Draft Local Plan part way through, to throw out the plan and instruct UDC to start again.

In particular his comments on siting 2100 houses in NE Elsenham were “ From all the material produced on this issue by the Council, by the promoters of the site, and by the opponents of the allocation, I have severe concerns about the justification for this proposal and the soundness of the plan as a whole”

This is a disastrous result by any measure. This Local Plan started in 2007 and in September the infamous Option 4 was agreed as the preferred option, placing 3200 houses in NE Elsenham. We then journeyed through 7 years of consultations, the rejection of the site as a 5000 house ECO town, removal of the site as an option and then it's reinstatement for 2100 houses, initially as a village extension, and then a new settlement. To describe this process as a shambles would be doing it an injustice. The residents of Elsenham and Henham have lived through this for over 7 years. The area has been blighted. The final straw was the rejection by the UDC Planning committee for 800 houses on the same site , only for it to be brought back to the planning committee 2 months later under some

spurious rule to be rejected again. Furthermore the developer then appeals the decision and UDC decides not to oppose the appeal.

The residents surrounding the site provided overwhelming evidence on each and every consultation that this site was fatally flawed. This was ignored by UDC who ploughed on regardless.

The cost of this debacle to the residents in the Joint Parishes area is £250K and rising. The cost to the Council Tax Payers is estimated at £2M. This is incompetence of the highest order. You will be aware of the possible consequences for planning applications whilst this hiatus is sorted out possibly until 2017.

The JPCSG calls upon UDC to conduct an inquiry into the processes and procedures that led to the formation of the Draft Local Plan. The residents are entitled to know what went wrong and why. It is unacceptable to publish a short statement which suggests that all is well. All is not well, and the residents of Uttlesford deserve to know why we find ourselves in this position.

We look forward to receiving news that a inquiry will be held as a matter of public interest.

N J Baker OBE  
Chairman  
JPCSG