

MARKS TEY PARISH COUNCIL

Council Offices

Parish Hall • Old London Road • Marks Tey • Colchester • Essex • CO6 1EJ

e-mail address: bookings@marksteyparish.org.uk

e-mail address: parish.clerk@marksteyparish.org.uk

e-mail address: chairman@marksteyparish.org.uk

Telephone: 01206 213250 / Fax No: 01206 213261



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Chair of Local Plan Committee
Town Hall

Dear Cllr Martin Goss,

Emerging Local Plan – Marks Tey Parish Council's views

As your work on preparing the new Local Plan Preferred Option nears completion can Marks Tey Parish Council please give our view on our hopes and concerns for this locality? This time last year we gave 4 pages of views on the Borough's Local Plan Issues and Options Document and we have tried to follow the same themes and format.

In our submission last year we welcomed the move to a far reaching 15 year Plan and we again repeat this. Such a Plan and the growth that it has to encompass creates considerable worry but also enormous opportunity for the community of Colchester and Marks Tey Parish Council again pleads for vision, leadership and excellence, (i.e. bold proposals that gain widespread and local community support) from the Borough in its chosen Development Option.

From Marks Tey's 2,500 residents point of view the prospect of 15,000 houses absorbing or adjacent to the village (as indicated in 4 of CBC's 6 Development Options) is very daunting and threatening. Many people have, through the evolving Marks Tey Neighbourhood Plan process, expressed that they see Marks Tey's rural location, size and access to the countryside as the village's prime features which they perceive as under threat.

In contrast the same survey shows that the biggest perceived problems in Marks Tey are; the separation of the community, environmental degradation, and local movement difficulties caused by the A120 and A12 highways. A failure to anticipate this in 1960 and 70s planning (the last big planning effect on Marks Tey) has stopped the natural growth of Marks Tey and the development of any recognised sense of place. On paper, the village is well endowed with facilities (with the prime exception of medical facilities) but the facilities that we do have are mostly supported by the wider hinterland offered by the A12/A120 junction and passing traffic rather than local residents for whom movement through the village is difficult, unpleasant, and dangerous. Local residents want to have easy access to these facilities, peacefully and safely, as they should have a right to expect The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is busily collecting evidence to support these needs in order to test the emerging Local Plan. Compared to the planning of the A12 through the village and an edge of village estate in the 60's and 70's, people look and hope for visionary planning, and of national excellence this time around.

It is in this vein, the discussion about the need for development and a new community to fund the upgrade of the A120 and bring forward other CBC stalled projects, risks a repeat of 60's thinking, and of selling the development opportunities short to the detriment of Marks Tey and Colchester's future. If development is to be accepted just because it is offered by developers and enables other things or can't be argued against, or because of where a boundary line runs between participating authorities this only shows limited thinking that is likely to fail. The extent of the future development envisaged in the plan should be seen as a major one off opportunity to create a community or communities and proposals that are visionary and, of national significance, that work well with their neighbours and of which we can all be proud of in their proposal, in their development, and into the future. It is another opportunity to promote Colchester's image nationally.

Similarly, development without timely and appropriate infrastructure that addresses developing needs and any existing infrastructure deficiencies, is likely to fail and be seen to threaten and short change existing communities.

It is heartening to see CBC working with adjacent authorities on joint Local Plans and jointly engaging consultants of national calibre and with innovative ideas but hearing Local Plan Panel Members talk about the risks of such innovation to the authority (rather than the communities they represent) creates great risk to the futures of those communities.

Marks Tey Parish Council recognises that some development in Marks Tey is necessary to make it sustainable and to create a heart. It is recognised that Marks Tey is a transport hub, with its mainline rail station and at the junction of the A12 and A120 and that these are likely to grow. The opportunity to create a community that develops and expands rail services at Marks Tey by perhaps additional retail and parking development over and to suppress the A12 (as per a smaller version of the Hatfield Galleria) Creating a sustainable community by expanding Marks Tey within walking/easy travel distance of the station., A12 access, church, shops, and parish recreational facilities and keeping these as the centre of our village, would seem sensible and difficult to argue are not needed. There is also potential to consolidate and expand the employment facilities between the railway and the A12

This would also assume separation of the community (by public green space or agriculture) from the ever expanding finger of urban Colchester through Lexden, Stanway, and Copford, creating an independent self sustaining community linked to Colchester as its commercial, major retail, and entertainment centre. If this is supported by a commitment to Garden Community principals with its commitment to landscaped environments and open space with fingers of green space penetrating the community giving it visual and physical links into the surrounding countryside, this could meet much of residents concerns. If it is done by negotiated development through a Local Community Trust, as advocated by your consultants, rather than a simple acceptance of Call for Sites speculative proposals, this would also drive the maximum community benefit from development and would reassure people of a community driven rather than speculative driven plan.

Such approaches would seem to be of benefit to Colchester irrespective of where the development or new communities are proposed. It will require compromise by communities and by the Borough Council. Marks Tey Parish Council are prepared to work hard to achieve and help to facilitate such a vision.

Yours faithfully



Allan Walker
Chairman, Marks Tey Parish Council
01206 211424 e-mail chairman@marksteyparish.org.uk

Copies to:

Cllrs Kevin Bentley, Andrew Ellis, and Jackie McLean - Marks Tey and Layer Ward
Cllr Anne Brown – Constable Ward, Essex County Council
Priti Patel MP – MP for Witham
Ian Vipond, Strategic Director, Commercial and Place, CBC
Karen Syrett, Place Strategy Manager, CBC
Laura Chase – Neighbourhood Plan Support Officer, CBC