

## **Summaries of Public Statements: Council, 30 October 2023**

*Summaries of public statements made at Council, 30 October 2023 (no electronic copy provided):*

### H Johnson

Ms Johnson spoke on the draft Local Plan and said it was a work of “fantasy” and she highlighted the main issues she saw in the document. She said the traffic in Elsenham was appalling and the congestion would get much worse if the proposed developments went ahead. Infrastructure was of particular concern, and she referenced the problems with water supply in Takeley. She said the proposed developments would be of benefit only to commuters, not existing residents as the properties would be too expensive and she could not understand why settlements such as Great Chesterford had been spared proposed development. Furthermore, she said environmental damage would be caused by developing the Flich Way at a time when the council should be protecting the countryside.

### S Merifield

Mrs Merifield congratulated the Council for producing a draft Local Plan; she said the earlier comments and strength of feeling demonstrated how difficult this was, in addition to the fact that the district had failed in approving the past two draft local plans. She said the Local Plan before members presented objective site allocations as based on evidence and officer expertise, and that if different sites had been chosen, there would still be contention and challenge. She said members could not play political games and had to progress the Local Plan beyond Regulation 18 in order to give residents and communities their say. She said comments provided during the consultation will be used for the purposes of the local plan process, and things could be changed due to the evidence provided. The district desperately needed an updated Local Plan and she urged members to proceed with the public consultation.

### G Bagnall

Councillor Bagnall said he had been excluded from the meeting due to “20 meters” and said he would be making a complaint about how the advice had been handled. He urged members to reject the draft Local Plan and to refer it back to the LPLG. He said there would be a windfall allowance of 8,500 houses that would be delivered in existing settlements over the next 10 years. The second phase of the Plan would be for 5,500 houses and this was where the allocations needed to be reconsidered. He said a strategic site should be selected in order to take the pressure off existing settlements and which would allow for growth in the future. Furthermore, he said potential strategic sites had not been properly explored as officers had not had the time to do so. He said the council needed to determine whether such sites would have been more beneficial and provide better connectivity for the district. He said LPLG and Scrutiny committee members had voted to recommend the draft if the evidence base supported the allocations. He said the evidence did not sufficiently support the allocations and, therefore, it was right not to rush this decision through. He asked members to look at paragraph 9 of the inspector’s letter dated 10 January

2020 which called out the need to assess one or two options for a new settlement. The decision before members would be the most important decision the council would make and quality had been sacrificed for expediency. Finally, he said officers should have been taking the evidence base to LPLG throughout the process.