

Councillor Martin Foley

First of all I'd like to thank our officers here, Councillor Freeman and fellow Councillors for improved communication from both this Panel and previous iterations which Councillor Bagnall chaired.

I have one communication issue though that I feel could be improved. At a recent Parish Council meeting for Larger Villages on the 21st March in my Ward, I was told that UDC officers said there would be now not be under 10 houses in that particular Ward but 40. It would be helpful if District Councillors were informed too. It sets hairs running as the next Parish Council fear that it may impact on them; that's unintended consequences I realise, but I think it need to be said.

In the past, I've seen several Local Plans and from previous administrations. When, from a very early stage before, I was told there is no alternative to big one-site of 10,000 houses, 5,000 houses. This was despite massive reservations about developer delivery, and we all know why they failed so well done UDC for kicking that madness into touch.

Councillor Haynes, the other District Councillor for Thaxted Ward, had a number of issues which are in your minutes from the last meeting, and I would respectfully ask if they can be addressed and answered if that is practicable. It's in the minutes that you'll be discussing later.

I am pleased to see the realisation that Thaxted in the draft Local Plan is justifiably recognised as the least sustainable of the so-called "Key Settlements" with no major transport links, railway etc. Bus services are very light.

The Thaxted response to Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation documents was a team effort from Thaxted Parish Council, District and County Councillors, Neighbourhood Plan groups, Thaxted residents focus groups and was then sent to every resident to see. I have a copy of that because I understand that even some on this Panel had some difficulty at one stage accessing all of the documents.

In conclusion, deadlines have been set on us because there has not been a successful Local Plan since 2005. This is a personal view, I'm not speaking on behalf of any party when I say the next thing, but I would think its better another two weeks, two months or whatever is needed than 20 years of failure and that's really the main things that I want to say. I'm very concerned that the deadline that has been set upon us is realistic and that we're not rushing into something that we could fail on because there's much good about what's happened so far and I'm very pleased, but there's still some really serious things that need to be addressed. Thank you.