

## **Site STN18 Hall Road, Copford and site STN26 East Queensberry Avenue, Copford**

I do not think the Hall Road site should be used for housing as it would carve into the beautiful countryside behind the London Road, which is used by many as access into the woods. Whatever architectural heritage lies beneath and might ultimately save it from destruction, it deserves to be preserved as a village amenity as it is already used as such.

Before paving over the countryside, I think consideration should be given to the dilapidated brown land where Renzland Forge used to be and which currently has a sign at the entrance saying Aquatronic Group Management Plc. This land is a mess, appearing to have no significant natural or historical value, and is of no obvious benefit to local people. I feel strongly that brownfield sites should always be the choice for development and that greenfield/agricultural sites should be left alone.

Of the two sites currently being considered for development I think East Queensberry Avenue is the better choice as the site is very hidden and I do not believe it is used much by local people. However, if this land is developed, I think all construction traffic should enter and exit via a road built off the London Road. Construction traffic should not be allowed up and down Queensberry Avenue, which is already quite narrow and has chicanes on it due to commuter parking. Adding construction traffic into that mix risks the death of a child who lives on that development and that is not a risk worth taking. Such traffic would also blight the lives of people living there to an unacceptable degree. I also believe that if there is a new development at East Queensberry, it should include a new play area for the children who will grow up there.

### **Number of new homes in STN18 and 26**

120 new homes is far too many in a parish which is already seeing massive development on its borders.

Firstly, the number of car journeys will be a problem on roads which are struggling to accommodate even the current volume of traffic. The question of erecting 'residents only' parking signs or 'time-limited' parking signs along the B1408 should be revisited to stop rail commuters and workmen in vans from parking all day on the London Road. I understand traffic surveys already conducted on the road have deemed this not to be a problem, but as a resident of Copford who travels on the London Road at least six times a day, I can say that it most certainly is. 'Residents only'/'time-limited' parking should also be extended down Queensberry Avenue, School Road and Allendale Drive at the same time to avoid any knock-on effect. Commuter parking is already becoming a problem at the top of School Road.

Similarly, the London Road cannot cope with the traffic at the Sainsbury's roundabout due to the new roundabout outside Chiquito's funnelling a stream of traffic onto it from the right. As people travelling towards Colchester on the London Road have to continually give way to the traffic from the right, vehicles are often backed up as far as the church. This is before people move into the large new developments currently under construction on the London Road. To mitigate this problem somewhat, at least one new left hand lane should be created immediately after the Oakwood Meadows development so that traffic turning left at the Sainsbury's roundabout or going straight on, can get through whenever there is a gap.

In addition to these traffic problems, with major new developments underway at Stanway and another planned for Marks Tey, traffic along the London Road is set to substantially increase. Even now, there are sometimes very long queues at the top of School Road because cars have to wait some time to turn right. A mini roundabout painted on the road at the junction of School Road and London Road would considerably help to ease the traffic flow there, particularly during the rush hour and at school drop off and pick up times. The road there is wide enough as the roundabout could replace the current right hand turning lane on London Road.

Secondly, new local health facilities need to be built before more houses are constructed in the area as one of the two doctors' surgeries at Tollgate has already closed its books to new patients. Where will the new Copford residents access primary health provision if it is not built alongside the new homes?

Thirdly it can be reasonably anticipated that many of the new residents in the parish and in bordering parishes where development is already underway or planned will be people moving out of London. I know of several families from London who have moved into Copford recently only to commute back into the city from Marks Tey to work. Without more trains and more station parking, this simply cannot continue as the rail network cannot carry any extra passengers at peak times. As it is, commuters who are paying more than £6,000 for a season ticket each year have to stand up all the way, if indeed they can even board their train of choice. I know there has been talk of building another station to mitigate this, but house building in this area should not go ahead until this problem has been solved. People will be sold homes under the false pretence that their journey into work will be relatively easy as these properties will undoubtedly be marketed as ideal commuter homes, which in practice they simply will not be.

### **The development at West Tey and its impact on Copford and Easthorpe**

The large-scale development planned will render London Road almost impassable due to the volume of traffic it will create, even with the suggested modifications to the road layout I have detailed above. These modifications are needed now to cope with the current number of journeys being undertaken. Getting into Colchester is already so bad I don't bother going in any more. I can get everything the town centre offers me online or elsewhere in a much better, more accessible environment. It is sad that I am not alone in this as town centres need high footfall to survive and I would much rather spend my money supporting the local economy than spending it elsewhere.

The fact that at best 2,500 and at worst up to 27,700 homes are being considered at West Tey is alarming because of the impact on the semi-rural areas of Copford and Easthorpe. The commitment to preserve the Conservation Area and distinct rural character of the Copford Green area is an excellent decision and while the plan to create a proper junction on the A12 at Easthorpe for vehicular access to and from the new development can be largely welcomed, it is not without its disadvantages.

The impact of building so many homes backing onto Easthorpe will considerably increase the volume of traffic through Easthorpe and Copford Green. Most worrying is the *current* volume of HGVs passing through Copford Green, which are unable to turn on the road itself because it is simply too narrow. They take the left hand turn from Rectory Road into School Road so wide that not only do they swing round onto the other side of the road endangering oncoming motorists, they drive onto the green itself. The road around the

green is so narrow that weight restrictions on traffic driving through this point should be imposed as a matter of urgency before someone is killed. The creation of a new junction on the A12 at Easthorpe means that the road through Easthorpe and Copford Green will become a diversion route for traffic whenever the A12 is blocked, just as the London Road is currently. It will see hundreds of vehicles, including HGVs, passing through it and it simply will not be able to cope. The green is used as a village amenity in a beautiful conservation area and the roads around it are not built to accommodate large volumes of traffic.

## **Summary**

While I think there is much to be commended in the thinking behind Policy SS5, it feels as though it has been created in isolation from the large-scale building programmes adjacent to the parish. I do not believe that we can look at Copford, or indeed any village or parish, in isolation and that a more strategic approach is required to consider the impact of creating thousands of new dwellings on its boundaries in addition to more than a hundred within.