

West Mersea Town Council express grave concern at the allocation of a further 300 dwellings on the Island over and above the already allocated 200 under the present Local Plan, together with the moving of the settlement boundary to include a further 16 Hectares of mainly farmland.

The local requirement for housing on the Island is in doubt as the census data for 2011 to 2021 showed an increase of only 37 persons whilst there were some 100 new dwellings during the same period. This would tend to indicate yet more second or holiday homes on the Island. Also, our 60+ population increased from 39.9% to 44.3% over this period more than twice the over 60s ratio of Colchester and the national average.

The extra 500 dwellings will mean there will be a more than 1000 extra cars on the Island adding to 7500+ vehicle movements a day on, and off the Island. Further increasing vehicle numbers is the intensification of static caravans to nearly 2000 units plus 800 touring sites and holiday lets.

Concerns of poor infrastructure on the Island leaves us vulnerable to an increase in dwellings, not least the fact that the Island doctors have had to close their list to new patients for the foreseeable future.

We still await full assessments of the effects of climate change on the increasing pace of sea level rise and how this directly impacts the only access road onto the Island. This year there are 220 days when the high tide is predicted to come onto the road.

The effect of the Causeway Road being closed by the sea is far worse than the present chaos at the Hythe. Water depth of some 2 metres at times, which results in two hours hold up in the traffic, with tailbacks of 4 to 5 Kilometres on the mainland side. This does also create issues for the emergency services and access to hospital and medical appointments off the Island. The public transport which runs approximately every hour to Colchester is always interrupted, meaning that during the mid day period of predicted high tides there can be no public transport for 4 hours.

Further Climate Change has not been considered regarding general sea level rise and the existing seawall defences which were increased after the 1953 floods to a height of that tide. This was considered then a 1 once in 100 years event. However, since then the annual rate of the sea level rise has increased significantly. Any breach of the seawall on the mainland side of the Strood will allow flooding of the low-lying area through which the B1025 access road passes and in the 1953 flood this was impassable for many days.

All this indicates that Mersea Island is a unsuitable location for yet more housing.