

STATEMENT BY CLLR. JOHN AKKER MBE TO LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE
ON 10TH NOVEMBER 2025

West Mersea Town Council has done its utmost to study and reflect on the voluminous material published 10 days ago. It will be submitting comments and also data. These are interim tonight.

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

We very strongly wish to state that insufficient consideration has been given to the fact that we are an island settlement. We will say that the material does not reflect, in many ways, what residents are experiencing on the ground in their everyday lives. Nor does it address, we believe, the inherent value that the island brings not only to residents but also to the City and the whole region.

The Blackwater Estuary is a site of immense ecological significance. We wish to see as part of the Local Plan an assessment of the Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) and Essex Estuaries Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

We have before referred to vehicle movements. The effect of high tides on our Strood, being impacted for 220 days a year. The extra dwellings will mean many more extra car movements a day on and off the Island. There is also more use of static caravans, touring caravans and holiday lets. Public transport impacted. During the mid-day period of predicted high tides there can be no public transport for 4 hours.

The Island doctors have had to close their list to new patients. Reports that house sales falling through as a result. There are understated health needs resulting from an aging population.

Lastly, we would urge consideration to strengthen your consultation. We understand now that there will be provision for comments other than by computer. On Mersea, many residents do not have access to a PC. Braintree had drop-in events in 7 centres. Urge an extension by two weeks as consultation will be in the Christmas and New Year period.

The Town Council believes it is not logical to conclude that West Mersea is a place for further significant growth. We already have substantial development. As an island settlement, we say, it is unsustainable.

END