

Rt. Hon. Robert Jenrick MP
Minister for Housing, Communities and Local Government
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF
United Kingdom

September 2021

Dear Sir

Epping Forest District Council's (EFDC) Local Development Plan and modification process carried out by the Planning Inspector.

We write to ask you to intervene in the process for the above Local Development Plan. This Plan includes building thousands of homes on Green Belt land bordering Harlow which together with the 10,000 homes being proposed on the Northern Boundary in the East Herts District Council Local Development Plan, collectively form the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town.

Despite concerns raised by our Party at the Local Plan Enquiry that the residents of Harlow have not been consulted despite the impact that it will have on them and their homes, nothing has changed. No attempt has been made to advise let alone consult those of us who already live in the town even at this late stage. The latest Main Modifications made by the Planning Inspector have recently been published and EFDC has invited its residents to comment. Once again it has made no attempt to involve residents in Harlow who until the Harlow Alliance Party leafleted 5000 homes most affected they would not have been aware of what is being proposed. It should be pointed out that one part of the development is just 12 feet from the back gardens of homes in Harlow.

It is our view that as a prelude to the creation of The Harlow and Gilston Garden Town, the boundary of Harlow District Council should have been re-drawn to include the Green Belt land around the town which by and large consists of open fields. This would have meant that residents in the town would have been consulted about plans to develop some of the Green Belt and decisions about the future of the land would have been made by Councillors in the Council chamber in Harlow and not in Epping. Perhaps most importantly, the income derived from the building of homes and commercial property would be used to regenerate the existing town and the public services provided to residents across the Garden Town would be from one District Council rather than three.

Throughout the Local Plan process we raised the issue that it is the view of many Harlow residents that they will be enormously affected by such large numbers of homes close to the boundary that would need to use the existing roads and facilities. It would appear that no proposal for creating additional infrastructure is included in the EFDC Plan to relieve the pressure on Harlow. In fact Harlow does not get any gains what so ever whether it is for

infrastructure, social housing or contributions to the facilities the new occupiers will be using within Harlow. The term being dumped on is being used by many constituents.

EFDC and the Planning Inspector have chosen to ignore a number of issues which have arisen since the first draft of the Plan was written. Firstly, Harlow Council's Local Plan identified that more than 1,600 homes would be built within the towns boundary in excess of the target set by Government. Since then, new Planning Applications on Brown Field sites has taken this number to around 3,000. We believe that this significantly reduces the need to build any homes on the Green Belt. Building more homes than is needed will simply add to congestion on Harlow's roads, increase noise and pollution and will undoubtedly have an effect on Epping Forest. Secondly, estimates in respect of the growth of the UK's population and the number of new households has declined dramatically and the effect of new immigration controls cannot be underestimated. Thirdly, whilst the long term effect of Covid in respect of home working and the need for office and other space is unknown it is clear that planning for the long term has become even more difficult and now is definitely not the time to be building on the Green Belt.

On behalf of the xxx residents who have signed a petition in support of this letter we ask that you to take these poorly thought out proposals on board and instruct the Planning Inspectorate to stop the current Epping District Council Local Plan process. This would then at the very least give Harlow residents a chance to voice their opinions and make it clear how these housing sites will affect their daily lives. We hope this would lead to a complete rethink as to where and in what number new homes will need to be constructed.

This letter will be published and copied to local MP's and Councillors.

Yours sincerely

Nicholas Taylor
Harlow Alliance Party Leader