

Examination in Public – opening remarks

My name is Andrew Bramidge, Head of Planning for Harlow Council. I'd like to welcome you to Harlow today to commence the Examination in Public of our Local Plan and to introduce you to the key members of our team: -

Our Counsel – Wayne Beglan

Paul MacBride, Forward Planning Manager at Harlow Council and other members of the Forward Planning team; Vicky Forgione, Wendy Hague, Colin Endean and David Watts.

This Local Plan, which I commend to you today, represents the next phase of the development of Harlow New Town, just over 70 years after its birth. Harlow was born out of the need to solve the country's housing crisis after the Second World War. Today, we find ourselves in the midst of another housing crisis as the country has not kept pace with the societal changes which necessitate significant housing growth. Harlow, however, is able and willing to respond to this challenge and fulfil the original plans of its founding masterplanner, Sir Frederick Gibberd. Sir Frederick said that Harlow would continue to grow and that it would be "an organism which would go on changing and being rebuilt as the needs of the people altered."

The growth that this Local Plan sets out, and beyond that in conjunction with our partners in the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town, also enables Harlow to correct one of the failings of the New Town – the creation of a socially and economically sustainable town that provides for all income groups.

Harlow has been designated as the centre of sub-regional growth for more than ten years since the days of the development of the Regional Spatial Strategy, the East of England Plan. From that point onwards, Harlow Council has engaged in the production of a robust evidence base and has undertaken widespread consultation over a number of years and we have engaged with and involved our statutory partner bodies – my colleague Paul MacBride will cover this in more detail. All this work, over many years, has created the Local Plan which this Examination is to review.

Harlow's Local Plan also reflects the Corporate Objectives of Harlow Council. The Council has established five Corporate Priorities for the next three years: -

- More and better housing
- Regeneration and a thriving economy
- Wellbeing and social inclusion
- A clean and green environment
- Successful children and young people

It is no accident that 'More and better housing' is at the top of the list – it is the Council's number one priority. And of course this chimes well with the Government's

expectations of the planning system to significantly boost housing supply across England. In the last six years 1,800 new homes have been built in Harlow, but this rate does not come close to meeting Harlow's housing need, with more than 4,300 people on our housing waiting list.

Adoption of this local plan will provide the confidence for developers to engage with Harlow Council to bring the plans into fruition. Delivery of the housing numbers as set out in the plan is not only important to meet the town's housing need, but it is also important to deliver on the Council's economic objectives – the second most important of our Corporate Objectives. The Harlow Enterprise Zone has made great progress in its development in recent years and has the capacity to bring an additional 5,000 jobs to Harlow. From 2021, Public Health England will commence the relocation of its headquarters and National Science Hub to Harlow, bringing nearly 3,000 jobs in the process. We know that in the past major businesses in Harlow, such as GSK, have struggled to attract and retain staff because of the lack of a broad housing offer. The delivery of more and better housing is an essential pre-requisite for the success of these economic initiatives and the creation of a socially and economically sustainable future for Harlow.

This Local Plan sets out to deliver that future.

Opening Statement – Mr Paul MacBride (Harlow Council)

Harlow Local Development Plan Examination

Matters 1 – Thursday 28 March 10am

By way of an introduction it is the Council's position that the Harlow Local Development Plan has been positively prepared in that it is based on a strategy that seeks to address locally identified development needs, including the necessary infrastructure requirements, taking into account the relevant corporate objective of the council, balanced against environmental considerations, in order to secure sustainable development over the Plan period until 2033.

It is also the councils position that strategies, policies and proposals set out in the plan are justified, in that they are based on proportionate evidence relevant to the area, some of which has been prepared jointly with neighbouring local planning authorities, together with Essex and Hertfordshire County Councils, in accordance with the Duty to cooperate as set out in Localism Act 2011. In addition the quantum of growth set out in the plan has resulted from the consideration of technical work around potential alternative strategies against the backdrop of the Government's desire for the planning system to significantly boost housing supply across England.

In addition it is considered that the plan will be deliverable over the plan period in that it has been prepared through on going and effective joint working with relevant bodies and organisations, and in particular with East Hertfordshire, Epping Forest and Uttlesford District Councils. But also with Essex and Hertfordshire County Councils, and Natural England and the City of London (Conservators of Epping Forest), as evidenced by a number of signed and published Memorandums of Understanding, together with a number statements of common ground with developers and infrastructure providers.

Finally, in respect of soundness, it is the Councils position that the Harlow Local Development Plan is entirely consistent with national policy that will ensure it will provide a spatial planning framework that will secure the provision of sustainable forms of development in the district and which has regard to and reflects the lineage of Harlow as a planned new town.