

Harlow Local Development Plan Examination

Andrew Bramidge
Head of Environment and Planning
Harlow Council



17 September 2019

Dear Mr Bramidge

HARLOW LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN EXAMINATION

Thank you for your letter dated 6 September setting out the Council's position in relation to the various outstanding matters set out in my post hearings letter dated 9 April. I am grateful for the progress the Council has made during the intervening period.

I note the various documents that have been published on the examination website including several Garden Town documents and statements of common ground with the Princess Alexandra Hospital and Essex County Council. The finalised statement of common ground with Historic England should also be put on the website as soon as possible.

As I indicated at the hearings and in my letter of 9 April an opportunity would be given for interested parties to make representations on the Garden Town documents published since the hearings and the programme officer has now invited any such representations during the period ending 11 October. I am not inviting comments on the possible changes to the plan at this stage as main modifications to the plan will be the subject of consultation in due course.

In relation to the need for dialogue and if possible a statement of common ground with Natural England it would appear progress has been disappointing. As I indicated right at the outset of the examination this is a critical issue and efforts should continue to agree policy requirements in the local plan in relation to any impacts (or potential future impacts) on Hatfield Forest SSSI and Epping Forest SAC. Are the results of this summer's visitor survey available for the latter to indicate whether the catchment area is wider than previously thought?

The difficulty with Natural England relying on the main modifications consultation process to propose any further changes is that, if any further significant changes are required for soundness, for example new policy requirements, these would need to be the subject of a second round of consultation. However, this risk may have to be taken and it would not be right to delay progressing the plan much longer to await Natural England's definitive position. I have reviewed the available information and Natural England's comments to date and hope to be in a position to put forward potential changes to the plan for soundness myself in the absence of a statement of common ground. These would be subject to consultation with Natural England and others to ensure they are satisfactory prior to inclusion in the plan.

I have given careful consideration to the various issues raised at and since the hearings and will write to you after 11 October setting out a comprehensive list of the main modifications required in my view to ensure the soundness of the plan. These will then need to be the subject of six weeks public consultation.

The Council will also be able to make additional modifications of a minor nature, i.e. not necessary for soundness, but this is entirely a matter for the Council and should be kept separate from the main modifications as I have no involvement in them. Thank you for submitting the comprehensive schedule of potential modifications drawn up to date – I will advise in due course which of these fall into the category of main modifications.

Yours sincerely

David Reed

INSPECTOR