

HARLOW ALLIANCE PARTY

Preserving our heritage, promoting our future



Dear Mr Reed

We note that there have been numerous comments in response to your examination of Harlow DC's (HDC) Local Plan, much of it to try and make the Plan meet your Main Modifications and observations. A similar situation has occurred with Epping Forest District Council's (EFDC) Local Plan. In the meantime, the Plan of Harlow and Gilston Garden Town is running in parallel.

You will recall from the outset that we felt the HDC Plan was unsound because despite the collaboration agreed by the four Council's making up The Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (HGGT) group, this did not include how, what and when residents in each District were to be consulted about these Plans. Harlow Council have continued with a low profile when consulting residents about your Main Modifications (we note that just two residents other than Councillors have responded to the latest consultation) and we are aware of mixed messages coming from those involved with the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town.

What has and indeed is still is being said about each other's Plans and how they affect the residents of Harlow still differ in respect of the sustainable transport corridors across our town. Whilst these directly affect EFDC's Plan for homes on Harlow's border, particularly at Latton Priory and west of Katherines, they will have even more affect on residents who already live in the town.

1) HDC have stated as recently as February 2020 that the Latton Priory development will have a tramway link to Harlow Town Centre, the towns train station and on to the development at Gilston. They hope this will encourage new residents to avoid using their cars to travel across Harlow and will add a huge amount of extra capacity for those travelling south to north. However, The Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (HGGT) developers held an exhibition at the beginning of the year where they said that a tramway was not part of the Plan, just more buses, 'providing a reliable, frequent and affordable service'. We have a bus service in Harlow, a route within 200 yards of the Latton Priory and West of Sumners and Katherines site, which residents would never describe as having the said attributes. HGGT confirmed January's position in writing as recently as earlier this month.

It seems very likely that a tramway will never be built due to the cost. The construction of a road south of Latton Priory which was only proposed as recently as February 2019, gives easy (by car) access to Epping Tube Station. As a result, there will be a huge increase in traffic leading to more congestion on some of Harlow's minor roads such as Rye Hill Road. The pollution and noise emanating from it will for example have a detrimental effect on Epping Forest. As an aside, but as an example of what is happening in the town now, a recent survey by Princess Alexandra Hospital revealed that 88% of those attending the hospital travelled by car, just 4% by bus.

We have been pleased to note what the Inspector said of the Garden Town Plan produced by Braintree, Colchester and Tendering Council for North Essex published last month when throwing out plans for homes in parts of the combined District. We believe that for the same reasons, Latton Priory and the homes to the west of Harlow should not be built and throw doubt on the sustainability of homes to be built in the eastern part of Harlow.

2) The significant change to the Transport Corridor to the west of Harlow will materially affect the Plans of EFDC in respect of the homes planned for west of Katherine's. A new road is now planned to cross this new development in the EFDC area to enter Harlow from the roundabout where Fifth Avenue and Elizabeth Way meet. In its path is the Elizabeth Way Travellers Site which will need to be placed elsewhere, but there is no indication of where this will be. With tightly packed boundaries in Harlow it is almost impossible to see where it will be placed.

We are writing to the Inspector of the EFDC Local Plan voicing similar concerns.

We hope that you will take into account this new information before making your final observations of HDC's Local Plan.

Nicholas Taylor
Harlow Alliance Party

26/6/20