

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

August 2021

Dear Sir

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

We write to appeal to you on this Plan which 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 so 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 the 5000 homes most affected, would not have been aware of what is going on.

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, the financial benefits resulting from any development would go to HDC, decisions about the future of the land would have been made in the Council chamber in Harlow and perhaps most importantly, the public services residents received 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. The first is that 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 needed will simply add to congestion on Harlow's roads, add 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 to support this letter to you we appeal to you to instruct the Planning Inspectorate to stop the current Local Plan. All matters effecting residents need to be properly addressed and the existing population of Harlow given the right to have their concerns heard.

Copies of this letter will be published and sent to our local MP's.

Yours sincerely

Nicholas Taylor
Party Leader