

HARLOW ALLIANCE PARTY

Preserving our heritage, promoting our future



Dear Ms Louise Phillips

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

We are writing to you to ensure that you are aware that changes to these other two Plans will materially affect that of Epping Forest DC and have written to David Reed the Inspector of Harlow's Local Plan to make the same point.

You will recall from the outset that we felt the EFDC 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.

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. These directly affect Epping Forest DC's plan for homes on Harlow's border, particularly at Latton Priory and west of Katherines.

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. This it is hoped will encourage new residents to avoid using their cars to travel around the town 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 gives easy (by car) to Epping Tube Station. As a result, there will be a huge increase in traffic leading to more congestion on many of Harlow's minor roads such as Rye Hill Road. The pollution and noise emanating from it will 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 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.

2) As a result of the Main Modifications made by David Reed, a significant change to the Transport Corridor 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, although there is no indication of where this will be. With tightly packed boundaries in Harlow it is almost impossible to see where it will go, indeed HDC should insist that EFDC be required to find a new site, bearing in mind the road is only being built because of EFDC'S Plan for new housing.

This road will form the main route into Harlow from the west, giving easier access to those working on the Public Health England site nearby. Providing new cycle tracks to mitigate an increase in road use is a key feature of the Harlow Plan and it must therefore be hoped that the road will have a cycle track adjacent to it. These will of course take a significant amount of land to construct and a hinterland between road and homes will be needed in view of how much and what size of vehicles are likely to use it to gain access to The Pinnacles industrial estate. This will inevitably lead to a reduction in the number of homes built and an increase in costs for the developer and ultimately the house purchaser, putting them more and more out of reach of local people and thus meeting housing need.

The developers of the site would have us believe that the present land owners are in agreement that they wish to sell the land they own to the west of Harlow. We now know that this is not the case, up to 40% of the land is not in fact subject to a legal agreement between land owners and the developers.

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

Nicholas Taylor
Harlow Alliance Party

26/6/20