



18 February 2019

Dear Madam

The Harlow Alliance Party wish to make a further submission to you on the following points;

## **Consultation**

It was interesting to note that the subject of the lack of public consultation was raised as early as the first morning of your hearings. We now understand that every household in the Epping Forest DC area was sent a leaflet during the period that the Local Plan was being prepared, exhibitions were held across the District and Neighbourhood Plans were supposed to help (although from what was said, these were apparently not completed until some months after the final version of the Local Plan was published). Residents in Harlow, who will be most affected by the inclusion of some of the sites in the EFDC Local Plan were not included in this public consultation, indeed those which we mentioned in our earlier submission were not actually carried out by EFDC themselves.

On 9 February The Harlow Alliance Party held its first public meeting where it gave a presentation about the Local Plans of Epping Forest DC (EFDC) and Harlow DC (HDC). Approximately 140 residents attended. Apart from 3 local Councillors, everyone expressed concerns about the lack of consultation and many aspects of these Plans. HDC's leading Councillor publically stated at the meeting that Harlow Council did not carry out more public consultation because it would have made no difference to the outcome. I will leave it to your imagination as to what residents felt about this.

We have obtained a copy of the leaflet that was sent to residents living close to the Latton Priory development prior to the public exhibition. The scheme shown was very different to what is now in the Local Plan. A number of issues had previously been identified and they were responded to in the leaflet in an attempt to 'sell' approval

1. The plan included a link road to the M11 junction nearby, which it said would reduce congestion on Southern Way and other roads in Harlow. This link has been deleted from the Local Plan, It is quite clear that without such a junction the roads in Harlow will become even more congested if this development is allowed to take place.
2. Commercial space was to be built "because space in the north west of Harlow (The Pinnacles) is too far from the motorway to make it attractive for new investment". Since then however, Public Health England have purchased the former GSK site, bringing over 3000 jobs to the town and 4 new warehouses are being constructed as I write. The outcome of both will see far more traffic on Harlow's roads.
3. It was noted that Epping tube station is already congested and thus a high quality bus service would be provided. What is now proposed is a tramway linking Latton Priory to the Gilston Garden Town, running through one of the

largest green open spaces in Harlow This will cost millions of pounds to construct, will cause untold congestion as it crosses already heavily congested roads and we believe it will be a white elephant bearing in mind how close Epping tube station is to Latton Priory and the comparative fares between over rail and underground services.

4. A hierarchical road access strategy was proposed “which might include Fernhill Lane, Rye Hill Road, London Road and Riddings Lane”. Fernhill Lane is the site for the tramway, which as things stand would mean that vehicles would not be able to use this route. London Road access has been deleted from the scheme, leaving just two roads, both hopelessly inadequate for the hundreds of daily vehicular movements that are likely if this scheme goes ahead.
5. The leaflet states that EFDC have had to resort to using green belt land and says that Latton Priory is the most suitable site. It goes on to say it is not visible from Epping as it is 2.5 miles away and would not lead to urban sprawl. HAP says it clearly will be visible to the thousands of people entering Harlow and does itself lead to urban sprawl.
6. The leaflet states that the proposal would lead to the creation of 2170 jobs. There was no evidence to support this claim and as the present plan does not include any commercial premises such a claim cannot now be used to support the building of Latton Priory.
7. The leaflet stated that EFDC would get a £26 million new homes bonus windfall, £2 million a year in council tax and £2 million in business rates. All good news for EFDC but not for Harlow Council and it’s residents who face an ever increasing pressure on it’s public services and congestion on it’s roads.

Our public meeting confirmed to us that very few residents in Sumners had been involved in any public consultation about the EFDC Local Plan and no-one living at Katherines had ever been made aware of plans close to their homes.

### **Making best use of existing housing stock**

The Latton Priory leaflet did bring to our attention the matter of the new homes bonus paid to Councils and explains why they are happy to go along with the Governments path of trying to build it’s way out of the “housing crisis”

My whole working life was spent in Council house management, 22 years at HDC and 13 years at EFDC. It’s as a result of my work that HAP’S policy on housing includes an undertaking to make best use of existing housing stock. A lack of suitable accomadation (usually bungalows) means that many homes are under occupied, simply because there are insufficient homes for people to move into at a cost that reflects downsizing. A recent survey revealed that nationally over 4 million people would like to move to a bungalow but are unable to do so. We have recently made a Freedom of Information Request of HDC which shows that some 1500 **houses** are occupied by just one person, hundreds more are likley to be occupied by just 2 people. This situation is likley to be repeated in the EFDC area (whose housing stock is about 50% bigger than Harlow’s). Council’s across the country should be given financial incentives to take action to maximise the use of homes in their area,, to include the building of bungalows and financial and physical help to allow residents to downsize.

The present policy is simply not sustainable in 2031 at the end of this Plan period the country will be in the same position as it finds itself in now, homeless on the streets, hundreds of thousands of people living in temporary accomadation and millions living in under occupied homes.

### **Out of date information**

In our last submission we alluded to the fact that new planning applications in Harlow were in the pipeline, homes which are not included in the total needed to be found in the Plans of EFDC and HDC. Since then Planning Permission has been given for 361 homes on a former car park near Harlow Town railway station and 3 other applications are awaiting to be heard for another 50 homes. Time prevents us from finding out from EFDC how many homes have been constructed or are in their pipeline on sites not within their Plan, but these must be taken into account when looking at the overall numbers required at Government level.

Finally, pleased be advised that both I and the Deputy Leader of HAP, Alan Leverett wish to attend and participate in the Hearing on 21 March.

Nicholas Taylor  
**Harlow Alliance Party**