

East Herts Council Non-Key Decision Report

Date: 22 May 2020

Report by: Councillor Linda Haysey – Leader of the Council

Report title: Harlow Local Plan: Main Modifications

Ward(s) affected: All

Summary

The report proposes a response to Harlow Council's consultation on its Main Modifications to the Harlow Pre-submission Local Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DECISION: That Harlow Council be informed that in respect of the Harlow Local Plan, East Herts Council:

- (a) Submits this report as its response to Harlow Council's Harlow Local Plan: Main Modifications Consultation; and**
- (b) Notes specifically, the omission of a main modification in relation to Policy HGT1.**

1.0 Proposal(s)

- 1.1 This report sets out the East Herts response to Harlow Council's consultation into the Main Modifications proposed to the Harlow Pre-submission Local Plan.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Following an examination into the Harlow Local Plan, Harlow Council is running a consultation on the Main Modifications to

the Pre-Submission version of the Local Plan.

- 2.2 The consultation runs from the 12th March to 31 May 2020, this was extended from the original deadline of the 27th April 2020 due to the Coronavirus pandemic.
- 2.3 Alongside the Schedule of Main Modifications, a Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulation Assessment have been published to form the Consultation documents and can be viewed on the Harlow Council website.
- 2.4 Following this consultation, the Inspector will issue a final report deciding whether the Main Modifications will make the plan sound and therefore the plan can be formally adopted by Harlow Council.
- 2.5 This report presents East Herts Council's response to this consultation.

3.0 Reason(s)

- 3.1 Harlow Local Plan: Pre-Submission Publication proposes to accommodate 9,200 new homes over the plan period 2011-2033. The identified housing supply exceeds the Council's full objectively assessed housing need (FOAN) of 7,409 homes (2017 SHMA Establishing the Full Objectively Assessed Need) and as such ensures that there is contingency/flexibility within the proposed development strategy.
- 3.2 The consultation documents contain a number of main modifications to the Harlow Plan. Main modifications propose to adjust the way the housing requirement is addressed across the plan period by introducing a stepped trajectory. A stepped trajectory is appropriate where delivery is likely to increase towards the latter stages of the plan period; as is the case with the Harlow Local Plan. This approach is supported in principle by East Herts.

- 3.3 The majority of the Harlow Local Plan modifications will not have a *direct* impact on East Herts. The proposed strategic sites for growth in Harlow are situated to the east of the town and the Plan also allocates a number of smaller housing sites within the town's urban area, these remain consistent with the pre-submission version of the Plan which this Council supported.
- 3.4 The cumulative impacts of the development proposed in Harlow will have an impact on the wider housing market area but this continues to be addressed through the modifications which support major new infrastructure such as Junction 7a of the M11 and through the facilitation of the potential relocation of Princess Alexandra Hospital.
- 3.5 East Herts Council further welcomes and supports the retention of the Policy SIR1 that identifies land use implications for a number of key pieces of infrastructure including the River Stort Crossings.
- 3.6 East Herts questioned the legal basis for Policy HGT1 applying to developments outside of Harlow's administrative boundary during the pre-submission consultation in May 2018. The Inspector's List of Matters and Questions (EX0006) then covered the issue in Matter 3, question 3.2. In response Harlow Council in their Hearing Statement: EX0012 proposed a modification to the text to rectify this issue.
- 3.7 It is noted that neither the recommended modification, nor one similar to it, appears to have been carried forward into the main modifications document or the minor modifications document. East Herts Council requests that the modification included in Harlow Council's Hearing Statement is included in the final plan to ensure that Policy HGT1 is sound.
- 3.8 Overall, East Herts Council supports the Local Plan's intention

to meet its objectively assessed housing needs, including the positive approach taken to reviewing the Green Belt to identify land for such development purposes. East Herts Council further supports Harlow Council's commitment to joint working to address the collective needs of the housing market area in terms of key infrastructure, employment and housing needs.

- 3.9 East Herts Council would like to affirm its commitment to working with Harlow Council in its Plan-making process, not least through continued engagement in the Co-operation for Sustainable Development Officers Group and Members Board, the Garden Town Board and Harlow and Gilston Garden Town.

4.0 Options

- 4.1 The Council could choose not to submit this report to Harlow District Council in response to the Main Modifications consultation.

5.0 Risks

- 5.1 Not submitting this report to the Main Modifications consultation wouldn't allow East Herts Council to put forward its views, and consequently the views of East Herts would not be considered by the Inspector. Not raising the issue could have an impact on the delivery of the Gilston allocation, which is a key part of the wider Garden Town programme.

6.0 Implications/Consultations

- 6.1 This report is a response to the Main Modifications consultation into the Harlow Local Plan.

Community Safety

No

Data Protection

No

Equalities

No

Environmental Sustainability

No

Financial

No

Health and Safety

No

Human Resources

No

Human Rights

No

Legal

No

Specific Wards

All Wards

7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

None

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