

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COUNCIL – 18 DECEMBER 2019

(A) PETITION – “STOP EXPANSION OF HARLOW AND BUILDING ON GREEN WEDGES WITH 23,000 NEW HOMES”

A petition has been submitted by Charles Browne, on behalf of 223 signatories, seeking that the Council and its neighbouring authorities, Epping Forest District Council and Harlow District Council, cease plans for the expansion of Harlow. Signatures have been collected via an online petition hosted by Change.org. The petition states:

The government has issued a requirement for local authorities to greatly expand house building in every part of the country. Harlow District Council, Epping Forest District Council and East Herts District Council have come together to draw up a plan to build 23,000 new houses in and on the edge of Harlow.

These new houses will be built in five areas:

Between Harlow Common and Latton Priory Farm up to the M11 roundabout; close to Radburn Close, Corner Meadow, Hawthorns, Gibb Croft, Sibney Green, Spruce Hill, Rye Hill Road, Berecroft. This comprises 200 hectares of housing, and will all be on farm land (Epping Forest District Council);

Each side of Water Lane; bordering on Silvesters, Heighams, Red Willow, Little Cattins, Taylifers, Hull Grove, Archers, Savoy Wood (Epping Forest District Council);

So-called Gilston/Hunsdon Garden Villages; which will consist of seven large areas of housing separated by narrow green wedges. This conurbation will have at least one new secondary school and five new primary schools. 10,000 new homes will be built between

Hunsdon, Wilford and Gilston, on Green Belt land including Briggens Estate and Gilston Park Estate. It will come very close to the A 414 (East Herts District Council);

To the east of Harlow; right up to the M11 (Epping Forest District Council and Harlow District Council);

Within the precincts of the existing town on many sites including some green wedge areas and play areas. Pollards Hatch, Joscelyns, St Andrews Meadow, Fennells, Deer Park, south of Clifton Hatch and Hawthorns (Harlow District Council).

This will result in us having to walk a lot further to get into open country, which is one of the things which makes Harlow so pleasant to live in.

Some of the open green spaces and play areas within the town will be lost. The town will become a part of the London-Cambridge megalopolis. Most of the new housing is unlikely to be social housing.

The argument for the expansion is that Britain needs to infinitely expand its economy (and so its workforce, which will need more housing), to be competitive in the world market; and to support an aging population in retirement. However, Britain is the fifth richest country in the world, and can surely afford to look after the people who created that wealth, in their old age.

Britain only has enough land to produce 60% of the food we need, and needs to save its farmland from being built over.

This drive to build on green farmland is happening all over the country and is being challenged wherever it is planned.

Hopefully our democratically elected councils and government can be persuaded to cancel this initiative.

Ward: Hunsdon

Note:

Members are reminded that the lead petitioner is permitted to address Council for up to three minutes. The relevant Executive Member will respond to the petition. There is no provision for any general debate by Members, however, local ward Members may comment if they wish.