

# Cabinet – 23 January 2020

## Questions from the Public

### **1 Mr Nicholas Taylor to Councillor Mark Ingall, Leader of the Council**

The Harlow Alliance Party and no doubt hundreds of residents were delighted to see the Main Modifications made by the Inspector of Harlow Council's Local Plan. These changes will see a reduction of some 200 homes being built on Council owned playing fields and green spaces between housing estates.

Members will be aware that despite this, the Plan if implemented in full will still see 1600 more homes being constructed in the area than is required by government targets.

It was announced last week that the Council would be commencing a £12 million house building programme shortly. How does the Council plan to meet the shortfall in Council house building numbers as a result of the Inspectors findings?

#### **Reply from Councillor Mark Ingall (Leader of the Council):**

The Council is developing a proposed housing delivery programme, comprising a number of sites that can be developed for council housing over the coming years.

It is anticipated that there will not be a shortfall in the required council house building numbers as a result of the Inspector's Main Modifications.

#### **Supplementary Question from Mr Nicholas Taylor to Councillor Mark Ingall, Leader of the Council**

Does this mean that sites outside of those identified in Local Plan will be built on?

#### **Supplementary Reply from Councillor Mark Ingall, Leader of the Council**

No, it does not.

### **2 Mr Nicholas Taylor to Councillor Mark Ingall, Leader of the Council**

The Conservative Government said in 2012 that for every Council house sold under the Right to Buy, a Council house would be built to replace it. Since then, nationally, a new house has been built only when seven Council homes have been sold. In view of these figures, can you tell me how many homes Harlow Council owned in April 2012 compared with in April 2019?

**Reply from Councillor Mark Ingall (Leader of the Council):**

The Council's stock in April 2012 was 9,824. The Council's stock in April 2019 was 9,180.

**Supplementary Question from Mr Nicholas Taylor to Councillor Mark Ingall, Leader of the Council**

Will there still be a lower level of council stock by the end of the Local Plan period?

**Supplementary Reply from Councillor Mark Ingall, Leader of the Council**

The Council has an ambitious pipeline of developments, but Government action is needed to address this issue.

**3 Mr Alan Leverett to Councillor Mark Ingall, Leader of the Council**

In March last year the Council undertook to consult with residents about the proposed sustainable transport corridors, after the Local Elections in May.

Until now, almost nothing has been done by Harlow Council to advertise exhibitions held in respect of the Plans relating to Gilston and Latton Priory. It has to be said that these included only very vague details of the transport proposals. The exhibition which took place yesterday (22 January) was not advertised on the Council's website or that of the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town.

Is yesterday's event the sole attempt by Harlow Council to consult residents? If not, when and how is the Council going to consult with residents in Harlow about these specific plans?

**Reply from Councillor Mark Ingall (Leader of the Council):**

I am pleased to be able to say that public consultation on the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Transport Strategy will commence at the end of January and run until the beginning March 2020. There was in fact no event that took place yesterday, which is why neither the Council nor the Garden Town team had publicised anything. This was a tentative date for the launch of the consultation which erroneously found its way into the local media.

The consultation exercise, when it is launched next week, will see material available on the Garden Town website for review and comment and this will be supported by social media activity through the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town team. Harlow Council's communications team will also support this activity. There will be two staffed exhibitions in the Harvey Centre (dates are currently being confirmed with the Harvey Centre's management team) with Officers available to hand out materials

and answer questions. A similar event is also planned for Harlow College and a presentation is to be given to the Harlow Chamber of Commerce on 19 February.

During the entire length of the consultation period there will also be exhibition panels on display in the Civic Centre reception. We welcome as many people as possible to get involved with this consultation process, which will be the first in a series of consultation exercises on the Garden Town proposals in the coming months and years.

**Supplementary Question from Mr Alan Leverett to Councillor Mark Ingall, Leader of the Council**

Are you going to engage with Residents Associations during the consultation?

**Supplementary Reply from Councillor Mark Ingall, Leader of the Council**

We will ask the Garden Town Board about their plans to engage with Residents Associations.

**4 Mr Alan Leverett to Councillor Mark Ingall, Leader of the Council**

With over 4000 applicants on the Housing Register, what analysis if any has been carried out to determine the most useful type of home the Council should build to make best use of its stock of homes and reduce the number of applicants on the Housing Register?

**Reply from Councillor Mark Ingall (Leader of the Council):**

The Council's strategic housing market assessment (SHMA) sets out the number of homes needed in future to inform our local plans and housing strategies. This seeks to meet housing need, support a healthy local economy and achieve a 'balanced' housing market.

Harlow's overall housing needs require all dwelling types. Current indicators show there is a significant need for two bedroom properties and a need for bungalows to meet the aging population in Harlow.

**Supplementary Question from Mr Alan Leverett to Councillor Mark Ingall, Leader of the Council**

Is the Council aware that a number of council tenants wish to downsize their properties?

**Supplementary Reply from Councillor Mark Ingall, Leader of the Council**

The Council is aware that some tenants wish to downsize. Where tenants wish to downsize they should contact the Council.