

COUNCIL, 26 July 2017

A HOUSING

Motion on behalf of the Independent Residents' Group

The Coalition Administration's promotion of the council booklet "Havering – Making a Greater London" that includes a "Visionary" commitment to support the building of 30,000 properties in Havering is premature and a mistake. Premature, because this "Vision" has not been explicitly endorsed by Council and a mistake, because to build that many properties would require the construction of nearly 1,700 per year, 530 more than Mayoral target of 1,170 per year.

Presently, we have introduced two large GLA housing zones plus various sites under an ambitious Council "re-build our council estates" programme that will total around 11,000 properties, even without the provision of the necessary infrastructure and services being guaranteed. The idea that up to 20,000 more properties could be built without adversely impacting upon the environment and residents' quality of life is risible and dishonest.

At the last Council meeting the Cabinet Member for Housing said the 30,000 figure derives as our apportionment as a member of a London sub-region rather than to meet Havering's specific housing needs. This figure must be resolutely resisted should the Mayor demand in the pending London Plan an adherence to the Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

Council therefore agrees it will not commit itself to any housing numbers above our present already excessive Mayoral target.

Amendment by the Conservative Group

This Council, having received expert advice from Queen's Counsel as explained in detail in a recent briefing open to all councillors, accepts that it must follow the required procedure if it is to obtain approval of its draft Local Plan and protect the Borough from indiscriminate developments across the area lacking proper infrastructure.

It further notes that this is laid down by National Planning Policy, that one of the requirements is to meet objectively assessed housing need and that this is done both in London and elsewhere through the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SMAH). The most recent updated SHMA indicates a provisional need for 30,000 homes over 22 years up to 2033.

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It further notes that the London Plan currently shows a minimum target for Havering of 11,701 new homes from 2015 to 2025. On this basis the emerging draft Local Plan would show a continuing target of 1,170 over the period of the plan which could be reviewed every 5 years in the light of any evidence of changes in need.

It further notes that the proposed Havering Local Plan will be open to extensive public consultation and any submission to the Secretary of State for public examination will be subject to the responses received through the consultation process.

B GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

Motion on behalf of the United Kingdom Independence Party Group

Over many months members have had concerns about the LIP funding and how it is our money being returned but with strings attached. TFL state 'We allocate money to the London boroughs to spend on projects that support the Mayor's Transport Strategy through a Local Implementation Plan' This money is raised through the GLA precept, only part of which do we see returned and only then to be spent on things that The London Mayor wants and not what is necessarily of any benefit to the people of Havering; rarely used cycle lanes being a case in point.

Most recently the unveiling of plans to build 30,000 homes in the borough over the next 10 years to meet the London Mayors housing target, coupled with the assault on our greenbelt to bury the dead from other London boroughs highlight just how little control we currently have to set our own destiny when it comes to planning.

This has been the case since the creation of the GLA in by the Greater London Authority Act 1999 which passed through Parliament, receiving the Royal Assent in October 1999.

From that day to this Havering has had increasingly less control over its planning decisions. Which with the ever increasing demand for housing largely fuelled by continued uncontrolled mass immigration this situation is not going to get better any time soon.

This council agrees that it would be better off renegotiating our current relationship with the GLA and rather than remain under the Mayors planning authority we should become a Unitary Authority so that we can bring back control of planning and create a local plan that better fits the needs of Havering residents.

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Amendment by the Conservative Group

This Council notes that, although it has repeatedly argued for greater control over how LIP funding is spent in the Borough and is concerned about London-wide or other outside control over planning policies and decisions, an Act of Parliament would be needed for the Borough to cease to be a London Borough and to become a Unitary Authority and that this would still be unlikely to give the Council ultimate control over such matters. Planning procedure in particular is governed by statute and national and regional policies. Any planning decision is subject to appeal, and if a council departs from such policies the outcomes are taken out of its hands.

The Council notes further that, even if Parliament could be persuaded to pass such an Act, there would be considerable implications including the loss of London-wide Freedom Passes and other subsidised transport schemes for our residents, the apportionment and burden of future funding of liabilities such as GLA pensions, the future of local policing and fire services and involvement in their governance and the future of the local transport and highway infrastructure which are controlled by TFL and its governance.

The Council notes further that the Council has not unveiled plans to build 30,000 homes over the next ten years and that matters such as annual housing targets and the preservation of the Green Belt will be part of the draft Local Plan to be considered shortly by the Council after the extensive consultation and evidence gathering which has already taken place.

Amendment by the Independent Residents' Group

Growing demands to leave an institution is also growing evidence of a need to reform an institution and this applies to the Greater London Authority (GLA), which is presided over by an EU inspired Elected Mayor. Havering sits between London and Essex and enjoys the costs and benefits of both, but the Mayor of London's plans to make Havering part of a Greater London to meet ambitious housing targets has incited a renewed debate about the future governance of Havering within the GLA.

This "Essex NOT London" debate involves a wide range of issues beyond planning matters and the Council's official position on whether to remain should be guided by popular support. For this reason Council calls on the Executive to seek a democratic reform of the GLA and consider holding a borough wide constitutional In or Out referendum on our future relationship with the GLA.