

Responses from candidates standing in the County Council elections on Thursday 4th May to this question from STOP Harlow North:

Are you in favour of the development to the North of Harlow included in the recently published EHDC District Plan?

Sotirios ADAMOPOULOS (Labour) hasn't responded so far.

Eric BUCKMASTER (Conservative) said:

"As you know the District Plan is now in the hands of the Planning Inspector There is no simple answer to your question because I believe things have moved on significantly since the Stop Harlow North campaign began and also since the time I was an active objector to the development. I was opposed to the site promoters' original suggestion that all of the District Plan of 15,000 homes could be accommodated in the Gilston area. I stand by that view and as you are aware other sites across the district have now been identified to accommodate at least 13,000 dwellings. Given the need to consider all options ahead of the examination in public I don't believe that the planning inspector would accept the proposition maintained by the Stop Harlow North Campaign of no development at all in Gilston. However, I stated at the District Plan Panel of the 8th September 2016 that we should hold the site promoter to the principle that they should develop no more than 3000 of the potential 10,000 homes during this plan period up to 2033. The delivery of early and appropriate infrastructure is also absolutely vital to all of this. As an existing District Councillor and prospective County Councillor I shall work with parish councillors, interest groups, and other agencies as a matter of course and I shall welcome further dialogue with the Stop Harlow North campaign following the inspector's examination."

Julia DAVIES (Liberal Democrat) said:

"I have opposed the East Herts District Plan in particular Harlow North (area around Gilston) - I am opposed in my own right and as Chairman of Stanstead Abbots Parish Council. I sent in a response for the Parish Council which should be available on the East Herts web-site. The Liberal Democrats have always been in favour of protecting the green belt."

Isabelle ROBINSON (Green) said with this proviso:

"[My response is my own view and may not be shared by other EHGP members.] Having read both Chapter 11 of the District Plan, and the points made on the 'Stop Harlow North' website, I am somewhat conflicted. While there is a definite need for more housing, the current plan does not adequately address how the additional infrastructure and services needed would be provided (who will build and pay for the proposed schools and road upgrades?). I am also cynical about how affordable the 'affordable' housing would be - there is little point in building houses local people cannot buy. (And from a Green point of view it isn't clear the housing would be built to the highest environmental standards - solar panels/insulation etc.) Separate from the practical issues is the gut feeling of sadness at losing valuable countryside and I am undecided whether the benefits of much needed housing outweighs the loss of local countryside. (I am in favour of infill/brownfield housing where possible.)"

Michael SHAW (UKIP) said:

"I on behalf of UKIP am the only candidate to oppose Harlow North, which the conservatives are forcing on East Herts despite the clear views of the vast majority of residents."