

Harborough District Council

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Neil O'Brien OBE MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Sent by email: neil.obrien.mp@parliament.uk

Good Afternoon Neil

Thank you for the letter email. In your position as the MP for Harborough there are a number of points that you will be uniquely placed to assist with and explain in more detail.

My personal concerns regarding the housing numbers potentially being transhipped to Harborough from Leicester City have been well documented. Here in Harborough we collectively have a responsibility for those currently living in our district now and those who will move into our community. We need to see investment in the infrastructure, properties that will stand the test of time environmentally, sustainably etc

In your letter you reference the city having several brownfield sites 'that would be perfect for development'. I would suggest that it would benefit the debate if you publicly named the sites, and we can call on the city to comment and confirm the considerations that have or have not taken place and if these sites when developed are able to remove the current and upcoming need to tranship housing numbers. The extra 123 dwellings per annum will place further pressure on Harborough's infrastructure and the impacts will need to be carefully considered.'

Turning to the matter of the Duty to co-operate being abolished. I understood the government said the intention to abolish existed, but has this actually happened yet? If yes, then when? Whilst on that specific subject, longer term do you have details as to what is replacing it and is it likely to be better or worse for our residents, the council and the quality of life in the district?

There are those who will argue this is all a consequence of the Strategic Growth Plan, but we need to look in detail behind the headlines. Where was the open, transparent involvement of the public, local councillors?





We challenged this process, and we will be raising it again at the first opportunity in open forum at Harborough District Council after the recent elections.

At every opportunity our concerns were detailed but could it be argued that the previous Harborough District Council Administration adopted the Strategic Growth Plan largely on the advice of the Leader?

Turning to our Local Plan. I spoke to our cabinet lead on planning. He raised a very interesting point. If the council were to decline to sign the Statement of Common Ground, what assurances are you able to provide from Ministers in the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities that we will be able to get the new Local Plan through an examination in public and adopted?

We understand there are councils that have found that without such an agreed statement between the councils in their particular local area, the inspector won't proceed with the examination and will halt the process. This action then effectively blocks the Local Plan under consideration.

We live in a county that is amongst the worst funded in the country. More homes yet not enough funds to invest in much needed infrastructure. Lack of money for schools and roads, major infrastructure projects all just out of reach and the lack of which directly impacts on the quality of life of our communities. I wonder, what guarantees are there from the government that this won't get even worse with more threats of reduced 106 contribution etc? I would appreciate your comments.

I look forward to hearing from you and to meeting up shortly.

Kind regards

Cllr Phil Knowles
Leader
Harborough District Council

