



HERTFORDSHIRE INFRASTRUCTURE & PLANNING PARTNERSHIP

By Email: NewTownsEvidence@communities.gov.uk

13th December 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: New Towns Taskforce – call for evidence

Hertfordshire has always been at the forefront of planning for growth, having pioneered the first garden cities and first new town. Indeed, within the county we have already committed to building an additional 100,000 homes and generating 100,000 new jobs over the next 10 years, ensuring residents and businesses thrive. We are working with Homes England and other partners to deliver 24,000 new homes at Harlow Gilston Garden Town with 10,000 of those new homes at Gilston in Hertfordshire, together with a further 10,000 new homes as part of the Hemel Garden Communities proposal.

We were delighted to see Minister Matthew Pennycook and Sir Michael Lyons launch the New Towns Taskforce in Stevenage a few months ago and to welcome representatives of the Taskforce to discuss proposals for Hemel Garden Communities earlier this week.

All of the boroughs and districts within Hertfordshire, supported by Hertfordshire County Council, are keen to deliver long-term, sustainable growth. To this end we have actively committed to strategic planning within the county and have clear governance structures in place to support this. We are also at an advanced stage in preparing technical work to look at future options for long-term sustainable growth.

The South West Herts Joint Strategic Plan Group are nearing completion of a Strategic Spatial Options Study, which will consider a series of growth scenarios based on their agreed vision for the area. Similarly, the North East and Central Herts Joint Strategic Plan Group anticipate that their Growth and Spatial Options study will be reporting outcomes by summer 2025.

Whilst we therefore do not have any specific new proposals to present to the Taskforce at this current time, we wanted to take this opportunity to highlight that there are expected to be further strategic-scale opportunities coming through our strategic planning work.

Our shared concern is however whether any proposals endorsed by the Taskforce would count towards district / borough housing targets. We strongly believe that they should. If it is in addition to these targets, it will be harder to build the existing community's trust, and support for growth, across the county.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss our approach to strategic planning and emerging growth options with you further in the New Year, in order to help deliver the government's ambition to deliver affordable, high quality and sustainable homes in the right locations.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jeremy Newmark'.

Cllr Jeremy Newmark
HIPP Chair