

Committee	COUNCIL MEETING
Date	18th March 2019
Agenda Item	12

Meeting with James Cleverly MP – Friday 22nd February 2019

Below is a summary of the topics discussed with MP James Cleverly at the meeting of 22 February along with supporting comments from the points raised.

- 1 **Town Plan** – we explained the process that we have gone through to create our Town Plan and introduced him to the structure and action plan. As part of our launch plan we gave James a copy of the plan for him to study along with the agreed upon covering letter of introduction. He was impressed by the work done and agreed that it formed a good focal point for action. He asked to be notified as to when the plan is published on the HTC website so that he could use social media to help raise awareness.

- 2 **Riverside Bridge** – we explained the history of how the bridge was closed, the work done so far to date to try and raise funds to reopen it, and the so far unsuccessful attempts to enable it to become part of the HTC Open Spaces Action Plan despite it being an integral part of the River Colne Walk; this walk cannot be completed, as per the publicly available brochure, without crossing this bridge. We asked him to help steer BDC into supporting our efforts so that we can use S106 funding to assist in the production of a technical report.

- 3 **River Colne** – we explained the situation, to which James acknowledged that he also had been in contact with the Environment Agency (EA) both last year and this year to try and draw out a conclusion. He agreed that the causeway was an iconic picture of Halstead and that the HIB team may suffer as a result of the overgrown state of this stretch of the river. He will contact the EA again in an effort to help.

- 4 **Housing Growth** – we explained to James about the rapid increase in housing growth in Halstead and expressed concerns about the lack of infrastructure to support it. He shared our concern and agreed to talk more generally with the Housing Minister about the need to ensure that infrastructure was available in line with housing growth. We informed James that currently the BDC housing trajectory forecasts another 658 houses in Halstead in the next 5 years with another 870 pending or under consultation.

- 5 **Infrastructure**
 - a **Highways** – we highlighted concerns about the increase in traffic through the town and congestion caused particularly around St Andrews Church area and Head Street. Halstead is the only town on the A131 without a bypass. We provided him with a copy of the Briefing Note of our meeting with ECC in December 2018 as background information. James agreed to press ECC for action.

 - b **Doctors Surgery** – we expressed concerns raised by residents about the difficulties they were having getting appointments at the Doctors Surgery and the impact of the rapidly increasing population resulting from increased housing. We provided him with a copy of the Briefing Note from our meeting with NHS England in January, which explained the situation. James agreed to make a call to the Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to press them for action to move forward with additional capacity.

- 6 **Policing** – we updated James that Halstead now has its first Special Police Officer and that there are a further two in the pipeline. We acknowledged that there has been an increase in the number of warranted officers visible in Halstead but that the general feeling of the community is that more police support is needed.
- 7 **Youth** – we updated James that there has recently been a revival of the Youth Council and that they have rebranded into HAPPY (Halstead Action Promoting Positive Youth) and that their recent help in community events has been very much welcomed.

Follow up – we thanked James for his time and requested a follow up meeting in the near future.

Recommendation: that HTC notes this report.

Cllr. Andy Munday
Cllr. Mick Radley