

NEWS RELEASE

19 December 2014

Horsham District Council has received an interim letter from the Planning Inspector appointed by the Government to examine its 20 year strategy, the Horsham District Planning Framework.

In this letter the Inspector clearly states, in line with the strategy, that he favours concentration of growth around Horsham, Southwater and Billingshurst along with some development in other villages, in accordance with Neighbourhood Plans that are currently being produced by communities across the district.

He completely dismisses the proposal by Mayfield for a new "market town" between Henfield and Sayers Common and in addition he dismisses "the alternative strategy of greater dispersal around the district" saying that "it would lead to a less sustainable pattern of development".

The Inspector makes specific comment about the proposal on land north of Horsham saying that it "offers the opportunity to provide housing, business development and social and community facilities at a sustainable location" and "that there would be sufficient distance between the new development and the western edge of Crawley for the separate identities of both towns to be retained".

He comments similarly on the allocation for around 500 homes on land west of Southwater stating that it is "a sustainable location relatively close to the centre of the settlement...and dwellings could be well integrated with existing housing. The development would provide support to local shops and services."

The Inspector has also examined a long list of calculations that have been submitted for the number of homes that will need to be built ranging from over 1000 per annum (pa) down to the council's target of 650 pa and indicated that he feels he could pass the plan if the council can find in the region of an additional 100 homes pa.

Cabinet Member for Living and Working Communities, Cllr Claire Vickers said:

"I am very pleased that after months of uncertainty we now have a very clear indication from the Inspector that he feels he is close to a point where he can approve our plan and that he has strongly supported the strategy that we have prepared.

While he dismisses some of the very high numbers for future house building that were being suggested, it is greatly disappointing that he is requiring us to revise this number. I have asked our strategic planning team to start work immediately on how we can accommodate these additional homes with the minimum impact. In addition, I am delighted that he has acknowledged that with current rates of housing delivery we should be able to demonstrate a five year supply of land. This will put us in a much stronger position when developers lodge appeals. "

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