

**NOTTH HORSHAM PARISH COUNCIL
TUESDAY 11th FEBRUARY 2014 AT 7.30pm
AT ROFFEY MILLENNIUM HALL**

CLERK'S REPORT

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are advised to consider the agenda for the meeting and determine in advance if they may have a Personal, Prejudicial or a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any of the agenda items. If a Member decides they do have a declarable interest, they are reminded that the interest and the nature of the interest must be declared at the commencement of the consideration of the agenda item; or when the interest becomes apparent to them. Details of the interest will be minuted.

Where you have a Prejudicial Interest (which is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest), Members are reminded that they must now withdraw from the meeting chamber after making representations or asking questions.

If the interest is a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, Members are reminded that they must take no part in the discussions of the item at all; or participate in any voting; and must withdraw from the meeting chamber; unless they have received a dispensation.

4. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

At the time of writing the Report, there are no Chairman's Announcements

5. AN ALTERNATIVE STRATEGY TO PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT NORTH OF THE A264

Members will find enclosed a copy of an Alternative Strategy Report for discussion. The Report will be introduced by Councillor Torn.

To assist Members, the following is a definition of the term 'Gatwick Diamond', taken from a Horsham District Council (HDC) document, together with a map -

"The Gatwick Diamond Initiative is a business led private/public sector partnership originally formed in 2003. The Gatwick Diamond area includes West Sussex and Surrey County Councils, boroughs of Crawley and Reigate and Banstead, and large parts of Horsham, Mid-Sussex, Mole Valley and Tandridge Districts; with the vision of the area being as world class place in which to live, work and do business.

In 2009 a business plan was agreed designed to take forward the Partnership's three core themes – inspire, connect and grow. One of the tasks in the business plan, allocated to the 'Grow' Group was to improve co-ordination at a strategic planning level across the sub-region on issues of sub-regional importance.

The Localism Act provides the legislation to abolish Regional Spatial Strategies (South East Plan) and sets out that local authorities should have a 'duty to co-operate' with their neighbours in respect to strategic issues. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out that authorities will be tested in Examination to see if they have complied with the 'duty to co-operate'.

It was very significant that all Gatwick Diamond authorities were prepared to sign up to the Memorandum of Understanding to work together. The Gatwick Diamond authorities have prepared a joint Local Strategic Statement which sets out the broad strategic direction for the Gatwick Diamond. The Statement includes the views of businesses that were involved in its preparation and demonstrates the 'duty to co-operate'.

The Statement has three main sections –

1. A short to medium term strategic approach, where there is already broad consensus of opinion
2. A longer term approach which includes the strategic issues that require further joint working and co-operation; and
3. A delivery plan setting out how local authorities intend to work together on priority issues

This work is positive and pro-active working between authorities and supports Government and the Council's historic strong plan-led approach, recognising that planning is an effective tool to help enhance the economy and role of the Gatwick Diamond and it is important to have a shared approach. This work has also been used as an example of best practice by Government's Planning Advisory Service."

RECOMMENDATION

Members' views are sought

- 6. DATE OF NEXT COUNCIL MEETING**
Thursday 20th March 2014 (scheduled)

7. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

To consider whether to exclude the Press and Public from the meeting during the consideration of the following items in accordance with S1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information

RECOMMENDATION

That the Press and Public are now excluded from the meeting

Sue Kemp – Parish Clerk
31st January 2014



North Horsham Parish Council

ALTERNATIVE STRATEGY - PLANNING REPORT

February 2014

www.northhorsham-pc.gov.uk

1. Horsham District Council has always supported the need for a controlled approach to land use and economic planning. The present Core Strategy, one of the first in the country provides the framework for land and economic development until 2018. Calculations have shown that whilst thousands of new homes will be built there is a shortfall of 2,081 homes against the stated need. To avoid double counting, the shortfall in the Core Strategy numbers must be offset against approved numbers with planning permission that will roll over to the post 2018 period (it is believed that over 6010 dwellings are extant).
2. Government policy requires a new Core Strategy to operate until 2030. An essential ingredient is maintaining a 5 year land supply for residential development. Now that the South East Plan has gone this has to be calculated according to need generated both from within the District and agreed in conjunction with adjoining Districts/Boroughs. The old South East Plan set out targets but up to date studies are able to make a new assessment of need.
3. When planning the present Core Strategy the majority of the new housing requirement was needed to cope with a fall in the average occupancy rate for District housing falling from above 3 persons to 1.9. The high price of homes restricted inward migration but major demand emanating from Gatwick airport and London resulted in the Northern part of the District being viewed as a growth area. This area was relatively unconstrained in terms of special landscape designations or high quality farmland, constraints that affect Surrey and, to a larger degree, Mid Sussex District. A major constraint however was the need to plan the expansion of Crawley Borough, much of which would have to be beyond its boundaries. The creation of the Gatwick Diamond reflected this and created the planning requirement to comprehensively plan development within this area.
4. When planning the new Core Strategy a starting point is to determine shortfalls in the implementation of the existing Core Strategy, to recognise that the need to cope with a reduction in existing home occupancy rates no longer exists and to plan comprehensively within the Gatwick Diamond area. The high price of housing makes it essential to plan to address the need for affordable homes.
5. There is clear public support to adopt a strategy that limits development to the absolute minimum required to address need. This is rooted in concerns on infrastructure capacity and the recognition that much of the new development will be on green fields. The high quality of life, including relatively low unemployment, creates a bias for the status quo and there is a requirement for a high quality local community leadership to handle tensions. An open approach is essential to maintain public confidence.
6. The determination of national airport strategy is a major constraint in the area west of Crawley.
7. It is apparent that Horsham District Council have been wedded to the view that developing a new neighbourhood north of Horsham is the way forward. Such a proposal would breach the existing policies that protect the separation of the

Crawley and Horsham communities which are protected by the strong boundary of the Horsham bypass (the A264) and a more open discussion of an alternative strategy is urgently required. Viewing development needs in the context of the Gatwick Diamond provides the basis for doing this.

8. The North Horsham proposal would increase traffic on the northern leg of the A24, have major infrastructure problems particularly in meeting land drainage and sewerage requirements and result in a new secondary school in the wrong location. It places employment demand in a non-sustainable location and doesn't plan for the determination of the Government's airport strategy. It is environmentally bad as it does not make best use of brown land and a transport study will show that it does not optimise in a sustainable way the opportunities for placing employment closer to its generation point.
9. The latest local studies show a need for around 625 homes a year from 2018 and a shortfall of 2,081 prior to that. A starting point therefore is to meet the shortfall and to provide for a 5 year rolling programme beyond 2018. Balanced development requires an integrated approach to employment generation but this "local" employment has to be based on the area of the Gatwick Diamond not on District boundaries. The strategy must take into account the uncertainty created by the unresolved decision of whether to provide a second runway at Gatwick. A second runway will almost certainly require a major extension to Burgess Hill (or otherwise a new settlement): non expansion will afford the opportunity to provide an Ifield bypass enabling a northern access to the M23. Setting noise contours will enable better use of land, a planning prerequisite.
10. This lack of strategic thinking has resulted in more development being proposed in the short term and in the wrong place with the result of objection from Mole Valley District Council and CPRE. It is essential to maximise the potential of the Gatwick Diamond and retain options for dealing with a new runway for an approach based on a 5 year land supply to be adopted.
11. Horsham Town and Southwater are the two largest communities in Horsham District with populations of 40,000 and 10,500 respectively. Every professional planning report for the last 20 years has identified land in the centre of Southwater as capable of sustaining development of up to 2,750 homes with little or no infrastructure problems. A central site or a new secondary school is available and a new school in this location would be highly sustainable, removing the necessity for bussing a five form entry into Horsham and providing a high order of pedestrian access. It's location is supported by the local education policy. In recognition of this Horsham District Council invested £25 million to create a much needed village centre and there is a major value for money issue in moving development away from this location. The centre was only completed 6 years ago.
12. As the largest community it is necessary for Horsham Town to take substantial new development to take pressure of the villages and to enable them to flourish in these rural locations. Fortunately such development land exists within the built up area (and within the bypass). Land in the Parsonage Road area would, through brown

field development, provide a substantial amount of new housing/employment opportunities, as would the Novartis site. The publicly owned golf course, land to the south west of the railway, and land off Brighton Road would provide for thousands of homes and through public ownership would be both deliverable and enable a higher percentage of affordable homes to be planned. A cross party working group of councillors on Horsham District Council could quickly flesh out these opportunities and advise the Cabinet and public accordingly.

13. The Ifield area could be planned to take substantial new development once the airport strategy has been determined. The Core Strategy should provide a commitment to plan for this within 6 months of the government determining the airport strategy. Working with Crawley Borough Council would meet the planning requirement to work across boundaries, plan in the context of the Gatwick Diamond, centre employment opportunities in the most sustainable and economically viable way, enable a comprehensive transport plan to be prepared (such a plan must provide for better access to Horsham Station probably utilising part of the Goods Yard site). Overall it would remove Mole Valley's strategic objection and encourage open planning with Crawley Borough (we suggest that Horsham District Council establishes a joint planning team with a resourced working group of councillors to produce an integrated plan for the Town area).

Employment generation

14. There is no demand in Horsham for significant inward investment other than retail. Indeed empty office space and the loss of major employers (e.g. Novartis, RSA and Applied Materials) are testament to the unattractiveness of Horsham as a major location for new investment. London agents will always advise that the lack of demand makes Horsham a poor location for investment because of the difficulty of selling a development should business requirements necessitate a move. Crawley is somewhat different because of its proximity to Gatwick Airport. It was a reason that led to the establishment of the Gatwick Diamond, and local employment should be construed as including Crawley because of this. A transport plan can provide for employees to have ready access to employment opportunities in Crawley. Indeed in periods of high employment public transport has been supplemented by employers' transport and this is to be encouraged.
15. What is needed is a plan to meet the requirements of existing investors. Southwater has already shown how public authority action can be aligned with local employers' requirements. Local employers should be cherished and any planning impediments removed. Sustained prosperity will be achieved by working with SMEs providing affordable small scale expansion opportunities. A suggestion has been made that Trend will require new premises when their existing Swan Walk lease expires in 2015. The north Horsham proposal will not meet this timetable and this is another example of the proposal not having been thought through. A plan is required for existing outmoded business estates (e.g. the station estate in Billingshurst) but a large new business park is certainly not the answer.

Conclusion

16. North Horsham is not the answer. A new plan must build on past planning to provide a blueprint for the future whilst maintaining a rolling 5 year programme. Maintaining the identity of existing communities will provide public support and it is essential that future opportunities are not shut down. Coalescence implicit in developing further at Ifield AND North Horsham will provide unbalanced development and it is imperative for the reasons given that the Ifield option is retained. This strategic issue is compounded by the lack of employment viability in the North Horsham proposal, a dangerous increase in vehicular use of the A24 in a northerly direction, the wrong location of a new school, reduction in chance of getting a new hospital in a comprehensively planned Ifield development, uncertainty in provision of sewerage capacity. It is a classic example a local authority becoming too close to a developer and thereby losing the ability to use the uncertainty surrounding a major national planning strategy in a way that protects its community by meeting short term land use requirements (in this case a 5 year land supply) whilst maintaining strategic options that will arise when the airport strategy is fixed.

What should happen now?

15. We will contact Mole Valley District Council to see if they will support our plan.

We recommend that Horsham District Council:

- Produces a new strategy incorporating the factors set out in paragraphs 9, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15.
- Changes the boundaries of the Gatwick Diamond to incorporate Southwater (at present Southwater is not in the Gatwick Diamond although it's boundaries are contiguous).
- Sets up a cross party working party of District councillors to work with appropriate Neighbourhood and Parish Councils to advise the Cabinet on the capacity of Horsham to take substantial residential development within existing boundaries.
- Works out the implications of providing land for development at Southwater, Horsham and a residue at Ifield sufficient to provide a rolling 5 year land supply from 2018 and the shortfall until 2018 (at least 4,500 without Ifield based on 600 a year plus 25 a year allowance in villages (to allow for localism) and including an allowance of 500 over 5 year period from larger towns). NB it is accepted that these figures are somewhat crude and can be refined as a study progresses but they must take rolling plan to 2026 with certainty.
- Allocate a new secondary school site in the position identified in previous studies (necessary to eliminate the £240,000 p.a. cost of bussing now being incurred and the need to bus children in from Crawley at further cost if North Horsham was chosen as the site for the new secondary school).

- Immediately consult with adjoining local authorities on this new approach (it is inevitable that the case for North Horsham will be made by the developers at the Inquiry).
- Produces an employment plan approach that meets existing investor's needs.
- Produces a community involvement plan explaining this new approach.
- Produces a transport plan for public debate that includes use of Horsham Station and access to Langhurst waste disposal facility.

North Horsham Parish Council approves this as a draft strategy and refers it to Horsham District Council's Planning Officers for comment.