

Questions to John Milne – Rusper Parish Council - Extra Parish Council meeting 13th February 2024

Agenda item 6.2

1. We note a general disregard for Rusper Parish in the Plan. Policy HA15 - Rusper is inadequate and less developed than those for other areas. There is a distinct lack of mention of any cooperation with Mole Valley District Council, or concern about effects of the Plan on the River Mole. What is Horsham District Council's response to this charge?
2. What is Horsham District Council's 30-year vision and where can it be found in the Plan?
3. The highly concentrated allocation of housing provision (80% of strategic sites) to Rusper Parish and its immediate vicinity is not acknowledged or given attention in the Reg 19 Local Plan. Could we have your comments about the implications of the concentration.
4. The Reg 19 LP disregards Rusper's 'made' Neighbourhood Plan. Could we have your comments on why and whether this can be rectified.
5. How is the Plan sustainable given the excessive rate of population growth the Plan will deliver, and the medium to long term lack of water supply and waste-water treatment capacity?

Can Horsham District Council please provide evidence that Horsham District Council and Homes England are putting plans in place with Thames Water for increased wastewater treatment capacity for the West of Ifield, and with Southern Water for medium to long term water supply for the district as a whole?

Transport and traffic.

6. We don't believe that Horsham Councillors made decisions with full information about the impacts of the West of Ifield on transport infrastructure and traffic in Rusper and Crawley.

To what extent did Councillors discuss the assumptions in the transport modelling about how active travel will supposedly reduce car use?

To what extent does the modelling take into account cumulative effect of Kilnwood Vale and North Horsham as well as West of Ifield?

Western Relief Road. The latest plan seems to have dropped any proposals for the 10,000 home extension to the initial West of Ifield phase. Does this mean that the concept of a western relief road has also been dropped? If so, has this been taken into account with all of the traffic modelling?

7. Why is Horsham District Council building an urban extension to Crawley when Crawley neither wants or need it?
8. The Plan contradicts itself in terms of whether West of Ifield is helping with Crawley's unmet housing need – on the one hand it suggests it's not because of water neutrality constraints (10.12), but elsewhere suggests it is helping (10.38), presumably because it serves Horsham District Council's narrative to justify building West of Ifield. Can Horsham District Council please explain this apparent contradiction.

9. What does Crawley Borough Council's opposition to West of Ifield mean for the Duty to co-operate and Statement of Common Grounds?
10. Several experts are noting a lack of evidence, data and detail to support the Plan - *for example, there is no detail on the proposed mitigation measures to address the adverse landscape and visual impact that on the proposed West of Ifield development.* Is Horsham District Council confident that the Plan has been prepared on a sufficiently sound evidence base? Why is the evidence base thin compared to other Local Authorities?
11. We're concerned that many of the key policies in the Plan are weak and so present a very low bar for developers to clear. Plus, there is insufficient evidence to support the policies in the first place.

For example, Policy 17 - Biodiversity and Greenspace – Sussex Wildlife Trust said in 2020 that the whole Local Plan should not go forwards due to the lack of ecological data to base allocation decisions on. Nothing has changed since then.

How can the Sustainability Appraisal have been done without these data, and how will anything meaningful be done in terms of Biodiversity Net Gain without baseline data?

Homes England's Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Request showed that they do not intend to survey areas such as Ifield Brook Meadows Local Wildlife Site and Hyde Hill Woods Local Wildlife Site (ancient woodland) – both of which run alongside the most densely built parts of the West of Ifield site.

12. The Ifield golf course is a valued recreational facility within the locality. Could we have information about the Council's decision on Homes England providing an alternative facility.
13. Can you please explain your Policy 9 Paragraph 1 in the local plan concerning Water Neutrality, whereby new residential properties are to utilise no more than 85 litres per person per day, how was this figure calculated and how and who will enforce this.
14. You have agreed that 50% of the proposed affordable homes in West of Ifield will be allocated to Crawley to reduce their housing list as Crawley does not have the space to build properties for its growing population, are Crawley Borough Council funding the 50% of costs of these affordable homes and infrastructure that will be required.

End 8th February 2024