

# Pressure to develop more new homes will not go away

AS REPORTED in last week's County Times, Horsham District Council has announced that it is no longer considering four of the nine sites it originally identified for possible large scale housing development.

This is good news for those living in Adversane, Faygate and Pulborough, who have had this threat removed from their lives, at least for now.

And it is excellent news that the council will not be developing Chesworth Farm, south of Horsham.

But it puts even more pressure on the remaining sites – Ifield, Southwater, Billingshurst and North Horsham – and raises questions over the process the council has adopted.



by **John Steele**  
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Originally it planned to release its preferred options this spring at which stage it would have had to explain in some detail why it had rejected some sites in favour of others. But the report has now been delayed until the summer and the reasons behind dropping the four sites now are sketchy to say the least.

Apparently it is because the council believes their locations would make it

harder to create cohesive communities.

If it is as simple as that then why, the people of Adversane are entitled to ask, was the site included in the first place thus causing so much angst to residents?

Last week's decision was not taken by the council, nor even the cabinet, but by David Jenkins, cabinet member for strategic planning.

Now Mr Jenkins is very experienced and has a reputation for consulting fellow councillors widely and openly, but it cannot be a sensible system that places decisions that will impact on our district into the next century in the hands of one individual.

It is more good news that as well as focusing further consideration on the remaining sites, parallel feasibility work is taking place with neighbouring authorities on a possible new town in the A23 corridor.

The Horsham Society has long argued that the only sensible way to cope with additional housing demand is to create a new town.

This would enable the necessary infrastructure to be planned in from the start and avoid the need to continue to add to existing towns and villages that have already reached the limit of viable growth.

But we must get on with this urgently because the

sooner a new town is agreed and work can start the less the pressure to develop fully the five remaining sites.

Some are clinging to a hope that a change in government, and the withdrawal of centrally driven housing targets, will make the issue go away.

This is emphatically not the case.

Whatever the system for determining housing need it is certain that we will have to allocate more land for new houses, and a lot of them, if we are to provide for natural growth and changing demographics.

The Horsham Society believes these decisions should be taken by local people and we are

pleased that the council is commissioning a locally generated housing needs study to provide the necessary evidence base.

The problem will not go away, so let's press on with planning a new town without delay.

*The Horsham Society is concerned about the past, present and future of the town. It seeks to promote good planning and design for the built environment and open spaces.*

*Membership of the Horsham Society is open to anyone who shares these concerns.*

*For more information, visit the website [www.horshamsociety.org](http://www.horshamsociety.org) or phone 01403 261905.*