

# Council must stand fast for long-term community benefit

I WAS so pleased to hear that the development West of Horsham had been put on hold (County Times, March 19). Not because I believe the development will go away (it won't) but because it gives our planners a golden opportunity to do some real planning.

The challenge is to leave for future generations an area of what will be Greater Horsham, which is attractive, affordable and a joy to live in. If Horsham District Council can seize the opportunity they can leave a legacy which future generations can be proud of. If they sit on their hands it will do no-one any good in the long run.

The two developments



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either side of the A24 (proposed by Berkeley and Countryside) together make up over 2,000 houses; a substantial development by anyone's standards.

But proposals so far have several major flaws. The trouble is that once schemes have been drawn up, there is a reluctance to tear them up and start again. But that is just what is needed now.

The road layout is flawed because the realities of the

traffic flow have not been recognised. There are two through east-west flows. One from Horsham and the A24 north towards Five Oaks, the other from Horsham and the A24 south towards Guildford.

Either there needs to be two bypasses, north and south of Broadbridge Heath, or the present east-west road needs dualling throughout and covered over to make a tunnel so that it no longer forms a barrier between the present village and the new development. Yes, either option will be expensive but anything else will leave a disjointed community.

Perhaps more important is the role which our local authority must play in the

totality of the development by these two developers. First we need some proper town planning in the layout of the developments and in the requirements for the infrastructure. This is the opportunity to have a leading environmental-friendly development.

Now is the time to build all housing, affordable and non-affordable (!), to the highest environmental standards.

Now is the time to specify grey water recycling. Now is the time to specify combined heat and power.

None of this will come cheap. The developers will plead poverty but if our council is strong it will stand fast for the long-term benefit

of the community. Their back stop is compulsory purchase of all the land designated for the development.

It is not just the housing. There needs to be a clear and very long-term organisational structure in place with binding agreements with the builders. The infrastructure must go in first, with community buildings.

Then the 40 per cent (or more) affordable homes, mostly houses with gardens, not flats. Then the other homes. During this period there needs to be a Special Development Committee made up of district, parish and neighbourhood representatives and the builders.

As the development proceeds, the committee needs to evolve with more involvement by residents' representatives who have a long-term interest in the viability and ambience of the locality.

Perhaps Ebenezer Howard, the 'Garden City Geezer', should be required bedtime reading for all involved, so future generations in Horsham can applaud the far-sightedness of our planners in the early 21st century.

*The Horsham Society is concerned about the past, present and future of the town.*

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