

Society is your voice in helping create the Horsham of tomorrow



by **Ian Dockrey**
vice-chairman
The Horsham
Society

review.

I have for some time noted that the local council has acted in a paradoxical way when dealing with important planning issues. They have rushed headlong into implementing central government diktats despite a pending general election this year. The paradox is that the local council is Tory dominated yet central government has been handing down socialist planning directives based on mass migration and a target driven planning policy, with little or no heed taken of local views.

The Horsham Society is proud of its non-political stance, our aim being to protect the quality of life and the environment for existing

Horsham residents. When considering development we consider whether it adds to that quality of life and local needs. The single most pressing need for our community is the provision of affordable housing for young people.

We need them to stay in our community to add the vibrancy our town so sorely needs. We should plan for this at least as much as considering the needs of those that may or may not choose to live here at some point in the future. The council must not cave-in to developers' fiscal pleadings on this point in the future.

For those that may come to live in the new communities that will be built, we need

to provide a well planned environment with attention given to landscaping, excellence of design and the provision of amenities such as sufficient school places, community centres, places of worship and local hospital beds. These are the true priorities that should now be pursued, given the potential for changed attitudes at central government level.

There are those that view The Horsham Society as rather more concerned with upholding the status quo of the past. Even leading councillors make no bones about airing this view at our meetings. However, we are just as passionate about the future as we are about the past.

When it comes to development in the existing town, we simply ask that when reviewing new development the council gives much more consideration to the buildings in the vicinity of that development and our work on the Horsham Design Statement reflects this. Such an approach will help avoid some of the more outlandish juxtapositions of style that I am sure readers can bring to mind.

As to the future, the West of Horsham site and others like it, essentially provide the council with a blank canvas. We do not ask for a pastiche of past styles. Excellence of design and social amenities will be of paramount importance for the people who

will live there and it is the duty of the council to provide them.

The Horsham Society, one of the largest amenity societies in the country, is principally concerned with watching over the town's environment. It seeks to promote good planning and design, to protect the open spaces of Horsham and speaks up for residents when it considers decision making to be detrimental to the well-being of the town. For more information on the society or to become a member at very modest cost, please contact the acting chairman: Nigel Friswell on tel. 01403 261905 email: horsoc@friswell.plus.com. Address: 2 Millais, Horsham, RH13 6BS. www.horshamsociety.org

THE LETTERS page last week was awash with views on the West of Horsham development and the various attitudes to design and structure.

With recent political changes it is reasonable to assume that over time the central government view on planning will develop into a more consensual approach. So I would urge that a collective deep breath is taken and that the whole subject of how best to proceed is put under