

# Housing in Horsham - the quiet before the storm?

AFTER a period of relative quiet, while everyone enjoyed the festive season, housing has returned to the agenda with a bang in recent weeks.

We already have new construction work in progress on sites in Horsham such as the old Nelson pub and near the veterinary surgery on Farthings Hill.

In real terms, these are relatively small building projects but they serve to demonstrate some increased activity in the house building sector.

Larger projects are now building up a head of steam with the approval of the planning application for nearly 1,000 homes south of Broadbridge Heath.



by **David Moore**  
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consultation programme in progress concerning possible new housing developments in both Southwater and Billingshurst.

If these projects were to be approved, it could result in an additional 1,000 new homes within Horsham district.

If this wasn't enough, we also have the outstanding planning application to construct 2,500 houses west of Bewbush at Kilnwood

Vale, which is still awaiting consideration by Horsham District Council.

Thus in the foreseeable future, we could easily have another 4,500 houses built within the area covered by the council.

Though we have to understand the difficult position that the council faces following the change of strategy announced by the current Government, it doesn't change the fact that we are running the risk of slowly eroding the countryside that surrounds us.

This becomes even more of a problem when one realises that the necessary infrastructure is not in place to support such a boost in the

housing numbers.

The key problem remains our reliance on East Surrey Hospital at Redhill, which by any stretch of the imagination is located in the wrong place for residents of Horsham district.

It's become rather like a badly maintained boiler, which is waiting to explode once the house building programme reaches some critical mass.

Two things must happen without any further delay. Firstly, positive action needs to be taken to give our area what it needs, namely a new hospital.

It's no use talking about what we might get in say five years' time. We need to know what we'll get and when we'll

get it before all these new houses are built.

Secondly, we need to bring back onto the agenda the concept of building a new market town on a site yet to be selected, which appears to have been put on the backburner.

In this way, we could ensure that plans for the necessary infrastructure were put in place before it was built.

We could also remove the need for the piecemeal development of our existing settlements and avoid the destruction of a number of isolated areas of our countryside.

We cannot ignore the fact that we are likely to need an ongoing supply of new

dwellings.

What we can ensure is that their construction is undertaken in a sympathetic way to satisfy the needs of all of us as individuals, protect the towns and villages in which we live and ensure that our descendants still have some beautiful countryside to enjoy.

*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 our website [www.horshamsociety.org](http://www.horshamsociety.org) or telephone 01403 263870.*