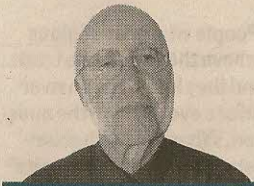


# David Moore: despair at totally illogical approach to building



**T**hough Horsham District Council has delayed the preparation of its new housing strategy for public consultation until 2013, it's not surprising that the issue continues to dominate the news. For example, you may have seen the recent comments by Lord Taylor on the subject of building new homes over the next 25 years. Lord Taylor and his panel of experts are reviewing which of the thousands of planning regulations should be scrapped, following the introduction of the new National Planning Policy Framework in March of



**Development is proposed on green fields north of Horsham**

this year.

They are due to report back to central government shortly. However, the approach being taken to this review is worrying as it has been decided that the public will not be allowed to have any input, unless the panel

decides otherwise. The reason for this is said to be because the areas reviewed are too wide for meaningful consultation.

This can only mean one of two things, either the public are considered to be too thick to have any meaningful input

into the discussion or no disagreement will be permitted with policy decisions that have already been made. We're told that it's always possible the government may want to consult on some of the changes recommended by the panel but, even if they don't, we're not to worry.

The ongoing problem that we face is one of mixed messages. On the one hand, we are told that rural areas should not be protected at any cost, whilst on the other hand, communities must decide where development could take place in the longer term. Also, from a planning point of view, big is beautiful.

We're told to accept plans for large developments, such as that proposed for north of Horsham, and not to be seduced by the attractions of smaller 50 house type developments.

Apparently, the smaller 50

house developments ruin our historic market towns when built on the very fields that are important to us, whilst a 3,000 house development built on those same fields will relieve the pressure on our historic communities.

One has to despair at this totally illogical approach to house building programmes for the next 25 years. What are we trying to achieve? Is the intention to build the homes that we need for the local people that need them?

This doesn't appear to be the case and it's more a question of how can the profitability of the developers be increased.

What is the logic behind this 'big is beautiful' approach, when it comes to identifying land for house building? There are many small communities who would welcome a small development, especially if it meant their children would be able to acquire a property and

live near them at a reasonable price. At the same time, there are towns like Horsham that don't want yet another 3-5,000 homes bolted onto the town.

The new market town concept offers a viable solution to the 'big is beautiful' approach but the idea needs to be developed at an early date so as to take the pressure off the existing settlements. The problem that we face is simply the answer to one question. 'Is anyone listening?' We'll soon find out.

*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 261640.*