

# David Moore: Is the HDPF in conflict with planning policy?



**T**he debate concerning the proposed North Horsham development rumbles on and in many ways becomes more confusing by the minute.

It's only some two weeks ago that the County Times quite rightly published an article by Andrew Blevins on behalf of Liberty, the company who would like to proceed with the proposed North Horsham development.

Interestingly, the project was seen as the council's emerging vision rather than that of the local residents.

Then there was news about a number of matters, one of which was the formal decision to reject the application from Croudace Homes Ltd to build a new football ground for Horsham FC near Hop Oast.

It was already known that part of the reason for the rejection was said to be due to the site being within a strategic gap but some of the other reasons were also of interest.

Firstly, the proposed development was seen as being located in the countryside albeit on the Horsham side of the A24 and its cumulative effect was seen as leading to

an unwelcome urbanising impact.

Secondly, the introduction of a commercial use in the countryside was seen as detrimental to the quiet enjoyment of the countryside. If this is true, North Horsham would mirror these effects on a far larger scale.

Thirdly, the development was seen as being located in an unsustainable location by virtue of having poor pedestrian and cycling access along Worthing Road, which was classed as a busy and unlit rural road.

At least there's no need to cross the even busier A24, when approaching the site from Horsham via the Worthing Road. If one looks at the proposed North Horsham

development, similar but more extensive objections could be set against it, when approaching the area from Horsham along the Ruserper Road.

The final nail in the coffin related to how it had not been demonstrated that the infrastructure needs for the development would be met. The same questions still have to be resolved for the proposed North Horsham development, particularly with respect to pedestrians and cyclists safely crossing the A264. The only viable way to achieve this requirement would seem to be by the construction of more than one underpass.

So it's all very much of a pig's ear at the moment. Are the objections to the proposed

new ground for Horsham FC justified? If they are, do they set a standard approach to how future planning applications will be judged? If the answer's in the affirmative, it would seem that any planning application for the proposed North Horsham development should be rejected by the council.

The council is currently considering the changes required to its HDPF to satisfy the Planning Inspector's requirement for an additional 2,000 new homes to be built in Horsham District over the next 20 years. If the reasons given for the rejection of a new football ground near Hop Oast are valid, those same reasons should apply to building north of the A264. Does this

mean that the possible North Horsham development in the HDPF is now under review to align the council's policy with its decision on the football ground? Or is the council's planning policy simply 'anywhere but Southwater'?

*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.*