

David Moore: Oh what a tangled web we are weaving



It was interesting to see in last week's County Times reference to the Times' list of the most attractive market towns in Britain and it was wonderful to see that Horsham was ranked in second place.

The downside of this type of commendation is that it makes Horsham a desirable place to live, if you can afford to buy a home.

It becomes more difficult to maintain this type of appeal

as the size of any town grows and the attraction of many towns has been destroyed by uncontrolled and ill-thought out development. This is the problem that faces Horsham today. In reality, the risk is no different than it's been for many years but it's moving far closer to the point of no return.

Secondary education continues to present an ongoing problem. We have to cater for the needs of the children, who live or will live in the West Horsham and Southwater developments.

Why should we expect all these additional children to cross the A24 for their secondary education? Why do the current plans assume that there may be one of even two secondary schools in the

proposed North Horsham development? Is the intention to have a counterclockwise movement of schoolchildren from West Horsham into Tanbridge, from Trafalgar into Roffey and from Roffey into secondary schools on the other side of the A264?

What are the plans for primary care? At the present time, it looks as if the promised GP surgery in the West Horsham development has been abandoned. How can we be sure that the same thing won't happen in the proposed North Horsham development?

It's a total shambles. Any integrated planning system would put the key elements of the necessary infrastructure in place in advance of its need.

Unfortunately, it seems

to be standard practice to allow a foreseeable problem to develop and then say, 'It's not our fault'. Is it too much to expect that someone should be in control of all the things that need to happen to make any development a success? For example, if a change is required to the roads, which requires WSCC's approval, shouldn't that be obtained before the development commences?

We have to expect Horsham District Council to protect our town. It needs to ensure that any development is undertaken in a planned way. We don't want any unexpected surprises such as suddenly finding that the money's not available for essential improvements to the

infrastructure. We can't afford a repeat of what's happened with the West Horsham development, where problems still need to be resolved and too many expectations have not been realised.

If someone was advertising a product for sale, you'd have some legal redress under the old Trade Descriptions Act and the current Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations via Trading Standards.

When the local plan for the number of new homes required in Horsham District is finally agreed, all the promises concerning the necessary infrastructure will be there. We must expect that our council ensures that the promises are kept and the

infrastructure's provided that's commensurate with the effect of the additional homes on the existing population.

We have to rely on the council doing its job properly. We have no other protection. Let's try to ensure that it happens before it's too late.

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 or telephone 01403 261640.