

Horsham Society

with Ron Bates



Blueprint can influence future direction

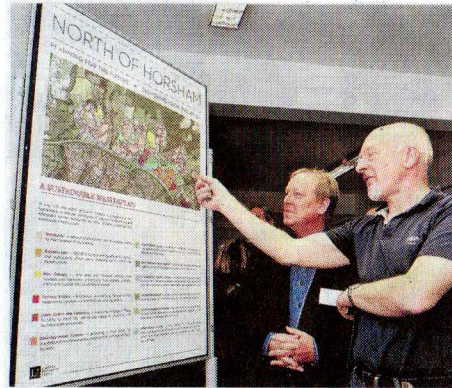
The North of Horsham development was given outline planning approval on May 22 at a meeting of all the members of Horsham District Council.

Prior to this decision being made, for a period of some four years, many letters of objection had been written to HDC and many letters and articles of objection written to the County Times by the residents of Horsham and the surrounding towns.

The Horsham Society wrote objecting to the development as a whole and in detail about many aspects of what is proposed.

Even now there is a vast amount of detailed matters yet to be concluded. The outline permission gives the authority to agree these to the HDC planning officers in consultation with chair and vice-chair of the HDC North and South Planning Committees.

The people of Horsham and District and 40 elected councillors will have no further say in the outline planning process in concluding such matters as the Section 106 agreement. All the representations of hopes and wishes made by local people



North Horsham plans were displayed to the public at an exhibition in 2015.

and those more closely affected by this development, will carry little or no weight in future agreements between HDC planning officers and Liberty Property Trust.

On the matter of representation, back in early 2014, the Neighbourhood Councils of Denne, Trafalgar and Forest, representing the unparished area of the town, set in motion a Neighbourhood Forum to create a Neighbourhood Plan and gave it the name

Blueprint. In the summer of 2015 HDC gave approval for Blueprint to proceed. It does not include the North Horsham Parish Council area.

What is a Neighbourhood Plan? It is a community-led process introduced by Government to encourage local people to shape and influence development within the places where they live and work.

They are produced by community forum groups or parish or town councils. Once approved after a local referendum they become part of the statutory planning framework and have legal weight.

Yet, why, despite the many written expressions of knowledgeable, well thought through views on the North of Horsham development over many months is there so little support and active involvement in Blueprint?

An opportunity to influence the future direction of this part of the town is being lost by the very people who have such clear views as to the direction the town should take.

The Plan would cover matters such as housing, design, transport, community facilities and green spaces – the issues that will determine the character of our town in

the years ahead.

Interestingly the North Horsham Parish Council a few months ago, after years of deliberation, made the decision to produce their own Neighbourhood Plan. They must feel that such effort will provide benefits for their community that they do not consider will be achieved through the current District level plan.

Without active participation by individual people who will give Blueprint their time and effort to produce a Neighbourhood Plan there must be a real concern we shall all continue to write our letters in vain.

Blueprint and North Horsham Parish Council websites exist for everyone to make contact. The Blueprint AGM takes place on 14th August 2017 at 7.30 at the Rehoboth, New Street.

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 the website www.horshamsociety.org or phone 01403 259038.