

Dear Mr. Chipp

HDC's Local Plan

Like so many local residents, the Parish Council feels it is entirely wrong to include sites in the Local Plan that would permanently destroy acre upon acre of precious Sussex countryside. The recent and growing emphasis on nature recovery only intensifies our feelings that neither Buck Barn nor Adversane should feature in the Local Plan. Indeed, this viewpoint gained wide public approval when Boris Johnson at the Conservative Party Conference said that he wanted to build, "not on green fields" and incidentally "not just jammed in the southeast".

Now that Natural England has advised HDC of its concerns about an insufficient water supply to all the proposed new developments in the draft Local Plan, this provides planners and politicians with a justification and the time to look again at alternatives to Buck Barn. This would be a brave step and one that would earn both HDC's planners and politicians immense local and national respect.

In view of Boris Johnson's statement at the Conference, the emerging Environment Act and HDC's own Nature Recovery Network scheme, the Parish Council feels it would be far more justified to build the required thousands of new houses on sites within and adjoining existing urban settlements.

The Icen Report commissioned by HDC advised that Horsham, as the major and dominant settlement in the District should "sustain (housing) growth rates above the District average". This was largely because of Horsham's wealth of services as spelt out in the Horsham District Economic Profile, its excellent communication links and the employment opportunities it is able to offer.

The Parish Council therefore suggests that potential sites in Horsham/Southwater/Billingshurst are re-visited because between them they could provide thousands of new houses and create additional employment opportunities. All these sites adjoin existing urban areas and would thus not compromise the requirements of the emerging Environment Act and HDC's own plans for nature recovery to any great extent.

In complete contrast, building over the relatively isolated and countryside sites of Buck Barn and Adversane would destroy any hopes at all of HDC's Nature Recovery Network scheme actually working in the district and especially as Buck

Barn is next door to Knepp Castle, HDC's chosen nature network hub. This is also likely to be the view of the Independent Examiner of Local Plans and his rejection of it would delay even further the implementation of a Local Plan.

The Parish Council therefore urges HDC to undertake this important re-evaluation of sites and shift away from countryside sites in favour of those urban sites that will create far less ecological damage in the district. The eyes of thousands of concerned people will be watching and trusting that planners and politicians will use this period to arrive ultimately at a far better Local Plan.

Yours sincerely

Cllr O Hydes OBE, Chair

Cllr N Bryant, Vice Chair

Cllr J Assassi

Cllr J Bromley

Cllr J Chayter

Cllr D Harber

Cllr W Ingram

Cllr C Kenny