

Save Our Island submission to the Hayling Herald for May 2022

THERE IS a serious situation arising which we should all be concerned about. The Havant Borough Council (HBC) Local Plan has been withdrawn following the recommendations of the Government Inspectorate; however, this will not restrict the drive to speed up house building across the Borough. The current Government target for HBC is to build approximately 500 new homes a year – and there is no end date to this requirement. HBC are only achieving just over half of this number currently. This situation is made worse as HBC does not have a 5-year housing stock, as is required by Central Government. We believe – and so does HBC – that this housing target is too high, is unachievable, and will potentially lead to a ‘free for all’ situation where we are inundated with speculative development applications.

HBC have written to the Secretary of State for Housing asking for a review. Save Our Island, together with other residents’ representatives, have also written to Mr Gove highlighting the danger to the Community if significant changes to the Local Plan are not introduced. Key points made in our letter are:

The original HBC Local Plan proposed building approximately 1,300 new homes on Hayling Island, primarily as large housing dormitories for people working on the mainland. Of these large allocated sites, two are core wading bird habitats, and one of these (for 190 homes) will require constant groundwater pumping during wet weather to prevent surface flooding from a rising – and flowing – water table level beneath the site. Four more of the sites are subject to “on site” flood risk. In their examination, the Inspectors determined that there were outstanding issues with the Hayling Island housing allocation sites. These deficiencies were significant elements in the Inspectors’ advice to HBC to withdraw the Local Plan.

We presented our position to the Inspectors during the examination, and we agree with the findings and recommendations made by the Inspectors. HBC are currently looking to continue with the housing plan without the involvement of the Inspectorate in the interim period before a new Local Plan is presented. We do not agree with this intent.

We are now seeing an increasing number of development applications (outside the Local Plan allocations) based purely in the knowledge that the Local Plan has been withdrawn following the Inspectors’ recommendations (examples are 60 houses at Saltmarsh Lane and 29 at Oysters Phase Two.) These speculative applications ignore the concerns of the Secretary of State and his Inspectors relating to the absence of a sustainable infrastructure. History tells us here that as a result of not having a 5-year land supply, development applications which are initially refused gain approval on appeal.

We have some sympathy with HBC as the conflicting objectives of impossibly high housing targets and ever-changing environmental demands cannot be rationalised, and we cannot see how HBC can resolve this dichotomy and continue as a viable entity to discharge their constitutional obligations to the electorate they serve.

We have asked the Secretary of State to use his Office to facilitate an essential reappraisal of the Hayling Island housing targets to set a level which reflects the risks and constraints of the local environment in order to create a sustainable Community.

- Please visit saveourisland.org.uk to view our letter to the Secretary of State.