

Parish Council Report – April

The Local Plan

As you may have heard, the Council has been informed by the government-appointed planning Inspector, Mr Luke Fleming, that he won't allow Horsham's Local Plan to proceed and recommends withdrawal of the plan.

This announcement from the Inspector comes after a considerable delay as Mr Fleming paused the hearings back in mid-December last year.

The Inspector's view that Horsham should be seeking to provide significantly more houses, is in contrast to the views of many who objected to the plan, arguing that its housing numbers were too high.

Horsham District is an area of acute water stress and since 2021 delivery of new housing has been severely restricted by the legal requirement for all new developments to be 'water neutral' to prevent further damage to the internationally important Pulborough Brooks wildlife sites.

To help deliver water neutral development, Horsham has led on developing the innovative Sussex North Offsetting Water Strategy, known as the SNOWS scheme. This manages the water available for new plan-led developments through improved water efficiency and offsetting. This approach to Water Neutrality, has already been accepted by the Planning Inspectors for Chichester and Crawley's Local Plans.

Despite this, Mr Fleming has written to the Council saying that he does not accept the Council's strategy and considers we should have done even more to find water solutions that would significantly increase the number of homes delivered in the District. Mr Fleming feels the Council should have done more to provide housing for Crawley's unmet housing need under our legal 'Duty to Cooperate' obligation.

The Council strongly disagrees with the Inspector's conclusions, as it has worked consistently and effectively with all organisations, including adjoining authorities, during preparation of its plan and particularly on the issue of water neutrality.

The Council is astonished that the Inspector could reach such a conclusion without allowing neighbouring authorities to speak at the examination hearings and questioning them directly as the Inspectors examining our neighbours' plans have done. Instead, the Inspector focused his attention on the views of the development industry representatives that were present at the Hearing sessions.

In addition, the Council was advised by expert bodies that delivery of the kind of large-scale private water schemes that the Inspector referred to is extremely challenging and highly uncertain and so provides no guarantee to deliver the homes being promoted by the development industry, which is the key requirement of any local plan. Again, the Inspector did not invite the key organisations to his Hearing sessions to better understand these issues.

The Council has written a letter of complaint to the Planning Inspectorate.

Cllr Ruth Fletcher, Cabinet Member for Planning & Infrastructure, commented:

"This is a hugely disappointing decision.

"The Local Plan has been the top priority for the Council because after the repeated delays under the previous administration, Horsham's existing Local Plan had fallen out of date and we are now seeing the result with increasing numbers of unwelcome, speculative developments. A Local Plan is the best way to deliver the housing we need in the most sustainable locations along with higher eco-build standards, supporting infrastructure and community facilities.

"The plan has been prepared based on good evidence; the Council has taken expert advice including from the Planning Inspectorate, on its actions throughout the plan preparation process and no substantive concerns were raised at any point. We firmly believe we have acted in the best interests of the District and in the most professional way in trying to meet the Government's housing targets.

"It's clear from the hearings and subsequent questions that the Inspector has struggled to understand the unique challenges posed by Water Neutrality. These were issues he should have clarified before the hearings commenced.

"The Government has made it clear that they want to see every local authority with a local plan in place, but the Inspector's decision that the Duty to Cooperate has not been met and his recommendation to withdraw the Local Plan will leave us fighting against uncontrolled speculative developments with one hand tied behind our backs."

The Council is communicating urgently with Matthew Pennycook, Minister of State for Housing Communities and Local Government, for assistance in finding a way forward

Combating Litter

Horsham District Council is asking local motorists and residents to help it reduce levels of littering on the District's roadsides, particularly in key problem areas.

The Council currently faces an ongoing battle with litter being strewn on the roadside across the Horsham District with a key problem area being the A264 between Southwater and Horsham.

The appearance of litter on roadsides is a blight on our environment and its clearance comes at a considerable cost to local taxpayers. It also puts our waste collection crews at risk every time they have to clear the litter on these high-speed roads.

The Council is asking that if road users or members of the public spot offenders dropping litter, they should report incidents to them by going to their website at:

<https://www.horsham.gov.uk/waste-recycling-and-bins/litter-and-street-cleaning/litter>

where they will also be able to supply the Council with Dash Cam footage where possible.

Additionally, people can help to keep local streets and green spaces litter free by signing up for our Adopt a Street scheme which already has hundreds of volunteers across the Horsham District who are passionate about protecting the environment on their doorstep. Volunteers choose the area they want to adopt, and we will provide all the equipment they need to help with litter picking.



For more information or to join up please go to:

<https://www.horsham.gov.uk/waste-recycling-and-bins/litter-and-street-cleaning/adopt-a-street>

Equipment will be provided to use in areas which are assessed as being safe for pedestrians.

Volunteers are asked not to litter pick on any unsafe, high-speed roads.

Warning: summer food safety

Council issues warning about ice cream vans operating without permission

Following reports of ice cream vans trading in Horsham Park, residents are being warned about the risks of traders operating without permission.

Unregulated vans may not have had food hygiene and other health safety inspections, as well as possibly using vehicles lacking insurance and MOTs. This means they could pose a risk to those who purchase food and drinks from them.

Food businesses are required by law to be inspected as part of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme. As such, legitimate sellers should display food hygiene sticker on their van. Consumers can search for a food hygiene rating online at: <https://ratings.food.gov.uk/>.

In addition, sellers wishing to operate an ice cream van, sell hot drinks, or similar from any council-owned carpark, park or open space across the District must apply for permission from the Council.

If a member of the public has spotted a trader they believe to be operating without permission, they are advised to report them to ehl@horsham.gov.uk including details of the vehicle registration and operating location.

New vision for Horsham town centre

We are inviting residents, businesses and visitors to share their feedback on suggested exciting new improvements to the Bishopric, Worthing Road and Carfax areas of Horsham town centre.

The survey is live until 30 April.

[Have your say](#)



Community Climate Fund now open

Applications are now open for the Community Climate Fund grant for community groups to deliver projects that will reduce their carbon emissions and create community value locally.

[Find out more](#)



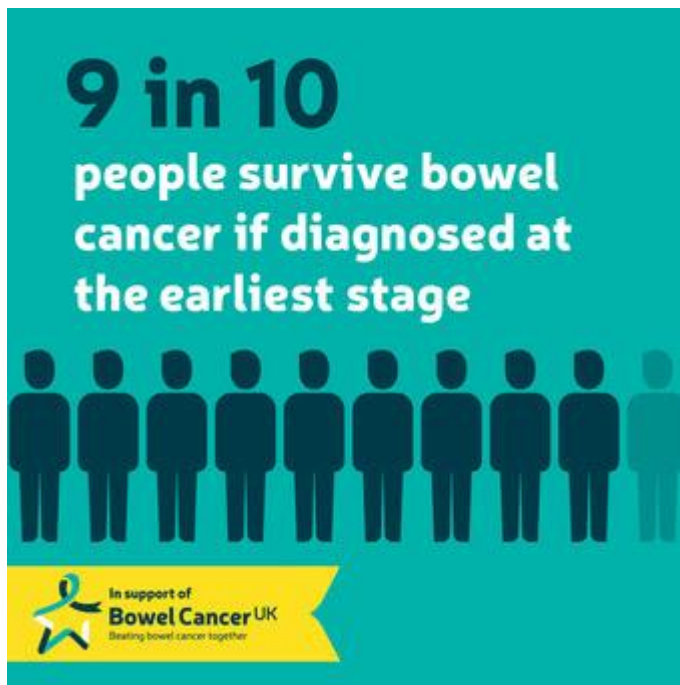
Teenager behaviour course for parents returns

A teenager behaviour course, '**Growing Your Teenager**', is set to make a return due to popular demand.

Horsham District Council, in partnership with West Sussex County Council and Sussex Police, developed the course with the aim of increasing parents' knowledge about the types of issues their young people may face as they transition from primary to secondary school.

[Read more](#)

Bowel Cancer Awareness Month



In Horsham, there are over 2,100 people currently outstanding a bowel cancer screen. If you need a new FIT kit, or you're 75 or over, you can ask for a kit every 2 years by phoning the free bowel cancer screening helpline on **0800 70 76 060**. If you are 60-74 years old, you will be offered a FIT test every 2 years.

If you're worried about a family history of bowel cancer or have any symptoms, speak to a GP for advice.

[More information](#)