Information From George Hollingbery our local MP: Solar farms

Now that the sun has been shining a bit of late, I think it’s a good time to talk about the controversial issue of solar farms. Believe it or not, here in Hampshire we’re actually considered a ‘sun trap’ and for this reason our area is being peppered with large installations of these farms. These are similar to the solar panels you will find on houses but on a considerably larger scale. They are often located in the countryside and are semi-permanent structures designed to generate large quantities of electricity from the sun.

Opinion on solar farms is divided. Most people, including me, are broadly in favour of these renewable energy sources as they are good for the environment. There are, however, a minority who consider them a blight on the landscape and consider them a waste of valuable agricultural land and the visual impact.

The Government is also issuing new planning guidance to local councils which would make clear that the desire for renewable energy should not automatically override environmental protections or the planning concerns of local communities.

George Hollingbery holds a monthly surgery at Waterloo Precinct on Saturdays. For the next date contact his office on 01962 734076 to book an appointment. You can also write to him at: George Hollingbery MP, House of Commons, London, SW1A OAA, or get in touch through his website: www.georgehollingbery.com
Joint Core Strategy:
Over the last months I have made reference to the future plans for housing in East Hants, and in the last few weeks the Joint Core Strategy has been released as a draft version which is now available for public consultation. This is your opportunity to give a view on the amount of housing in and around Horndean. Something I know we all have strong views on. This sets out the housing needs for East Hants as a whole. First off some background to explain how all of this is worked out. Apologies if you have read this already.

Joint Core Strategy:
Planning authorities produce a document called ‘A Local Plan’. For us in East Hants where we have a strip of the South Downs National Park in the middle of the planning district, our patch has two planning authorities (SDNP and EHDC). Rather than each authority formulate a separate local plan, we have shared resource and cost and produced one together. This makes some sense as while we might have two sets of planning authorities, the rate of births, deaths, business growth, average age etc are all ignorant to this. Our Local Plan is therefore known as ‘The Joint Core Strategy’ or JCS.

SHMA:
In order to work out what sort of housing needs we have, a report called a SHMA is produced. This is a ‘Strategic Housing Market Assessment’. It looks at the population and determines what the true housing need will be over the coming years. In our case this SHMA runs from 2011 to 2028, an 18 year period in all. Essentially, the SHMA identifies that over this 18 year period, our housing need gets greater, and by quite a bit actually. This means that we need to plan for this housing to make sure that our social structure grows to suit our needs and so that we have the right provision at the right time. This does mean more housing, and responsible governance means planning for it. If we do not, then our children who already struggle to get on the property ladder will struggle more as house prices remain out of reach, and the elderly will not be able to down size into more suitable properties, releasing equity on the way. Supply has to equal demand. This takes us onto ‘Where to build’

SHLAA sites:
Local Authorities know what the housing need is, but they need to be able to plan in which way this might go so that developers can plan with confidence, and other agencies can plan infrastructure to suit - roads, utilities etc. Land owners who are happy to develop their land can put it forward as a ‘SHLAA’ site – Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. Generally this results in more land being put forward for development than is needed, so the local authorities are able to select some of these to identify ‘allocated sites’ and reject others as undesirable. This is like a ‘first sifting’ process. The current June 2013 SHLAA site map for Horndean is on the right:

Allocations:
Next, East Hants needs to decide which of these sites is suitable for development, and which we do not wish to see built out. Just because a site has been put forward as a SHLAA site, it does not mean it will get planning permission. For example, HD018 (White Dirt Farm) and HD008-5 (Trickets Field) are large sites in the centre / North of Horndean, but both are in land designated as ‘local gap’ which is designated to protect the different villages from merging together so EHDC will NOT support development on this land. This allocations process can take 18 months or so, and will involve some consultation, so if you have an opinion then when this process starts it is important that you voice your thoughts. I will make sure you know in a future newsletter when and how to comment.

What we want to achieve in this process:
The Right housing in The Right place with The Right facilities

SHMA Needs by Settlement:

Housing in Horndean:
Horndean needs to have about 1,190 new homes between 2011 and 2028. 490 of these have been identified already and include sites with planning permission (Gales, Havant Road etc), but a further 700 new homes are required on top of the current plans between now and 2028. (Horndean includes Horndean, Blendworth, Cattherington and Lovedean, and is ‘The Civil Parish of Horndean’) This will mean a significant change for Horndean in these 18 years as these 1,190 homes are built in the villages around us.

We are currently looking at how robustly we support some of the sites that we are desperate to protect against development, but also what sites we might be happy to see built out that we can link with the facilities we would like to have. We are also looking to see if some of the SHLAA sites can be taken off the register by challenging their suitability. The next step is to assess which of the SHLAA sites can best satisfy our needs and what the community gets out of them. A very good site to use will be one that does not add any traffic to our roads, and does not affect anyone views. HD020 would be a good example of such a site, and I hope to be able to tell you more about possibilities on this land soon. Every new home will come with approximately £1,000 of CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) so the new homes in Horndean will bring in an additional £13,090,000 to create new facilities. This might include facilities for the following: a small leisure centre, cricket pitch with pavilion, football pitches with changing rooms or better facilities for schools and community associations. Please visit www.horndeanmatters.com and view article “Horndean Housing To 2028” to get links to the SHMA and Draft JCS on the EHDC website.

JCS Consultation:
The changes to the Joint Core strategy are out for consultation from 9th August to 20th September. All comments received will be sent to the Planning Inspector for consideration through the examination process. The inspector should report back by the end of this year and either approve or reject our Joint Core Strategy.

Issues which affect us in Horndean are the large number of new houses that are required to satisfy not only our own needs for population growth, but also the overspill from the South Downs National Park where housing is limited due to the environment status of the park.

If you wished to give feedback on the Joint Core Strategy then the notes below might be useful:
1 – The Parish of Horndean had 5,240 homes in the 2011 census.
2 – We are being asked to take on 1,190 homes between 2011 and 2028, a 22.7% increase. You might have strong views that this increase is to great, is not sustainable for a collection of villages with poor public transport, no station and few employment sources.
3 – The percentage increase is greater than Petersfield, or Alton which you might note are far more sustainable towns than our current patch. In order to be suited to development as they have good local sources of employment, train links and facilities. You might feel that Horndean is being asked to take more than it should or can.
4 – There are strong opinions that the South Downs National Park authority has not allowed for sufficient housing to address its own needs and that this must be increased. You might strongly agree with this view, and that it is not appropriate for adjacent towns to take any excess burden to preserve the ideological views of the park who have not got the right balance of environmental concerns and housing needs of their own.

You can send feedback to East Hants by email: ltd@easthants.gov.uk or by letter to the Planning Policy Team, East Hampshire District Council, Penns Place, Petersfield, Hampshire GU31 4EX no later than 5.00pm on Friday 20 September 2013. Every response is viewed by the inspector, and the more times he sees the views above, the better (if you happen to share them…) Please feel free to copy me into any replies on guy.shepherd@easthants.gov.uk

BT Kiosk: Press release from EHDC - East Hampshire District Council is considering asking British Telecom to remove this telephone kiosk in North Road, Horndean. Only ten telephone calls were made between February 2012 and February 2013 and the kiosk is quite damaged.

Your local District Councillor, Guy Shepherd, has looked into several options for trying to restore the kiosk but unfortunately this is not a viable option. You can contact Councillor Guy Shepherd to hear about those considerations by telephone on 07973 739988 or via email guy.shepherd@easthants.gov.uk

We welcome your views over a period of 28 days so that we can make the right decision regarding the future of this telephone kiosk. Any feedback will be taken to the Community Forum (Clanfield, Horndean and Rowlands Castle) at Merchiston Hall, 106 Portsmouth Road, Horndean on 8th October 2013 commencing 6.30pm. A final decision will be made at that meeting regarding whether or not East Hampshire District Council ask British Telecom to add this kiosk to their list of those to be removed.

To take part in this consultation and lodge your view, please contact the Community Safety Manager, Karen Dawes via email Karen.dawes@easthants.gov.uk or in writing to Karen Dawes, Community Safety Manager, East Hampshire District Council. Penns Place, Petersfield GU31 4EX before Wednesday 2nd October 2013. Yours Faithfully – Karen Dawes, East Hampshire District Council Community Safety Manager.

Promoted and published by N Lander-Brinkley on behalf of Guy Shepherd, both of the Conservative Offices, Manor Farm, Itchen Stoke, SO24 0QT

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Guy Shepherd - We Are Downs Ward – Newsletter September 2013

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