

2 October 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LIB DEM COUNCILLORS CONDEMN MSDC'S RUSHED DECISION FOR 500 NEW HOMES IN HASSOCKS

At a meeting of Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) on Wednesday 27th September Liberal Democrat Sue Hatton¹ (Hassocks Ward) was the only councillor to vote against a revised District Plan that allocates 500² new houses to the North East of Hassocks. Hassocks' other two District Councillors, Conservatives Michelle Binks and Gordon Marples - despite acknowledging significant problems with the proposal - voted in favour of it.

The Council has failed three times to demonstrate a 5-year land supply to the Planning Inspector and MSDC has now decided that Hassocks should make up the shortfall. When combined with other new houses that are planned for Hassocks, the village could see approximately 900³ homes over the Plan period to 2031 – most of which will come in the first five years. If these plans go ahead, the village is set to grow by more than 25%⁴.

As well as narrowing the strategic gap between Hassocks and Burgess Hill, there are serious concerns about the impact that this will have upon local infrastructure and stretched public services. Schools in Hassocks have already expanded to capacity to meet existing demand; patient to GP ratios are higher than the average for Horsham and Mid Sussex CCG, and Hassocks struggles with traffic congestion and parking.

Speaking after the meeting, Cllr Hatton said, "I am bitterly disappointed that the people of Hassocks have been denied a Neighbourhood Plan that contained a sustainable future for the village. The imposition of this Strategic Site of 500 homes will change Hassocks forever."

County Councillor Kirsty Lord (Liberal Democrat, Hassocks and Burgess Hill South) who observed the meeting commented, "There is plenty of room to take 500 extra homes in Mid Sussex. Hassocks should be part of the solution but it should not suffer from a rushed decision that places the entire burden of the District's housing shortfall on one village."

The next stage of this development will be a public consultation from 2nd October until 10th November. Cllrs Sue Hatton and Kirsty Lord are doing everything that they can to support their residents by ensuring that these plans are properly scrutinised.

ENDS

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

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NOTES TO EDITOR:

1. Cllr Sue Hatton was elected in June 2017. She previously served as a District Councillor between 2007 and 2015. She is a Parish Councillor in Hassocks.
2. Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan (NP) proposes 290 new homes in total of which 140 were proposed on the land immediately to the north of Clayton Mills. These new plans for 500 houses combines these 140 homes with an additional 360 homes that sit outside the NP. The land in question is a small portion of the northern end of the NP site, and a larger site that was not part of the NP allocation towards Burgess Hill.
3. The figure of 900 is based upon:
 - Neighbourhood Plan (290)
 - Ham Fields outside the NP (97)
 - Friars Oak, outside the NP (130) dependent upon the decision of the Secretary of State following a planning enquiry in June. Decision expected November.
 - New District Plan allocation (360), see note 2
 - Total: 877
4. There were 3342 households in Hassocks in the 2011 census. $877/3342 = 26\%$