

TEXT OF SPEECH ISSUED BY

Hassocks & Hurstpierpoint Liberal Democrats

29 March 2018: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SPEECH ON 28 MARCH BY HASSOCKS COUNCILLOR SUE HATTON (LIBERAL DEMOCRATS)
TO MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL REGARDING THE ADOPTION OF THE DISTRICT PLAN.

"Mr Chairman, I am aware of the very difficult position that the Inspector, Mr. Bore placed the Council in when he increased the number of houses required in the District Plan from 13,600 to 16,400.

However, will you be surprised that I am not supporting the District Plan tonight because of the disastrous effect on the village of Hassocks that will come from the inclusion of 500 homes to the North of Clayton Mills?

The sole access to and from this site is from the narrow and dangerous **Ockley Lane** - indeed it has a 6'6" width restriction. It will also place a great strain on the already stretched infrastructure of our village.

Furthermore, the East - West traffic flow problems and congestion in the centre of Burgess Hill **have not yet** been solved, and the **extra** traffic from the new **large** Kingsway Strategic site and Keymer Brick and Tile site to the East of Burgess Hill will inevitably add to congestion at the small Folders Lane roundabout, and push traffic down south through Ockley Lane. Unfortunately, the A2300 improvements - which are being hampered by the inability of the developers of the Northern Arc to agree shared financial responsibilities - will only alleviate problems to the **West** of Burgess Hill.

This lack of progress on the Northern Arc led directly to the **rushed** decision of the District Council to take up the offer of a piece of land in Hassocks, which was immediately available and deliverable for a Strategic Site, in order to ensure its five year land supply. So the goal posts were moved in a flash, and in this haste, due diligence, fairness, and democracy went right out of the window, and the process was compromised.

The Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan, presented to the District Council as a Reg. 16 Plan in June 2016, which had been prepared diligently; **by the book**; with huge input from residents, and in complete agreement with the District Council on housing numbers - **unfortunately** could not play a part in this decision. This was because its progress towards being '**made**' was delayed by District Council for months from being assessed by an Independent Inspector - (and still has not been) even **before** Mr Bore had made his pronouncement on extra numbers for the District.

It is up to the residents of Burgess Hill to decide whether their councillors have shouted loudly enough on their behalf regarding concerns about their town's future. But so far as I am concerned, I was elected to represent the people of Hassocks and their views, and I cannot vote for a District Plan that compounds the unfairness and disregard for local democracy for the people of Hassocks."

ENDS

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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