

From: M C Heelis
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To: Councillor R Millard
Leader of EHDC
Penns Place
Petersfield
Hants, GU31 4EX

29 July 2020

Dear Councillor Millard,

I am writing to you representing the Alton District Residents Association out of concern for how the EHDC Local Plan is currently being developed. I have already written an FOI request to EHDC Planning Policy and also to the Planning Portfolio Holder all communications of which have been responded to. In response to my own and perhaps other approaches for clarity EHDC have now published a "Large Development Sites FAQs" paper on the website (undated).

However, I still wish to seek more detail of how and what EHDC Planning Policy are doing behind seemingly closed doors. My specific concerns are:

- EHDC have used a terminology in press releases dated 12 and 15 June which, in addition to other information, quoted a "*broad area of search along the A31 corridor*". Evidently the planners are confident that they will be able to "*allocate suitable land for housing development*" in "*a future plan*"(?). I have sought to clarify what is meant by this statement and what the areas are. It was thought that they could have been those already consulted on in the EHDC Large Site public consultation. Indeed in one communication from the Council it was confirmed that this would be the case albeit with minor boundary changes. However, scrutiny of the carefully worded FAQ paper reveals that the search area "*is not accurately defined*" and that all will be revealed at the Regulation 19 consultation. Also it is intimated that possible sites in the area may be for a "*future plan*"(?) and that this is to ensure "*sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change towards the end of the plan (under development now) period*". Furthermore we are assured that there would be no further call for sites. Upon scrutiny of sites submitted under the EHDC Land Availability Assessment of 2018 there would be no need to call for sites in any case as sufficient were submitted, but many dismissed as unsuitable, prior to the Regulation 18 consultation. In summary we as ADRA are yet to understand what EHDC Planners are doing in connection with the "*broad area of search along the A31 corridor*". We need to know and understand:
 - Is the "*broad area of search*" for inclusion and delivery in the forthcoming local plan or a future plan?
 - Why is the consultation for this work is being left to the Regulation 19 consultation when it will be too late to amend due to the immense pressure to get the plan to the Examiner?
 - Why was this work not included in the Large Site consultation which itself must have been very costly?

- Why have EHDC not published the Evidence Base, derived from the Large Site consultation, so that the public can better understand how decisions have been made before moving on to Regulation 19 consultation?
 - On the understanding that the A31 corridor sites are not the same as those consulted on in the Large Development Site consultation - why the FAQ paper does not include the public in “*who they (EHDC) work with to help inform decisions on large development sites*”? As required by the NPPF para 3, sub para 16c why are communities not included.
- Included in the EHDC Large Site consultation was Land South East of Liphook and Land East of Horndean. They have been excluded from any further broad area of search and per the FAQ paper there is “*no intention to allocate them at this stage*”. It is also stated in the paper that “*reasoned justification for their exclusion will be revealed at the Regulation 19 consultation*”. Yet in another communication from the Council we were informed that the two sites “*continue to be assessed as part of the sustainability appraisal*”. There is inconsistency here and we would like to know why the EHDC “*preferred approach*” is the A31 corridor?
 - The EHDC current published timetable for plan development (Local Plan Made Easy [or easier]) shows the Regulation 19 Consultation as Summer 2019. Then submission of the Plan to the Government in Winter 2019. Clearly this timetable is out of date and the public need to be informed what any revised timetable is now. This is further reason for the public to doubt if any of the consultation points raised will be adequately addressed before the plan goes to the Government. May we please know the updated timetable for issue of the local plan?

The people of Alton and its surrounding settlements have demonstrated their willingness to engage with EHDC in the plan making process. Indeed most have Neighbourhood Plans, supported by EHDC that underpin a clear engagement and concern with the future of their areas. We (and others in Alton) would like to know what exactly is going on with development of the updated local plan and what the timescales are.

Yours sincerely

Original signed

M C Heelis
Chair ADRA

Copy to:

Councillor A Glass Portfolio Holder for Planning
Mr Simon Jenkins EHDC Director of Regeneration and Place
Councillor Steve Hunt Alton DC and EHDC Planning Committee
Councillor Graham Titterington Alton Town Council Chair of Planning and Transport Committee