

THE RT. HON. JEREMY QUIN MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Cllr John Milne
Cabinet Member for Planning and Infrastructure
Horsham District Council
Parkside
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RH12 1RL

25 May 2023

JQ48826

Dear John,

I understand that you are the new HDC Cabinet member responsible for planning and development. May I both congratulate you on this and your colleagues on taking control of the Council and wish you well in your role.

Most people accept that some housing development is important and necessary. Indeed I note that the Liberal Democrats nationally are demanding a very significant increase in the amount of house building being delivered. However opposing individual sites is often, as you well know, extremely popular.

I am sure in Opposition the Lib Dem Group will have developed ideas as to whether and if so how to deliver a Local Plan. I know you will now be drawing on the substantial resources in terms of in-house and external expertise and legal and environmental advice tailored to the needs of HDC, which quite rightly the Council pays for from taxpayer funds to support it in its role but which is not made available to be directed by MPs, given our different responsibilities.

I wish the Council well in bringing forward its new strategy.

I understand I have been invited to a meeting with you to set out "Central Government planning policy and its implications for the Horsham District". Planning policy is set out in law and in formal notices from the Department with which I am sure you were familiar as a Councillor in opposition and on which in any event your officials and external advisers will be providing you with advice for your decision. I know you will be acutely aware of the need to follow proper process and will want to base your decisions on official advice which you are able to challenge and on which you and your colleagues can come to a view, and not on speculation.



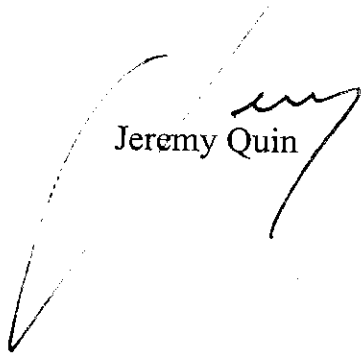
I am aware that you will inherit the extensive work your Conservative predecessors undertook on the impact of Water Neutrality and you will receive advice on how this may enable HDC to agree a much lower than historically anticipated house building number.

In undertaking this work, I understand the previous majority group believed that Water Neutrality enabled HDC to take a really careful look at its development plans and come up with the right answers. I trust you will be doing the same, exploring all options and consulting where required and will start doing so at pace, though these are decisions for you and your cabinet colleagues.

Whilst decisions on a Local Plan and site allocation are absolutely a matter for the Council to decide can I make absolutely clear that I would be very keen to work with you in ensuring any plan approved by the Council secures the infrastructure and amenities it requires to make it an enormous success and to prevent adverse impacts on existing communities.

I don't know if the invitation was also extended to him but I have copied this letter to Andrew Griffith MP who is as you know the MP for the southern half of the District.

Yours sincerely


Jeremy Quin