

REIGATE AND BANSTEAD BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL: 17th December 2015

Public Questions

Question by:	To be answered by:	Subject:
Mr B. Horne	Executive Member for Planning and Development (Councillor T. Schofield)	Planning and Development
Mrs J. Barnett	Executive Member for Property and Regeneration (Councillor N. J. Bramhall)	Horley Business Park – Horley Master Plan Hr33
Mr G. Whitworth	Executive Member for Property and Regeneration (Councillor N. J. Bramhall)	Horley Business Park – Flood Risk
Mrs K. Allen	Executive Member for Property and Regeneration (Councillor N. J. Bramhall)	Horley Business Park – Horley Master Plan Hr36
Miss A. Backhouse	Executive Member for Property and Regeneration (Councillor N. J. Bramhall)	Horley Business Park – Horley Master Plan Hr37
Mrs K. Whittaker	Executive Member for Property and Regeneration (Councillor N. J. Bramhall)	Horley Business Park – Loss of View
Mr M. Allen	Executive Member for Property and Regeneration (Councillor N. J. Bramhall)	Horley Business Park – Benefit to Horley

Council Meeting: 17 December 2015

Mr. B. Horne will ask the **Executive member for Planning and Development, Councillor T. Schofield** the following question:

Planning Development

Would the Executive member for planning respond to the following question:

It would appear that this Borough is acting like a London Borough and building on every available small plot of land, many of which are looking ridiculous and cramped for the developers to make money. Fir Tree Road, Yew Tree Bottom Road and Ruden Way for example.

Is it not time that Back Yard Development came to an end in that area?

Observations

Thank you Madam Mayor and thank you Mr Horne for your question.

Let me first address a couple of inaccuracies in your preliminary statement before I answer the policy related question on back land development.

The kind of developments you refer to are built by private developers and not by the council.

The Council is required to determine valid planning applications when these are submitted to it. Decisions are taken in accordance with this Council's adopted Development Plan, taking into account all material considerations, including national planning policy's "presumption in favour of sustainable development". Whether the developer "makes money" or not is not such a material consideration.

Turning to the actual question on back land development I would make the following points:

- In the right circumstances, it is an acceptable form of development and we cannot introduce a blanket ban on it.
- It represents a good source of housing land, helping reduce pressures for development on Green Belt land.
- The council cannot prevent residents from selling off their back gardens to developers
- What we can do is make sure that we have up-to-date planning policies to ensure that this type of development is well designed and sensitively delivered within the locality in which it sits.
- That is why, through our Development Management Plan, we are updating our back garden land policy to ensure it remains fit for purpose for many years into the future.

Council Meeting: 17 December 2015

Mrs J. Barnett will ask the **Executive Member for Property and Regeneration, Councillor N. J. Bramhall** the following question:

Horley Business Park Proposal – HR33; Public Open Space

Policy HR33 states that 21 hectares of the land at Bayhorne Farm and Fishers Farm is designated as public open space. For many years Horley has had a shortfall of public open space. In 1985 the shortfall was 18 hectares. In addition to this a further 15 hectares of public open space is required for the 2,600 dwellings that are in the process of being built, as outlined in the Horley Master Plan.

If the public open space at the Bayhorne Farm and Fishers Farm was lost and the land became a business park the combined shortfall would become a total of 54 hectares.

I appreciate that some planning has been undertaken for further development of the Riverside Green Chain around the two new neighbourhoods, but it is still not clear what the total area of this new space will be.

If the business park is created what will the Council do to replace the lost public open space at Bayhorne Fishers and Fishers Farm and address the need for 133 acres of new public open space in Horley?

*HR33 is a component of the Horley Master Plan.

Observations

Thank you for your question.

The Council has identified demand, and a potential opportunity, for a business park in Horley.

The report that was considered by the Council's Executive in October also recognised that there were a number of planning issues that would need to be considered and addressed as the scheme details are worked up.

It is then the Property Team's intention to submit a planning application for the proposed business park in Summer 2016.

Part of the area that the Council is looking at for this proposed development was allocated in the 2005 Borough Local Plan (the Horley Master Plan) as a site for amenity open space and/or outdoor playing space, to make a contribution towards providing 33ha (or around 82 acres) of public open space for the town.

However, whilst Bayhorne Farm is in public ownership, this part of the site is subject to an occupational lease and the remainder – Fishers Farm – is privately owned. As a result, and despite the allocation, the open space scheme on the site has never been delivered. Nonetheless, any future planning application will need to justify why – taking this allocation into account – the development is acceptable. In accordance with legislation, it will be

determined in accordance with policies in the Council's adopted Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

It will fall to the Planning Committee to determine whether material considerations outweigh the policies in the adopted Development Plan, and how the balance between environmental, social and economic considerations should be struck in relation to this proposal.

Council Meeting: 17 December 2015

Mr G. Whitworth will ask the **Executive Member for Property and Regeneration, Councillor N. J. Bramhall** the following question:

Horley Business Park – Flood Risk

My Question relates to the recently proposed Large Business Park in South Horley (also referred to as “Gatwick Airport City”) which will cover approximately 172 acres of open grass-land part of Horley’s rural surrounds.

The question is: Why is the Borough Council supporting such a development without any consultation with residents, when the area concerned is in a recognised flood plain and part of it stands as a large Lake through most of the year.

When any significant rainfall occurs, mini rivers run through people’s gardens. Quite clearly, Building on this Flood Plain known as “Fishers Farm” and “Bayhorne Farm” is going to seriously worsen the flood risk situation causing serious distress and anxiety to hundreds of residents in the area.

Horley has a very high water table and sits on impermeable clay which are perfect conditions for flooding. The same flood risk situation applies to the land at the rear of Balcombe Road which is also earmarked for development as part of the New Business Park.

Observations

Thank you for your question.

Part of the area that the Council is looking at for this proposed development is affected by surface water flooding. Just over half a hectare is classed by the Environment Agency as being at high risk of surface water flooding, with a further 1.5 hectares being at medium risk and 5.5 hectares being at low risk. Maps of the extent of the risk are available to view on the Environment Agency’s website.

The decision of the Council’s Executive in October gave authority for the Head of Property to make consultancy appointments to inform the preparation of a planning application. Part of this work will include investigation of flood risk and the identification of technical design interventions, mitigation, attenuation and flood risk compensation to avoid flood risk on the site and – importantly - prevent impact on the wider area.

The Council will be carrying out pre-application consultation with both the Environment Agency, and residents, as part of this exercise and I would encourage local people to engage in this process.

Council Meeting: 17 December 2015

Mrs K. Allen will ask the **Executive Member for Planning and Development, Councillor T. Schofield** the following question:

Horley Business Park Proposal – HR36; Development Categories

The site of the proposed business park is in the rural surrounds of Horley. Policy HR36* says that development will not be permitted unless it is related to agriculture, forestry, outdoor sports and recreation. How is a business park acceptable in this policy as it is clearly not related to any of these categories?

*HR36 is a component of the Horley Master Plan.

Observations

Thank you for your question.

The Council has identified demand, and a potential opportunity, for a business park in Horley.

The report that was considered by the Council's Executive in October also recognised that there were a number of planning issues that would need to be considered and addressed as the scheme details are worked up.

This work is currently underway, and as I have previously mentioned we are planning consultation with local residents early next year. One of the areas that will be looked at is the landscape impact of proposals and how open space can be incorporated as part of the proposals.

As your question recognises, there is a conflict between the Borough Local Plan policy about the Rural Surrounds of Horley and the proposal currently being developed. The application will therefore need to justify why – taking this policy into account – the development is acceptable.

In accordance with legislation, any future planning application will be determined in accordance with policies in the Council's adopted Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

It will fall to the Planning Committee to determine whether material considerations outweigh the policies in the adopted Development Plan, and how the balance between environmental, social and economic considerations should be struck in relation to this proposal.

Council Meeting: 17 December 2015

Miss A. Backhouse will ask the **Executive Member for Property and Regeneration, Councillor N. J. Bramhall** the following question:

Horley Business Park – HR37; Gatwick Open Setting

The 172 acre site of the proposed Horley business park is situated in the Gatwick Open Setting. The protection of the Gatwick Open Setting has been a long term aim of the Council. Policy HR37 has ensured that the land around the airport has not been urbanised and has remained as green space in order to prevent a coalescence forming between Horley and Gatwick Airport.

Why is the Council proposing to develop a business park at this location when it is known that it will contribute to Horley physically joining Gatwick Airport?"

*HR37 is a component of the Horley Master Plan.

Miss A. Backhouse also included the following comments:

I am opposed to the plan for a number of environmental and ecological reasons, in addition I think it will damage the local community, especially for local residents and businesses. How would Councillors feel about living next to a business park instead of green fields?

Throughout the local area in Redhill, Gatwick, Reigate, Crawley and Horley there are numerous empty office and business space, including multiple brownfield sites, even with some spaces being converted into flats and housing. I question the motives of those driving the plan and I think more should be done to protect the green space, environment and wildlife for the sake of Horley as a residential community.

Observations

Thank you for your question.

The Council has identified demand, and a potential opportunity, for a business park in Horley.

The report that was considered by the Council's Executive in October also recognised that there were a number of planning issues that would need to be considered and addressed as the scheme details are worked up.

This work is currently underway, and as I have previously mentioned we are planning consultation with local residents early next year. One of the areas that will be looked at is the landscape impact of proposals and how open space – and a visual break between Horley and Gatwick - can be incorporated as part of the proposals.

It is then the Property Team's intention to submit a planning application for the proposed business park in Summer 2016.

As your question recognises, there is a potential conflict between the Borough Local Plan policy about the Gatwick Open Setting and the proposal currently being developed. The application will therefore need to justify why – taking this policy into account – the development is acceptable.

In accordance with legislation, that application will be determined in accordance with policies in the Council's adopted Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

It will fall to the Planning Committee to determine whether material considerations outweigh the policies in the adopted Development Plan, and how the balance between environmental, social and economic considerations should be struck in relation to this proposal.

Council Meeting: 17 December 2015

Mrs K. Whittaker will ask the **Executive member for Property and Regeneration, Councillor N. J. Bramhall** the following question:

Proposed Development of Bayhorne Farm (re. Horley Business Park) – Impact on surrounding properties.

After working for S.C.C. for the last 25 years we purchased our property as our "retirement" home in December 2014, we had all the searches and surveys done and no developments were flagged up. Can you imagine how this proposed development will impact our lives?

As our property would back onto the proposed business park but may not be a compulsory purchase, the appeal of my property named MEADOWVIEW would become much less both in terms of value and its appeal to potential buyers .

I would like to know how the council would intend to compensate us for the change of view from our rear garden from fields to concrete?

Observations

Thank you for your question Mrs Whittaker. We can empathise with residents who may experience a change in outlook. A proposal such as this is not contemplated lightly but it does appear to offer such advantages for the Borough as a whole that it is worthy of serious consideration. I appreciate that whilst this process happens there will be doubt and concern with local residents about what future change may emerge. The Council is however committed to engaging with residents throughout the development to ensure that all such concerns are addressed as far as possible.

The proposal is still at a very early stage. Questions such as compensation are a long way down the line. The proposal needs gain planning consent and there a lot of matters to be examined before a planning application can be made. It's not possible at this point to say what might happen as regards compensation, but the law does protect residents who are affected and the Council would of course act within the law.

The Council has noted your interest in the proposed development should it go ahead.

Council Meeting: 17 December 2015

Mr M. Allen will ask the **Executive member for Planning and Development, Councillor T. Schofield** and/or the **Executive member for Property and Regeneration, Councillor Mrs. N. J. Bramhall** the following question:

The observations below were provided as a written answer following the meeting.

Horley Business Park Proposal – Access route and benefit to Horley

“Given that access to the proposed park would not be safe off the Balcombe Road, the safest access would be from the Gatwick South terminal roundabout. The park would therefore surely become Gatwick Business Park with little or no benefit to Horley town or residents.

Is this not another case of Horley being the poor relation to the more favoured towns under the Councils’ care?”

Observations

Thank you for your question.

The Council exists to improve the quality of life of people who live and work in across the borough of Reigate and Banstead. This is enshrined within our constitution.

As Portfolio Holder for Property and Regeneration I fully understand the need to maximise the benefits of new development for all our town centres, including Horley.

The proposed Business Park site is extremely well located in relation to Horley Station and Horley town centre. It will bring new jobs for local people, and investment into the local community from the businesses that locate there, their workers, and local suppliers and service providers.

As I have previously mentioned we are planning consultation with local residents early next year. This will include details about how we propose – through public transport, pedestrian and cycle routes – to make it easy for employees to shop, eat, drink and do business in Horley town centre.

It is expected that this new development will bring real economic benefits to the town of Horley.