



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Dear Constituent,

8/12/16

Havant Borough Council's Draft Local Plan 2016-2036

Thank you for your interest in the Havant Borough Council (HBC) Local Plan, housing development, and housing-related infrastructure in the Havant constituency.

Approving and adopting a Local Plan can sometimes be a long and complex process, with many opportunities for local residents, community groups and residents' associations to engage with local councillors and other stakeholders. Members of Parliament like me have no formal role or statutory powers in that process, no influence over the development of the Local Plan, and no vote on its adoption. However, I am aware that some incomplete – and sometimes inaccurate - information is in the public domain regarding the Local Plan and my role in lobbying for infrastructure funding. With that in mind, I hope you will find the following information (and attached position paper) both helpful and informative.

1. The Havant Borough needs an up-to-date Local Plan in place, to restore control of the planning process to locally elected councillors, and prevent speculative planning applications for potentially inappropriate developments from being won on appeal. As an active and engaged local MP, I meet some residents who feel that the Planning Inspectorate (the statutory body to which planning applications rejected by HBC can be appealed) is not equipped to fully understand their concerns, or the unique characteristics and nuances of our local area. This is precisely why it is so important for HBC to draft an updated Local Plan and restore control to local councillors.
2. It is also important to remember that the adoption of a Local Plan by HBC, and the corresponding identification of land suitable for development, is not the end of the process. I am aware that some of my constituents are concerned that the Local Plan may be a green light for developers to build whatever they want on a particular plot of land. This is not the case, and they should be reassured that each new planning application will still have to go through a rigorous process of local planning approval by HBC, which will take into account factors like the impact on local infrastructure, (such as schools, roads, GP surgeries), and the environment.

Housing-related infrastructure

3. As you are no doubt aware, the planning process has built-in mechanisms through which developer financial contributions can be – and should be – sought by the relevant local authorities, to improve infrastructure like schools and roads, and GP services automatically receive a per-patient uplift in funding when new housing is built. I have been assured by both HBC and Hampshire County Council (HCC) that this process will continue for future developments.

Member of Parliament for Havant

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4. It is also worth noting that some of the concerns expressed about infrastructure across the Borough of Havant are often not supported by compelling evidence. For example, South Eastern Hampshire NHS Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) (who are responsible for commissioning local NHS primary care services) have assured me that extra patients would mean extra funding from the CCG, despite the incorrect suggestion from a small number of local residents (based only on personal anecdotes) that this is not the case.
5. I have a good working relationship with surgeries across the constituency, and a track record of supporting them. For example, I have been working hard since I was elected to secure new and expanded facilities for Emsworth Surgery, where the CCG acknowledges a need for additional capacity. This has included convening a series of local meetings with key stakeholders, and several meetings with Government Ministers. This clearly demonstrates that where the evidence shows additional infrastructure is needed, and clear proposals from the relevant bodies exist, I am more than happy to press for action.
6. Attached to this letter is a more detailed statement on my position regarding Local Plan related infrastructure, and you will note that I am committed to working with colleagues at all levels, including HBC and HCC, to support our shared responsibilities in relation to infrastructure, which is funded from a variety of sources at local, regional, and national levels. I am happy to support all bids for additional infrastructure funding, where they are appropriate, have the support of HBC, and take the form of specific proposals in relation to a particular site. I have met The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, to lobby for funds, and he has confirmed these will be made available for local councils like HBC and other bodies to bid for. Please see the attachment for more details.
7. Notwithstanding all of the above, I am pleased that Havant Borough Council have agreed to do some further work on reviewing and assessing local infrastructure as part of the Local Plan. I am also aware of the strength of feeling on this issue amongst some residents, and while I fully support HBC in their progress towards delivering a Local Plan and protecting the Borough from speculative development, I am always happy to pass on representations where appropriate.
8. I have therefore met the Housing Minister Gavin Barwell MP to discuss the HBC Local Plan, and some of the Borough's unique characteristics. Regrettably, the Government do not feel it would be appropriate to exempt any part of the Havant constituency, or the Borough of Havant, from national housing planning and development laws, so no area will be designated as having "special status". The same national laws must apply equally to every part of the country.
9. Moreover, no changes will be made to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) or the requirements for local planning authorities like HBC to secure a five-year supply of housing land, during the period the HBC Local Plan is being drafted and finalised. The Minister also states, and I



agree, that the NPPF and current planning laws provide local councils like HBC with the tools they need to protect sensitive areas, e.g. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Sites of Special Scientific Interest. The whole Borough of Havant already benefits from these protections, and they will be retained in the Local Plan 2016-2036

10. It is also worth noting that the Minister has recently visited the Havant constituency at my invitation, he is aware of the area's geography and characteristics, and he fully supports HBC's work in updating the Local Plan so that housing and development can be planned in a strategic way, and agreed at the local level, as close to residents as our democratic system will allow – to do this we need a Local Plan.
11. Ultimately, I agree with the Government's position that we need more new homes across the country, and in the constituency. Britain faces a housing shortage, and the Government is committed to ensuring that people are able to enjoy the security and stability of owning their own home. By agreeing a Local Plan, we return control of where these houses are built to locally elected representatives who are accountable to local residents. This view is shared by many local residents I meet.
12. With all of the above in mind, I agree with Havant Borough Council that the only way to protect the Island from speculative development is to agree a Local Plan as soon as possible and return control of planning to the local democratic process.

Eastleigh Borough Council (EBC) Local Plan

13. The situation in Eastleigh provides a useful example of how not having a Local Plan is extremely disadvantageous. Eastleigh Borough Council (EBC) do not have a current and up-to-date Local Plan, which has left the local community vulnerable to speculative planning applications. This failure to agree a Local Plan and give locally elected representatives the tools they need to safeguard the community from inappropriate development was recently criticised by The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, who called on EBC to "to get its act together" because Eastleigh residents "deserve to have their voices heard".
14. Unfortunately, the Liberal Democrat controlled Council seem to have no intention of drafting a new Local Plan, and it is the view of my Parliamentary colleagues (Mims Davies MP, George Hollingbery MP, and Steve Brine MP) that EBC is waiting for a Local Plan to be imposed on them by the Government.
15. These local MPs have therefore joined the Action Against Destructive Development (AADD) campaign due to their opposition to development at a specific site, not because they oppose the creation of a Local Plan, but for the opposite reason. Indeed, they are unhappy with the *lack of progress* towards a Local Plan in Eastleigh. In contrast, I am satisfied with the HBC process for adopting a new Local Plan.



16. Unlike in Eastleigh, Havant Borough Council is committed to creating a Local Plan, which is the best defence against speculative development and protects the decision-making power of locally elected councillors, giving them the tools they need to safeguard specific sites from development, and protect environmentally sensitive areas. I support HBC's efforts to update the Local Plan and therefore I see no need to join a campaign like the AADD. I am pleased that HBC's excellent progress towards a new Local Plan was recently praised by Housing Minister Gavin Barwell MP in the House of Commons.
17. As ever, if residents have technical questions about the Local Plan, or the planning process in Havant Borough more generally, they should contact the senior team at HBC who are leading on this issue:
- David Hayward, Planning Policy Team Leader, HBC
E-Mail: david.hayward@havant.gov.uk
 - Andrew Biltcliffe, Head of Planning, HBC
E-Mail: Andrew.Biltcliffe@havant.gov.uk
 - Councillor David Guest, Cabinet Lead for Economy, Planning, Development & Prosperity Havant, HBC
E-Mail: david.guest@havant.gov.uk
18. As most residents already know, MPs have no formal role or statutory powers in the planning process, no influence over the development of the Local Plan, and no vote on its adoption, so there is no need for residents to copy me into correspondence with the Council. Cllr David Guest, Cabinet Lead for Economy, Planning, Development and Prosperity Havant, is in agreement with the position set out in this letter.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to re-iterate that I understand the concerns of some residents regarding developer appeals to the Planning Inspectorate, and the potential impact of housing development on green field sites that are not protected by the shield of a Local Plan and local democratic accountability. This is why I so strongly support the adoption of a new Local Plan for the Havant Borough, so that control of the process can be returned to the judgement of locally elected representatives.

Thank you again for your interest in this issue, and I hope this letter and attachment provide you with useful information regarding the Local Plan 2016-2036.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Alan Mak".

Alan Mak MP