

Dear Councillors,

Having just been to the Homes England exhibition at Rusper Village Hall on the proposed West of Ifield development, I am registering my absolute horror at Homes England's plans to destroy the productive farmland alongside Ifield Brook. The plan to build 3,000 houses here in Rusper parish (the last exhibition stated 10,000 which is still on the cards, but 3,000 sounds an improvement - don't be fooled!).

Climate Change should be a priority everywhere and it is imperative that Horsham, Crawley and West Sussex work together to stop the mass destruction of our local environment, flora and fauna. The farmland should be retained not only for the wildlife, but for the sustainable production of food for the locality, not concreted over. As was seen during the Covid pandemic, it is also crucial for our wellbeing and mental health. Ifield Golf Course, despite HDC's assessment, is very well used, home to much wildlife, ancient hedgerows and a source of enjoyment for many people, whether playing golf or walking the area. Homes England's promised mitigation of planting more trees (after felling others) can in no way make up for the loss of ancient trees and the habitat

With Natural England's block on development due to water neutrality, it would appear that Homes England seem to think that this won't apply to them; maybe with their connections to Government, they have different rules. Water is a right for everyone and it is immoral to even contemplate building more house when there is a shortage of water.

Horsham District Council has allowed many houses to have been built in recent years, altering the atmosphere of our market town forever. Many are eye-wateringly expensive and unaffordable to local people in need of housing. Developers always promise that 35% of the houses to be built will be affordable, but always manage to reduce that number. The current Government definition of affordable is 20% discount on a potentially inflated price. Where are the offers to build badly needed social housing, to provide for those less well off who do not earn enough to be able to buy a house?

Where will all the electricity come from? We are already facing the prospect of power shortages, without any extra housing. The North Horsham development promised electric power points for cars for all houses, but has reneged on this even before starting building works, after realising that there wouldn't be enough electricity available.

The video of the proposed development is hideous and despite flowery names like River Walk and Meadow View, there is no hiding the fact that this will be a

vast new housing estate, totally out of keeping with the surrounding rural area. The 15 minute travelling idea is to be applauded, using buses, bikes and Shank's pony, but I for one would not relish the thought of carrying the weekly shop for a family of four, or even for the two of us, without a car: I would imagine that the proposed community shop would have a limited choice for 3,000 new homes.

We were repeatedly told that the "link road" to nowhere is not a dual carriageway, despite having two lanes in both directions, and I find it hard to believe that the proposed speed limit of 20mph will be adhered to. With the proposal that the Rusper Road is closed around Furlong Farm, it means that Rusper residents will no longer be able to drive to Ifield by the most direct route and commuters using Ifield station will see their journey increased by 2.9 miles each way. Ifield station would be unable to cope with an influx of new commuters (yes, it would be ideal if they were to work on the development site, but there is hardly likely to be onsite job opportunities for everyone) and currently, it is standing room only for commuters who board the trains during peak times at Ifield.

The NHS is currently struggling to cope, with GP surgeries, hospitals and ambulances unable to keep up with the workload, so such a vast increase in numbers will be to the detriment of all. NHS dentist appointments are impossible to find, unless you have been a long term patient.

I strongly urge HDC not to include this in their upcoming Local Plan and ask everyone to object to this monstrous proposal. Enough is enough. Doing nothing is not an option.