

Sent:

23 January 2026 12:25

Subject:

'LET DEMOCRACY BREATHE' [LIVESTREAMED MEETING - THURSDAY FEBRUARY 26 2026]

Attachments:

thumbnail - 2026-01-23T104858.469.jpg; thumbnail - 2026-01-21T173235.709.jpg; thumbnail - 2026-01-20T093424.276 (1).jpg

Categories:

Comments Received

## 'LET DEMOCRACY BREATHE'



### Letter to the editor: Let democracy breathe

On Thursday [February 26th], the Planning Inspector has convened an exploratory procedural meeting with Horsham ...

Dear BBC Team

On Thursday [February 26th], the Planning Inspector has convened an exploratory procedural meeting with Horsham District Council to decide whether the Local Plan examination can realistically continue.

This meeting is not about housing numbers or site allocations. It is a test of sound process, legal compliancy and democratic integrity.

The public will not be invited to participate, which is normal for a procedural meeting. What is unusual — and important — is that the Planning Inspector has instructed that the meeting be livestreamed.

That instruction matters.

Livestreaming recognises the exceptional level of public interest and acknowledges that democracy depends not only on decisions being made, but on the process being seen to breathe freely — calmly, openly, and without undue pressure. ◊

In response, local community groups are - subject to confirmation - seeking to make arrangements for a 'Livestream Watch', so that residents and interested parties can observe the meeting publicly, either online or through organised, observation-only community viewings. ◊

There will be no commentary.

No participation.

No intervention.

Just the opportunity to observe the democratic process at work.

When irreversible actions are taken before democratic decisions are reached, pressure is placed on the planning system itself. Trust is weakened. Democratic oxygen is reduced.

The Inspector is now asking a simple but fundamental question:

Can this examination proceed in a way that remains sound, lawful, and procedurally legitimate?

By directing that the meeting be livestreamed — and by enabling public observation — this moment belongs not only to institutions, but to the communities they serve.

Sometimes the most democratic act is not to shout louder, but to pause, to watch carefully, and to ensure that judgment is reached because it is right — not because it is rushed.

That is what it means to let democracy breathe.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

The Ifield Society

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## TRANSCRIPT OF A SHORT PRESENTATION - 'HOW DARE THEY - LET DEMOCRACY BREATHE' - FOR THE JANUARY 21ST 'SAVE WEST OF IFIELD' MEETING AT IFIELD CRICKET CLUB [POSTPONED DUE TO FLOODING]

'HOW DARE THEY - LET DEMOCRACY BREATHE'

A SHORT PRESENTATION BY [REDACTED] - THE IFIELD SOCIETY

How dare they

How dare they bulldoze through their masterplan without legitimacy.  
How dare they apply pressure before democratic judgment.  
How dare they act coercively.

Homes England's masterplan appears unstoppable. It is not.

It appears a done deal'. It is not.

Give up, they say - it's a waste of time. Do not give up. It's not a waste of time.

Homes England has issued what amounts to be an eviction notice to close Ifield Golf Club, before any democratic decision has been made on its speculative West of Ifield planning application.

This eviction was done before the planning process has concluded and before elected councillors have reached a decision.

Many of us here believe this is not just procedurally flawed - but also democratically wrong.

Why?

Because democratic planning depends on procedural stability, just policies, and legitimacy.

When irreversible action is taken in advance of a decision, pressure is placed on the democratic process itself.

Public confidence is undermined. Trust is lost. And pre-determined outcomes risk being shaped before evidence has been properly assessed and judgements made.

And that pressure now raises a serious question.

Can Horsham District Council realistically present the Planning Inspector with a sound, legally compliant Local Plan while carrying the unresolved burden of Homes England's speculative West of Ifield masterplan?

In effect, they are being asked to square a circle - a seemingly impossible task..

And this concern is no longer theoretical.

The Planning Inspector has convened an exploratory procedural meeting to examine whether the Local Plan examination can even progress.

This is an extraordinary step - and it underlines the instability now facing the democratic planning process.

But maybe there is a democratic way forward.

In December 2023, councillors at [Horsham](#) voted to include West of Ifield in the Local Plan.

That Plan was later rejected by the Planning Inspector, as we know.

It is therefore legitimate — critically necessary even — to ask this question:

Were councillors in possession of all the material information they should reasonably have had when that vote was taken?

If relevant risks or consequences were not fully set out, then that decision cannot be treated as settled or binding.

Reviving such a decision is not an admission of fault. It is a correction of democratic process.

And it strengthens — not weakens — public trust.

At this point, we can legitimately ask another question:

Who really controls planning decisions?

No one controls it.

And that is precisely the problem.

What controls and governs pre-determined outcomes is a well-oiled system of land acquisition agreements, algorithms, housing targets, viability models, delivery timetables, institutional incentives - and the like.

In theory, decisions are made democratically. In practice, power often operates earlier - and covertly. Premature pressure, such as the closure of the golf club, is applied before a democratic decision is made.

At that point, the process - the system - takes hold and dictates outcomes.

No conspiracy is required. Only that momentum of the process is kept up.

So, Homes England doesn't need to rig the system - the system already controls and dictates it.

So here is a question this community is now entitled to ask:

Is Homes England too big to fail in Ifield?

Will democratically-elected councils be left with little choice but to accept the diktats of unelected, unaccountable powers - and bow to the pressure of the system?

And that pressure seriously weakens the democratic process - and that is something we should never accept.

In conclusion, let us return to first principles:

Planning decisions must be based on planning policy, procedural evidence, and genuine public consultation

Not taken under the shadow, for example, of a pre-emptive closure by a government-owned development body acting in advance of a decision.

If Homes England's speculative planning application is sound, why can't the democratic planning process be allowed to run its proper course?

Without pressure. Without prematurity. Without predetermination

This is not party politics.

Crawley Borough Council, Gatwick Airport Limited - and significant others - have raised serious objections to Homes England masterplan, based on forensic, 'game-changing' evidence of environmental and ecological damage - and the human implications to public health and well-being - and commercial aviation safety.

The democratic system demands those objections are fully heard.

Homes England is a public body.

It is accountable to Parliament —and to the public.

Calls for ministerial intervention -

to withdraw the speculative application,

to remove the threat to close Ifield Golf Club,

and to support a viable, realistic Ifield Park – Gatwick alternative —

are proportionate, responsible, and critically necessary to restore confidence and trust in the democratic planning system.

We can all write to our MP calling for that ministerial intervention.

If we live in Crawley, write to Peter Lamb.

If we live in Horsham, write to John Milne.

Not to inflame.

Not to accuse.

But to ask —

forcefully but respectfully —

for ministerial intervention.

Anything less may prove catastrophic for the democratic planning process —  
and for this area we hold so dear.

This is not radical.

This is not extreme.

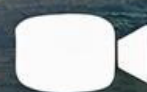
It is called democracy.

Let democracy breathe.

Thank you.

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# LET DEMOCRACY BREATHE



**LIVE**



**FEBRUARY 26**

Exploratory Procedural Meeting



Planning  
Inspector

Horsham  
District Council

**EXAMINING PLANNING PROCESS INTEGRITY**

**LIVESTREAMED IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST**

*Observation only – no public participation*

WEDNESDAY - JANUARY 21 2026

# 'HOW DARE THEY - LET DEMOCRACY BREATHE'

THE IFIELD SOCIETY



**EVICITION NOTICE**  
ACTING BEFORE DECISION?

## IS HOMES ENGLAND "TOO BIG TO FAIL" IN IFIELD?

**CALL FOR MINISTERIAL INTERVENTION!**



**DEMOCRACY UNDER**

**PRE-DETERMINED OUTCOMES**

**PUBLIC TRUST AT RISK**

# LET DEMOCRACY DECIDE!

**NO BULLDOZING AHEAD**

**NO FORCED CLOSURES**

**NO UNACCOUNTABLE POWER**

# WAS ALL THE INFORMATION PROVIDED?



? WERE COUNCILLORS MISLED? ?

? WERE RISKS IGNORED? ?

LOCAL PLAN

**PLAN REJECTED**

**MISSING  
FACTS?**

## IT'S TIME TO RECONSIDER WEST OF I FIELD?

**DEMOCRACY DESERVES THE TRUTH**