

**COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT
TO
HAWKLEY PARISH COUNCIL**

17 MAY 2018

1. South Downs Local Plan commences examination

The first Local Plan to cover the entire South Downs National Park has been submitted to the Government. The Local Plan has been submitted alongside all of the evidence used in its preparation and more than 2,500 comments received in the pre-submission consultation in 2017.

Inspector Brian Sims has been appointed to conduct the examination to determine whether the South Downs Local Plan is sound. The Inspector will set questions to be answered by the Authority and other interested parties on the plan. All outstanding queries will be dealt with at public hearings, expected to be held at the South Downs Centre in Midhurst. The dates for hearings will be confirmed by the Inspector in due course.

The overall allocation of homes and the ratio of affordable homes are likely to be key issues for the examination. The South Downs Local Plan will make overall provision for approximately 4,750 net additional homes over a 19 year period between 2014 and 2033. That works out at around 250 homes per year in the entire South Downs National Park. Most developments will have to include 50% affordable homes.

2. New Secretary of State prioritises housing

On 30 April James Brokenshire MP was appointed Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

It is clear from his comments that housing is going to be his principal focus. The Government has already stated that it wishes to see 300,000 new homes built every year. In 2016-17 the annual new homes figure stood at 216,750 which was a 15% improvement on the previous year.

The Government consultation on the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is due to end on Thursday week and this is likely to be followed by the publication of the new NPPF in the Summer. National Parks get a reasonably good exemption in the draft revised text which currently reads:

“Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited. Planning permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest.”

The overall context for housing policy in the National Park will have a huge impact on site allocations in East Hampshire so I will keep an eye on the NPPF consultation and the South Downs Local Plan examination and update you all on interesting developments.

3. Mental Health Awareness Week 2018



This year Mental Health Awareness Week takes place between 14-20 May. The theme this year is “Stress: are we coping?”. Many employers and organisations will be encouraging workers to address stress-related issues and use toolkits to address them. There is an excellent toolkit available free online at

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/how-manage-and-reduce-stress>

Hampshire County Council is using the opportunity of Mental Health Awareness Week to communicate our Mental Health Strategy, focusing on young people. Soon all schools will have a mental health champion amongst their staff and schools nurses are also receiving extra training in mental health so that they are qualified to make referrals.

RUSSELL OPPENHEIMER

County Councillor for Petersfield Hangers