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'Now is the time for action' on harbour

MP urged to confront senior government colleagues

Joshua Powling
Political editor
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Tangible action to avert an 'environmental catastrophe' facing Chichester Harbour is urgently needed, campaigners have warned.

Senior figures from a number of major organisations met at Bosham Sailing Club last week to discuss the challenges facing the harbour.

John Nelson, chairman of the Chichester Harbour Trust, has since written to MP Gillian Keegan to press for a senior ministerial visit as well as a meeting to develop the 'overwhelming arguments' for a pause on significant new planning applications.

He outlined how short and long-term measures are required and the summit felt ministers should visit



John Nelson (front centre) and Jonson Cox (front right) host key environmental agencies in Bosham

the harbour and 'see for themselves the catastrophe it is facing'.

Mr Nelson highlighted the 'avalanche' of recent applications on the perimeter of the area of outstanding natural beauty (AONB), while measures to solve the water quality problem would take

years to execute.

Although he acknowledged the work Mrs Keegan had done behind the scenes, he said: "We need you to be a far more powerful advocate for the community and to be prepared to confront your senior ministerial colleagues more robustly."

Since December, Mrs Keegan has held meetings with Ofwat, Southern Water, the Environment Agency and Natural England, and she met the housing minister last week to highlight the problems the area is facing.

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EDITOR'S COMMENT

Politicians must take firm action on housebuilding

Political pundits all agree on one point. The Tories suffered the brutal loss of their ultra-safe Chesham and Amersham constituency in last week's by-election because of public anger at their planning free for all.

The issue there was amplified through the lens of the hated HS2 rail route - which will ruin glorious countryside and has been largely rendered irrelevant by the pandemic-born switch to working from home.

But the government's obsession to effectively let developers run riot over huge swathes of land while 'streamlining' the current time-honoured system of public debate has added to the sense of despair in middle England.

Politicians in Sussex could be equally vulnerable to this growing sense of outrage.

Across Sussex the headlines are dominated week after week by incredulity at the scale of house building being

proposed on previously sacrosanct land. Nor is there substantive evidence that these homes are for local people.

The problem is compounded by the failure to invest in decent infrastructure. The people of Chichester were promised hundreds of millions of pounds worth of improvements to that giant car park known as the A27 around the city but none has materialised.

The city itself, as it emerges from lockdown, is already jammed with traffic - not helped by the antiquated rail and level crossing system in the heart of Chichester which needs a dramatic overhaul. Forget HS2 - it's the existing creaky rail infrastructure in the engine house of the UK, the South East, that is in desperate need of investment.

All the while, building continues apace.

Most troubling across the region is the total dereliction of responsibility to protect the wildlife corridors around the jewel that is Chichester Harbour.

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News

'Urgent measures' to stop ecological decline

Joshua Powling
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A Chichester Harbour summit attended by key organisations has heard about the need for immediate action to halt the ongoing ecological decline.

The environmental welfare of the harbour, the inadequacy of sewerage infrastructure and the scale of proposed housebuilding have all been raised repeatedly with decision makers over the past few years.

And recently the Chichester Harbour Site of Special Scientific Interest was downgraded by Natural England to 'unfavourable declining' condition.

Last week a meeting, hosted by the Chichester Harbour Trust at Bosham Sailing Club, was held to discuss the challenges facing the harbour.

In attendance were senior representatives from the Chichester Harbour Conservancy, Southern Water, Ofwat, Environment Agency, Natural England, Chichester District Council and a representative from MP Gillian Keegan's office.

After a short walk along the shoreline to view the impact of the explosion of algal growth smothering mudflats, a socially distanced meeting enabled all parties to share their views and commitment to protect Chichester Harbour.

Jonson Cox, chair of regulator Ofwat, urged all agencies and local government to work together in order to address the impacts of water quality, compounded by climate change and new development on the ecology of this unique area.

There was unanimous agreement that the issues



Campaigners from the Save Our South Coast Alliance with John Nelson, chairman of Chichester Harbour Trust, at Dell Quay in March 2019

facing the harbour are now immediate and require short term action as well as long term investment, particularly to address deteriorating water quality.

John Nelson, chairman of the Chichester Harbour

Trust, said after the meeting: "I cannot stress enough the immediacy of the ecological decline we are witnessing so clearly and the need for urgent short-term measures to save the harbour. Now is the time for action."

EDITOR'S COMMENT

Efforts must be made to save our environment

(continued from front) In all of this, it has been down to local people to voice their protests - our leaders seem to pay nothing more than lip service to the crisis that is engulfing the region.

John Nelson, chairman of Chichester Harbour Trust, has been one of those speaking most vociferously on the subject. History and the environment will be indebted to him in equal measure for his efforts.

This week after a highly successful summit - at which there were the first fledgling signs of political support - he wrote to MP Gillian Keegan calling for a pause on major housing plans and asking her to support a ministerial visit.

We urge Mrs Keegan as well as our councils to respond positively to these concerns and suggestions. Mrs Keegan's column in this week's Observer and initiative on housing (page 32), and the district council's Q&A (visit the Observer website) are very welcome and positive steps.

But they must be followed by firm action and decisive leadership if they wish to avoid a repeat here of Chesham and Amersham.

The overriding lesson from all this is clear.

Central government must stop dictating housing numbers and policy and putting district councils in an entirely untenable position over their local plans. These should be matters delegated in their entirety to the communities.

London and central government have no business declaring a planning free for all in Chichester or any other part of this great nation - it should be for local people alone to be free to balance the local need for homes with vital infrastructure investment, economic growth and protecting the environment.

By Gary Shipton, Editor-in-Chief.

CHICHESTER UNDER SEIGE! WE NEED TO ACT NOW!

“Ministers have failed to develop coherent strategies for cutting emission from the most polluting sections of the economy and are not matching their climate rhetoric with action” the UK government’s environmental adviser warned on Thursday. - Lord Debden – Chair, Climate Change Committee

We need you ALL to write in NOW to:

The MP representing Chichester who does more to promote her career than promote all the devastating issues facing her constituency.

Gillian Keegan MP – gillian.keegan.mp@parliament.uk

The Secretary of State for Housing who does more to feed the greed of developers than for the people of this country who need affordable housing.

Rt. Hon. Robert Jenrick MP – robert.jenrick@communities.gov.uk

The Minister of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government

Rt.Hon. Christopher Pincher – christopher.pincher.mp@parliament.uk

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for The Department of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

Rt. Hon Rebecca Pow MP – rebecca.pow.mp@parliament.uk

The Lords Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for DEFRA

Rt. Hon. Lord Benyon – benyonr@parliament.uk

The Secretary of State for Transport

Rt. Hon. Grant Schapps. MP – Grant.Schapps@dft.gov.uk

Minister of State for Transport

Rt. Hon Christopher Heaton-Harris MP – chis.heatonharris@dft.gov.uk

Secretary of State for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs

Rt. Hon George Eustace MP – george.eustace.mp@parliament.uk

President of COP26 who is too busy saving the world to spare the time to save the UK

Alok Sharma MP – alok.sharma.mp@parliament.uk

Leader of CDC

Eileen Lintill – elintill@chichester.gov.uk

Chief Executive CDC

Diane Shepherd – dshepherd@chichester.gov.uk

SAVE OUR SOUTH COAST ALLIANCE

There is a great deal of data within our website most especially within our RESEARCH section that can be used for nearly all arguments to protect our environment across the Chichester Coastal Plain. Please do use but quoting SOSCA each time. ACTION NOW!

In a highly critical report on the government's progress on delivering economy-wide emission cuts, the Climate Change Committee said: "decarbonisation plans for key sectors such as housing had been repeatedly delayed, and that it was hard to discern any comprehensive strategy in the climate plans we have seen in the last 12 months."

John Gummer, also known as Lord Debden, Chair of the Climate Change Committee said:

"Almost all things that should have happened have either been delayed orhaven't hit the mark."

- Financial Times, June 2021

SAVE OUR SOUTH COAST ALLIANCE



NEWS BULLETIN N°7 SPRING/SUMMER 2020

INTRODUCTION

There has been a considerable delay in putting together this latest Bulletin due to the enormous work that we as a group have undertaken. Whilst it might appear that there has not been much activity

whereas in fact there has been a great deal taking place behind the scenes. The establishment of the COP26 organisation with its eight committees each having approximately eleven members have all been receiving letters from SOSCA putting forward arguments and criticisms of government policies that go right against the very spirit of COP26. These have been replicated to MPs, DEFRA, Environment Agency, Natural England and other similar government organisations.

Also there have been a considerable number of meetings taking place with other interested parties that are important in ensuring that all our efforts are co-ordinated and that there is a general consensus as to where to direct our energies. Hence Press Releases, letters to the local media, to the national media, and attendance of zoom meetings of various groups and listening in to relevant parliamentary debates .

SOSCA's level of support is growing and further afield. It includes the following communities:

Langstone, Emsworth and Westbourne, Southbourne & Nutbourne, Chidham & Hambrook, Bosham, Fishbourne, Donnington & Stockbridge, Oving & Tangmere, Hunston, Mundham, Sidlesham. Almodington, Birdham, Itchenor, West and East Wittering, Bracklesham, Earnley, Selsey, Pagham.

And others across Hampshire, throughout East and West Sussex, Surrey and South London

We also have regular articles on our work appearing in the following local journals:

The Chichester Observer, The Ems, The Village, and Selsey Life.

COMMITTEE

There have been several changes within SOSCA since the beginning of the year. We have welcomed three new members onto the Committee who all have a wealth of experience, and all feel very strongly about the future of our environment and its protection.

Ginny Kidd

Ginny Kidd has brought her qualified experiences of corporate finance, leadership consultancy and organisational skills to the Alliance. These include

North-western University, Illinois: Cranfield School of Management; MSc from University of Surrey and BA (Hons) Mathematics/Philosophy. She was recently involved with Friends of Chichester harbour

running their events. Her addition to SOSCA is hugely welcome.

Andreis de Vaal

Until his retirement in 2004 Andries led the global hotel, leisure, food service and travel industry group in Deloitte Consulting. Since then, he has been Chairman at Salon Hospitality Consulting. He is one of the most experienced experts in these areas in Europe, having been involved in numerous assignments throughout the world. He is widely known and respected amongst hotel chains, tour operators, developers, banks and other investors and owners, chartered surveyors and architects.

Whist his span of consulting experience is wide, his focus has increasingly been in the areas of tourism planning, business re-engineering, mergers and acquisitions and IT strategy and implementation.

It is his knowledge of the importance of tourism to the economy that will be his strongest contributing experience.

Andries has been a resident in Almodington, West Sussex for some 27 years.

Catja de Haas

Catja is a qualified architect, RIBA PHD, and founder and director of Catja de Haas Architects; a design-led, chartered practice with an interest in well designed, sustainable planning and housing. Her work has been published in WallPaper, ArchDaily, Inhabitat, the Times Magazine among other publications. The office runs The Giant Dolls' House Project, a social arts project that raises awareness for the importance of a home and community for all. With the dolls' house project Catja has worked with Oxfam, The housing and Homelessness charity Shelter, and recently the New Horizon Youth Centre. Through the dolls' house project, she has become aware of the importance of involving the general public in the development and rethinking of how to design sustainable communities and neighbourhoods.

Catja qualified as an architect at Delft University under Professor Herzberger and with A. Viaplana in Barcelona, (supported through an Erasmus Scholarship). She holds an MA in housing and Urbanism from the Architectural Association in London (supported through Fonds Voor Beeldende Kunsten).

She completed her PhD by design at the Bartlett school of Architecture, UCL, in 2013. Prior to setting up on her own she worked for Itsuko Hasegawa in Tokyo and Alsop Architects in London and had a small practice, Studio CS, with Sabina Riss.

She has been a visiting lecturer and crit at various universities (the Architectural Association, the Bartlett UCL, Westminster University, Hanzehogeschool Groningen, and Bournemouth University) and is currently teaching at Arts University Bournemouth (AUB). She has exhibited her own work at the Bartlett and TESTBED01 in Battersea.

In March 2021 she co-organised a series of lectures for the CDC, parish councils and planners in order to not only raise awareness of the widely known threads the area faces, but also to show that with good design, collaboration and good decision making there are opportunities to make the area better.

SOSCA EXCHANGE FORUM

We released the following Press Release on a meeting that SOSCA organised and hosted. It was thought that there was a need for all the communities along the East West corridor and across the Manhood Peninsula to join together to voice and share their concerns and experiences.

COMMUNITIES ACROSS CHICHESTER VOICE THEIR ANGER

In a highly unusual move, representatives from more than a dozen villages stretching from Emsworth to Oving and Pagham and across the Manhood Peninsula came together on 17 May in a

zoom meeting organised by SOSCA (Save our South Coast Alliance).

The villages are all being inundated with housing applications from large building companies, doubling the size of many of them and destroying their character, economy and environment, attendees claimed. The situation has arisen because of the difficulty faced by Chichester District Council in completing its Local Plan, due to an unrealistic government housing quota for a district with significant geographical and infrastructure constraints.

In a crowded southern England, Chichester's stunning coastal hinterland boasts an irreplicable collection of internationally designated wetlands. As a result, the area attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors each year, including migratory birds and other species and tourists from all over the country, and the world. The area is also blessed with a high proportion of Grade 1 and Grade 2 agricultural land and a thriving fishing sector. It is no coincidence that the area's principal economies of tourism and food production are based on its environment.

However, this unique environment and thriving economy will be irrevocably harmed by densely packed suburban housing, most of which will be unaffordable for local people.

Representatives at the SOSCA meeting, including parish councillors and residents working on neighbourhood plans, described how their villages would increase in size dramatically, several more than doubling. Oving, for example, a rural village of some 800 homes could expand by up to 2000 new homes; East Wittering, one of the last small villages on the south coast, has seen applications for hundreds of new homes in the last few weeks, Emsworth, Bosham, Chidham and Hambrook, Birdham, Fishbourne, Donnington, Oving, Pagham, East Wittering, Bracklesham, and other villages are facing a similar influx of planning

applications. Southbourne has completed a neighbourhood plan accepting some 1300 homes because it's parish council felt it was the only way to get some say in its future, its representative noted. Selsey Town has already doubled in size with its Medical centre built to support 6,000 now having to accommodate 30,000 during the summer months.

Lack of democratic accountability was one of the biggest criticisms levelled at the meeting. New housing is being planned and designed by large building groups, allowing for little or no input from local people, and all before the area's existing infrastructure deficits have been fixed. The speakers pointed out that Sewage and Water Treatment Plants, and intermediary pumping stations, are already operating at capacity. They shared cases of residents experiencing toilets backing up and tankers regularly having to empty the main drains of new housing estates.

Transport infrastructure is also not fit for purpose with no train service on the Manhood Peninsula and the main local roads of the A259, A286 and B2145 operating beyond capacity.

No viable long term solution has yet been put forward by Highways England for the A27. CDC's proposed Stockbridge Link Road from the Fishbourne roundabout to the A286 and other A27 junction changes will be disastrous for locals, the parish representatives agreed.

Meanwhile, the low lying nature of the whole area makes it extremely vulnerable to climate change. Flood risk zones have been altered when challenged by developers but the fact that the EA has warned that flood zones will be subject to continual change in the future, which may put new housing back into flood zones, is not being taken into account.

All the village representatives at the meeting called on CDC, the government and Gillian

Keegan MP to help before it is too late for the area. Residents believe that truly affordable and sustainable housing for local people can be built that will enhance the area's incredible environment, its unique sense of place, its thriving economy and its resilience to climate change. Planning in Chichester's coastal plain should focus on the creation of housing for local need in the same way that it is done in areas like the South Downs National Park, they argue. Relying on market housing to provide affordable housing in an area where outside demand for holiday and retirement homes will always exceed local demand is not a sustainable long term solution.

The response from the speakers after the event was positive. They felt it had been a most helpful exercise and many expressed surprise at how bad the situation was right across all the communities – that they were not suffering alone. It is now our hope that we can build on this Forum and continue to support all the initiatives.

DEPARTMENT for ENVIRONMENT, FOOD & RURAL AFFAIRS - (DEFRA)

In March of this year we sent out our Research Paper and Press Release on the downgrading of our SSSI of our AONB of Chichester Harbour. (See under Research and Media on web site) It was sent out to all the major national media. It was picked up by the Climate Change Network who published it within their contacts. It was also sent to all the Heads of the COP26 Committees and to each of their eleven members. It was thought to be a devastating blow to our AONB and completely at odds with all that the Government was saying about how they were building back better and how vital it was to protect the environment, and that they were determined to make the future greener etc. etc.

On the next page, we print in full below the response we received from the Minister:



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Rebecca Pow MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

Seacole Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

T 03459 335577
defra.helpline@defra.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/defra

Libby Alexander
Save Our South Coast Alliance

Our ref: PO2021/08958/NM

contact@sosca.org.uk

9 June 2021

Dear Libby,

Thank you for your email of 31 March about the status of coastal wetlands in England. I apologise for the delay in responding. Defra is currently dealing with high volumes of correspondence.

I note your concerns that some of these habitats are in decline and your request that the Government investigates the causes as a matter of national urgency. I recognise the importance of these wetland sites for people and nature. Many of our coastal habitats are protected in view of their biodiversity value but are also recognised as providing a range of important ecosystem services, including flood control, water purification, carbon capture and helping to offset the effects of climate change. I am aware that many of these habitats are under pressure from a range of issues, including diffuse water pollution, which can be very challenging and is best managed through a strategic approach. Our 25 Year Environment Plan marked a step-change in ambition for wildlife and the natural environment. We are already taking steps towards achieving the ambitions in the Plan, including developing a new Nature Strategy and bringing forward the first Environment Bill in over 20 years.

Regarding water dependent habitats, there are a broad range of measures in place to secure their favourable condition. This includes seeking improved performance from water companies to reduce the frequency and volume of sewage discharges from storm overflows. Defra is also developing a targeted Action Plan in liaison with other Government departments and agencies, defining short term actions to enable development to proceed without harming the condition of protected sites and longer term actions to tackle the sources of nutrient pollution e.g. agriculture and wastewater treatment works, and improve the condition of protected sites.

Additionally, the Environment Bill provides for Protected Site Strategies. These aim to protect and restore habitats whilst maximising local economic benefits where evidence shows that the condition of a protected site is affected by a range of problems and requires a strategic approach.

Thank you once again for taking the time to contact me about this important issue. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance with this or any other matters in the future.

REBECCA POW MP



As you see The Minister ends with a very generous offer of being of further assistance to which of course we have responded :

Dear Ms. Pow,

Thank you for your letter of 9th June 2021 and your offer of assistance. As you acknowledged, the lowline coastal habitats of the UK are hugely important for their biodiversity value and the nation's ability to mitigate climate change.

The Chichester Coastal Plain contains several internationally recognised wetland habitats including RAMSAR sites. While these individual sites are protected by national and international designations their future integrity is under threat due to the unprotected nature of the countryside between each of these sites. This has already been identified in a recent Natural England report into the declining state of Chichester Harbour, as you are aware.

Experts believe that not enough attention is being given to the future resilience of ecological coastal areas to climate change. (See evidence submitted by CIWEM and others to the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee). Coastal wetland is the UK's fastest disappearing ecosystem and one of the most important in terms of biodiversity and flood management. If the environment between coastal wetlands is not afforded a sufficient degree of protection then the designated wetlands will be unable to migrate sideways and inland as sea level rises, leaving the species reliant on this category of landscape stranded and threatened with extinction on the south coast.

Whilst SOSCA recognises the Government's commitment to honour the status of existing protected sites it is vital that more statutory recognition is given to the importance of the currently unprotected environment between clusters of designated coastal wetlands. This is particularly pertinent in the case of the ecosystems between Langstone, Chichester and Pagham Harbours, and Medmerry Coastal Realignment Nature Reserve, the largest and the most important areas of coastal wetlands on the entire UK's south coast.

Unfortunately, Chichester District Council faces a huge dilemma. More than 70% of its district lies within the South Downs National Park or the Chichester Harbour AONB. Faced with centrally imposed housing numbers the unprotected coastal plain faces the possibility of unsustainable development that will irrevocably harm one of the UK's most important biodiverse habitat areas.

Since 2001 the local communities of the Chichester's coastal plain have been working together and with national agencies such as Natural England, RSPB, Environment Agency, Chichester District Council, West Sussex County Council, Chichester Harbour Conservancy, and others to put in place a long term, integrated and strategic plan to futureproof the whole area's economic, environmental and social resilience to climate change. This work is now being overridden by CDC's lack of a Local Plan and the Government's 'Build, Build, Build' policy. Any environmental measures the government is planning in future legislation will be TOO LATE for the South Coast's wetlands. As the UK Government is preparing to host COP26 its Ministers are ignoring the destruction and potential extinction of one of the UK's most crucial carbon capturing biodiverse wetland areas.

As a result we urge you to meet with our local MPs and your fellow Ministers in Department for Housing, Communities & Local Government; Department of Energy & Climate Change; and Department for Transport in order to ensure that the local communities long standing work on the future viability of the area will not have been in vain.

This degradation that has led to the downgrading of such a nationally crucial and uniquely important environment across the Chichester Coastal Plain has not suddenly appeared. It has come about as a result of years of inaction by government ministries and government departments whose duty of care and responsibility have been woefully ignored, by disjointed policies in implementation of housing and planning, and by the cancellation of democratic rights of local communities.

This issue has been brought to the attention of RAMSAR in Geneva and I am copying in their UK representatives as requested by RAMSAR's Secretariat.

With Kind Regards, Libby
On Behalf of SOSCA.ORG.UK

STOCKBRIDGE LINK ROAD – AL6

The continuing battle to prove time and time again that this Link Road will be devastating on so many levels seem to be consistently blocked by Chichester District Council. They are tunnel visioned into filling the Manhood Peninsula with as many developments as possible. This comes about through not having a Local Plan and not contesting the housing numbers being imposed by central government. Below is the announcement by Diane Shepherd, Chief Executive, CDC on their decision to go ahead with the Link Road.

This policy has been countered on many occasions by SOSCA e.g.:

Agricultural land quality

The Agricultural Land Classification map London and the South East (ALC007). This record was published by Natural England on 24 August 2010 shows the land to be Grade 1 (Excellent) with a residual of Grade 2 (Very good). Source: <https://environment.data.gov.uk/DefraDataDownload/?mapService=NE/AgriculturalLandClassificationProvisionalEngland&Mode=spatial>

Flood Risk

Being between 3m and 6m above chart datum (OS) and laying astride the once-braided and now canalised delta of the River Lavant which debouches directly to Chichester Harbour some 480m to the west, there is flood risk to this area. It is important to understand that there are two separate sources of flood risk and there is then a third 'combination effect'. Firstly sea-level rises will bring this area within risk of tidal flooding in a way not adequately modelled by CDC. Secondly increasing frequency of prolonged rainfall that has typified very recent years threatens to overwhelm a drainage pattern that has remained hitherto adequate. Thirdly a set of meteorological conditions envisaged long ago to require the construction of the Thames Barrier viz:

low-pressure, high spring tides and gale-force winds from a particular direction and vastly increased storm-water flows would as likely overwhelm the area including the Apuldrum WWTW.

Sewerage

The Apuldrum WWTW is adjacent to the proposed site, but it has little if no further headroom to take connections from additional domestic or business premises. Such development would necessitate a

District Dispatch

Diane Shepherd
Chief executive
Chichester District Council



Local plan work reveals link road needed

As the Chief Executive of Chichester District Council, I will be taking over district dispatch from time to time and this time it is to update you on our progress with the local plan.

As you may be aware, we published the timetable for the local plan review earlier in the year.

Unfortunately, the plan has experienced delays and this has largely been due to elements of the plan that are in the control of other agencies.

We want to assure you that we are doing everything in our power to move forward with this piece of work as fast as possible.

Since our local plan was adopted in July 2015, the government has changed the way it calculates future housing needs and this means that we are now expected to take more housing within our area.

Over the past couple of years, we have spoken with government officials to explain the complex issues that we face.

Through the preparation of the new local plan we are testing if it is possible to accommodate the housing requirements set by the government.

This process factors in a number of key considerations including the ability to deliver critical infrastructure to support new housing.

It is important that we have considered all available options to meet the level of housing need set by the government. However, if our evidence shows that certain things are not possible, the Planning Inspector should take this into consideration when reviewing the government housing targets.

We know that people are concerned about some of the planning applications that are being submitted.

I want to assure you that we have robust measures in place for the council's consideration of planning applications.

In order to meet the government's housing targets, we need to make sure that the right roads and facilities are in place.

Although we are not responsible for these areas, they need to be resolved in order to deliver the plan.

We have carried out huge amounts of work, looking at where housing could possibly go and what new roads or improvements would be needed.

This requires us to carry out detailed assessments, accounting for all sorts of things, from the environmental impact to local economic needs.

This work has identified that we need a series of improvements to the junctions on the A27 and a link road from the Fishbourne roundabout, to the Manhood Peninsula.

Our partners have agreed that the evidence points to the need for the link road and this is needed in the absence of a government funded major scheme for the A27.

The proposed link road would cross over land owned by West Sussex County Council and they have now asked us to carry out a much more detailed assessment of benefits

and impacts.

This is a vital piece of evidence for the Planning Inspector who will review the plan, to consider whether it is acceptable for adoption.

Waste water has also long been a problem in the south of the district.

Following an official complaint to the Water Services Regulation Authority, Ofwat, we have been holding constructive meetings with Southern Water and the Environment Agency, and Southern Water has agreed to work with us jointly on identifying improvements that need to be made.

Over the coming months, we will be working with them to ensure that their commitment to effective progress and engagement in waste water issues is achieved and that the required evidence work on waste water disposal is completed.

We intend to continue to regularly update you on this important piece of work and you can sign up to our email newsletter at www.chichester.gov.uk/localplannewsletter

significant enlargement of this WWTW which is within the AONB and adjacent to the following protective designations: Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Protection Area, RAMSAR (Internationally important Wetland Protection Area) and Special Area of Conservation.

The Setting

The cathedral city and market town rely for its historical distinctiveness upon its setting between the South Downs, Chichester and Pagham Harbours. To permit urban sprawl right up to the boundary of the AONB at Apuldram will destroy this setting. Equally the symbolic significance of the city would be irreversibly harmed by rupturing the view from the harbour of the Cathedral spire and separate bell tower. This is an historic view of incalculable value. The necessity of elevating a new spine road through the site would seal the fate of this visual connection.

Nature Conservation

Birds associated with the neighbouring SPA are afforded protection under the guidance given by Natural England (Natural England Commissioned Report NECR207 - Functional linkage: How areas that are functionally linked to European sites have been considered when they may be affected by plans and projects - a review of authoritative decisions, first published 29 February 2016).

"Ensure the protection of the adjacent SPA, SAC, SSSI and RAMSAR site at Chichester Harbour, the AONB and the River Lavant Marsh LWS. This should include mitigation measures to avoid recreational disturbance"

Sussex Ornithological Society

"The policy for this housing allocation appropriately highlights the need to provide mitigation to ensure the protection of the adjacent SPA, SAC, SSSI and Ramsar at Chichester Harbour. However, the land in this policy is across the road from site 'C23' in the Solent Brent Goose and Wader Strategy (SWBGS) and has been designated as a 'Candidate area'. RSPB

Infrastructure

This link road will do nothing to alleviate the inevitable growth of constant traffic on the cul-de-sac road of A286 as developments are concreting over valuable agricultural land where the average house will have two cars. These households will need to access the congested A27 and/or into Chichester for schools, hospitals, etc. The CDC regularly refuse to take in to their calculations the influx of tourists during the summer months putting added pressure on an already creaking infrastructure. Their solution - to build hamburger junctions on the A27 at Fishbourne, Stockbridge, Whyke, and Bognor with no right hand turns on to the A27 This will cost not only millions in the construction but also to the local economy due to the inevitable years of destruction and diversions. It will also contribute to a huge long term deterioration in the health of the communities who will have to suffer a daily nightmare to negotiate their journeys to work, to schools, to hospitals, and to reach their city.

This hugely damaging link road will be raised to cross the flood plain of the River Lavant that crosses the land and exit on to the already most dangerous roundabout on the A27 – Fishbourne roundabout. The residents of Fishbourne already suffer from long queues on the A259 and the resultant rat run up Salthill Road. Thus, generating more accidents, more pollution and more damage to the fragile protected AONB.

The Council is allowing more holiday parks to be sold for housing thus damaging the economy of the entire area. These houses do not contribute one bit to the highly valuable tourist economy and are often left empty for so many are second homes.

There are not sufficient jobs, schools, nor medical facilities to cope with this huge influx of residents. For example, Selsey Town has a medical facility that was built to serve 6,000 residents. During the summer months it has to cope with 30,000.

Why is the Chief Executive using sophistic arguments to justify this destructive and ill-judged scheme which the public has already rejected when proposed by Highways England in 2016.

That CDC have been working tirelessly in the past two years to resolve issues which have been 'in the control of other agencies. These 'issues' were highly relevant in 2015 when the first Local Plan was put forward. Nothing that the government has said or done has changed that fact. Why then are these same 'issues' being used by CDC to excuse their discreditable inaction on behalf of their communities in 2021.

CHICHESTER HARBOUR PROTECTIONS UNDER THREAT

ACTION NEEDED 'NOW'

As mentioned on many occasions SOSCA works closely with The Chichester Harbour Trust. Our work is to engage as much as possible directly with the communities to keep you all informed and to continue to gain your essential support. This is much appreciated by The Trust. We have often commented that the odd occasions government departments respond to letters they are filled with caveats of 'what they are going to do'. This has been happening for the past eight years but suffering from consequences that go back much further. There has been no movement to improve. And yet the Prime Minister, Government Ministers, Heads of Government Departments are bombarding the public with statements declaring policies that are 'going to' build back better, protect our nation's incredible environment, the right houses in the right places, lead the world in protecting wildlife and biodiversity, and host the world's top ecological gathering of COP26 in November. That does not leave much time to repair the many years of government neglect of our national environmental well-being and the numbers of wildlife that are now on the extinction list.

Since not everyone reads The Chichester Observer we print in full below the strong and forceful letter to Gillian Keegan on the TRUE state of affairs across her constituency by John Nelson of The Chichester Harbour Trust. This was backed up by an equally forceful article by The Editor.

This is a true wake-up call to our MP, to CDC, and considering the Amersham political upset, to the Government. We must build on this. We therefore wish to request and encourage you all to write into Ministers, MPs, Councillors, CEOs of Departments, COP26 committees, national newspapers and all and everyone you know. There is sufficient ammunition for specific data within our website to equip you to be well researched in your responses.

SOSCA supporters:

Langstone, Emsworth and Westbourne, Southbourne & Nutbourne, Chidham & Hambrook, Bosham, Fishbourne, Donnington & Stockbridge, Oving & Tangmere, Hunston, Mundham, Sidlesham. Almodington, Birdham, Itchenor, West and East Wittering, Bracklesham, Earnley, Selsey, Pagham. And others across Hampshire, throughout East and West Sussex, Surrey and South London.

Contact

If you have any comments or ideas on the above, please do get in touch. We welcome any input, any links, any connections.

Email us via contact@sosca.org.uk