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20<sup>th</sup> January 2015

Dear Fellow Residents

You will no doubt have heard in the local press that the Planning Inspector has **rejected** Mayfields Market Towns (MMT) proposals following the Examination of the Horsham District Plan in November. The Inspector's preliminary report, published on December 19<sup>th</sup>, concluded that Mayfields is "**not required** in current circumstances" and there are "**significant concerns**" about its proposed location.

The inspector asked Horsham District Council to look at all the other development proposals that they had previously rejected, in order to find approximately an additional 2000 houses to be built by 2031. He took the very significant decision to specifically steer them away from the MMT proposals, as he considered that the massive increase in housing numbers they were pushing for is neither required, nor sustainable, nor supported by the local community.

The report acknowledged that should Gatwick be chosen to have a second runway, then all councils would have to review housing numbers. However, in November the Airport Commission released a report examining the impact of Gatwick on housing requirements in the area and concluded that, "the demands on any individual local authority are likely to be relatively small". On the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2015, West Sussex County Council (WSCC) voted by 37 to 26 to reverse its decision of July 2013 to support expansion of the airport. Kent County Council withdrew its backing for a second runway in November, because of new flight paths. LAMBS, Horsham and Mid-Sussex District councils, with whom we continue to be closely co-operating, acknowledge that Gatwick expansion will put increased pressure on housing, but the inspector specifically noted that it would be up to local Councils to decide how to meet those needs.

Horsham and Mid-Sussex District Councils (the planning authorities) remain firmly opposed to Mayfields Market Towns proposals, and we have no reason to expect that position to change, whatever the outcome of the Gatwick decision; both councils recognising, as did the Inspector, that you cannot simply build anywhere. The Inspector made this clear in his report by stating: "At present, to my mind significant concerns have been raised about the sustainability of the location of the MMT site, in particular its distance from railway services and the strategic road network and the potential usage and viability of the 'park and ride' proposals. The deliverability of the preferred 10,000 dwelling option, with employment development, within two local authority areas without their support, and in the face of strong opposition from two local MPs, parish councils and local people, including land owners, is also an issue of concern. The scheme for just half of what the promoters ideally prefer in Horsham District alone would appear to dilute the fundamental concept and raises further uncertainty about delivery."

We are waiting for an official response to the Inspector's report from the Directors of Mayfield Market Towns, and they have advised that they will be having a board meeting at the end of this month to discuss how they move forward. Their website states that at present it is basically business as usual, and even implies that the Inspector did not report on their New Market Town of 10,000 dwellings, but a smaller scheme. You can see from the above this is patently untrue.

We understand that MMT's representatives are continuing to approach some local residents and landowners trying to get them to sign options to purchase their land in the unlikely event that they were ever to obtain planning permission. This is despite the fact that they were forced to reveal to the Inspector during the examination, that in order to fund the infrastructure required for their scheme, they could only pay land owners £30-40,000 per acre, less than 5% of usual development land values. If you do want to sell land for development and obtain proper land values, there are opportunities to do this now through the neighbourhood planning process, which is being undertaken by our Parish Councils at the moment, and we would advise anyone seeking this route to take professional advice.

If you are approached to sign an option please bear in mind, Compulsory Purchase Orders will not apply – that was made clear at the Hearing. They cannot “build around you” as it would not be sustainable. Remember, the presence of Options do have to be declared at the Land Registry, and not only will the option devalue your own land, but that of your neighbours and the wider area for the period of the option and beyond.

Once MMT have announced their decision, assuming they are going to continue promoting their scheme, LAMBS have arranged with our new planning consultants to meet legal representatives in London. We will be investigating what redress is available to us, and local residents, both in the UK and European courts if necessary. It is completely unacceptable for people to have had uncertainty damage the value of their homes for the past two years – and this will continue for many more years if not stopped NOW. This blight is being caused solely by the directors of Mayfield Market Towns, who have whole heartedly failed to win any support for their scheme, but whatever they are told by the local planning authorities or by official national bodies, who all point out the unsuitability of area they have targeted in relation to the NPPF, they march on regardless, with a complete disregard and contempt for our local democracy and governance.

We will keep you posted.

Kind regards  
The LAMBS Committee

PS. Please see the Inspectors report in full on HDC website