

Good morning, I am Ruth Fletcher, Cabinet Member for Planning and Infrastructure and I am pleased to welcome you all to the second stage of the hearings for the Horsham Local Plan.

Welcome everyone: to Inspector Bore, to residents and community groups and professionals -whether you are here today, listening to the livestream or joining us over the next two weeks.

This has been a long and a difficult process with multiple stages of consultation and feedback that have shaped the plan.

Making a plan requires many compromises and difficult trade-offs, but not having a plan does not stop development. No plan would mean:

- more applications in poorer locations,
- applications that deliver less infrastructure and lower standards,
- lengthy and uncertain appeals which waste the time and money of developers, residents and the council.

Getting Horsham back to plan-led development continues to be the priority for this council. The uncertainty about LGR timing adds to the need to have this in place avoiding the risk of going into a unitary without an up-to-date plan

We now believe we are at a point where we have a sound and positive plan to shape the future of our District:

- providing homes our residents need,
- putting the strongest possible emphasis on delivery of the schools and other infrastructure that are necessary to serve strong and effective communities
- and implementing the highest design and environmental standards that the current, more restricted plan-making process now allows us to.

We are all under very strong pressure to provide housing to meet the government's targets, but a plan with targets that are not deliverable will not help our residents or anyone else. The plan therefore proposes stepped targets which take into account the legacy impact that water neutrality has had on housing delivery in our area and, while they cannot be guaranteed in this uncertain world, they are challenging but realistic.

The Council's proposed Main Modifications were agreed by Cabinet in July and in the consultation over the summer we received nearly 2000 representations on them. I would like to thank everyone who has taken the time and effort to take part.

I am grateful to Inspector Bore for his guidance and commitment to meeting a very tight timescale and to our team of professional officers who have also been working very hard preparing responses to the Inspector's matters, issues and questions.

Regards

Ruth

Ruth Fletcher

Councillor for Denne Ward

Cabinet Member for Planning and Infrastructure