

## EAST GRINSTEAD TOWN COUNCIL

### Policy Response to the West Sussex County Structure Plan 2001-2016 Consultation

**The following initial submission was made to West Sussex County Council following consideration of the first draft Structure Plan consultation document. This official response was agreed at meetings of the Planning Committee on 21 January 2002 and Council on 4 February 2002.**

- (i) That proposals in Plan Policy LOC1 for up to 2,500 houses on and to the west of East Grinstead (or up to 2,650 houses if the proposed Mid Sussex District Council amendment is approved) to be built before 2016 be supported in principle subject to:
  - 1. The provision of an effective relief road being a legal prerequisite and such legal agreement to be signed before any planning consent for additional houses be approved;
  - 2. A comprehensive environmental assessment of the development land being undertaken, including the land identified as necessary for the relief road, which should be built in the new development and not immediately adjacent to the existing East Grinstead built up area;
  - 3. That the highest quality design standards in keeping with this landscape be sought for all proposed development in this environmentally sensitive area;
  - 4. The approved Fastway scheme for the Crawley area being extended to East Grinstead (Policy NE13 and Plan paragraph 196) and to other public transport improvements being implemented;
  - 5. Other planning benefits being agreed at planning negotiation stage including developer contributions towards education improvements, enhanced leisure and community services and other basic infrastructure.
- (ii) that paragraph 80 of the Draft Structure Plan be deleted in its entirety;
- (iii) to amend paragraph 77 on page 18, 4th bullet point beginning “East Grinstead”, final sentence by adding the word “*must*” after “2006 and” and before “include a relief road”. Sentence will now read, “Development should start after 2006 and *must* include a relief road on the western side of the Town.....” ;
- (iv) to amend policy NE15, page 45, by inserting:  
*(d) (2) ensure that the needs of public transport users will be met, including the provision of measures to avoid buses being slowed by congestion; and renumber existing (d) (2) and (d) (3) to (d) (3) and (d) (4) respectively;*
- (v) to amend paragraph 248 on page 52, last sentence by inserting “*East Grinstead*” before “*Chichester*”. Sentence now reads, “Schemes for East Grinstead, Chichester and Burgess Hill will be investigated in relation to strategic development proposals.”;

- (vi) that proposals set out in Policy NE19 for a road/rail transport interchange at East Grinstead Railway Station be wholeheartedly supported with the request that this be constructed as soon as possible from 2006.

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**The following sets out the Town Council's formal submission to the Examination in Public in December 2002, as presented by Councillor Gillbard, Chairman of the Planning Committee.**

**WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL STRUCTURE PLAN 2001-2016  
DEPOSIT DRAFT: EXAMINATION IN PUBLIC**

**Statement of Case by East Grinstead Town Council - Ref No. 04487; Issue 6(iii)**

**Introduction**

East Grinstead Town Council was established in 1974 as a result of reorganisation emanating from the 1972 Local Government Act. As a tertiary local authority the Town Council welcomes its consultative role in all local planning issues and the opportunity to make specific representations at this Examination in Public. This statement expands on the representations made by the Town Council to the Deposit Draft Structure Plan on 11th February 2002.

**The Issues for Land West of East Grinstead**

- (a) What would be the impact upon features of acknowledged importance and what are the environmental constraints (including the risk of flooding and the impact upon the Strategic Gap)?*

It is recognised that new housing development on the scale proposed, namely 2,500 houses, will have the effect of generating substantial additional traffic which, without the construction of an effective relief road, would be unsustainable on the existing road network.

Any development west of East Grinstead will inevitably impact upon the Strategic Gap between East Grinstead and Crawley. It is essential therefore that the new development must be planned and built in a way that protects that Strategic Gap as much as possible and ensures that there is no coalescence with Crawley Down.

- (b) What are the transport implications and needs?*

There is an existing and long established requirement for an effective relief road around East Grinstead. The current road network is already at, and may even be beyond, saturation point. Construction of a relief road must be a legal prerequisite and a binding legal agreement for this must be signed before any planning commitment for the new houses is entered into.

A comprehensive environmental assessment of the land being identified as necessary for the relief road must be undertaken in order to ensure that the proposed route is not environmentally damaging.

The approved Fastway scheme for the Crawley area must be extended to East Grinstead in accordance with the requirements of Deposit Plan policy NE13 and Plan paragraph 196 and other public transport improvements must be implemented.

In addition proposals set out in policy NE19 for a road/railway transport interchange at East Grinstead Railway Station are wholeheartedly supported. It is the Town Council's wish that this be constructed as soon as possible from 2006.

*(c) What would be an appropriate timescale for development having regard to the necessary infrastructure provision and how much development could realistically be provided?*

The Town Council supports development of land to the west of East Grinstead commencing in 2006 subject to a prior legal agreement on the construction of the relief road. The Town Council recognises that the development is likely to take a number of years to conclude but would wish to see the development completed well within the time frame for this Structure Plan.

The Town Council wishes to see the highest quality design standards for any new development in keeping with the landscape of this environmentally sensitive area.

The Town Council also wishes to see other planning benefits being agreed at planning negotiation stage with a constructive input from the Town Council, including developer contributions towards education improvements, enhanced leisure and community services and other basic infrastructure.

*(d) Are there alternative and better locations for strategic development close by?*

The Structure Plan states the new development will be west of East Grinstead. There is a strong belief that the County and District Councils are however only committed to this new development being built on one specific site, namely, Imberhorne Farm. If this is the case then the Draft Structure Plan should clearly state this. However, the Plan has never identified any specific site and therefore the Town Council sincerely trusts that the process of site identification will be objective, fair and thorough and be based on a comprehensive assessment of the various sites available. This should pay particular regard to environmental factors and issues of sustainability. In all of this the Town Council has an open mind about a preferred site for development west of East Grinstead. Members do however share the concerns of Imberhorne Residents Association that Imberhorne Farm is not the only option available. All possible locations including land east of Imberhorne Lane, that is closer to the Station and town centre than Imberhorne Farm, should be considered as part of the objective planning process described.

### **Town Council's concluding comments**

In conclusion the Town Council does support, in principle, the County Council's policy to develop 2,500 new homes west of East Grinstead and welcomes the recent proposed change that recognises the development **must** be contingent upon the early provision of a relief road to improve traffic conditions in the Town. The Council considers that development on this scale is required not only to fund the relief road

and other infrastructure requirements but also to give impetus to East Grinstead's economic growth and to give a positive boost to attracting inward private investment.

The Town Council also welcomes enhanced passenger transport links to Crawley/Gatwick but believes the Structure Plan needs to go further than its current intention which merely refers to a possible extension of Fastway. Such extension is considered to be essential.

Regarding the development itself the Town Council seeks an assurance that proper and effective planning proposals and assessments, including on environmental and sustainability grounds, will be undertaken to ensure that the site eventually selected to the west of East Grinstead is indeed the most appropriate for this purpose.

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**The Town Council will be responding to the second deposit draft of the West Sussex County Council Structure Plan once it has been published and there has been an opportunity to review in detail what is proposed. This response will be agreed at a special meeting of the full Council on a date to be determined, but probably mid-October 2003.**