

Dear Claire

District Plan for Mid Sussex

Further to the letter of 7th June 2011 from Gary Marsh inviting Towns and Districts to feed in to the overall District Plan, I am writing to advise you of the current position of East Grinstead Town Council.

East Grinstead Town Council very much welcomes the opportunity to feed in to the District Plan, we feel that it is paramount that the Town and Parish Councils represent the views and thoughts of the residents and businesses of the Town, when determining the direction and development of the Town for the next 20 years.

We are aware of the challenging timescale that Mid Sussex hopes to follow in the adoption of a District Plan. You will also be aware that some initial work was carried out for East Grinstead Town Council prior to the local elections resulting in a vision document that sets out some aspirations for the Town. However this document is only a starting point and the new administration has established a working group to drive forward a neighbourhood/ town plan that we can feed in for consideration with the District Plan. This new plan is however very much in infancy. The group has however set itself a very tight timescale to supply this report at least in draft stage to you by the end of 2011. Outline views will be provided in time for the Mid Sussex District Council September Better Environment Advisory Group.

To assist you at this early stage we have the following comments that we would wish to make:

East Grinstead Town Council believes:

The three towns of Mid Sussex are demographically and geographically different, therefore facing different challenges and opportunities, these differences should be acknowledged and represented in an overall District plan, not treating the three as simply one third of the District.

East Grinstead is not resistant or unwilling to take development, however this must be proportionate to need and appropriate for the towns development. The town wishes to preserve its existing strategic gaps to ensure that the towns and villages remain separate. The Town wishes to seek pledges that economic growth is encouraged internally rather than the town developing to simply accommodate external growth for example around the Gatwick diamond.

It is recognised that many residents now commute away from the town daily and growing businesses often rely on good commuting networks. It must therefore be assured that appropriate infrastructure pledges to accommodate and stimulate growth are given.

It would not be appropriate to consider a blanket Community Infrastructure Levy for the whole of the District. The levy must be determined based on evidence based need and therefore the cost of

providing the infrastructure, which could well be different across the District. At the very least we would suggest that the three towns be considered separately.

We intend to use the previous health checks, traffic research and reports on the Town that have been undertaken over the past few years, as a result we intend to have good evidence base for the plan that we submit. Although some updating of evidence and is needed and time and funding may result in our needing to change our priorities or assumptions as the true and current position emerges from the work that we undertake.

We further intend to include various groups and individuals as part of our research to help inform the plan and undertake public consultation. We reserve the right to undertake a referendum as we see fit and subject to the provisions of the emerging localism legislation.

We fully appreciate that this is very fluid and less detailed than may have been hoped by yourselves. However we feel that it is an important document that will result in the strategic plan for the development of East Grinstead and as such must be completed as soon as possible, but as thoroughly as possible within this timetable and based on very firm foundations. We do as stated above intend to issue further information to you as it emerges and our initial outlines are due for September to help inform and take this timetable forward.

We are more than prepared to meet with you and hope to inclusively work with you in order to make sure that we are able to deliver a meaningful document which the District is able to adapt in to the overall plan without too much difficulty.

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