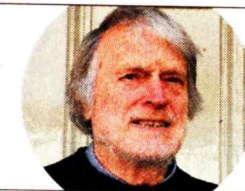


Horsham Society

David Holmes



Good design to enhance our town

Can Legal and General make a success of the development north of Horsham? They hope so and so do we. Horsham Society wants to see a well-designed development that enhances our town of Horsham. It should not give the impression of yet another cramped, high density, commuter settlement but be the attractive outskirts of a Sussex market town. It must meet the need for affordable homes and provide local jobs reducing the need to commute.

This should all be achievable, although their recent press release which says, "This site represents the first step for Legal & General to expand its current Strategic Land capabilities into Master Development", does raise concern. This must not be a first step where Legal and General learn from mistakes made, it must be a success. If that means more consultation with the community than is usual, or working with partners who have more experience, then they must do so.

Somebody must take responsibility for the design of the whole site. It cannot be parcelled up and left to individual developers who may use low cost materials



The North Horsham development zone.

and standard building designs. There needs to be an effective structure to monitor the proposals of individual developers, so that the overall objectives are not compromised.

When this site was first suggested there was talk of it being a separate settlement from Horsham. This may not now be intended but more may need to be done if it is to be tightly linked to the town. The present ring road must not be a barrier, there must be frequent bus links to the

centre, there should be a pleasant and direct cycle route and the roads in must flow freely. If the people who eventually settle in to this new development use Horsham's shops, markets, restaurants, pubs, theatre and leisure facilities the town centre will be vibrant rather than risk decline.

This development was proposed in 2014, the initial planning application submitted July 2016 and approved nearly two years

later March 2018. Time is passing and both the new homes and the job opportunities from the Business Park are needed. Legal and General should provide some certainty on when these will be provided.

Despite agreements that have already been reached, consideration should be given to providing truly affordable homes for social rent. Private rental with two months' notice does not provide adequate security of tenure for people who are wishing to put down roots and bring up families.

So that sufficient affordable housing can be provided consideration could be given to more terraced housing with back gardens using a Victorian grid pattern - economic use of land, but giving everyone their own defensible space.

We welcome Legal and General's involvement and their enthusiasm. The Society hopes that they will make good use of the Society's "Good by Design" guide. It draws attention to 25 key considerations. We would urge that particular attention is given to the quality of the master planning, mix and use of character, transport systems and interconnecting access, architectural design, landscaping, green spaces and trees.