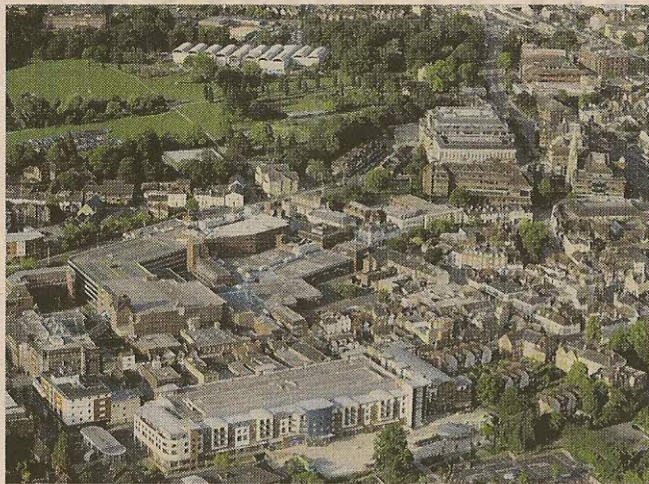


David Moore: using gateway into town is a dismal experience



An aerial view of Horsham's Blackhorse Way

We all know that the original purpose of Blackhorse Way in Horsham was to act as a service road to the shops on the south side of West Street and later to service some units on the Forum. But since the town centre redevelopment it has been the only gateway into the Carfax and Causeway, two of the most historic and attractive parts of our town.

Blackhorse Way has presented us with an unsightly appearance for many years. Unfortunately, this has now become a major issue.

The back of many of the retail units is unsightly due to a lack of maintenance. The refuse bins that are left outside the units are unattractive and very often overflowing with rubbish.

We also find debris that

should be in the bins lying on the floor.

It is a dismal experience for anyone, who has the misfortune to have to use the road either on foot, by bicycle or in a car.

If it's a depressing

experience for us when we use it, what message does it send to our visitors?

So we've done the easy bit. We've criticised what we have and got it out of our system. We've done this many times before but nothing has really changed so how do we break the mould?

What we need is for everyone to make a concerted effort and make something happen.

We need the retailers to take a pride in the appearance of the rear of their units. We need owners of the properties to ensure that their buildings receive adequate maintenance, including external redecoration.

The traders should resolve the rubbish problem.

How many refuse collections in Blackhorse Way are only undertaken on a weekly basis?

Would more regular collections be feasible? Could the refuse bins be stored in a less visible way?

Horsham District Council and West Sussex County Council also need to consider what action they could take to help deal with the problem. This does not necessarily mean enforcement action.

However, it does mean leadership and giving some idea as to how the problem may be resolved for the benefit of everyone concerned, not least the town itself.

Our council is looking at the problem but it will never find the solution by itself.

It's going to need the active involvement of everyone concerned. Is there a way in which the traders can be engaged in this process?

We need to demonstrate what benefits our town might gain if we get our act together.

Doing nothing is not an option. There is a solution. All we have to do is to find a sensible and cost effective way in which it can be achieved. Let's do something now. Let's get Blackhorse Way looking as if it's part of a viable approach to a town centre and not as if it's the approach to a down at heel slum area.

Service roads do not have to be dirty and unkempt so why should we accept such a situation in Horsham?

The Horsham Society is concerned about the past, present and future of the town. It seeks to promote good planning and design for the built environment and open spaces. Membership of the Horsham Society is open to anyone, who shares these concerns. For more information, visit our website www.horshamsociety.org or telephone 01403 261640.