



ROMSEY & DISTRICT SOCIETY

Reg. Charity 269308

PRESS RELEASE

Society says “Housebuilding targets: Make your views known!”

The Romsey & District Society has issued a call for people to respond to the latest proposed targets for housebuilding on greenfield sites in southern Test Valley.

Hampshire County Council is consulting on how the South East Regional Assembly should allocate the 80,000 new houses needed between 2006 and 2026 in the South Hampshire sub-region stretching from Romsey to Havant. Even with major new strategic development areas proposed near Hedge End and Fareham, and 38,000 houses on brownfield sites, 12,500 will still be needed on greenfield sites. The question is: How many of these should be in the Romsey/Nursling/Chilworth/North Baddesley/Ampfield area?

The three options are 2500, 3250 or 4000, and there is absolutely no realistic prospect of any lower total than 2,500 over the 20-year period. None of the options focuses on specific sites in the area – that will come later in Test Valley’s own Local Development Framework.

Chris Amery, chairman of the Society’s Planning Subcommittee, made the Society’s view clear: “We want to defend Romsey’s unique character as an independent and vibrant market town. That means above all keeping its geographical expansion to an absolute minimum and preserving clear southern and eastern boundaries. That way we best preserve its character and its traditions, and its attractiveness as a centre for all the neighbouring villages. It is very difficult to see how 2,500 houses could be accommodated, and absolutely impossible to envisage any more than that.” Chris went on to cite the main constraints: traffic, narrowness of existing countryside gaps, water and waste, ecology. “If Portsmouth, Fareham and Southampton want to grow their economy faster that’s fine” he added, “but Romsey should remain a market town and not become a dormitory for them. Build the houses near the jobs!”

And Society chairman Kate Clark weighed in with an impassioned plea to all local residents who care: “Please make your views known! Respond to HCC’s questionnaire, with your own reasons why we must resist anything but the minimum allocation. These three options are all on the table but only one of them is even remotely acceptable.”

The consultation document “Where shall we live?” with questionnaire, is available on the HCC website at www.hants.gov.uk/environment/downloads/where-shall-we-live.pdf or from 01962 845025, or in many cases is being delivered to households in the mail. Responses are due at HCC by October 21.

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For more information contact Chris Amery (01794 523135).