**LOCAL PLAN INSPECTOR’S POST HEARING ADVICE**

You may have read that the independent Planning Inspector Christa Masters has reported back on her findings regarding Eastleigh Borough Council’s (EBC) proposed Local Plan. You can find the full content of her report [here](https://www.eastleigh.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy-and-implementation/local-plan/local-plan-examination/latest-news-and-updates).

Fair Oak and Horton Heath Parish Council objected vigorously to the Plan which proposed building up to 5500 houses on land to the North and East of Fair Oak and Bishopstoke and the link road from Mortimers Lane to Allbrook and the motorway junction, both to the Borough Council and the Planning Inspector in 2013, 2016 and 2019. Our objection was based on the inconsistent reasons EBC gave for selecting the proposed strategic growth option site and disregarding other areas in the Borough. As well as the effect that the building major link roads and increased traffic would have on our villages, the National Park to which it adjoins, Stoke Park Woods, part of the ancient Forest of Bere as well as the countryside in-between – some of which is ancient parkland.

The Inspector has recognised these inconsistencies in EBC’s decision making, in selecting the SGO site and some options which were discounted without any evidential basis particularly Hamble airfield.

Her conclusion is that: -

“Overall it is apparent that the process of considering the reasonable SGO (strategic growth option) alternatives has not been undertaken on an equal footing. I consider the process to be flawed” (paragraph 21) and “I am unable to conclude that the approach to site selection of the SGO represents a justified and evidence-based approach”.

On traffic and the link road she says this would cause

“Significant harm to the National Park”

And concludes

**“I am unable to conclude that the selected SGO (***policies S5 housing options B and C and policy S6 the link road)* **represents the most suitable option when considered against all other reasonable alternatives and are not justified. I therefore conclude that these policies should be deleted from the local plan”.**

She then gives Eastleigh Borough Council some options to consider – either adopting the Plan with her main modifications or to contact her as soon as possible for her to determine how best to continue with the Plan examination, adding that the only alternative may be to withdraw the Plan.

Obviously this is a lot for a Borough Council to consider especially in such difficult circumstances and so we will need to wait and see what their response is. We will continue to keep you updated.

Meanwhile a BIG thank you to all our residents who have helped us in making our objections so clearly heard.