

### **REGENERATION STRATEGY.**

Havant Borough Residents' Alliance formed two years ago following the publication of the Council's Housing Statement. HBRA is an alliance of eight residents groups and three conservation groups.

During the last two years HBRA has met with officers and councillors and pressed hard for regeneration of the brown field land in our town centres and welcome the new initiative, particularly Council intervention and the use of Compulsory Purchase. We feel that it is a long overdue analysis, setting out the borough's negative and positive points, but we remain unconvinced the actions proposed so far, will contribute to a more positive balance of outcomes. **It would have been helpful to ask these questions before work started on the draft Local Plan two years ago.**

### **Jobs and Skills.**

The local skills base is a concern jobs have been lost when employers have relocated from Havant because they could not recruit. It is not stated in the Regeneration Strategy document but data published last year showed that schools in the **Havant Parliamentary constituency, have had the lowest application rate for university in England**. Actions needed should include; raising aspirations, boosting participation in higher education, up skilling the local workforce, raising wage levels, particularly female pay to achieve a better comparison with the regional average.

Closer working with Hampshire County Council, other agencies and Government is vital.

### **New Focus is needed.**

There needs to be more in the strategy about the changing employment landscape particularly Artificial Intelligence, as Havant's job mix with low skilled jobs would be vulnerable. Focus is needed on climate change, how it will impact on our coastal geography and resilience solutions to coping with flooding and extreme weather events and pollution.

The Regeneration Strategy hardly mentions **social aspects** of living in the borough and the measures needed to make it a better place to live. Housing and facilities for an ageing population, access to transport, clean air and space to enjoy nature and leisure pursuits all have a place to play in a vision statement and are sometimes described as the "happiness index".

### **Just to Focus on one part of the borough Leigh Park.**

The statement on the Leigh Park area in the document seems to ignore the current unusually wide range of tenure. The current housing offer is described as homogenous yet there is actually a very wide range of types of construction including many new homes. The biggest infrastructure project planned for the borough is the Havant Thicket Reservoir in Warren Park this will create jobs, waterside homes, as well as a range of leisure facilities, but does not get mentioned. The section regarding Leigh Park in the future being a "desirable place to live" is ill informed and implies it is not at the moment and should be rewritten. Leigh Park Warren Park and West Leigh is already desirable place to live for thousands of our residents. The land at the Leigh Park shopping centre is ideal for

housing but development has not progressed. Regeneration strategy should also focus on future maintenance of new rented housing stock where many will be living.

### **Property Values.**

On page 17 line seven there is a reference to low property values. This needs to be clarified should it say "low commercial property values"?

### **Does the Regeneration Strategy Conflict with Draft Local Plan?**

In places the Regeneration Strategy seems to conflict with the draft Havant Local Plan which is based on housing numbers and the need to make housing more affordable. Proposed new projects to bring in a new demographic, including the homes on the Council's Plaza car park **may not be affordable to a large number of local residents in this borough who are in housing need. There is no mention of the housing and facilities needed for our ageing population which would be ideal on town centre land.** As the list of projects is confidential it is impossible to comment more at this stage and we would welcome more detail.

### **Development sites.**

HBRA has already expressed concerned about the appearance of , and safety issues on, many sites awaiting development and would like to see some mention in the Regeneration Strategy of how these will be managed.

### **Conclusion.**

Havant Borough is good place to live and work but has fallen behind the rest of the Hampshire County Council administrative area apart from Gosport. Resident's homes in our borough are well kept but many of the town centres including Leigh Park, Watrelooville and the designated St Faith's Conservation areas in Havant Town and much of the public realm look run down and uncared for.

These areas have lacked prioritisation for the last decade when bringing more shops to Havant has been the main and misguided Council focus. Stage one of the Regeneration Strategy will do nothing to change this.

We would also like to see more councillors walking their wards and report regularly to Customer Services the numerous public realm issues needing repair and maintenance that blight our town centres but could be remedied.

We hope you will expand Regeneration Strategy to give a much fuller vision for the borough and engage fully with local stakeholders to bring about the full potential of our area.

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