



## NEWS BULLETIN N°5 AUTUMN 2020

### Introduction

The good news this week, according to press reports, is that there has been a climbdown by The Housing Minister, Robert Jenrick, following the threat of a backbench revolt over the plans to enforce housing numbers based on a rogue 'algorithm'. However, we must not celebrate too quickly as this has not been given Governmental status. We will still have the huge threat of over development. According to Litchfields the number of houses that were due to be built in the South East would increase by 57% to 61,000 whereas those in the north of the country would decrease.

Unfortunately, the bad news is whilst the Government is said to be prepared to look at other aspects of the plans such as a fairer allocation of housing numbers it is still determined to fulfil the target of 300,000 new homes every year.

These developments will still consist of badly designed houses, wrecking local village communities, destroying the environment, choking the residents

with poor air quality, and infrastructure collapsing due to lack of investment. Part of the problem is the demand to live by the coast and a national park which can never be satisfied. Over demand will of course degrade the whole area into a giant 'sink site' in the next 10 years which yes would bring house prices down, eventually – but the result would be misery to all the inhabitants. This cannot be the right future for the area and its communities.

The change of heart by the Government was brought about by a huge outcry from environmental groups right across the country. SOSCA played a part on behalf of its supporters by contacting all the MPs in the South East setting out its strong feelings against the entire planning procedure. Amongst the many important points that we contested was the shutting down of local democracy by continuing to promote centralisation by Westminster.

There is a battle looming for an end to all these developments. We are launching a Petition to request a halt until and when all infrastructure is in place and we will need your help to promote it. We will be publishing it in our SOSCA web site under the Petition section.

## COP26 – Glasgow

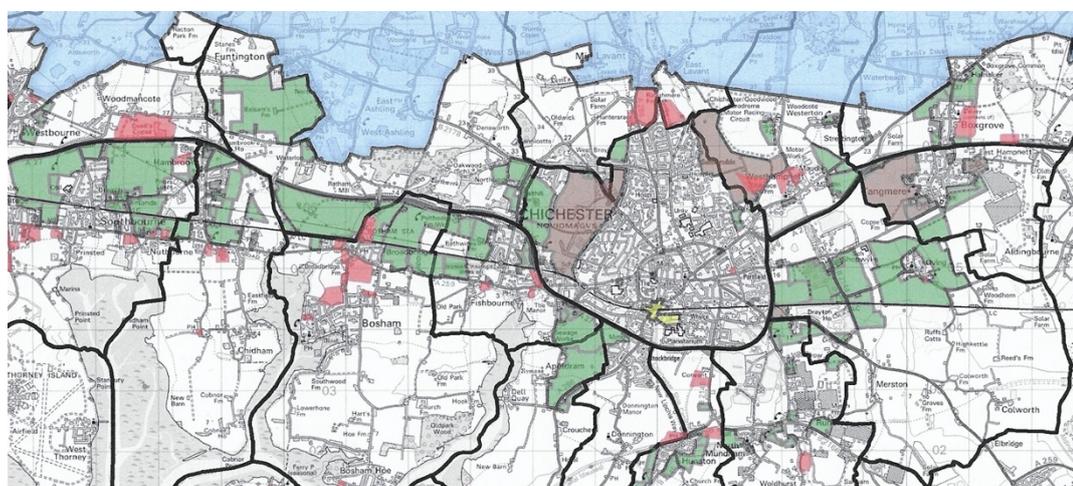
November next year the UK Government will be hosting the COP26 forum on the environment in Glasgow. This is the 26th UN Climate Change Conference with COP standing for Conference of the Parties.

Publicly the Government is declaring its huge commitment to the protection and enhancement of the UK environment when the reality is the opposite.

This will be further exacerbated when on leaving the EU the authority to oversee this protection - the Office of Environment Protection - is already having its remit watered down. Each day that goes by the Government issues statements that one by one takes away the published authority that was originally agreed for this office.

Each day that goes by we learn of, yet another promise made by the UK Government at international forums that have been missed. Each day that goes by we have environment groups publishing up to date data on the real situation across the country. SOSCA is in the process of putting together a dossier on what was promised in these declarations and what has or has not been delivered.

## HELAA housing numbers for Chichester



SOSCA is not against new housing. What SOSCA is for is ‘well designed, sustainably built, affordable housing.’ This can only be achieved by restoring the

democracy of local communities to produce what is ‘needed’ in their community and for the encouragement of local SME builders to build.

As shown in the above map, the areas that have been marked green are those that are deemed suitable for development. To fulfil the numbers required by the Government in the Chichester area many of these green field sites will have to be developed thus creating a concrete ribbon right along the south coast from Southampton to Eastbourne. The reason that this area will have to take the brunt is because it is in an especially vulnerable position in that it is squeezed between the sea and the AONB of the harbours and the South Downs National Park. The present Government initiative of the ‘algorithm’ does not allow for such nuances.

One of the outcomes of such a policy will be the ‘coalescence’ of ancient communities along this area. For many years Governments have vowed to protect this very outcome from happening. For example, Fishbourne is under threat yet again from the re application on Bethwines Farm made more vulnerable since there is no Local Plan to protect it. If this is allowed, then it opens the way for building over 1000 houses that will join Fishbourne in concrete with Bosham. And Bosham is threatened with over 3,000 houses to the north outside its

settlement area. There are many other examples with Southbourne taking the brunt and the Manhood fighting developments on flood plains.

We have encouraged as many people as possible to write to their MP with their objections.

Many nationally respected organisations have research that shows at least a million homes could be built on Government car parks. At least a million homes could be built on brownfield sites. At least a million homes could be built within our city centres which due to the Covid19 have resulted in many having empty office spaces and empty shops.

There is therefore absolutely no economic necessity to:

- enforce local government to build 300,000 homes across the country.
- create a windfall for farmers whose agricultural grade 1 and 2 land is imperative for the nation's food safety.
- cancelling the democratic voice of local communities.
- aiding developers to have 'carte blanche' to make huge profits without recourse to the real effects of their work on e.g.: environment, infrastructure, well-being, etc.

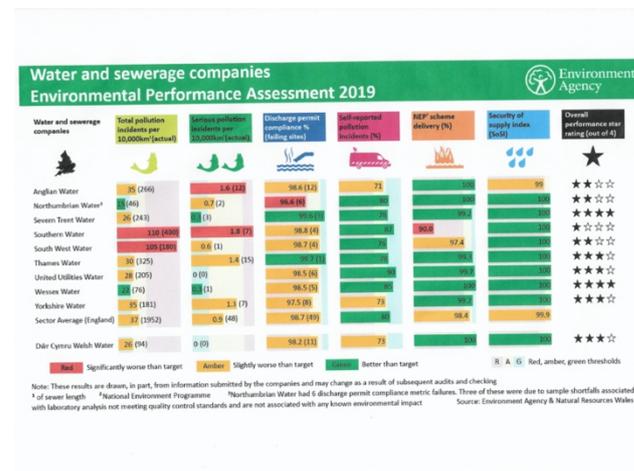
What is economically a necessity is for the Government to aid Local Government to tax the developers and tax the landowners and this money put towards building 'affordable' homes for local communities where and how they democratically decide is best. Just recently the organisation English Rural produced a report that stated: 'Building ONE affordable rural home reduces the annual deficit by £6.5K'.

And this is what is happening NOW on our doorstep -

Chichester District Council has just made an Application for Compulsory Purchase Order for land in Tangmere to build at least 1,000 homes and up to 1,300 homes all on AGRICULTURAL LAND. Comments on this Application should be made to Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and

Local Government, Planning Casework Unit, 5 St Philips Place, Colmore Row, Birmingham B3 2PW by the 10th December 2020.

## CHALK STREAMS AND RIVERS



SOSCA's latest research paper is now up on our web site [www.sosca.org.uk](http://www.sosca.org.uk). This research paper gives an in-depth summary of the state of the streams and rivers which are unique to the south of England. It is a huge concern that they are continuing to be polluted adding to the growing incidents of raw sewerage contaminating our seas. Inevitably it can only worsen if all these developments take place. This latter point is relevant because the present water treatment works have not only reached full capacity but are also out of date. They lack investment and are not held sufficiently accountable by the Authorities. There is a slow but systemic build-up of pollutants across our harbours that are eroding the very environment that we are going to rely upon to counter our climate change.

The latest report from SAS – Surfers Against Sewage – is that water companies across the nation have discharged raw sewage into bathing waters almost 3,000 times in the past year. It seems the UK is ranked 25th out of 30 European nations for bathing quality. Hardly anything to boast about as we host COP26 in a year's time.

We know that Southern Water is the worst company in the south for the number of incidents of raw

sewage emissions. Regrettably it deals with the Chichester area and hence our harbours which is endangering the SSI status of the harbour. This is unacceptable. Every water treatment works is already operating at over capacity. Planning applications are pouring in without any investment in infrastructure. None should be given planning permission until such time as the water companies can guarantee complete protection from pollution.

The NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) states that 'There is a presumption in favour of sustainable development – unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.'

Clearly the adverse impacts are there for all to see and experience.

## THE SOLENT



The concerns of communities outside of the Chichester area are also growing. SOSCA has recently been in contact and had a meeting with Bob Seely MP for the Isle of Wight who has been very active in the House of Commons with debates on these issues. He is hugely concerned at the impact this 'algorithm' will have right across the whole of the southern region. We have also been in touch with many in the Havant area and we have initiated a dialogue to help create a unified voice for all the environment action groups. The framework to be under an alliance and could be called 'Solent

Solidarity'. All that happens in the Solent area has a bearing on the AONB of the harbours. However, the reality is we are watching the slow but inevitable creep of making Emsworth meld into Havant, Havant meld into Portsmouth and Portsmouth meld into Southampton. Exactly what the Government would love – a giant conurbation with no thought to the environment or quality of life for its communities.

The evidence of the damage already being done to the whole area through overdevelopment is already manifesting itself. It is the Nitrates problem which has been at the forefront of the Solent's environment issues. Nitrates have at last been recognised as a major contributor to the eutrophication of the waters in the Solent and adjacent harbours causing the suffocation of all healthy plant life reducing it to a mass of algae. It seems the government's answer to reversing this environmental disaster is to allow yet more developments.

## SOSCA

The work of our Alliance has not only reached Hampshire but is spreading across the South East, and Dorset. We are in correspondence with South Oxfordshire and now a group in Leicestershire who all share our views on the Planning situation.

## Contact

If you have any comments or ideas on the above, please do get in touch. We welcome any input, any links, any connections.

Email us via [contact@sosca.org.uk](mailto:contact@sosca.org.uk)