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Statement to Eastleigh Borough Council Meeting 20th July 2017 on Emerging Local Plan

Madam Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen

I speak on behalf of CPRE Hampshire – The Campaign to Protect Rural England - a charity representing thousands of members across Hampshire, whose remit is to protect and enhance the countryside. We try to do exactly what it “says on the tin” by working with decision makers and the public to make the best choices about development. To provide affordable houses and employment for local people, in the right place, with sustainable transport options, and to make cities and towns attractive, prosperous, regenerated places to live, thus minimising the need for excessive green field land take.

Personally, I have led CPRE’s campaigns in South Hampshire for over 20 years, and made the opening statement at the South-East Plan Inquiry on South Hampshire - specifically on housing need calculations. This extensive experience leads me to believe decisions are being made on the Emerging Local Plan which may turn out to be found Unsound at Examination

Fellow speakers tonight will point out the likely adverse environmental impact on the River Itchen SAC and whether that will breach legal requirements of the EU Habitats Directive. There is no easy prospect of an IROPI case ‘Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest’ as contained in Article 6 - because there ARE viable alternative locations that do not affect a European site.

You will also hear evidence that a new estate road will likely cause more congestion, not less. CPRE commissioned a study in March 2017 which demonstrates using case studies that new roads induce new traffic - average increases over-and-above background traffic growth in the long run were +47%. <http://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/transport/roads/item/4542-the-impact-of-road-projects-in-england>

However, I do not actually believe anything said tonight will change the way the votes are counted. Nonetheless, I want to share the historical context, and why CPRE believes the choice of Options B and C tonight is so very, very difficult to comprehend.

20 years ago, a strategic look at the entire county led to plans for a 4,000 house Major Development Area at Allington Lane. It was agreed that this was the most sustainable location for development in Eastleigh, and this preferred location was in the Hampshire County Structure Plan. In November 2000, the Council Executive - chaired by Cllr House - made the following resolution, “That no greenfield sites be made available for housing development other than at Allington”.

But in 2005 Eastleigh’s Leadership “saved” the borough from this proposal. The homes would be built on brownfield sites across the borough and the Council would “continue to be on guard

against any such uncontrolled development in the countryside.” Fortuitously the Pirelli plant had come free, and the Inspector agreed, saying that an MDA would almost certainly have discouraged brownfield regeneration.

But at the same time in 2005 the Hedge End Strategic Development Area was already in the pipeline to take 6,000 houses. The SE Plan stated “the SDA will be located close to and with good transport links to Southampton and other major employment centres. Its location will also help support improvements in public transport infrastructure and services across a wider area”. It would “maximise opportunities to improve services via Hedge End rail station”.

Eastleigh’s Leadership “saved” the day yet again, and said that the SDA was no longer needed as the borough could again accommodate all its need on brownfield land.

This was apparently not the case, and with new housing numbers, the Inspector found the new draft plan unsound. So, Eastleigh has struggled on year after year without a Local Plan - living day to day by speculative application and appeal. And Boorley Green has gone ahead anyway.

It’s easy to blame someone else for failing to produce a local plan, the government, the inspector, local people who rightly continue to object to (and are probably extremely confused by) these **U-turns** about how to build a sustainable future for Eastleigh.

And so now Eastleigh has its 3rd proposed immense greenfield site, this time entitled a Strategic Growth Option. Located on the Winchester border, it is an area which is **SO** unsuitable for development it wasn’t even in the running in the previous 2 cases.

Of all the options, it is:

the least sustainable

it will require a new road upon which to hang the housing

it will damage a world class highly protected chalk river

it has the lowest light pollution

it is the furthest from the rail network

it is the furthest from access to employment

it is furthest from Southampton – for which it is purported to be needed to provide housing

and it is quite simply the most unspoilt and attractive landscape in the borough

Lord Rogers stated: “Done wrong, development can increase pollution, widen social and economic inequalities and deprive future generations of environmental assets.” This plan is in danger of doing exactly that, adding to yet more sprawl and congestion. CPRE has long campaigned to prevent that undesirable outcome through an ambitious but sustainable Strategic Vision and a new Green Belt in South Hampshire, encompassing Options B & C.

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