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Enquiries to: Natalie Meagher
Direct line:
Email: Natalie.meagher@easthants.gov.uk
My reference: NM/EMT/20240715
Your reference:
Date: 15th July 2024

Dear Justin,

Many thanks for your letter regarding housing land supply, dated 10th July 2024. We appreciate the situation you find yourselves in, however East Hampshire District Council is not currently able to assist.

The geography and housing market is such that providing new homes in East Hampshire district would be ineffective in alleviating housing needs in Epsom and Ewell Borough and we are not convinced there is evidence to the contrary.

We are currently preparing a new Local Plan for our district (outside the South Downs National Park). Our next step is pre-submission (Reg.19) consultation. Whilst we are aiming to meet our own housing needs, we are already being asked to consider unmet needs from authorities much closer to us; the SDNPA, Havant and Portsmouth. We have in the past also been asked to assist Elmbridge, to which we have responded in the same way as to you. There is a limit to the amount of unmet housing needs from elsewhere that we as a rural authority can sustainably accommodate. Our absence of Green Belt does not in itself justify us accommodating the unmet housing needs of Surrey Green Belt authorities.

The new Government is looking carefully at Green Belt authorities and we would expect Epsom to consider what recommendations are being made nationally about mandatory housing requirements and Grey Belt land. Whilst appreciating that might not be the solution to your difficulties, a national approach with regards to Green Belt is required. As we progress our Local Plan we will be considering and testing our capacity to meet unmet needs through our Integrated Impact Assessment. This will be documented in our Pre Submission (Reg19) consultation, to which you are welcome to respond.

We are experiencing similar challenges with regards to providing additional Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. Our new GTAA is expected to be published shortly and continues to identify high need that is challenging for us to accommodate. We are not able to assist you with this at this time.

We are currently updating our Land Availability Assessment (LAA), to be published over the summer. All of our latest evidence base is online at <https://www.easthants.gov.uk/planning-services/planning-policy/local-plan/emerging-local-plan/evidence-base>

Whilst we appreciate this isn't the response you would like, nonetheless it probably isn't unexpected. We wish you all the best with your Reg.19 consultation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Natalie Meagher".

Natalie Meagher
Director of Regulation & Enforcement