

Nicholas Soames's Column
16th April 2008

It is a fact that many of the problems that we all find so irritating are often those caused by success; dealing with too much traffic for example.

Like my Parliamentary neighbours, who share this column, a huge amount of my time is taken up with trying to deal with the penalties of over-development. For example, the very suggestion that we should not have proper maternity services seems to me to be quite mad.

But Health Services are only one part of the jigsaw. Given the Government's astonishing proposals on housing numbers, which all local Councils are grappling with, it must seem to many quite astonishing that a country with the fourth most powerful economy in the world cannot make proper investments in its vital local infrastructure.

There is a respectable case for housing development in and around East Grinstead; indeed we need it to provide homes for those who are desperately searching for somewhere to live, but the sheer scale of what is proposed across the whole of the northern part of our county flies in the face of all existing Government environment policies.

East Grinstead has a very great deal to gain from sustainable and wise development, but my colleagues and I are united in the view that without adequate roads, schools, hospitals and all the other essentials of modern social architecture these plans are unsustainable.

These are profoundly difficult issues to resolve and it is right that a great deal of care is being taken to consult and develop sensible and rational plans.

In my judgement, local people understand very well the need for development, but they are determined not to see their quality of life diminished nor expansion without adequate infrastructure to cope with all the new people and cars.