>>> caroline lynch
24/04/2012 17:17 >>>

I am writing to express my strong resistance to the above development.

Uckfield is a small town, with local amenities and I cannot comprehend how it will be possible for a further 1000 families to move into the area and utilise the existing shops and services. With family sizes increasing, it is likely that each house will have four of five people living in it and this will have a huge impact on many different areas within Uckfield.

Supermarkets
Uckfield has only two small supermarkets. Both of these are extremely busy and almost impossible to shop in at weekends. It is difficult to park in either car park, there are long queues at the tills and products are quickly sold out. In addition, the traffic around the roundabout at Bell Lane and Tescos is so busy, that there are long queues at all times of the day.

Shops
The range of shops in Uckfield is very limited as the Council seems to have some ridiculous policy not to allow decent chain stores into the town. This means that in order to purchase goods, residents of Uckfield have to either visit other towns or order goods online, both of which results in increased traffic in and around Uckfield. This issue will only get worse, if the number of people living in the town is allowed to increase.

Petrol Stations
There are three petrol stations in Uckfield, which are again consistently busy. I cannot remember the last time that I did not have to queue at the pumps to fill up my car.

Schools
Whilst there are a number of primary schools within the Uckfield area, it is my understanding that these are all full, with some having class sizes in excess of the agreed maximum of 30 children (as is the case at the school my daughter attends, Little Horsted CE Primary).

There is only one secondary school in Uckfield, which is almost full. Are there plans to extend the existing school / build new schools and how will this be financed?

Social Housing
I understand that 40% of the houses planned are social housing. This issue brings further problems as a large proportion of social housing residents are claiming substantial benefits and are not contributing to society and the local area.

Doctors
There are two doctor surgeries in the town, both of which are extremely busy, with no parking at The Meads and parking becoming increasingly difficult at The Bird in Eye Surgery. In order to park, people frequently abandon cars wherever they can, causing obstruction to the ambulances and doctors. Waiting times for appointments are already, frequently over a week.

Dentists
Whilst there are a few dentists in the area, they are extremely busy and there are only a limited number of NHS places available. Waiting times can be several months - I have recently seen my dentist and have to wait until mid June for a follow up appointment.

Hospitals
With the closure of various departments at the few main hospitals that are available to residents of Uckfield - Haywards Heath, Brighton and Eastbourne, the long waiting lists and the cuts that are being made to the NHS, it seems impossible to comprehend how the services will stretch to accommodate a further 1000 families.

Police / Fire & Ambulance
Uckfield has only small police, ambulance and fire stations. With the cuts to public services is it unlikely that these services will be expanded and numbers of police, fire-fighters and ambulance personnel increased? Levels of crime are increasing in East Sussex and police services are already stretched.

Traffic
The traffic through Uckfield town centre is constantly busy, and at some times through the day, it can take 20 - 30 minutes just to drive from one end of the town to the other. The A22 bypass is also busy, with traffic flow already at maximum capacity. If a further 2000 - 3000 cars are on the roads in and around Uckfield, then there will be times when the town and bypass comes to a complete stand still.

Trains
Whilst the train service to London has improved considerably over the last couple of years, it is very busy during the rush hour and almost impossible to secure a seat on a journey home from London. There is only limited parking around the station, and no capacity for any further cars.

Buses
Uckfield has good bus services to Brighton, Lewes, Tunbridge Wells and adequate services to East Grinstead and Eastbourne, however they rarely run on time, as they are already very busy and are fully utilised.

Car Parking
The car parks behind the cinema and Tescos have been becoming increasingly busy over the last couple of years and the planned 1000 houses are positioned so that it will be necessary for the residents to drive into town. Where are these cars going to park, when at times, it is already impossible to find a car parking space in Uckfield town centre?

Jobs
Unemployment within the South is high, and there are few job opportunities within Uckfield itself. Unless services are considerably expanded, new jobs will not be available to people moving into the area. This will mean that jobs will need to be secured outside of the local area, increasing the amount of traffic already using the A roads to Surrey, Kent and other parts of Sussex.

Leisure Centre
The swimming pool and gym facilities at the main leisure centre, Freedom Leisure, are already stretched, with many gym classes needing to be booked over a week in advance to have any chance of securing a place. Parking each morning is already very difficult at the centre. UCTC also uses these facilities and if the school is to be expanded and numbers of children increased, how will the leisure centre be able to accommodate them?

Water / Drought
It is widely publicised that the South of England is experiencing one of the worst drought periods in recent times, and as such water resources are already limited for the existing Uckfield residents. A hose pipe ban is in place, and there are no plans to remove this.

I would welcome your detailed comments on how you feel that the needs of a further 4000 - 5000 people can be accommodated in Uckfield. There are already cuts in public services and so how will it be possible to increase the numbers of police, doctors, schools etc and build new roads to accommodate the traffic?

It seems to me that existing residents in Uckfield will be penalised at the cost of new families moving into the town.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Caroline Lynch