



Billingshurst Neighbourhood Plan Examination
Statement by Horsham District Council in response to
the Independent Examiner's Request for points of
Clarification

Questions for the District Council

20 October 2020

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This statement is in response to the Examiner's request for clarification in relation to the timetable within the Local Development Scheme for the Horsham Local Plan. The second part of this statement addresses if the Council has a view on an appropriate timetable for the review of a 'made' Billingshurst neighbourhood plan.

2.0 Context

2.1 Billingshurst Parish Council was designated as a Neighbourhood Plan area on 30 December 2015 and is shown in Figure 1 below. The Steering Group leading the preparation of the neighbourhood plan has undertaken extensive engagement on a range of evidence gathering activities and consultation events.

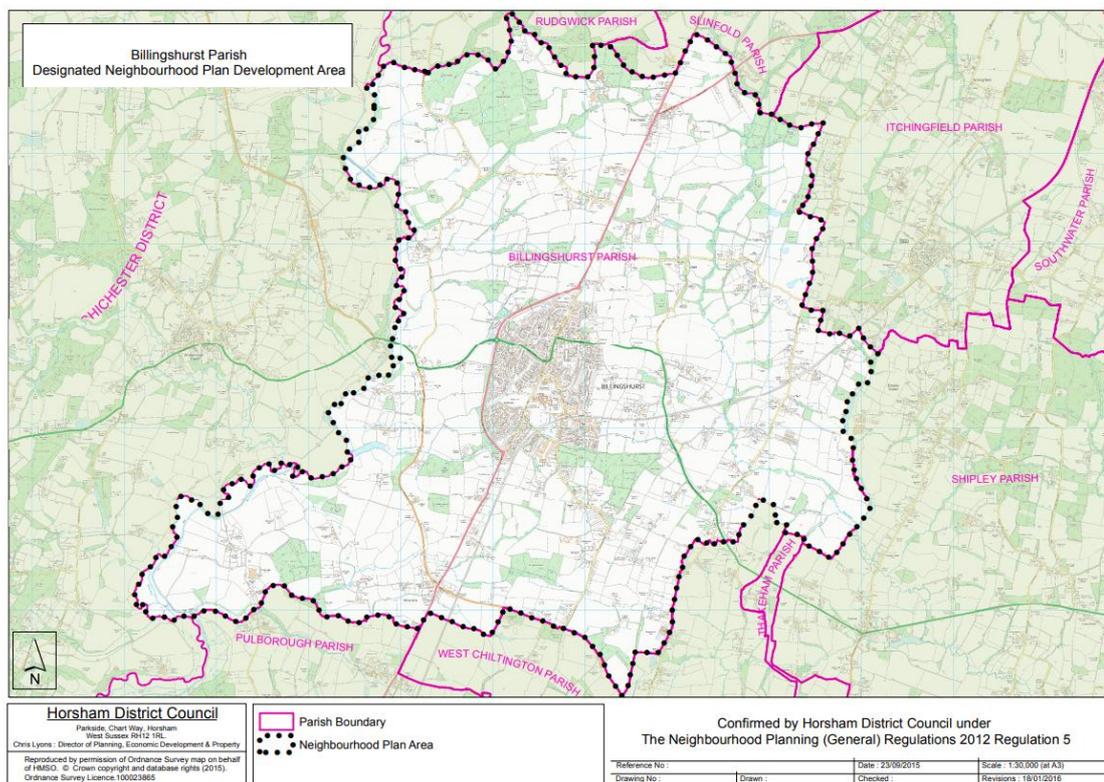


Figure 1: Billingshurst Neighbourhood Area

2.2 The Parish Council published a Pre-submission plan for consultation under Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The consultation was held from 1 August to 29 September 2019. Comments were considered and the Pre-Submission Plan was amended accordingly. A revised “Submission Plan” was then formally submitted to Horsham District Council on the 31 March 2020. The Council, in accordance with Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, held a consultation on the Billingshurst Submission Draft Neighbourhood Plan. Representations were invited for 8 weeks between 17 June and 12 August 2020.

3.0 Local Plan Timetable

Question: Is the emerging Local Plan timetable still proceeding to that available on the District Council’s website and within the Local Development Scheme?

3.1 Horsham District Council (HDC) is currently preparing a Local Plan Review that will supersede the Horsham Local Development Framework. The Local Plan Review has finished its Regulation 18 Draft Consultation, which ran for six weeks from 17 February to 30 March 2020.

3.2 We can confirm that at this stage the Council are still working in line to our Local Plan Review timetable. The Regulation 18 consultation has concluded with over 6000 representations have been received. HDC are working towards a Submission Draft of the Local Plan, Regulation 19. The timetable can be found on our website: <https://www.horsham.gov.uk/planning/local-plan/local-plan-review-timetable>. Formal adoption of the local plan is expected in 2022.

3.3 The COVID-19 outbreak has had an effect on all of our lives. At HDC we will keep all of our communities and Neighbourhood Planning groups up to date with any changes or updates with regards to COVID safety and we will continue to have regard to Government guidance with regard to keeping our communities safe. The Council will continue the work on the preparation of the Local Plan and Regulation 19 Submission Documents in line with Government directive, whilst having regard to the up to date government COVID guidance if/as it changes.

4.0 Timetable for Review of Neighbourhood Plan

Question: Does the District Council have a view on an appropriate timetable for the review of a 'made' Billingshurst neighbourhood plan?

- 4.1 As stated in the previous question, the District Council is working to the timetable set out in the Local Development Scheme. During the preparation and review of the Local Plan, all Parish and Town Councils will be consulted and kept informed as we progress into the next stages. We would suggest and encourage that all Neighbourhood Planning groups try to also stay informed and engaged with the process as much as possible.
- 4.2 Due to Covid-19 the updated NPPG paragraph 107 now states referendums will not take place until May 2021. HDC have several plans post-decision statement, waiting for a referendum date. We envisage it will be over the spring/summer of 2021 that we would 'make' the Billingshurst Neighbourhood Plan subject to the plan meeting the Basic Conditions and agreement with the Parish to any potential modifications.
- 4.3 The Council is expecting to adopt the Local Plan in April 2022. The local plan review timetable can be found on Horsham District Council's [website](#). Prior to formal adoption we would look to engage with local community groups to support and make preparations for communities to review their respective neighbourhood plans in the district to ensure they are up to date.
- 4.4 Further consideration must be given to the emerging Planning White Paper 2020 which will introduce radical change to the planning system overall and the implications for neighbourhood planning. Further details will be provided as they emerge, and it will be necessary for officers to advise local groups when changes will be formally introduced and how and when such measures will come into force.

5.0 Other matters

- 5.1 We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Billingshurst for a well presented and laid out plan and for getting to this significant milestone.