



## Henfield Neighbourhood Plan Examination

Statement by Horsham District Council in response to  
the Independent Examiner Request for Points of  
Clarification (sent 25 March 2020)

Questions for the District Council

17 April 2020

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 This statement is in response to the Examiner request for clarification in relation to the timetable for the preparation of the Local Plan. The second part of this statement addresses if the Council is satisfied that the proposed delivery of 270 dwellings in the Plan Period is in general conformity with Policy 15 (4) of the adopted Local Development Framework.

## **2.0 Context**

- 2.1 Henfield Parish Council has been designated as a Neighbourhood Plan area since 4 February 2014. The Steering group leading the preparation of the neighbourhood plan has undertaken extensive engagement on a range of evidence gathering activities and consultation events as documented in the Consultation Statement.
- 2.2 Henfield Parish Council produced a Neighbourhood Plan that was quashed in the High Court following an application for a judicial review. The case was heard in High Court on 4 October 2016 and the judgment to quash the Henfield Neighbourhood Plan was delivered on 13 October 2016. A copy of this judgement can be found on Horsham District Council's website:

[https://www.horsham.gov.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0020/65054/Approved-judgement-on-Henfield-Neighbourhood-Plan.pdf](https://www.horsham.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/65054/Approved-judgement-on-Henfield-Neighbourhood-Plan.pdf)

- 2.3 Henfield Parish Council contacted both Horsham District Council (HDC) and the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) of its intention to produce a second Neighbourhood Plan. Both Authorities confirmed that the Neighbourhood Area did not have to be re-designated. Letters were received from HDC on 20 April 2017 and the SDNPA on 18 April 2017. The Neighbourhood Area that was originally designated in 2014 remains the same Area designated for this Neighbourhood Plan and meets the legislative requirements as stated in the Localism Act 2011.
- 2.4 The Parish published a Pre-submission Plan for consultation under Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The consultation was held from 7 June 2019 to 26 July 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 30 October 2019. The Council, in accordance with Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, held a consultation on the Henfield Submission draft

Neighbourhood Plan. Representations were invited between 8 November 2019 and 20 December 2019.

### **3.0 Timetable for the preparation of the Local Plan**

*Question: Is the District Council continuing to work to the timetable for the preparation of its Local Plan as set out on its website?*

3.1 Horsham District Council is currently preparing a Local Plan Review (2019 to 2036) which will eventually supersede the adopted Horsham Local Development Framework. The Local Plan Review has just completed the Regulation 18 Draft Consultation, this ran for 6 weeks from 17 February concluding on the 30 March 2020.

The new Plan will set out how the Authority will meet the additional housing requirements which arise from the standard housing methodology and any Duty to Co-operate requirements. The locational strategy to meet these housing numbers is a strategic matter and will be addressed in the Local Plan Review. It will take account of the Council's revised evidence base and Sustainability Appraisal process. The proposals for meeting the housing requirement arising from the standard housing methodology are set out in Chapter six of the consultation document.

3.2 The Horsham District Local Plan Regulation 18 document has limited weight and has a number of stages to progress through before the plan can be adopted. Thus, even having regard to the housing need arising from the standard methodology which is the basis for the Local Plan Review and the strategy proposed by the Local Plan Review to meet that need, at this time Henfield Parish Council cannot plan beyond the current adopted plan requirements set out in the HDPF. Subject to the outcome of Local Plan Review process any additional needs for the Parish will need to be met in the Council's Local Plan as the Parish Council has confirmed it will work with the officers as part of a review of Horsham District Planning Framework. The Parish will continue to monitor the policies in the Henfield Neighbourhood Plan to ensure they are kept up to date and in particular following the completion of the Local Plan Review.

3.3. Horsham District Council would like to advise the examiner the Council are still working in accordance with our Local Plan review timetable. HDC are working towards a Submission Draft of the Local Plan, Regulation 19, for Autumn/early winter 2020 for examination in 2021. The timetable can be found on the Council website:

<https://www.horsham.gov.uk/planning/local-plan/local-plan-review-timetable>

3.4 The Coronavirus COVID-19 outbreak has had an effect on all of our lives. At Horsham District Council we will ensure to keep all of our communities safe. Neighbourhood Planning groups will be kept up to date with any changes or updates in guidance. In regards to the Local Plan preparation, Government's advice has been explicit regarding Local Plan preparation with guidance to progress as much as possible employing new technology where possible. At the time of writing, officers are processing the thousands of representations received during the Regulation 18 consultation. Therefore, the Council will continue the work on the preparation of the Local Plan and Regulation 19 Submission Documents, as per the timetable on our website, whilst having regard to the up to date government guidance if/as it changes.

#### **4.0 The general conformity of the proposed delivery of 270 dwellings**

*Question: Given the Plan's proposed delivery of 270 dwellings in the Plan period is the District Council satisfied that this number of dwellings is in general conformity with Policy 15 (4) of the adopted Local Development Framework?*

4.1 The starting point for the preparation of the HNDF is the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF), which is the adopted Local Plan for the District and runs to 2031. Policy 15 in the adopted HDPF sets out the Strategic Housing Provision in the Horsham District up to 2031. This is for a provision of 800 dwellings pa over the plan period. Part (d) of the policy stipulates at least 1500 of the aforementioned overall provision will be allocated through Neighbourhood Plans, and to be in accordance with the settlement hierarchy.

4.2 Henfield village is identified as a 'small town or larger village' in the second tier of the development hierarchy. Strategic Policy 4: Settlement Expansion supports the development of settlements across the District in order to meet identified local housing, employment and community needs. Strategic Policy 15: Housing Provision identifies an annual housing target for the District of 800 homes each year of which at least 1,500 should be identified in neighbourhood plans across the District. There is no specific provision in the policy for each parish.

4.3 Consequently, Henfield Parish Council, following guidance from HDC, commissioned through Locality's Technical Support Service an independent Housing Needs Assessment produced by AECOM. The Housing Needs Assessment would generate a housing requirement number for the neighbourhood plan area employing robust

evidence and is widely accepted to be proportionate and accepted methodology in accordance with Planning Practice Guidance<sup>1</sup> .

- 4.4 Policy 15 of the HDPF sets a housing figure of ‘at least 16,000’ homes to be delivered throughout the District over the Plan Period of 2011 – 2031. The District’s ability to deliver this number was debated in detail during the course of the HDPF Examination in 2015. The trajectory which was presented to the HDPF Inspector contained a number of housing developments which had already been granted permission and these were accepted by the HDPF Inspector as being able to contribute towards the Districts supply.
- 4.5 It follows, HDC took the view that all permissions (proposals 5 and above) given within Henfield Parish following the adoption of the HDF (November 2015 would effectively contribute towards Henfield’s housing need. Permissions within Henfield parish for schemes under 5 dwellings would be considered as windfall and fall into the District’s windfall allowance of 750 over the plan period to avoid double counting. Land North of West End Lane (DC/17/1140) was permitted for net increase of 12 additional dwellings on 28 September 2017. HDC agreed to take this into consideration with the agreement of the parish and arrived at the housing requirement figure of 270 dwelling for Henfield Neighbourhood Plan up to 2031. The emerging plan would be required to make best endeavours to meet this target.
- 4.6 Policy 2 of the Henfield Neighbourhood Plan allocates four housing sites:
1. Land North of Parsonage Farm: 205 dwellings;
  2. Land East of Wantley Hill: 25 dwellings;
  3. Land West of Backsettown, off Furners Lane: 30 single storey dwellings; and
  4. Land South of the Bowls Club: 10 single storey dwellings

It is considered by Horsham District Council that the 270 dwellings proposed in the Henfield Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with Policy 15 (4) of the HDPF and represents 18% of the total neighbourhood plan requirement identified in the HDPF. Given the position of Henfield in the settlement hierarchy, (Policy 2 & 3) the District Council considers that this is an appropriate, sustainable and important proportion of the (at least) 1,500 new homes required from neighbourhood plans under Policy 15 (d).

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<sup>1</sup> Paragraph: 105 Reference ID: 41-105-20190509  
Revision date: 09 05 2019

4.7 In conclusion, Horsham District Council considers Henfield Parish Council and the volunteers in the steering group have made best endeavours to accommodate the housing requirement figure as recommended in the AECOM Housing Needs Assessment. It is the view of Horsham District Council that the Steering group have fully engaged with the relevant stakeholders to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the sites to justify their inclusion as an allocation in the emerging neighbourhood plan and that this is supported by the sustainability appraisal which has been carried out iteratively through the process of plan production. It is also the consideration of Horsham District Council that the plan and the housing proposals (notwithstanding any further recommendations which may be suggested as part of this Examination) meet the Basic Conditions and the allocations will contribute positively towards the district's housing supply in accordance with Policy 15 of the HDPF.

## **5.0 Other Matters**

5.1 In consideration of the evidence presented before the examiner, we respectfully like to take this opportunity to readdress a point raised in our formal representation to the Regulation 16 consultation (Rep ref: 22). The Henfield Neighbourhood Plan: Policy 11 allocates Local Green Spaces within the Neighbourhood Area. The Council welcomes and supports the principle of Local Green Spaces but all proposals should be in conformity with the tests as advocated in the NPPF, however it is considered LGS no 15; Green land around Meadow Walk does not meet the tests as stipulated in Paragraph 100 in the National Planning Policy Framework and should be revoked as it is in conflict with proposed access to Housing Allocation Policy 2.2 Land east of Wantley Hill Estate (page 29). Furthermore, it is advised the submission HNDF should not prejudice any proposed allocation within this emerging neighbourhood plan or any other potential development site being possibly considered as part of the Local Plan Review undertaken by the district council.