



**Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Billingshurst Parish Council
Wednesday 19 August 2026
6.30pm at the Billingshurst Centre.**

Present

Cllrs Paul Berry (Chairman), Edna Bengier, Phillip Day, Sandy Duck, Jeremy Harris, Craig Jones, Trevor Leonard, Marie Montoya, Kate Rowbottom and Doug Waller.

In attendance

G C Burt, Clerk to the Council
R Plant, Assistant Clerk
Patrick Barry, NOVA Planning
Dis Cllr M Baynham
Dis Cllr J Trollope
Approximately 36 Members of the Public.

78/26 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman advised that:

1. The meeting was being streamed to the internet.
2. Cllrs wishing to speak should raise their hand and speak loudly and clearly.
3. Mobile phones should either be switched off or silenced.
4. As we have quite a few people here this evening, can I please ask if any members of the public do speak to each other while the meeting is in progress, that they do so in whispers. Whether in the room this evening, or listening online, it is difficult for people to follow the meeting if there is a lot of background noise, especially if they are hard of hearing; it is also difficult for council officers when minute taking.

79/26 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Faye Algar, David Hingamp and Anna Rhodes, for approved reasons. On the proposal of Cllr Paul Berry seconded by Cllr Trevor Leonard **RESOLVED** that the apologies and reasons given be accepted.

80/26 To Receive Declarations of Interest and consider any requests for a dispensation.

None.

81/26 Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting held on 1 July 2026.

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2026, previously circulated, were taken as read. On the proposal of Cllr Craig Jones seconded by Cllr Phillip Day **RESOLVED** that the minutes be accepted and signed as a correct record accordingly.

Adjournment for

82/26 Public Session (Members of the Public may speak for up to 3 minutes at the discretion of the Chairman).**a. Julian Trumper**

I represent the community campaign group – BigSTAND.

We have read the BPC response to the revisions and amendments to the Local Plan and I think that we are very much on the same page in agreeing that Adversane is a far from ideal site for a new town.

We note that some of the greatest impact of a new town at Adversane will be felt on Billingshurst.

Adversane has been rejected as a potential site for a new settlement on three formal occasions in 2010, 2021, and 2023. And each time the officers and HDC have stated the same reason – Infrastructure.

Infrastructure and in particular transport – this Parish Council has made known its deep concerns about road and rail infrastructure and the pressure that would be put on local roads by imposing 3,200 new houses at Adversane.

The planning officers themselves have never believed the level of internalisation of travel and jobs that could be created. At the Our Place workshops at Brinsbury in May we were shown maps which amongst other things made assumptions on the numbers of jobs that could be created on site. Very broadly, excluding work from home, the figure was 1,000 jobs.

In the Southeast the planning assumption is 1.25 jobs per household, which when multiplied by 3,200 houses means 4,000 jobs. If 1,000 really can be provided on site, then 3,000 people will be commuting out of the town for work. And that assumes zero in-commuting where people who work on site do not live in the town.

Whichever way you look at it this is going to mean a lot of extra traffic getting around Billingshurst and Five Oaks and Horsham. The developers promise a park and ride to get to the station, but we think they overestimate how many will actually want to walk 400 yards to get on a bus when they can just walk out of the house and get in the car. And we know how difficult it is getting to Billingshurst station and the lack of parking - so this all seems poorly thought through to us.

The developers Our Place use the word Poundbury a lot and they have indeed employed some very competent people who were involved in Poundbury – but to be clear, OurPlace did not build Poundbury.

Poundbury is the unashamed urban extension of Dorchester with Dorset County Hospital barely one mile from the Centre of Poundbury. It is disingenuous to claim that you can recreate Poundbury in the countryside at Adversane where the nearest hospitals with A&E facilities are: • Worthing - 16.3 miles, • Chichester - 19.0 miles, • Crawley - 18.9 miles, with an average journey time to any of these at least half an hour on a good run.

In fact, Our Place seems to have not built anything much. Their website has not changed really at all in 6 years with no new projects undertaken.

Their main project seems to have been the £80m St Mary's Works/St George's Works redevelopment in Norwich, where this company managed to negotiate down the affordable housing number from 50 to just 4.

(As reported in the East Anglian Daily Times January 2018)

So the concern we have is that OurPlace have done a great sales job but in reality may struggle to fulfill all their promises.

We find amendment MM227 to build a new town at Adversane unsound.

Janina Pedan

What is the issue that we can all feel in our bones today?

It's easy to answer.

Water.

We are facing a climate crisis, and we know the pressures on our water resources and infrastructure are only going to increase.

But I believe in our capacity to address that problem — through radical creativity, and through radical action.

And we desperately need more of that from our council.

Instead, these Main Modifications risk becoming death by a thousand cuts.

The Council's own evidence acknowledges shortcomings and uncertainty in water and wastewater infrastructure.

But instead of strengthening the safeguards for residents and the environment, several of these modifications appear to weaken them — replacing firm requirements with a potentially disastrous “monitor and manage” approach.

John, when I asked you what would happen about the water infrastructure needed for all this additional development, you told me that Southern Water has a statutory duty to provide it.

And that is true.

But it is only half the story.

Southern Water is responsible for providing its infrastructure.

You — the Council — are responsible through the planning system for ensuring that the location, scale and timing of development are properly coordinated with the infrastructure needed to support it.

And that is where I have a serious concern.

Look at the Council's updated Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Its water section still appears to rely upon the superseded water-neutrality position, despite water neutrality having ended and these Main Modifications proposing substantially more development.

Then look at Adversane.

This isn't a small housing development. It is a proposed new settlement of 3,200 homes.

Yet the dedicated site assessment does not appear to address the water and wastewater infrastructure needed to support development on that scale, or if it will actually be available when required.

The Council's own evidence acknowledges that water infrastructure investment will be needed.

So saying “Southern Water has a statutory duty” does not answer the question.

The question is:

What infrastructure is actually required?

When will it be delivered?

And what prevents thousands of homes being occupied before that infrastructure is operational?

Because if this Council cannot answer those questions now --- with clear evidence, then "monitor and manage" is not an infrastructure strategy. It is taking a risk with the future and asking residents to carry that risk.

b. Peter Coleman

My wife and I own Hadfold Airfield, which has been operating since the 90's. In 2024 we applied for planning permission which was successful thanks to local support. We were given full unrestricted planning permission.

The Environmental Impact Assessment scoping document for the proposed Adversane development seems to downplay the presence of the airfield.

It states that the airfield is located approximately 1.75 km away. The real truth is that the southern end of the runway is only 210 m from the edge of the development area. The northern end is 900m away.

A noise assessment states that the airfield is used infrequently and is as such not considered to represent a significant noise source. The assessments were carried out in December, when very little or no flying was happening.

Over the last 10 years the average flying days per year was 110 and in busier years up to 150. This can be 10 to 20 movements per day. No noise assessments on take-off or approach were made. We are getting busier.

When taking off to the south towards Adversane, we turn to the left to avoid the houses, this then brings us over the proposed development land, and if we had an engine failure, we would have very little time to consider where to land. That area of land gives an opportunity to land safely. 2 of us have actually experienced an engine failure and were able to land safely on fields to the east of the railway.

If the land was developed, we would not have anywhere safe to land, resulting in a serious incident resulting in possible death or serious injury to the pilot, passenger or people on the ground. The probability is small, but the severity could be catastrophic. The approach to the southern end of the runway to land, would also be a problem, with low flying aircraft close to roof tops and the noise factor. Who would want to buy a house under a flight path? We do try to keep to the east of the houses when landing.

As we have been operating since the 90's and have full unrestricted planning permission, there is a long established planning principle called "Agent of Change" that generally places responsibility on the new development to mitigate the effects of existing lawful activities, rather than expecting the existing activity to curtail its operations.

Horsham District Council's own published planning material has previously recognised that Hadfold Aerodrome is a material planning consideration.

We request that the Developers actually acknowledge the presence of Hadfold Airfield rather than brush us aside. We are here closer than you admit and do make far more noise than was assessed.

c. Roger Smith

I speak for CPRE Sussex

HDC's Main Modification 142 states:

"The Council's evidence base work has identified a total of 20,915 homes, which are considered to be deliverable in the Plan period."

However, the number of homes ultimately built will depend on housing sales.

House sales depend on the state of the economy and labour market, housing affordability, mortgage availability, and buyer confidence.

When sales fall, developers will reduce build-out rates to maintain profit margins.

The July 2026 ICENI Horsham Housing Delivery Study reports that annual sales have generally declined and are now near 2010/11 credit-crunch levels.

Given Horsham's enormous target, CPRE Sussex questions whether housing sales over the plan period will be sufficient to pass the government's Housing Delivery Test.

Protection against speculative development is not assured.

Regarding the allocation of Land at Adversane, Main Modification 227 Strategic Policy HA(NP1): Land at Adversane (Kingswood).

HDC describes this as an "Additional allocation to ensure the plan can meet increased housing targets following the withdrawal of water neutrality".

CPRE Sussex considers that the proposed creation of a 'stand-alone new settlement' of at least 3,200 homes, envisaged as a 'fully fledged small town', on farmland adjoining the hamlet of Adversane close to the existing small town of Billingshurst—is NEITHER SOUND NOR JUSTIFIED.

The Horsham Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal Report Addendum (July 2026) does not adequately explain why this site was selected or considered more suitable than the alternative.

HDC anticipates that the scheme will deliver at least 1,425 homes during the plan period, but this outcome is not guaranteed.

BE AWARE THAT BY MEANS of Main Modifications 69 and 74–79, HDC is removing or weakening Strategic Plan policies that would otherwise help protect the countryside and natural environment – even though there is no requirement for them to do so, as evidenced by Mid Sussex District Council, whose local plan is also being examined by Inspector Bore.

Apparently, Inspector Bore did not tell HDC to revise these policies to reflect the wording of the emerging NPPF.

d. Murray Hughes

I am a resident of Billingshurst. I should like to thank the Parish Council for organising this meeting and giving residents a chance to comment.

If the proposed development East of Billingshurst goes ahead, I think it is inevitable that the section of footpath (Number 1933) running south through the fields and over the railway by a foot crossing would be closed. This is because the additional housing would generate more pedestrian traffic, making the railway foot crossing too hazardous.

The footpath, and a network of connecting informal paths, forms a popular route towards Rosier Wood and Daux Wood which are locally renowned for bluebells and

other flora; bats are also present in the area. The path offers a recreational walk easily reached by people living on the east side of Billingshurst. I believe that closure of the path would be detrimental to the welfare and wellbeing of residents as it runs through a green space – both north and south of the railway – and that space that is much appreciated by local people. It is not an official green space, but perhaps it should be. In Horsham District Council's Green Space Strategy 2024-2029 I read that it is "a Strategic Priority"

1) "to protect, maintain and enhance existing greenspaces to a good standard" and
2) that "Greenspaces have significant value for public health and wellbeing and should provide a range of opportunities for amenity and leisure use", and
3) that "The importance of Greenspaces for public health and wellbeing is supported by academic research. Greenspaces provide places for everyone to spend time outdoors – to spend time together outside of the constraints of home, school and work. They are somewhere to walk the dog, to relax in, and exercise..." End of quote. That is precisely what the paths and fields East of Billingshurst are used for.

I return to the question of the foot crossing over the railway. If the development goes ahead, I believe it is essential that either a footbridge or a tunnel is completed and opened before work on any new housing commences. To go ahead with building a housing estate without first having a safe railway crossing in place would be irresponsible, to say the least. Some kind of vague and imprecise commitment to build a footbridge or tunnel in the future is inadequate and unacceptable.

Finally, I ask why HDC is favouring development East of Billingshurst when the proposal for the West would offer more facilities for local residents and has local support. Surely the Council should be working with residents rather than against them?

e. Mela Davidson

I am speaking on behalf of BilliGreen, an environmental group in the village. Along with many others, we made representations in favour of development to the west of Billingshurst in 2024, our focus was on the superior environmental offering proposed by the developer there. We identified that that the Local Plan's scoring for biodiversity and for climate, renewables and energy efficiency was unsound and needed to be reviewed.

However, these representations have been ignored by HDC in their proposed amended Plan. The amended Plan would now EXTEND development in the east from 650 to 1,000 homes, building on the fields south of the railway line as well as north. In the proposed amendments to the Plan, the council makes numerous commitments regarding development and the environment. It commits to supporting the transition to achieving a net zero carbon target - through its direct activities and indirect actions; and to enhance the ecology of Horsham District's natural environment and biodiversity. It points out that "net zero carbon targets will require radical changes in how we live, and plan our settlements" and that "development proposals will be afforded positive weight where they provide zero and low carbon heating and where sustainable design, including construction and operation, is integrated".

This said, it is disappointing to note that the amended Plan would reduce its BNG requirement from 12% to 10%.

So, looking at the approaches of the two developers – Bellway to the east and Highwood to the west, there is a clear contrast. Regarding biodiversity, Bellway

commits to only the legal minimum of biodiversity net gain, 10%. We tried to meet with Bellway to learn more about their plans for BNG and other environmental credentials, but they delegated their PR firm to meet with us who were unable to answer our questions and asked us to email them. I did so – but did not receive the courtesy of a reply!

In contrast, Highwood's development proposal to the west of Billingshurst commits to providing a 90-acre country park/nature reserve, with biodiversity net gain between 20 and 30%.

Regarding net zero, Bellway is only able to commit to complying with building regulations, with no commitment to zero carbon.

In contrast, Highwood has a commitment to provide an all-electric strategy with solar panels and air source heat pumps and are committing to Future Homes Standards which will drive sustainability at the forefront of development. In addition, they will be exploring with green energy suppliers how to further improve sustainability.

So my question is this: where you have a developer such as Highwood that goes above and beyond the council's stated environmental standards, is providing 1,000 homes and has fully transparent and workable designs ready for implementation in the area to the west of Billingshurst, why would the Plan just rule out this option? We need a clear explanation from HDC as to the rationale of this decision.

83/26 To receive comments from Horsham District Cllrs for Billingshurst, Cllrs Mark Baynham and John Trollope on HDC's Proposed Modifications to the HD Draft Local Plan.

The Chairman explained that he was contacted a number of weeks ago by District Councillor Trollope who asked if representatives from HDC could brief Parish Councillors as to why, *and I quote*, "Adversane is the best choice for Billingshurst".

Dis Cllr Mark Baynham explained the background to the decision by HDC to propose both South of Adversane and Buck Barn be included, including the aborted first Public Examination. It was necessary for HDC to include significantly more housing land in order to satisfy the Planning Inspector; insufficient land meant the district was more vulnerable to speculative applications. Land allocated in the Plan was more able to be controlled and benefits accrued for communities. He had abstained from the vote on which of the two sites to include.

Dis John Trollope:

As you are aware, the government is giving us very high building targets and the Inspector has made it clear that we need to have more sites to the plan we submitted two years ago. So, whilst I see there are pros and cons to WoB versus EoB, this is not really up for discussion any more as there would need to be a catastrophic flaw in the EoB plan for it to be withdrawn. There are also both pros and cons to Buck Barn versus Kingswood; I will try to explain why I think Kingswood is the least worst option. Do note that I have not yet voted on this and so the following is how I see things at the moment.

I will not repeat the other points Councillor Baynham's made on the relative merits of EoB compared to WoB other than pointing the members' attention to the news report in the Guardian on Monday that Angela Rayner is launching guidance for a presumption of

approving any planning application for homes within 10 minutes of transport hubs. In her words, this is to "[unlock] thousands of homes around well-connected transport hubs [in order to help] people live closer to work, school and the services they rely on" and goes on to say "That's how we'll tackle the housing crisis and raise living standards for people in every corner of the country." So, as I argued two years ago, if we adopt WoB of EoB, we will have both as EoB will be impossible to oppose on planning grounds as EoB is very close to the train station.

I did in fact ask senior HDC officers about the viability of having WoB alongside EoB and Adversane and this was in fact seriously considered however it was felt that it would oversaturate the market and was therefore not viable.

On Buck Barn,

- It is less well related to the settlement hierarchy.*
- It does not link well with rail services*
- It does not support the northern part of the district where housing pressures are greatest.*
- It will impact an important nature corridor as well as the world-leading ecological research being done at Knepp Estate*

I acknowledge that the Kingswood proposal will have a serious impact on the roads and on the A29 in particular. However, highways will remain a statutory consultee when detailed plans are submitted for actual house builds. Further, the Kingswood plan includes a comprehensive transport strategy with new walking and cycling infrastructure. The Kingswood plan will also be able to deliver major junction improvements that smaller sites cannot fund.

To the residents of Adversane, I understand your worry about how your community will change. I hope the following may mitigate some of your worries even if just a little bit. The following will be offered as planning conditions as well as being policy requirements:

- A buffer between the existing settlements and the new housing estate.*
- A new nature park for your evening strolls*
- Many sports, recreation and community facilities*
- New schools including nursery provision as well as SEND provision*
- Office and light industrial units for local employment including links with Brinsbury College*
- Protection of night sky through ecological buffers and a sympathetic lighting strategy*
- The traffic impacts are universally acknowledged however there are several ways of mitigating this. Further, I am sure that the choke intersections could be redesigned or improved when traffic modelling proves that changes are necessary.*
- And last on my list but by no means least, money! The CIL money is roughly £40 million to be divided among the three parishes - the officers will come with an exact break down at time of determination. There is also S106 money for which I have no current details.*

I'll finish off by acknowledging the anger and worry that many of you will be feeling. However, I do think there are no easy or realistic alternatives. I do recommend that you share some feedback to the Inspector on how to get the best and most out of Our Place, the company who own land and will be partnering with housebuilders during the entire build

phase. I do know Our Place are keen to reach out and listen to your concerns and ideas and are already doing so.

Dis Cllrs then took questions.

Cllr Kate Rowbottom asked if the land at Mayfield was still to be developed? Dis Cllr Mark Baynham responded that the site had been withdrawn by developers.

Cllr Craig Jones asked the Dis Cllrs to explain what they meant when they said there were other ways to deliver the infrastructure offered by West of Billingshurst?

Dis Cllr Mark Baynham explained that significant funds would accrue from new development through s106 and CIL. The Better Billingshurst Fund had shown what could be done with these funds to benefit the locality and more could be done.

Cllr Trevor Leonard said that the assertion that East was more constrained from being expanded in the future than West was not true. West was constrained by a new country park in the west to be owned by the Parish Council, which in itself was further constrained by the River Arun to the west of that. East of Billingshurst could easily go east further also. He also mentioned that the argument that West would be developed in different parcels was also spurious, as at least West was all owned by one developer, whereas the East's south parcel, south of the railway line was owned by a different developer and in that case was dependant on Network Rail playing ball.

Cllr Doug Waller stressed the need for infrastructure to be provided before most of the housing, especially roads as the network will grind to an immediate halt. Dis Cllr Mark Baynham explained that infrastructure was generally provided when agreed numbers of homes had been completed. Cllr Waller was concerned at the impact on existing roads if houses were built, and new roads then followed.

Cllr James Marchant asked what the new roads junctions might look like? Dis Cllr Trollope said whatever needed to be done would be done.

Dis Cllr Mark Baynham said he felt we were getting into too much detail; the debate for tonight was Buck Barn or Adversane? All details could be worked out later.

Cllr Doug Waller pressed the Dis Cllrs on the Environmental Impact. Dis Cllr Mark Baynham said that the impact on wildlife was very important to him, and with Buck Barn being a bigger site, Adversane being a smaller footprint would be less detrimental to wildlife.

Patrick Barry of NOVA Planning was concerned about the process whereby the land to the south of the railway line for 350 homes had been removed from the original draft allocation on the grounds of environmental impact, but had suddenly been added back in.

Dis Cllr Mark Baynham explained that he thought the 350 site was considered as one of the smaller sites being allocated, rather an extension to a strategic site.

The Clerk said that the scoring between the various sites appeared unfair particularly walking and cycling. He also queried the inclusion of a new secondary school at Adversane which was designed to meet a need in the west of the district. However children from new homes in Adversane would have to travel to Billingshurst until it was built.

Dis Cllr Mark Baynham said that it would not make sense to build a school before any houses. He reiterated that the main problem of East versus West, was that if you say no to East and get West, you will still get East. The opposite was not true.

Resume Meeting

84/26 To consider making a response to Horsham District Council's Proposed Modifications to the HD Draft Local Plan. Suggested response, based on existing Parish Council position.

Cllr Paul Berry said

I was asked recently if I thought we were going to stop all this proposed new development and if it was really worth bothering to respond to the current consultation? Certainly, comments such as "it's a done deal" abound. Despite this, I feel that it is vital that we as a parish council, and a community point out to the planning inspector, any errors or inaccuracies we consider there to be in the plan, which may affect its soundness. I have heard people say that the current consultation is nothing more than a 'tick-box' exercise and that the decisions have already been made. Well, in the case of HDC, perhaps the decisions have already been made, but remember we are really putting our concerns to the Planning Inspector, not HDC.

In 2021, HDC strongly suggested that Billingshurst would get either a development to the east of Billingshurst, or the west, at the time although the Adversane site was considered initially for inclusion in the plan, it was not thought to be a suitable option. It may well turn out to be the case that any developments which do not appear in the current Local Plan, will instead appear in the next. I say this, not to be defeatist or to scaremonger, but to perhaps manage people's expectations. The sad fact is, that there is not likely to be a good outcome for Billingshurst as far as the Local Plan is concerned, we can only hope that the responses that we all make to the consultation, including the Council's response this evening, will help us to achieve a least worse outcome.

Cllr Trevor Leonard (Speakers' notes)

Investigation into Page 98, Paragraph f) of the Horsham District Council Schedule of Suggested Modifications to the Regulation 19 Local Plan.

THE WORDING

Deliberate wording that must have gone through various stages of referral / sign-off / compliance checking etc before publishing.

Why is the critical rail safety mitigation measure being proposed only "prior to the completion of all dwellings"?

BRIDGE OR UNDERPASS?

The 'either a bridge or an underpass' scenario being presented indicates no meaningful dialogue to finding a solution has yet taken place between the site promoter and Network Rail.

SURVEYORS PERSONAL OPINION.

- RICS Surveyors suggest Network Rail would likely prefer an Underpass, as its more aesthetic and safer. (You can't drop things or jump off an underpass.)
- Bridge would be a cheaper option.
- Both present challenges with the Grade II listed building and Woodland on the southern side.

COST OF A BRIDGE?

A replacement bridge, comparable to the type required for EoB – namely fully accessible, accommodating mobility impaired and cycles, has just been commissioned at Havant - £12.8m.

Press release issued by Hampshire County Council on Havant footbridge | Havant Borough Council

NETWORK RAIL PERMISSION REQUIRED.

- Notoriously slow to deal with.
- A PRoW Diversion application would need to be made.
- Technical approvals are required with a three-stage approach of Approval; -
 - a) Approval in Principle.
 - b) Detailed design.
 - c) Construction and Supervision.
- This would take a minimum of 2 years, but more likely 3.

NETWORK RAIL PAYMENTS.

- Network Rail operate a 'Shared Value' policy. (Added value secured on land as a result of utilising their property.)
Shared Value Policy
- Details are freely available online, which suggest payments as much as 50% of the land value once planning permission has been granted.
- As a rough estimate, Surveyors feel it not unreasonable that EoB could be valued at £50m.
- Network Rail will also require the Developer to cover all of their costs, an agreement to purchase or lease the 'airspace', and all future maintenance.

SITE PLANNING PROCESS. (Based on similar sized sites.)

- Planning and pre-construction – 2 to 4 years.
- Infrastructure and groundwork – 1 to 2 years.
- Phased construction of 1,000 homes – 7 to 10 years. (*100 to 150 properties per year, building out to match local market absorption rates.*)

ECONOMIC SITUATIONS COMPOUNDED BY DELAY SINCE SITE FIRST PROPOSED.

- Increased cost of labour – minimum wages / National Insurance costs.
- Increased cost of materials.
- Rising mortgage rates reducing demand.
- Greater supply of similar housing already now in the immediate vicinity.
- Latest figures from Lloyds Bank show house prices in the South-East are currently falling by 2% per annum, the fastest falling area in the UK. (Increased supply.)
- According to the Building Costs Information Service, this site will cost 40% more to deliver than in 2020.
- Sale price has increased by 16% in the same period.

EARLIEST DATE FOR PLAN APPROVAL.

- 2027.

CONCLUSION.

Financially:-

- According to Gross Development Value Homedata GDV Calculator — Gross Development Value & Feasibility | Homedata developers want a minimum 17% profit from a site such as this.
- When you consider the compounding effect of general market forces impacting developer profitability
- Compounded by the financial implications unique to this site – namely, the cost of a bridge and payments ongoing payments to Network Rail . .
- The price they pay the landowner for the land.
- The site has a serious risk of becoming financially unviable to develop.

Deliverability:-

Taking the standard planning processes and build out rates,
Adding in the impact of the complex and protracted contractual negotiations required with Network Rail. (3 years.)
The average time for the planning process and build-out rates build-out rates. (13 years.)
The site cannot be delivered within the Plan period.

Inclusion of this site is therefore unsafe, and thereby it makes the Plan unsound.

(Unless the planning process delays and costs of installing a footbridge or underpass are removed from the equation – which they will be courtesy of paragraph f), page 96 in its current form.

This is HDC seemingly placing their support for the site promoter above that of public safety.)

The benefits of HDC supporting BPC's proposal for West of Billingshurst.

- The promoter's plans are more advanced.
- The overwhelming majority of people who have engaged with BPC and expressed a preference support BPC's position, so less resistance.

- A more diverse housing stock will be delivered in more diverse locations ensuring greater choice and wider appeal. It's not just more of the same in the same area as with EoB.
- A much quicker and easier deliverability with no delays or complications due the presence of a mainline railway running through the site.
- HDC still retains its numbers within the Local Plan.
- If HDC were to take out EoB and replace with WoB, this could be used to evidence that the Consultation process has been effective and that HDC have listened to public concerns, recognised their legitimacy and adapted the Plan accordingly.

Cllr Craig Jones

HDC has rated Land West as 'very unfavourable' for transport and accessibility, citing the A29 bypass as a major physical barrier that separates the site from the village. Yet, HDC has rated Land East as 'favourable' for transport, despite being physically separated from the existing village built form by both the active railway line and the Rosier Business Park.

Land East extends up to 1.5 kilometres from the village centre and train station. New residents living towards the easternmost edge (near the Rosier Business Park end) will be physically isolated from village services due to a lack of safe, made pedestrian pathways and the barrier of the railway line.

By dragging the built-up boundary of Billingshurst so far to the east, we risk shifting the natural footprint of our village away from its established core. The East site relies entirely on speculative, uncosted, and unagreed railway crossing infrastructure to connect isolated eastern residents to our village centre.

Secondary School Scoring: HDC downgraded Land West's education rating to 'very unfavourable' on the sole basis that The Weald is approaching capacity. Yet, for Land East, secondary school capacity is not treated as a constraint. HDC rated the East site as 'favourable' for education, stating that secondary school capacity issues can be resolved through developer financial contributions.

Both sites rely on the exact same secondary school. It is a basic planning contradiction to use a shared, village-wide infrastructure constraint to penalise one site while recommending another.

While the 3,200-home Adversane proposal safeguards land for a railway station, Network Rail has formally confirmed that a new station is undeliverable during the Local Plan period due to line capacity constraints. Because there will be no functional railway station on-site, commuting residents from these 3,200 homes will be forced to travel to Billingshurst Station or Pulborough Station. This will place direct, unmitigated pressure on narrow local roads, busy train services, and already congested station car parks.

Inadequate Road Network Capacity: Adversane's commuter traffic will depend on narrow local roads. The proposed closure of the B2133 Adversane Lane level crossing will divert high volumes of commuter and HGV traffic through roads not designed or suitable for this volume of traffic.

Cllr Paul Berry said

If we must have a Local Plan, and take even more new development, I am sure that you agree that we need a plan which doesn't just take, we need a plan that gives.

- A plan which provides new local facilities and improves current. In the case of any promised new facilities, we have heard similar promises in the past which didn't come to fruition.*
- We need a plan which improves our local road network, rather than putting it under even more pressure.*
- A plan in which things like local health-care and the water and electricity networks can cope with, now and in the future.*
- We surely need a plan which is proportionate and fair, a plan which spreads new development across the district as fairly and evenly as possible and doesn't just keep focusing on the same areas time and time again. I'm sure that all the parish councillors and members of the public present this evening, feel that Billingshurst has had more than its fair share of development in recent years compared to other areas, and that surely the time has come to leave our area alone. It appears that the only people who don't share these views, are HDC Councillors and officers, who once again appear to be seeing Billingshurst as an easy and convenient option for new houses.*

When it comes to Adversane, the bulk of the development on the site will be in the West Chiltington Parish so I imagine that they would benefit from the bulk of any CIL money associated with the development and also see a large increase in the precept they receive. As far as I can see, they will suffer with very few of the disadvantages the development will bring. In the case of Billingshurst, HDC and the developers seem to be under the misguided and naïve impression that the road network around Adversane, and Billingshurst railway station and the area around it, can cope with all the additional people and traffic that the Adversane development will bring.

Of course, any increase in people and traffic the Adversane site would create would be in addition to all the extra people and vehicles the east of Billingshurst development will bring too; a development which HDC have been completely fixated by for many years, and a development that in my opinion they always knew they were going to back regardless of what their electorate and other stakeholders said. Is this perhaps why the east of Billingshurst developer has shown no real interest in engaging with the community; they probably know their plans are a done deal, more than a done deal in fact as they are now going to get an extra 350 home bonus!

HDC states that one of its priorities for the Council for the period to 2027 is "Always listening and improving. We're stronger when we work together. That means more sharing and more community involvement. Local democracy has to mean more than just an election every 4-years."

Interesting that "always listening" is mentioned. In the case of site allocation in and around Billingshurst HDC have failed to do this in the past and continues to fail to do it now. This is why we must now hope that the Planning Inspector is listening instead.

Local democracy also surely means not misleading people. Election material distributed in 2023, included references to “protecting our countryside” and what is needed is “a Local Plan that benefits the majority of local residents, not developers” Residents who live near the Adversane and east of Billingshurst sites, and no doubt in other parts of the district, may really be struggling to see much evidence of this.

I think most people reluctantly accept that Billingshurst will have to take some development. What I feel people really struggle with is the size and pace of that development, and that we will get all the disadvantages of it, and very few benefits.

On the proposal of Cllr Paul Berry seconded by Cllr Craig Jones **RESOLVED** the response to HD Draft Local Plan, subject to final amendments to reflect any points made this evening, as appropriate.

85/26 Date of Next Meeting – 2 September 2026.

The Chairman concluded by saying:

As we have members of the public present, and as this meeting is likely to attract some interest online, I would like to end by reminding people that all the council’s agendas appear online and the council has various social media accounts, and an e-mail update service, so it's very easy to keep up to date with items that councillors are due to discuss. We welcome and value parishioners’ views and their attendance at our meetings. Next May, the council reaches the end of its current term. I am sure that some of us will stand again, and some perhaps not, but please consider putting yourself forward as if more than 15 people stand, an election will be forced, and democracy will be better served. People have said to me in the past that they don't want to get involved as they don't want to have to represent a political party. Remember, unlike our principal authorities, parish councils are generally not party political. In the case of Billingshurst, none of the current councillors serve under any political banners and as far as I am concerned, long may that remain the case as I think that party politics should play no part in parish councils; it should just be local people who care for their communities, trying to make them a better place for all, people just like you perhaps.

Now, having probably talked myself out of office next May, I thank you all again and bring the meeting to a close.

Meeting finished at 7.57 pm