

**MINUTES OF THE PARISH MEETING
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS
THE BILLINGSHURST CENTRE
ON THURSDAY 29 MARCH 2012 at 7.30pm**

Those Present: Mr P.M. Berry, Mr R. Grantham, Mr D.A.K. Homer, Mr P.T. Leaney, Mrs L. Wilding.
Also Present: Parish Clerk Mrs B.Bell, Mrs Barbara Childs – Spatial Planning Manager HDC, Mrs Caroline West – Senior Planning Officer HDC, two members of the public.

The Chairman opened the meeting and said Horsham District Council is in the process of undergoing a consultation called “How much housing does Horsham district need?” The Parish Council will consider its response to the consultation in a special meeting next Tuesday. This evening, we have asked Barbara Childs, who is Horsham District Council’s Spatial Planning Manager, to give us a presentation on the subject and answer any questions that may arise.

I will let Barbara say more about the consultation in a moment, but as far as the Parish Council is concerned; to date it has tried to resist further mass development in Billingshurst. The reason for this is that in the main, the community have told us that they feel that Billingshurst has had enough new development in the past decade or so. The consultation may be asking about district wide planning, however, I am sure that first and foremost in our minds is how any decisions might affect Billingshurst. It perhaps seems reasonable to assume that the more housing the district takes, the more this is likely to affect individual parishes within the district such as here.

There are challenges of course. Whilst wishing to resist mass development, many of us would like there to be sufficient affordable housing to help youngsters brought up in the parish, to remain in the parish. There is of course also the contentious issue of 106 Planning Gain and the New Homes Bonus. Sadly, and it is sad I feel, if Billingshurst wishes to have renewed and improved facilities, often it comes down to development to help fund it.

We live in a lovely area. We have good road and rail links, good local schools and are in easy reach of the coast and larger towns such as Horsham and Crawley. All great things for us living in the parish, but exactly the things that attract new development.

Guest Speaker: Mrs Barbara Childs – Spatial Planning Manager Horsham District Council ‘How much housing does Horsham district need?’

- The Core Strategy (2007) and General Development Control Policies (2007) will be replaced by the Horsham District Planning Framework
- Early consultation in September 2009 on housing strategy, potential strategic sites and core policy areas.
- Further stage of early consultation on housing numbers due to expected revocation/removal of South East Plan
- Work continuing on evidence gathering including infrastructure, economy, green infrastructure, as well as policy formulation and site evaluation.
- Next stage Preferred Strategy in Autumn 2012, which will be site specific.
- Submission stage document consultation Spring 2013 with public examination by Planning Inspector in Spring 2014 and adoption of the policy in Summer 2014.

Horsham District Planning Framework

- This consultation focuses on housing numbers
- Also opportunity to comment on policy areas to feed into the production of the wider document.
- Planning should remain plan led
- Setting housing numbers is new for District and Borough Councils – these were set regionally by Government
- We need to plan to meet the Districts needs for at least 15 years
- Need to consider the evidence and predicted needs for housing in the District
- Robust evidence base will be tested at examination

National Planning Policy Framework

- Published on 27 March 2012 and supports sustainable plan-led development.
- Local planning authorities have been given one year from date of publication to get their plans up to date.
- HDC are fortunate that they already have an adopted Core Strategy, but it still requires updating.
- 5 year housing land supply must include a 5% additional buffer, rising to 20% in locations with a poor record of delivery. This is not the case in Horsham District, which has a recently adopted development strategy and record of implementation.

Housing Options 2011 to 2031

Housing Option	Amount	Remaining Requirement*
A	11,800 590 per annum	5,500
B	12,700 635 per annum	6,400
C	13,400 670 per annum	7,100
D	14,600 'plus' 730 'plus' per annum	8,300 'plus'

Economy

Housing Option	Housing Amount	Job Creation
A	11,800 590 per annum	1,844 92 per annum
B	12,700 635 per annum	3,000 150 per annum
C	13,400 670 per annum	3,880 194 per annum
D	14,600 'plus' 730 'plus' per annum	5,480 274 per annum

Comparisons

Comparison	Plan Period	Amount
Core Strategy (2007)*	2001 – 2018	10,575 622 per annum
South East Plan	2006 - 2026	13,000 650 per annum
Office for National Statistics	2011 – 31	13,881 694 per annum

Base Line Information

- Under a 'zero net migration' scenario
 - population would decrease by 1,274 (2011 – 2031)
 - employment would decrease by 7,387 jobs.
 - However, to support this scenario 4,555 new homes (228 per annum) would still be needed
- This is explained by how people occupy homes including; older single people households, life expectancy, marriage and divorce rates, 'live alone' households.
- To maintain a stable working-age population would require 10,335 new homes 2011 – 2031, equivalent of 517 per year.

Question and Answer Session from the Public.

- A member of the public said that building houses does not create jobs and does not agree with the correlation. There are no large companies in Billingshurst. Mrs Childs said that is why the previous consultation had focussed on Horsham and Crawley and she added that companies do wish to come to Billingshurst as it is a popular area.
- Mrs Wilding said that over 1,000 houses have been built here in the last 10 years, but they have little access to the transport network, as Penfold Grange is not served by the bus service.
- Mr Grantham said he would like to see the infrastructure in place first such as schools, water, drainage, shopping facilities, petrol station. Mr Grantham said the parish does not want £400,000 - £500,000 houses, they need homes for local people that they can afford to rent or buy. Mrs Childs said that in the current climate it is very difficult for developers to borrow money, so developers build out some houses, sell them and then do some infrastructure. They do not have the cash cycle to put the infrastructure in first. She added that HDC are looking at putting a tariff on individual housing so that HDC can collect the money to provide the infrastructure.
- Mr Leaney said that village homes should be for local people, perhaps who have lived here for five years. Mrs Childs replied that HDC are looking at the category one settlement policy with a view to adding a local connection policy for a proportion of houses. Mrs West explained that the background study had established that the majority of people moving in to the district come from West Sussex, Brighton & Hove and London. A member of the public reported that the Chairman of SPAG is supportive of migration into the district. Mrs West said that the Council needs to plan for 20 years for the working age population.
- Mr Leaney said there used to be seven garages in Billingshurst, but it is a commuter town now that does not produce anything. He asks if empty offices could be converted into flats.
- Mr Homer asked if Billingshurst is a category one settlement due to the A29, A272 and the station. Mrs Childs said that Billingshurst is one of the district's most sustainable settlements. A member of the public said that Billingshurst had the A29, A272 and station 30 years ago and is no better off now than then.
- Mrs Wilding said the Housing Needs Survey had identified 72 households in housing needs and of those 72 households, none had a sufficient income to purchase a property in Billingshurst and only one had an income over £40,000 to be eligible for shared ownership. Mrs Childs said the District Council is testing affordable housing and local connection through their Legal Department at the moment.
- Mrs Wilding said that HDC had failed to maintain a five year housing land supply and had lost appeals for Oddstones, Hilland Farm and Gilmans. The new National Planning Policy Framework requires a 5% buffer and 20% for areas that failed to maintain a five year housing land supply. Mrs Wilding asked what guarantees HDC could give and Mrs Childs replied none as HDC had been caught in the economic downturn too even though they had adopted policy. She said HDC would continue to monitor housing completions on an annual basis and review policies if necessary.
- Mr Leaney suggested building a village at Dunsfold aerodrome and Mrs Childs replied that this is one of the options being investigated in Surrey.
- A member of the public asked about land banking and getting developers to build once they have obtained planning permission. Mrs Childs replied that HDC have reduced the planning permission period from 5 to 3 years to encourage developers to start to build. A member of the public asked if HDC could compulsory purchase the land and Mrs West replied that this is a long, complicated and costly process which HDC would need to decide if it is the best use of Council Tax payers money.

- Mrs Wilding asked who determines the number of affordable houses per development and Mrs Childs explained that HDC has a policy requiring affordable housing for developments of 15 dwellings or more, but HDC are looking at revising this policy, perhaps to require a financial contribution from one house towards affordable housing.
- Mr Homer asked what had happened to the buffer zone originally planned for the land at Daux Avenue. Mrs Childs said the District Council does not support the Daux Avenue planning application, and the buffer zone was part of a much larger planning application.
- A member of the public said that affordable rented accommodation does not build a community as people move on, but Mrs Childs said that the government is looking at this as people tend to stay in these properties for a long time even when their financial circumstances improve.

The Chairman thanked the guest speakers and the meeting finished at 8.40pm.