**Statement from Chidham & Hambrook Parish Council
concerning the Chichester Local Plan 2021-2029 Proposed Submission Consultation**

The current Local Plan was made in 2016. It would be reviewed within five years. Consultation on the Preferred Approach Plan was undertaken between December 2018 and February 2019. Our residents profoundly disagreed with the change in the proposed housing allocation for the Parish which had risen from 25 (Objective Assessment indicative housing number) in the previous Local Plan (2014-2029) to 500 (2024-2039) Since then, despite our arguments, the number has only been reduced to 300 i.e. 12 times our previous housing allocation. There has been no explanation from Chichester District Council about what has been changed/retained as a result of the consultation or for what reasons. The figure of 300 has not been justified. Our arguments have not been addressed. Furthermore, there is a Southbourne planning application for 63 houses on the immediate north-west border of the parish with the only access through Chidham & Hambrook, but this, if approved, would be in addition to the allocation determined by CDC. This application would impact a protected chalk stream destroy the rural edge of the village and landscape and exacerbate local concerns about development levels. Despite these issues, this development would have little if any practical connection with Southbourne.

We have been asked to comment on the Regulation 19 Submission Plan which includes brand new Policies which have been introduced apparently without any local consultation. The response submission process is on-line only, complicated and time-consuming. Residents are limited to three reasons for objecting – legal compliance, soundness and duty to cooperate. They are restricted to a comment of only 100 words. Only four supporting documents can be attached. This consultation process seems undemocratic. We realise that the government makes the rules, and the Council has to keep to the rules, but this is not an acceptable or democratic form of Consultation.

In the period 2014 - 2017 of the previous Local Plan there was a substantial amount of development in Chidham & Hambrook: the 25 properties increased to 144 new properties permitted by the end of 2019, many ‘on appeal’, and a further 148 in the period to 2022 of which 144 count towards the new Local Plan. This means a further 156 houses are required.

Currently a further 239 houses are the subject of planning applications which have gone to appeal.

The Council’s original assertion of the status of the parish as a relatively high ranking service village was only justified by the theoretical ranking system, but not in our view, as expressed to the council, by practical, comparative, qualitative reality. Although this ranking has disappeared from the current draft it must have contributed to the appeal decision in 2021 for 118 houses in Hambrook which was not contested by the Council, and allowed at a time when the Council could not demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply.

Our residents are understandably incensed. It is difficult to present an argument for a Neighbourhood Plan that requires so many houses, and any new plan will be required to get residents approval in a referendum. Our current experience is of increasing housing numbers for a parish where travel by car is necessary because of the distances, infrequency, inconvenience and cost of buses or trains.

How can CDC expect support from local communities for their Local Plan involving future development if they disregard concerns about the current situation in terms of the limitations of the infrastructure? Just as importantly the parish is midway between the SDNP and the Chichester Harbour AONB. Building in the parish degrades the links between, and therefore the habitats themselves, of these two important and legally protected environmental areas. This is economically counterproductive because of the importance of tourism and leisure, and farming to the area, and the historic and chronic underinvestment in basic wastewater treatment capacity locally.

11 April 2023