

Neighbourhood Plan Statement – June 2019

The Chichester District Council (CDC) revised Local Plan Preferred Option requires Chidham & Hambrook Parish to accommodate 500 new houses over the next fifteen years as part of a new round of house building. We currently have about 1000 homes in the parish, so this will make a substantial change to the parish.

The Parish Council has objected to CDC, but can't overturn Government policy. Chichester District Council is considering representations made to it as part of its consultation process. In the mean time two things are happening.

A resident's Housing Action Group has been set up to campaign against the numbers.

Secondly, the Parish Council has set up a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

The purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is to allocate land for housing development. This might sound totally at odds with the campaign against the housing numbers, but it isn't.

The Neighbourhood Plan document forms part of the Local Plan, and thus the planning law, and it is planning law that determines whether or not any particular planning application is permitted.

However we are constrained as to what we can put in the plan. The Neighbourhood Plan has to comply with the rules made by the Government - as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, the NPPF. We can't stop development, but we can have a real influence on the type of development we get in the parish. Developers will look closely at the plan policies when they are finalised to give their proposals the best chance of being accepted.

If the housing numbers are changed we can modify the allocation of land for housing in our Neighbourhood Plan.

If we have no Neighbourhood Plan, the District Council will step in and decide how to allocate the land. In the absence of a Local Plan developers will submit planning proposals, with every expectation that their proposals will be permitted.

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has been looking at how the parish could accommodate the 500 houses the district requires. We have engaged a firm of Planning Consultants to advise us. Clearly there are many concerns. What do we like about living in the parish? Where will the houses be built? Will it be possible to maintain a semi rural feel? Will the roads be more congested? Will these houses damage the Chichester Harbour AONB? Will we lose our views and open spaces? What about schools and doctors? And so on

Chidham & Hambrook is a good place to live. We have to consider if we can write policies for the Neighbourhood Plan which will be fairly balanced, will preserve the best of the parish, address residents concerns, and make it a good place for existing residents as well as newcomers.

To achieve this, the plan has to be consistent with the rules set down by the Government – the NPPF, and the Chichester District Council Local Plan

In due course there will be a Consultation process so that residents' views (as well as developers and statutory organisations views) are taken into account. The document will be vetted by the District Council and also by an Independent Examiner. The final democratic backstop is that the Plan will be put to a Referendum, and this will happen sometime next year.

The proposed new housing means inevitable change. It is vital that we have the protection of a Neighbourhood Plan so that we do not completely lose our ability to influence this process.

Stephen Johnson, Chair, Chidham & Hambrook Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group