

Date: 24 July 2019
Project Ref: 0002
Project Name: Steyning Community Plan



THE FUTURE OF THE STEYNING NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

This summary note has been prepared at the request of the Clerk to the Parish Council to inform Full Parish Council Meeting on 24th July 2019 and confirm the matters that need to be considered and options available to the Council.

There are two distinctly separate but linked matters to consider, these are the current neighbourhood plan and what happens in the future.

1. The current Neighbourhood Plan

Horsham District Council are preparing a new Local Plan and have stated that for a neighbourhood plan to precede the new Local Plan it must be submitted to them under Regulation 15 by 30th November 2019. If this deadline is missed and submitted after this date it will be placed on hold until the new Local Plan is adopted by HDC.

For several reasons the neighbourhood plan has not progressed in line with its timeline set out at the beginning of the year and as a result it is not achievable to have a plan which includes housing allocations submitted by the set deadline. It is however possible to produce a pared back plan which considers other matters and provides planning policies on them. This would ensure some locally specific policies can be introduced and the parish would receive 25% of Community infrastructure Levy (CIL) monies originating from within the parish (instead of 15% without a made plan).

This was discussed informally on 17th July and a steer was given the Steering Group that they should press on with a pared back plan to meet the 30th November deadline. Work is now progressing at speed with the preparation of the required evidence base.

Q1. The Parish Council are therefore asked to confirm whether they are content for the NP Steering Committee to produce a neighbourhood plan (which will not include housing allocations) for Regulation 15 Submission by 30 November 2019.

2. The Future of the Steyning Neighbourhood Plan

This element of discussion considers the future of the neighbourhood plan and should be considered separately from the above. Any decisions made relating to the below questions will not affect the production of the current plan which must be submitted to HDC by 30th November.

Horsham District Council (HDC) is reviewing its Local Plan and this new plan will seek to meet the increased housing need resulting from changes to government policy. The final figure is unknown

at this time but is expected to be a considerable increase on the current level of provision. HDC are expected to meet this figure through housing allocations in the Local Plan and supporting neighbourhood plans.

Within each plan area there are therefore two options:

- a) Allocate housing through the neighbourhood plan: Where a neighbourhood plan area has said they wish to choose where the housing allocations in their plan area will go, the new Local Plan will set out the quantum of housing that area should provide. The relevant authorities of such neighbourhood plans areas will be expected to sign a memorandum of understanding with HDC to confirm they will undertake a review of their plan in 2021/22 and allocate at least the quantum of homes assigned to their plan area.
- b) HDC to allocate housing through the Local Plan: Where a plan area confirms they do not wish to allocate sites in their neighbourhood plan, HDC will allocate sites through the Local Plan. These allocations would be considered at the district level and it is unknown at this time where they would allocate housing.

When considering these options, I would suggest that the following points are considered alongside the list of pros and cons circulated previously by others:

- At this time there is no way of knowing which option would result in more, or less, housing being delivered in each plan area as HDC's methodology has not yet been published.
- It is likely that the Steyning Neighbourhood Plan will need to be reviewed in 2021/22 regardless of which option is chosen by the Parish Council to bring it into general conformity with the new Horsham Local Plan. At this point additional allocations (above those as required by HDC) and further policies could be included in the neighbourhood plan if so chosen.
- The local community would have a greater say on where housing is located if they chose option a) above but progressing such a plan can result in differences of opinion, rifts in the local community, a financial cost to the parish and any revised neighbourhood plan would need to pass referendum.
- If option b) were chosen HDC have stated that any allocations in the parish made by the Local Plan would be done so in consultation with the local community. We are of the opinion that Steyning should not expect to have any special treatment or say in local plan allocations beyond those that would occur as part of any Local Plan process which is primarily evidence base led for a number of reasons including resource implications for HDC.

Assuming the Parish Council have accepted that a plan will be produced for the 30th November deadline they need to make one important decision regarding the future of the neighbourhood plan and HDC have requested a response to the following by 24th July 2019. HDC would like the Parish Council to confirm the following:

Q2. Would the Parish Council like to adopt option a) or b) above regarding the future of the plan

P.T.O.

In seeking to provide a response to the above question the Steering Group drafted a letter for the Parish Council which was sent to HDC on 3 July 2019. In it the letter confirms that:

- i. The Steyning Neighbourhood Plan will be submitted by 30th November.
- ii. The Steyning Neighbourhood Plan will commence an early review to take account of any revised housing numbers which are assigned to the parish in new Local Plan. (this is option a) set out above)

The Parish Council have been asked to ratify/approve this letter as their formal position. Whether they can do so will be based on the decision to Q.2 above, if option a) is chosen the letter dated 3 July can be ratified by the Council. If Option b) is chosen, the letter cannot be ratified and should be amended to reflect this decision.

Q3. The Council are asked whether they ratify the letter drafted by the Steering Group on 3 July 2019?

We trust that this summary note provides a useful overview of the matters to be considered and will inform discussions between Councillors.



Andrew Metcalfe

Director | MPlan MRTPI