

The Neighbourhood Plan is a process to help shape growth and development for the local community. It was introduced in 2011 as part of the Localism Act and looks to facilitate the devolution of decision-making powers from central government control to individuals and communities. Neighbourhood planning enables communities to play a much stronger role in shaping the areas in which they live and work and in supporting new development proposals. Through a Neighbourhood Plan, communities can choose where they want new homes to be built, have their say on what new buildings should look like, and determine what additional infrastructure should be provided. Crucially, having a 'made' Neighbourhood Plan also increases the Parish's entitlement to a 25% share of CIL money collected from developers for investment in local infrastructure and amenities. West Chiltington has struggled for a number of years to complete its plan and gain the necessary agreement from the District Council. It is the intention of the Aecom Working Group to break this impasse. Horsham District Council has made it clear that for it to accept and progress our plan we must make a contribution to increasing the local housing stock. In fact, just over a year ago HDC issued a consultation document where it gave an indication of the housing numbers it wanted from the Parish and identified two sites that would achieve that number. The requirement is for a minimum of 25 extra houses above the normal windfall and the two sites proposed in the Draft Local Plan would deliver 28.

The Parish Council commissioned its own independent study with a company called AECOM. The results of this study were initially available in November 2020 but contained many errors that needed correction and also required consultation with HDC before release. All these things have been completed.

The AECOM report suggested there were a small number of sites within the Parish that could be considered by the Parish Council to achieve the HDC requirement of 25. Aecom Working Group undertook a process to rank these sites and then engaged in consultation with Horsham District Council.

The conclusion of this consultation was that we should align our Neighbourhood Plan with that of Horsham District Council's Draft Local Plan, and that the Smock Alley site plan of 14 dwellings and the Hatches Estate site plan of also 14 dwellings are proposed. This will in the mind of the working group be the least damaging to the character of the village.

Horsham District Council has agreed that if we do this then it will progress the Neighbourhood Plan to the next level, and try as best it can within its powers to firstly resist any attempt to increase the housing numbers both within the plan and any other non-windfall developments.