

Meeting the Housing need

by Myles Cullen

Myles Cullen is District Councillor for the Bosham Ward, Chichester District Council (which includes Chidham and Hambrook)

As I explained at the HADRA AGM, there are many misconceptions concerning the CDC position regarding development and the forth-coming Development Plan.

Councillors and the District Council as a whole have to obey the law of the land. Currently the South East Plan is part of that body of law and we are required to accept it, providing as it does for 480 homes per annum in the District up to 2029; our responsibility now is outside the SDNP so 355 pa will be the requirement. Even when (if?) the South East Plan is revoked, CDC will be required to produce a sound Development Plan based on the best available data on population projections and other relevant data. The advice we have received would indicate that the Government's Inspector's definition of soundness is likely to mean provision for a number of houses outside the SDNP little changed from the figure in the SE Plan. These will be met by Strategic (large) sites around Chichester and lesser amounts in our towns and villages. Furthermore, currently there is a substantial shortfall in permissions to meet our statutory Five Year Land Supply requirement. This shortfall has to be carried forward into our figures.

Clearly priority should be given to using brownfield sites over greenfield areas. This priority is given Government backing in the National Planning Policy Framework in paragraph 17 on page 6 in the Statement of Core Planning Principles where it states that one of its 12 core principles is to: *encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value...* Unfortunately within the existing Settlement Policy Areas in the District there are, as far as I know, no significant brownfield areas designated for housing which are not already the subject of planning applications. The Council, in order to meet the Government's Five Year Land Supply requirement, has had no alternative but to permit certain planning applications on greenfield areas. It seeks to regulate this, until we have our Local Development Plan approved, by applying the criteria in our interim policy statement, **Facilitating Appropriate Development (FAD)**. Details of conditions around such sites are available on the CDC website and there is a link from the village site. Since its introduction over a year ago there have been minor amendments to the FAD policy with another being currently considered. Basically by identifying those sites (taken from the sites in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) published 2010) that best suit the agreed criteria, the Council can manage where development could be considered. However, without such an interim policy the Council would have no safeguard against development on other greenfield sites of developers choosing, with the presumptions of the new laws regarding development. This would be greatly detrimental to development management and decisions inevitably would be taken by central inspectorate. Developers are now considering FADs such sites one of which is that on Broad Road.

Some comments have been made regarding the time-scale for producing the new plan. Contrary to the statements recently uttered locally, there is no date legislated by for the submission on a new Development Plan. There is an onus on authorities who have a current plan to update that plan by end 2013. The Chichester plan is being produced in the most expedient manner possible within the constraints allowed by the process and the crucial need to support the plan with an evidence base that will pass the Government's test of soundness. All the efforts to speed-up the process have not been helped by the many changes to planning introduced over the past two years and even this month the Prime Minister introduced further planning guidance with major changes to permit development, even though of an interim nature.

It will take much further consultation, evidence gathering and deliberation before the submission document is ready and the final figures are agreed by Council. However with all the options considered to-date it is possible to attempt some extrapolations and shortly suggested figures will be circulated to the Parishes. My anticipation of figures for Chidham and Hambrook will be between twenty-five to fifty properties over the period to 2028 which would mean increase in stock from just less than two to just over three houses per year. A single development of 25 would possibly meet the full fifteen year commitment.

As always any application that does come forward will have to be considered on its own merit and in relation to the policies currently adopted by the Council and all the normal protocol must ensue.