



FISHBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL
RESPONSE TO THE CHICHESTER LOCAL PLAN REVIEW
CONSULTATION

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CHICHESTER LOCAL PLAN REVIEW CONSULTATION

Following previous discussion in the Parish Council, three meetings of the Neighbourhood Plan Review Group, the analysis of the Village Survey 2018, an Open Meeting attended by over 100 residents, a meeting of the Bournes Forum and two meetings with the Senior Planning team at CDC, we wish to record our concerns about the Consultation version of the Chichester Local Plan Review.

OUR GENERAL CONCERNS:

- 1. Whereas the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (para 16 b) says plans should “be prepared positively, in a way that is aspirational but deliverable, the consultation document for the Local Plan Review is STRONG ON ASPIRATION BUT WEAK ON DELIVERABILITY.**

There is a running sore throughout the document created by the disparity between the policies (which tick all the boxes for compliance with the NPPF) and the implications of what parishes are asked to do to meet their allotted new building targets. To take one example, Policy DM8 states that “any development must minimise and not create or add to problems of highway safety, congestion, air pollution and other damage” whereas the Donnington – Southbourne transport corridor (A259), which is currently over capacity at peak times, would be used by a further 4,500 cars (on the basis of 2 cars per household).

As far as Fishbourne is concerned, there is little scope for employment in the village, the primary school is full and the nearest secondary schools are in Chichester or Southbourne. Even without the proposed 250 extra houses, Fishbourne already has the largest car dependency in Chichester District and the air pollution level on the A27 near Fishbourne was 70.1 in 2017 compared with the legal average limit of 40 recently set by the European Union.

- 2. There is concern about the definition of Fishbourne as a Service Village since this implies (4.18) that Fishbourne offers “an opportunity to provide development based on the strategy of dispersing development across the plan area (*REALITY: given its annual expansion since the 1970s any dispersing should be away from Fishbourne!*) in conjunction with land being available (*REALITY: mainly Bethwines Farm which is best and most versatile land and has a climate ideally suited to arable crops*) in suitable locations” (*REALITY: with valued views from Chichester Harbour to the Downs and with traffic having to use Blackboy Lane and the already overcrowded A259 and Fishbourne Roundabout*).**
- 3. The voice of the local communities seems to be ignored in the drive to meet the new targets. Whereas Secretary of State James Brokenshire says that “the number of new houses we build won’t be based on what a developer thinks they can sell but on the real needs of the community”, the Local Plan sets an arbitrary 250 homes target for Fishbourne which could only be met by placing some of the homes on Bethwines Farm since the extensive new build in the last 50 years has used up almost all of the sustainable sites in**

the village. This is despite current policies in Fishbourne Neighbourhood Plan (2014-2029), the current Local Plan and the NPPF all of which prevent best and most versatile land from being considered appropriate for building development.

The Village Survey of 2013 made it quite clear that the residents were opposed to any house building on Bethwines Farm and Bethwines was excluded from the list of possible sites in the Neighbourhood Plan because it would not be sustainable and would “cause unnecessary irreparable damage and would have an adverse impact that would demonstrably outweigh the advantages.” This was confirmed by Fishbourne Parish Council in September 2018 and further endorsement came in the analysis of the 2018 Village Survey where over 90% considered Bethwines not suitable for potential development.

1. COMMENTS ON FISHBOURNE (para. 662 - 665) and the Allocation of 250 new homes.

1.1 Nowhere can the Parish Council find the set of criteria used by the District Council to determine the size of the allocation of new housing to individual parishes. We are particularly concerned that the arbitrary allocation of 250 cannot be delivered from sustainable sites in the village and the only land available to produce the remainder is Bethwines Farm.

Para 663 gives an apparent reason for the allocation of 250 to Fishbourne, but the basic premise, that Fishbourne needs 250 new homes in order to promote the vitality of the village and to sustain the local facilities is totally untrue.

- The population doubled in the second half of the 20th century and has increased by a further 33% since the 2001 Census.
- Development has already reached the Northern, Eastern and Southern boundaries.
- The primary school is full.
- The Fishbourne Centre is so busy that all three meeting spaces are often in use at the same time.
- The Playing Field offers opportunities for football (adult and junior), cricket, tennis, bowls and croquet.
- Fishbourne has a proactive Parish Council which involved the community in the construction and delivery of 2 village plans before becoming one of the first in the District to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan.

The case for any increase in population in order to increase vitality is therefore not made. Indeed what the village actually needs is more infrastructure (especially improved roads) and not more housing.

1.2 Even if the premise about the need to promote the vitality of the village were correct, that would only explain the need for some more housing and not why that need has been fixed at an arbitrary and inflexible 250. **It is our view that 250 is not a deliverable figure and therefore fails to meet the requirement in NPPF para. 16b: “Plans should be prepared positively, in a way that is aspirational but deliverable” and the requirement in NPPF para15 that plans should provide “a platform for local people to shape their surroundings”. We urge the District Council to reduce our allocation accordingly.**

1.3 Interestingly, the Chichester Local Plan’s Inspector’s Report May 2015 states:

“Early proposals to locate strategic development to the south west and west of Chichester and at Fishbourne were discounted due to their environmental impact on the Chichester and Langstone Harbour Special Protection Area (SPA). Subsequently a mitigated strategy for recreational disturbance was developed and a solution to address the issue of waste water treatment emerged. This led to the strategic location for development west of Chichester being re-introduced. However the SA report makes it clear that no such justification exist to re-introduce South West of Chichester or Fishbourne as locations for strategic development.”

So what methodology is CDC using in this 2019 Local Plan Review which changes the above?

1.4 The one area in the village where an aspirational approach might have delivered 160 new homes was suddenly and with no consultation rendered unavailable as a result of the District Council’s decision to use the site as part of a Wildlife Corridor. This has in effect increased our target to an equivalent of 410. **We urge the District Council either to rescind the decision to site the Corridor in Clay Lane or to reduce our new housing allocation accordingly. It is not equitable for one parish to shoulder the negative impact of a District Council decision.**

1.5 If the proposed Wildlife Corridor remains in situ, the only land available to meet the arbitrary 250 allocation would be small sites indicated in HELAA which together would provide 40 new homes, leaving Bethwines Farm to provide the remainder. The Parish Council is not of a mind to change its view that Bethwines Farm is not suitable for any building development for the list of reasons set out in the attached report *“No Building on Bethwines: A Red Line”* which is compatible with the NPPF (2018).

1.6 Fishbourne Parish Council wishes to be able to draw up a revised Neighbourhood Plan which would be aspirational but deliverable, but our ability to do this would depend on the co-operation of the District Council. There are three proposals:

(1) Proposal One: Small sites as indicated in HELAA with a total of 40 new homes

(2) Proposal Two: Medium sites on Clay Lane as indicated in HELAA, offering approximately 160 making a total of 200. This would depend on substantial mitigating factors: improvements in flood risk at the Eastern end of the site and substantial road improvements to make Clay Lane safe for walkers, cyclists and the increased vehicular traffic; and relocation of the proposed Wildlife Corridor.

(3) Proposal Three: re-examination of sites rejected in HELAA.

This would provide a maximum of 200 which falls short of the arbitrary 250 and the District Council has been informed.

2. POLICY AL 9: Fishbourne Parish

Development will be expected to address the following requirements:

2.1 Provision of a high-quality development to be masterplanned as a sustainable extension(s) of the existing built up area of Fishbourne and be well integrated with the existing settlement providing good access to facilities and sustainable forms of transport;

RESPONSE: This will not be a “sustainable” development, nor will it provide “good access to facilities and sustainable forms of transport”. On the contrary, the increased traffic will only hasten the progress of “gridlock Chichester” as cars seek to avoid Fishbourne roundabout by using rat runs which are unsuitable even for their current usage.

Traffic flow calculations need to take into account four things:

- 1. The cumulative effect on the A259 of ALL the new building in villages through which it passes.**
- 2. The increasing demand on the local road network which already suffers delays when traffic attempts to join the main road network;**
- 3. In subsequent Local Plan reviews, developers will be keen to offer the rest of Bethwines – making a total of 1,000 new homes.**
- 4. Fishbourne has the highest car-user ratio in the District and one of the highest air pollution levels.**

2.2 A range of types, sizes and tenures of residential accommodation to include specific provision to meet specialised housing needs including accommodation for older people;

RESPONSE: Fishbourne has an above average proportion of older people and accommodation which meets their needs is certainly necessary. However, the main shortage is for accommodation suitable to first-time buyers and it is requested that this is added to the above requirement.

2.3 Provision of suitable means of access to the site(s) and securing necessary off-site improvements (including highways) to promote sustainable transport options;

RESPONSE: If BETHWINES were to be used, there would be huge access problems both during the construction and once the houses are occupied. The only roads for access are country lanes which are already used beyond their capacity and any substantial increase in traffic will cause jams wherever they join the major road network. If CLAY LANE were to be used, there would need to be a programme including road widening and the provision of pavements, with street lighting and the introduction of a speeding limit. Calculations would need to take into account the impact on the area of traffic from the stage 1 (1,600 homes) development at Whitehouse Farm. For further details, see our response to Policy S23.

A separate Highways issue is that the proposed mitigating feature of an additional link road from the A286 to Fishbourne Roundabout (Policy AL6) would in fact make the Roundabout less accessible from Fishbourne and increase the accident risk. This proposal is strongly opposed.

2.4 Provision of on-site public open space and play areas;

RESPONSE: None.

2.5 Detailed consideration of the impact of development on the surrounding landscape, including the South Downs National Park and Chichester Harbour AONB and their settings. Development should be designed to protect long-distance views to the South Downs National Park;

RESPONSE: It is requested that “and views to and from Chichester Harbour AONB, Stow Clump, SSSI Kingley Vale and Bow Hill” should be added to the final sentence.

The use of Bethwines Farm for housing would conflict with this objective, which is even acknowledged by the District Council (see HELAA list of rejected offers where all but the initial slice was rejected because of “Impact on the landscape setting and long distance views”).

2.6 Opportunities for the expansion and provision of green infrastructure into the wider countryside including between settlements and facilities;

RESPONSE: It is thought that wildlife corridors would be most appropriate as green structures in land between settlements (e.g. Bethwines Farm) rather than routes in residential areas and containing trunk roads (e.g. Clay Lane).

2.7 Demonstration that development would not have an adverse impact on the surrounding area.

RESPONSE: Any building on Bethwines would lead to a total of 1,000 new homes (as already offered by Icenio obo Fishbourne Developments Limited) and this would have a significant negative impact on identified sites within

Bethwines. The increase in recreational use (especially dog-walking) would have a serious effect on the breeding areas in the Harbour.

For further details, see our comment on policy S25: The Coast and also our report: No Building on Bethwines: A Red Line.

2.8 Provide mitigation to ensure the protection of the SPA, SAC and Ramsar site at Chichester Harbour as a result of water quality issues relating to runoff into a designated site, and loss of functionally linked supporting habitat;

RESPONSE: Water quality issues would need to take into account the likelihood of a further substantial increase in the next 5-Year review as well as the impact of rising tides. (See our comment on S.31 Wastewater Management.)

3. Policy AL6: Apuldram and Donnington Parishes

3.1 Donnington & Fishbourne look to become one “Harbour Village” (The new Ward was deliberately named “Harbour Villages Ward” to emphasise it was a collection of separate villages).

3.2 The proposed raised Stockbridge Link Road and hamburger junction design for the Fishbourne Roundabout will mean that the actual roundabout and slip road will encroach into The Fishbourne Meadows.

3.3 The Link Road would in fact make the Roundabout less accessible from Fishbourne and increase the accident risk. In 2008, the failed presentation of the draft local plan to the inspectors showed that the road would be on unstable flood plains.

3.4 The views from the AONB of the Cathedral and South Downs will be obliterated by this AL6 Development. See link.

[https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?fbclid=IwAR35GS2e_ZzBnOgie5bT6zrg8FU_r4WCu1dVJ3D8gqTNjtSnYPYT2QGNY-AI&mid=1g3MzIHTqvToifHPdYdLI5CvLry8DvfCF&ll=50.820118437376806%2C-0.8102088499999809&z=14](https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?fbclid=IwAR35GS2e_ZzBnOgie5bT6zrg8FU_r4WCu1dVJ3D8gqTNjtSnYPYT2QGNY-<u>AI&mid=1g3MzIHTqvToifHPdYdLI5CvLry8DvfCF&ll=50.820118437376806%2C-0.8102088499999809&z=14</u>)

3.5 It would be detrimental to SSSI and SPA within the Chichester Harbour AONB.
This proposal is strongly opposed by Fishbourne Parish Council

4. Policy S23: Transport and Accessibility and Policy DM8: Transport, Accessibility and Parking

4.1 New road connecting Birdham Road to A27 Fishbourne roundabout (see Policy AL6) to be funded through S106/S278 by the developer of the Strategic Site Allocation – Land South West of Chichester (Apuldram and Donnington Parishes);

RESPONSE: This looks similar to the proposal soundly rejected when it formed part of one of the options put forward by Highways England. The objections raised then by Fishbourne Parish Council remain the same now, namely that the proximity of an extra junction on Fishbourne Roundabout would cause an even worse bottleneck on the A259 from Fishbourne which would already be dealing with all the extra traffic from developments from Emsworth to Chichester using the A259 as their access to Chichester and the A27. This, together with the poor sightlines, would also increase the existing risk level for the Fishbourne Roundabout – and, as such, would be clearly at odds with the statement in Policy DM8 that “Development must not create residual severe cumulative impacts on surrounding areas.”

4.2 7.48 ...”it is necessary to consider the impact of any new development upon: the existing transport network; highway safety; and current provision for movement for all modes of transport”...

RESPONSE: This is a welcome ambition but placing an additional 4,500 cars on the A259 would cause intolerable delays and air pollution so this is another fine-sounding sentiment which would result in exactly the opposite of what it purports.

Particularly significant would be the effect of Bethwines development traffic (in addition to the Whitehouse Farm development, on the existing network. Car-sharing and extensive use of cycling/walking will never work to reduce regular car use in the village because there are few facilities in the village and new residents would have to travel some distance to find employment or even to find schools. So all the traffic emerging from Bethwines (eventually traffic from 1,000 homes) would have to exit onto Blackboy Lane. At the southern end, where traffic would join the A259, the road is narrow, with ditches either side and with properties closely bordering the roadway. The exit on the A259 is narrow with limited visibility and turning into the A259 would be almost impossible with the proposed traffic flow. North of the level crossing, the road is wider but leads to Clay Lane which is a narrow country lane with no pavement, no speed limit and no lighting which currently makes it dangerous for the volume of traffic that uses it as a rat run alongside pedestrians and cyclists for whom there is no provision. Accidents already occur at the Clay Lane/Salthill Road junction.

The Salthill Road/Funtington Road junction has very poor visibility and at peak times there are lengthy queues along Salthill Road. It is inevitable that Salthill Road, Hunters Race (off Funtington Road) and Clay Lane would become popular routes out of the area.

Any travel plan needs to take into consideration the increase in summer traffic to the beaches due in part to the Hindhead Tunnel improving journey times from South London.

4.3 **Policy S23** promises a travel plan that will “achieve timely delivery of transport infrastructure needed to support new housing”. Given the amount of new housing proposed and the current over-capacity of much of the current local road network, a timely delivery would require the provision of the infrastructure **before** the building was completed. Accordingly, **Fishbourne Parish Council proposes that any building requiring such infrastructure should be placed in the second or third of the five-year slots in the Local Plan’s 15 year time span so as to allow time for planning, funding and implementing the travel plan.**

5. POLICY S24: COUNTRYSIDE

5.1 Outside settlement boundaries as defined on the policies map, development will be permitted in the countryside provided that:

1. It conserves and, where possible, enhances the key features and qualities of the rural and landscape character of the countryside setting;
2. It is of an appropriate scale, siting and design that is unlikely to cause unacceptable harm to the appearance of the countryside; and
3. It requires a countryside location or meets an essential local need, as provided for in Policies DM21 and DM22.

RESPONSE: We totally support this policy. It is, though, a strident example of how the District Council’s own policies are ignored in the drawing up of its proposals. Given the criteria above, how can the District Council justify its plan for 250 homes in Fishbourne which will inevitably lead to building on Bethwines Farm unless the Wildlife Corridor to the east is relocated? The Council’s proposals would cause not only unacceptable harm but irreparable harm to the appearance of the countryside. The eventual scale would merge with developments in Bosham and beyond and destroy for ever the views to and from Chichester Harbour and to and from the South Downs. Separate villages would merge into an urban sprawl – the very antithesis of the rural and valued landscape setting which Fishbourne currently enjoys.

6. POLICY 25: THE COAST

RESPONSE: In considering any proposal to build on Bethwines Farm CDC is urged to apply paras 5.44 and 5.46 (below)

5.44The landscape of the coastline is characterised by its relatively flat topography which, on occasion, serves to provide views from the water across to the South Downs National Park.

5.46The importance of the landscape of Chichester Harbour, including its coastline has been recognised by its designation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Most of the coastline is also designated as a Special Area of Conservation and a Ramsar site. There are also Sites of Special Scientific Interest along the coast.

and to take no action that would conflict with them.

7. POLICY S26: NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

7.1 The Council will continue to work with partner authorities and organisations to protect and enhance the natural environment of the Plan Area. In relation to development proposals this will include:

- Ensuring that distinctive local landscape character and sensitivity is protected in accordance with Policy DM28.
- Ensuring there is no adverse impact on the openness of views in and around the coast, designated environmental areas and the setting of the South Downs National Park. See Policies DM19, DM20 and DM28.
- Protecting the biodiversity value of the site and its environment in accordance with Policy DM29; and
- Considering the quality of the agricultural land, with the development of poorer quality agricultural land being preferred to the best and most versatile land.

RESPONSE: We totally support this policy and urge that Officers and Members should take it into account when considering any proposal to build on Bethwines Farm.

8. POLICY 27: FLOOD MANAGEMENT

RESPONSE: We have no problem with the overall aim of this policy which is “to reduce the overall and local risk of flooding in the area” The Fishbourne and Parklands Flood Prevention Group (FPFPG), with the help of the County Council’s Operation Watershed, has made great strides in reducing the flood risk in Fishbourne.

We also agree with the Policy requirement that “Development must be located, designed and laid out to ensure that it is safe, that the risk from flooding is minimised whilst not increasing the risk of flooding elsewhere, and that residual risks are safely managed. The risk of flooding along the A259 in Fishbourne is much higher than might be assumed from table-top exercises to determine Flood Risk areas.

96% of respondents to the Village Survey which formed the starting point for Fishbourne Neighbourhood Plan 2014-29, cited flooding as a major concern. FPFPG has developed strategies for ensuring streams and ditches are monitored and cleared where necessary and that culverts are working to their capacity. However, this relates to the increased flood risk from earlier building development and proposed building on Bethwines farm would present new problems with its potential to provide sites for 1,000 homes.

A local farmer, whose farm lies mainly to the south of the A259, writes:

“The main channel through Chichester Harbour runs approximately South West/North East and our prevailing wind always comes from the South West. Our flooding problems happen when extremes of weather arrive at the same time i.e. torrential rain, 5 metre plus tides and winds at gale force. I personally have observed the tides my entire life and if we get gale

force winds from a South Westerly direction, a 5 metre tide is more than the equivalent of 6 metres on arrival at the head of Fishbourne Channel, resulting in the newly replaced and heightened centre footbridge at the '**THREE BRIDGES**' being completely submerged. On these occasions sea water is very close to flowing onto the A259 at a point directly opposite the junction with Salthill Road. I have watched tides getting steadily higher over the last 50 years and predict that sea water, in the very near future, will reach the A259, and will be a regular occurrence within the next 20 years or less.

Fishbourne has three main drainage water ditches running North to South, all three of these ditches terminate at the head of Fishbourne Creek and pass into the harbour under the '**THREE BRIDGES**' centre footbridge.

The proposed development on Bethwines Farm is particularly relevant. The site sits between our two western drainage ditches which are currently running way over capacity. It is also very important to understand that almost **ALL OF THE HOUSES THAT REGULARLY FLOOD ARE SITUATED BETWEEN THESE TWO DITCHES AND BELOW BETHWINES FARM.** I am very familiar with this area and for the last three months, or more, the water table has been at, or just below ground level, this makes it virtually impossible to manage the ground water in the short distance available before it reaches the culverts under the A259. Any holding ponds would be full before they were dug, similarly so the recently favoured S.U.D.S. drainage systems. **ANY CHANGE TO THIS SITE'S CURRENT AGRICULTURAL USE WOULD ONLY BE DETRIMENTAL TO THE SITUATION AND LEAD TO GREATER FLOODING PROBLEMS IN THE AREA."**

9. POLICY S28: POLLUTION

Next to the M25, the A27 has the worst congestion rates in the country and the air pollution from this has caused several "hot points" along the Chichester bypass. EU Regulations concerning air pollution are already being breached and air quality will worsen as a result of traffic from all the proposed developments feeding onto the A27. It is also a matter of concern that this section does not cover noise or light pollution.

10. POLICY S30: STRATEGIC WILDLIFE CORRIDORS

RESPONSE: While we support the notion of wildlife corridors, we consider their location should be where they do not have a negative effect on the availability of plots for development as part of a Neighbourhood Plan. We therefore **OBJECT** to the proposed location of a wildlife corridor to the east of Fishbourne (Clay Lane) and consider a wider corridor towards the west of the village would be our preferred option.

11. POLICY S31: WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT

RESPONSE: In the Parish Council's view, no planning application should be considered without previous guarantee that the updates at the relevant WWTW have been completed and that the waste water from the new building can be safely dealt with without any risk of polluting the AONB.

12. FUTURE POLICY FOR GAPS BETWEEN SETTLEMENTS

Maintaining separate village identity is something that is a key issue for Fishbourne and other villages in the East-West Corridor. It scored 96% support in the village survey that preceded Fishbourne Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2029 and in the 2018 Village Survey a similar level of support (together with the strength of feeling in some of the comments) caused the data analyst to remark on the importance attached to this by the inhabitants of Fishbourne.

It seems somewhat too late for this issue to be addressed by the District Council by setting up "a study for the potential for the introduction of gaps between settlements across the plan area" – and even more so when this late action contains no promise ("should this study support the case ...") and in any case delays the provision until "the next iteration of this Plan".

Fishbourne Parish Council urges CDC to support the introduction of gaps and to delay any decisions on allocations that would be affected by such a provision until this policy has been added to the Revised Local Plan.

13. FORMAL REQUESTS FROM FISHBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL

Fishbourne Parish Council requests a recalculation of its allocation of 250 and a consequent reduction on the following grounds:

1. The case for Fishbourne's need for further growth to promote the vitality of the village and to sustain its facilities (para 663) is not made. In fact, the opposite is true. The village has expanded to three of its four borders, the primary school is full, the Centre is looking to make more flexible use of its space because demand frequently outstrips supply, the facilities on the Playing Fields are the envy of neighbouring parishes, and the Parish Council is regarded as being proactive.
2. 250 is not a deliverable figure for the allocation to Fishbourne. The only sites available are:
 - (1) Small sites on the edge of the settlement which could produce 40 new homes;
 - (2) Sites in Clay Lane which would need an extensive road development programme but which look like being overtaken by

the District Council's decision to locate a Wildlife Corridor across this site.

(3) Bethwines Farm which is not suitable for planning development for the reasons cited in our No Building on Bethwines document. By forcing the Parish Council to accept building on this site would be to flout the views of the community, the existing Neighbourhood Plan which has been made by the District Council and the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. The District Council's arbitrary decision to locate a Wildlife Corridor on an area which was to have produced up to 160 homes needs reconsideration and should either result in an alternative site being chosen or Fishbourne Parish Council should have its allocation reduced by 160.

Fishbourne Parish Council also requests a moratorium on any applications which would result in more traffic on the local network and its junctions with the main road network until the Department for Transport has agreed a route for a new Chichester Bypass, allocated funding for it and announced a date for the completion of its implementation.

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