

BILLINGSHURST NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

HOUSING NEED PAPER – DRAFT 1

APRIL 2018

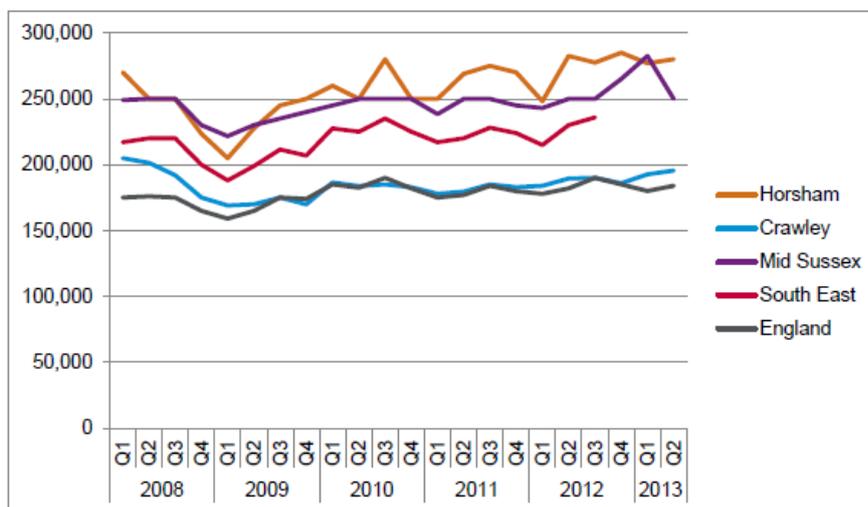
Introduction

1. The purpose of this paper is to clearly identify the type of housing that is needed to address the requirements of the existing and future population of Billingshurst.

Issues in Billingshurst

2. One of the principle issues in Billingshurst is affordability of housing. Figure 1 shows that Horsham has seen median house prices well above the regional and national averages for a long time.

Figure 1: Median house prices, 2008-2013



Source: DCLG live tables: Land Registry data

3. At the December 2017/January 2018 workshops, the need for starter homes, housing for market rent and homes suitable for older people were identified. The 2011 Census shows that the proportions of 1-bed properties and flats (potential starter homes) in Billingshurst were below the Horsham district and regional average, as were the levels of property to rent (both social rent and private). Moreover, the parish has a high proportion of people of retirement age, the most common type of occupier of bungalows.
4. The Billingshurst Housing Needs Assessment 2017 identified the following key trends in Billingshurst with the potential to influence the type of housing needed:
 - A. Growth of demand in the private rented sector and for shared ownership properties suggests the difficulty of people being able to afford market housing is becoming entrenched.
 - B. There is an imperative for housing policy to address the needs of older people, for example dwellings of a manageable size and designed to be ‘age-friendly.’
 - C. While ‘down-sizing’ suggests moving into a smaller home it is important to remember many may wish to accommodate a live-in carer as well as at least one guest bedroom for friends and family to stay; moreover, consideration should be paid to accommodation being arranged over one floor/level.

- D. Household composition data does point to households comprising fewer individuals, with the average age being substantially older.
 - E. Despite the predominance of mid-size and larger homes in the existing stock, this correlates with demand, suggesting little need for active policy intervention. Larger dwellings should form an important part of the mix of types and sizes of homes provided over the plan period.
 - F. The market mechanism is best suited to address demand for market dwellings of different types and sizes in the parish; policy should therefore be permissive, supporting a wide mix of dwellings to come forward.
5. This suggests that what is being provided by way of additional housing is broadly in line with needs, particularly where family housing is concerned. However, certain specific types of housing and tenures – including homes for rent and housing to meet the needs of older people – do need to be addressed in the future.

Wider context

6. The Horsham Development Planning Framework (HDPF) 2015 has the following policies of relevance:
- A. Policy 15 - 1,500 dwellings are to be delivered by neighbourhood plans over the period to 2036.
 - B. Policy 16 - In terms of meeting local housing needs, seeks to achieve a mix of housing sizes, types and tenures to meet established local housing needs, subject to the existing character of neighbourhoods and individual scheme viability. It does so by requiring all residential developments of between 5 and 14 dwellings to provide 20% affordable, or a financial contribution where this is deemed is not deemed achievable; and by requiring all developments of more than 15 dwellings or on sites over 0.5 hectares, to provide 35% affordable dwellings.
 - C. Policy 18 – This policy on retirement housing and specialist care states that “proposals for development which provide retirement housing and specialist care housing will be encouraged and supported” where they are accessible from existing settlements and where they cater to those on lower incomes. Large scale retirement communities will also be supported in appropriate locations, provided they accommodate a range of needs, include some affordable provision or an appropriate financial contribution, and contribute “appropriate services and facilities”.
7. Affordable housing policy is a strategic matter dealt with at local plan level, so is not something that the Neighbourhood Plan can address.
8. It is helpful to the Neighbourhood Plan that the HDPF provides support to addressing the housing needs of older people.
9. The various technical studies prepared at the district or housing market area (HMA) level, including the Strategic Housing Market Assessment¹ and the Market Housing Mix Study², confirm that the supply of housing being provided has generally been in step with needs. However, it does identify that changing trends in affordability and the ageing population may change the profile on need over the Plan period.

¹ GL Hearn (2015) *Housing Need in Horsham*, for Horsham District Council; and GVA (2012) *Northern West Sussex Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update*, for Horsham District Council, Crawley Borough Council and Mid Sussex District Council

² Chilmark Consulting (2016) *Market Housing Mix*, for Crawley Borough Council and Horsham District Council

Options

10. Based on the evidence gathered to date, it is considered that there are three options for consideration through the Neighbourhood Plan:
 - A. **Do nothing**

HDPF Policy 16 requires a mix of development to reflect needs across the district including Billingshurst, which has needs in line with the wider district. Policy 18 specifically encourages provision to address the needs of older people, including care provision. Therefore there is no need or justification for a general policy on housing mix or older people's needs.
 - B. **Specific policy for older people's needs**

Given the evidence, there is potential justification to secure the provision of housing to meet the needs of older people. This could be bungalows or it could be housing capable of adaptation for people's needs as they age. This will require a specific site to deliver this, therefore it will be necessary to engage with the site promoters to gauge interest. If this is an important part of the Plan, then any site promoter willing to commit to such provision would increase the prospects of their site being allocated, subject to its wider sustainability. One particular factor may be the proximity of any such provision to the shops and services in the centre of Billingshurst – there should be a preference for provision within easy walking distance of these facilities.
 - C. **Seek specific provision of specialist care facilities**

Given the evidence, there is potential justification to secure the provision of specialist care facilities to meet the needs of older people. This doesn't necessarily mean a residential care home, it could equally be warden-assisted housing or a continuing care and retirement community. This will require a specific site to deliver this, therefore it will be necessary to engage with the site promoters to gauge interest. If this is an important part of the Plan, then any site promoter willing to commit to such provision would increase the prospects of their site being allocated, subject to its wider sustainability.

Possible policies

11. Option A would not require a policy, although the issue could be identified in the Neighbourhood Plan with general support given for it.
12. Options B and C would require a specific policy or policies allocating one or more sites to provide for the needs of older people and/or specialist care facilities.