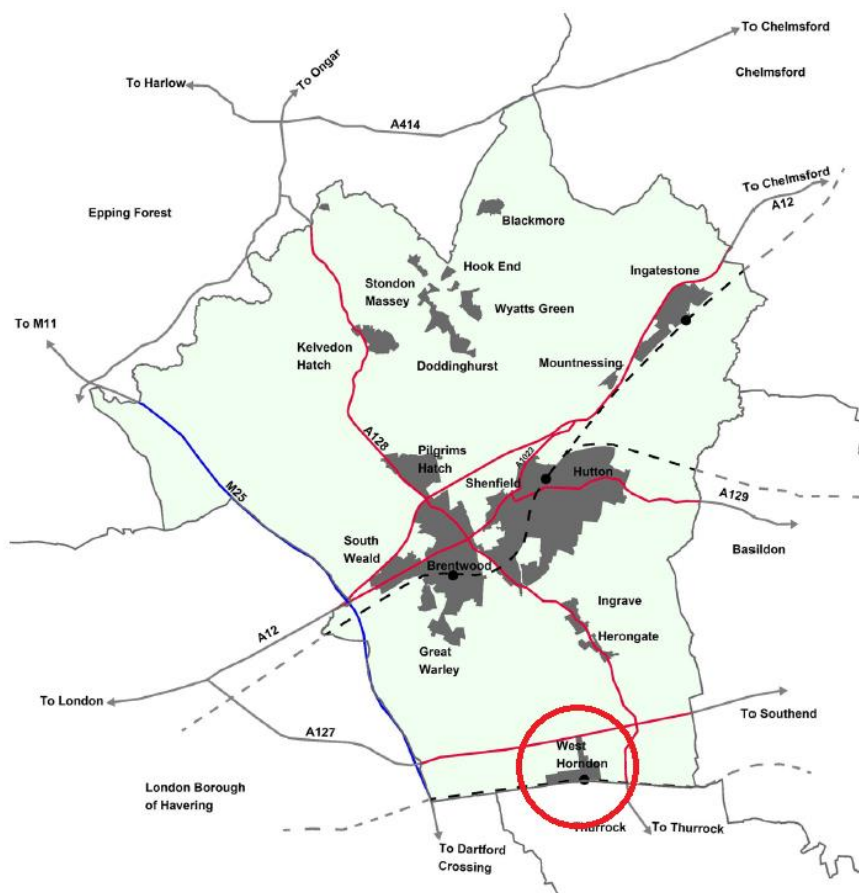


WEST HORNDON PARISH COUNCIL

WEST HORNDON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL



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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This document has been prepared by a Steering Committee comprising 5 members of West Horndon Parish Council, Stephen Kuschel of SJK Planning, plus co-opted residents. A previous scoping report had brought together the results on the initial stages of the sustainability appraisal process. It set out baseline information on a wide range of topics, highlighting key trends, issues and objectives for the local area. It outlined a framework to be used to appraise the sustainability of growth options for West Horndon.



West Horndon Parish – Neighbourhood Plan Boundary

1.2 National Planning Guidance states that the purpose of a Sustainability Appraisal should be to “To promote sustainable development through better integration of sustainability considerations in the preparation of plans”. This is particularly relevant for West Horndon Parish Council given that they have declared an intention to produce a Neighbourhood Plan. Under Section 19(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, plans must be subject to a sustainability appraisal throughout their production, ensuring that they are fully consistent with and help to implement the principles of sustainable development.

1.3 Such an objective is driven by The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive, which is a European Union requirement that seeks to provide a high level of protection

of the environment by integrating environmental considerations into the process of preparing certain plans and programmes.

1.4 A key issue for West Horndon is whether it is appropriate that it becomes a focus for growth within the Borough's emerging Local Development Plan. Neighbourhood planning and the concurrent sustainability appraisals have to anticipate that the Borough will continue to suggest that the village is a suitable location for housing growth.

1.5 Sustainable development seeks to ensure a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come. It focuses on the consideration of the long-term environmental, social and economic issues and impacts in an integrated and balanced way. The UK Government has set five guiding principles to achieve the sustainable development purpose. These principles form the basis for policy in the UK and are as follows:

- Living within environmental limits
- Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society
- Building a strong, stable and sustainable economy
- Promoting good governance
- Using sound science responsibly

1.6 This document is tailored towards the character of the West Horndon (as defined as the Neighbourhood Plan Area, submitted and approved by BBC during 2014). Section 2 of this document sets out the characteristics of the Parish generally and the village of West Horndon. This brings out the issues to be dealt with in moving forward with a Neighbourhood Plan. It also provides a basis for looking at what might be a reasonable level of growth for the Parish, and what the vision and objectives of the plan should be. Section 5 reviews the policy context and Section 6 puts forward a sustainability framework. Section 7 uses the framework to test different growth scenarios for West Horndon.

2.0 The Parish of West Horndon

2.1 This section of the document sets out the main characteristics of the Parish. Its extent and population, historic development, the pattern of development, character, amenities and facilities, transport, and leisure provision. This in turn helps to identify the main issues facing the Parish over the plan period to 2030. The plan at **Appendix 1** shows that location of services and facilities in the village.



West Horndon and the surrounding countryside.

Extent and population

2.2 The Parish Boundary includes the settlements of East Horndon, Dunton Hills, Little Warley and West Horndon. Bounded by A127 on the north side and the railway on the south side. Though the middle, north to south, runs the A128.

2.3 West Horndon itself is a small village with a population of some 1800 people, on the southern edge of the Borough of Brentwood, with the railway forming the boundary with

Thurrock. It has some 700 households. In the settlement hierarchy for the Borough the village is rated as a “Settlement Category 3: Larger Villages”, described as:-

“The larger villages in the Borough are served by a local shopping parade and a primary school, but generally have limited community and health facilities, limited local jobs and only a fair bus service. West Horndon is included in this category, but has some distinctive advantages, such as the rail station and a significant employment area.”

2.4 Other Category 3 villages include Doddinghurst, Kelvedon Hatch, Herongate, Ingrave, Mountnessing, and Blackmore. It is therefore one of seven locations considered suitable, in sustainability terms, for a limited level of growth.

2.5 In the 2011 census the population of Herongate, Ingrave and West Horndon was 3,712 and is made up of approximately 51% females and 49% males. The average age of people in Herongate, Ingrave and West Horndon is 44, while the median age is higher at 46. The top occupations listed by people in Herongate, Ingrave and West Horndon are Professional 17.4%, Managers, directors and senior officials 16.7%, Associate professional and technical 15.2%, Administrative and secretarial 15.1%, Skilled trades 12.4%, Corporate managers and directors 11.1%, Administrative 10.5%, Business and public service associate professionals 9.4%, Caring, leisure and other service 7.2%, and Elementary 6.4%.

History and Pattern of Development

2.6 The main part of the village was developed pre-1970, with smaller areas constructed in the 1980s. The original growth of the village was due to the convenience of railway travel and the main residential areas are concentrated immediately to the north of the railway, with the exception of Thorndon Avenue extending to a length of some 500metres from Station Road, and connecting to the A127.

2.7 There is no clearly identifiable village centre with the village hall, church, public house, school, shops, and station all being dispersed in different locations. This reflects the small size of the village and its iterative development over time. The housing is characterised by a large proportion of bungalows, many with long gardens backing onto open fields. There is an industrial area on the west side of the village housing two specific medium and light industrial estates.



Thorndon Avenue



The Railway Hotel



The Station entrance



Station car park

Setting and Character

2.8 Being surrounded by Metropolitan Green Belt West Horndon remains very rural in character, despite its proximity to larger settlements. This is a reflection of West Horndon Parish's location, acting as a "buffer" between the eastern boundary of London (Havering) and the western most settlement of Basildon (Laindon). Open arable fields are bounded by hedgerows, with several footpaths around the edge of the village.

Education

2.9 The primary school dates back to 1962 and is smaller than average with a total of around 115 pupils. It is understood to be at full capacity.

2.10 For secondary education the village falls within the Brentwood County High catchment area, some 6 kilometres from the centre of the village. Pupils are transported to Brentwood County High via organised bus transportation.

Health

2.11 The West Horndon Surgery is affiliated to the Peartree Surgery in South Ockenden. It has three doctors and is located in a semi-detached property in Station Road.

Shopping

2.12 There are three small parades of shops which include two hairdressers, a newsagent, a general store, a fireplace shop, and a café. There are 3 or 4 vacant units. For weekly shopping most residents will travel to Brentwood or Basildon. The village has one public house.



The Church



Local Shops



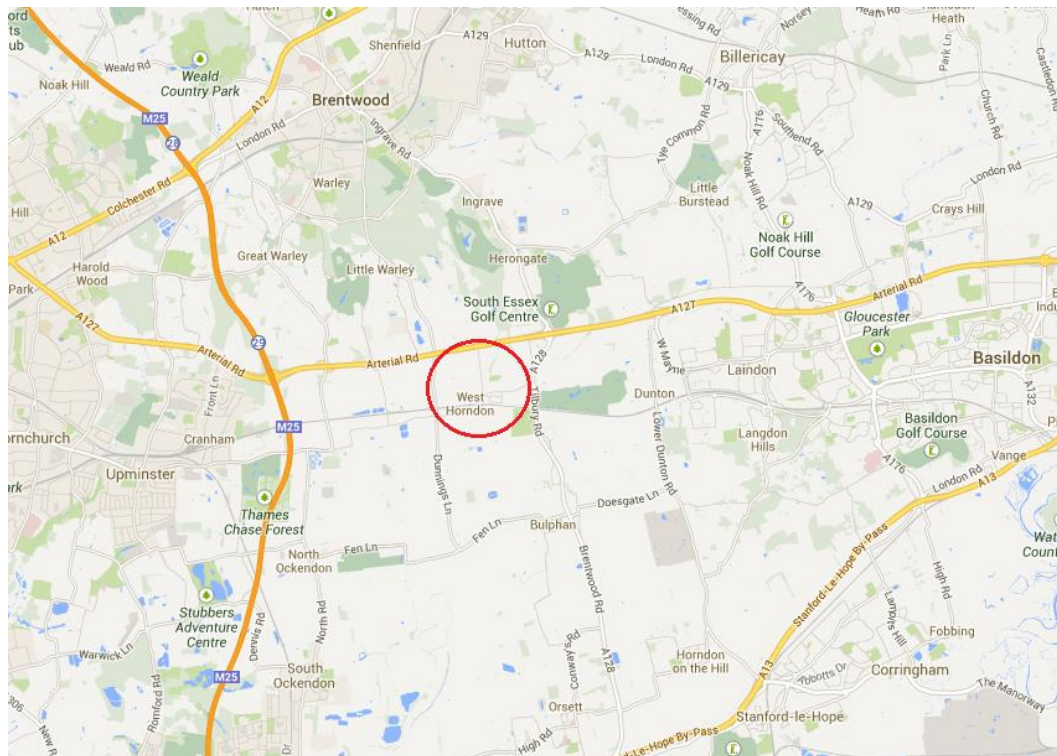
The Doctors Surgery



Entrance to the Primary School

Transport

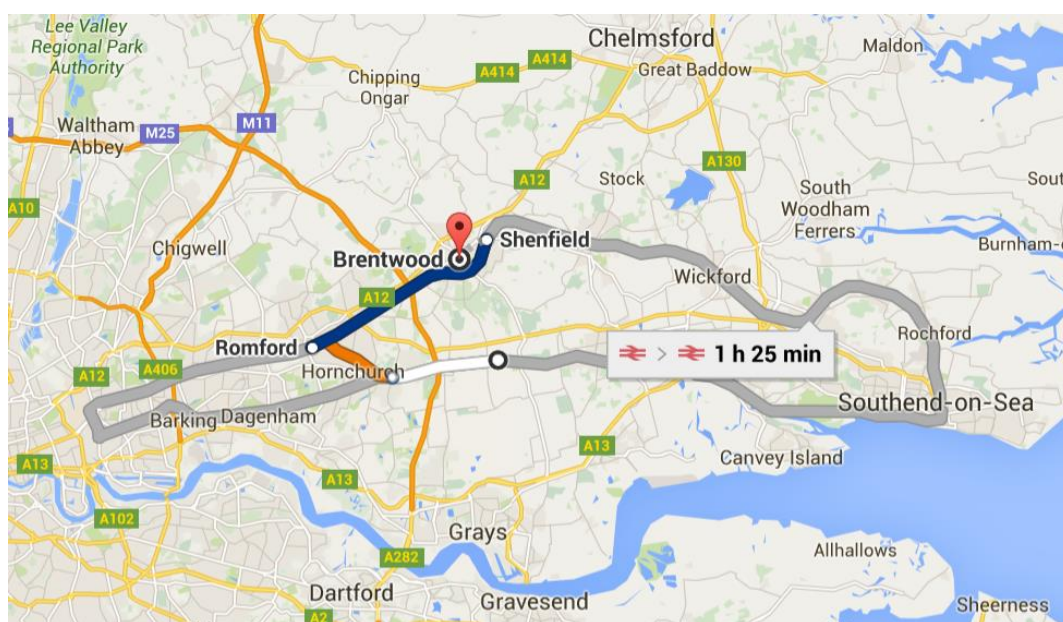
2.13 Although it has a railway station and is close to the A127, West Horndon village is not conveniently located in relation to larger settlements, being some 6 km south of Brentwood, 10km west of Basildon, and 8 km east of Upminster and Hornchurch. With the A128 the main route to Brentwood often extremely congested, many residents use Basildon rather than Brentwood as their primary town centre location.



Location of the village, 6km south of Brentwood, 10km west of Basildon, and 8km east of Upminster.

2.14 West Horndon is on the London, Tilbury and Southend Railway main line from London to Southend. It is currently known as the Essex Thameside Route by Network Rail. Previously in the latter part of the 20th century in about 1998 the station building on the London bound platform had been demolished. A more modern structure was erected, which provides very little shelter, unlike the original building. During the latter part of 2008 the ticket hall, customer toilets and ticket office were refurbished. Automatic doors were provided between the street and the ticket hall, and to and from the platform. Under the latest terms of National Express' franchise to run the "C2C" network on the London, Tilbury and Southend Railway main line, services stopping at West Horndon are required at half the frequency of the other stations on the Basildon branch of the line (2 off-peak vs. 4 for all other stations).

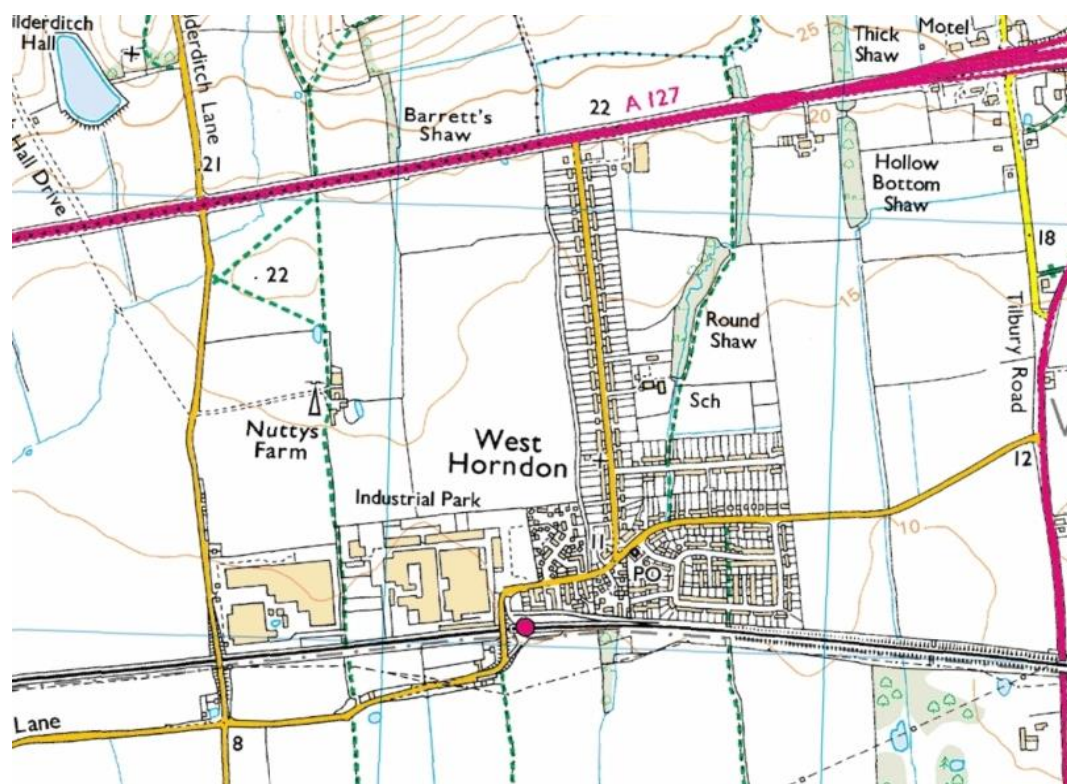
2.15 The station serves both commuters living within the village, and commuters living along the A128 from Brentwood, who find it easier to drive south and catch the train here in order to avoid congestion in Brentwood or Basildon. It is also the case that as a commuter train it is very much at full capacity. This will become even more the case when C2C's Dec-15 timetable is rolled out, which shifts "spare" capacity on the line from the centre of the line (including Laindon and West Horndon) to the east.



West Horndon to Brentwood by train is expensive and time consuming

2.16 North of the town and parallel to the railway is the A127 Southend Arterial Road, with Thorndon Avenue housing running right up to this road. West Horndon is east of junction 29 of the M25 motorway.

2.17 The village is served by two bus routes which both terminate in Brentwood. Despite the fact that the village has a railway station, it is reasonable to assume that the majority of journeys from the village, for schools, shops and work are undertaken by car. The station provides a route into London but does not connect to Brentwood. A larger part of the village, given its ribbons of development are not conveniently located for the station. It is recognised that these issues would need to be properly researched by way of a detailed study.



Roads and footpaths in and around the village.

Leisure Facilities

2.18 Further afield to the southeast of the parish is the Dunton Hills golf course. At Little Warley in the north-west there is a small number of houses and the Virgin Active Health

Club. The West Horndon Park and playground, located within West Horndon village, were opened in 2004. There is currently no direct vehicle access to the park, or dedicated parking. There is a small tennis club with two courts.

3.0 Housing Growth and a Sustainable Future

Sustainable Development

3.1 Whether new development can be proved to be sustainable is central to national planning policy. The National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”) looks for an integrated approach to the provision of housing with accessible local services, or provide a high quality built environment. It also says that planning should be a collective enterprise, and that planning has tended to exclude, rather than to include, people and communities in the past.

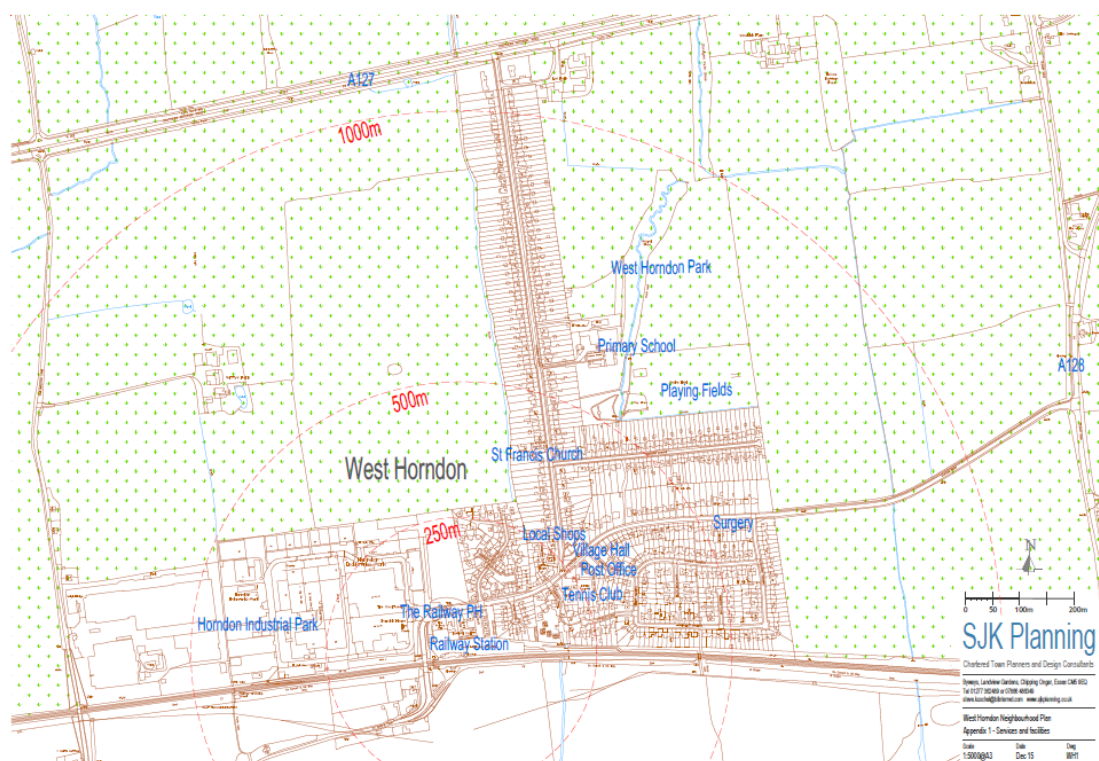
Sustainability at neighbourhood level

3.2 Most people’s daily lives revolve around their neighbourhood. A neighbourhood’s sustainability reflects both individual behaviour, such as walking and cycling, and the built environment that links people together locally and with the wider region. Improving sustainability at a neighbourhood level contributes to more sustainable environments at a wider scale. Equally, the sustainability of a house depends partly on the built environment of the neighbourhood in which it is located. Getting neighbourhoods right is therefore important both for the people who live in them and the resources they consume.

Sustainability and West Horndon

3.3 Taking a snapshot of the community and the way it functions, West Horndon is a small Green Belt village of only c.1800 people, with a very limited range of amenities and facilities. It has few shops, no secondary school (either in the parish itself, or within walking distance), and is remote from the larger centres of Brentwood, Basildon and Upminster. The primary school is at full capacity. The doctors’ surgery is close if not at capacity with delays to see a doctor. There is an infrequent and narrow bus service. A railway station provides a commuter route into London, but has limited additional

capacity. The railway does not cater for the important local journeys, such as to Brentwood. The station car park already struggles, with many cars parking in the village. Many of the roads and junctions in the area are at full capacity.



The plan at **Appendix 1** shows the dispersed pattern of the settlement, with the northern end of Thorndon Avenue being over 1 kilometre from the railway station. Services, facilities, shops, and other amenities are also limited and well dispersed.

Sustainable Housing Growth

3.4 The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee has met for a number of times to discuss the key objectives for the future of the village, paramount to which is what would constitute a fair proportion of the Borough's new housing development. Some Neighbourhood Plans have worked out what they should expect their share of the housing demand to be by simply taking a proportion of new households in relation to the existing proportion. Applied to West Horndon, if there are 700 households, of the 30,600 in the Borough, this represents around 2.28% of the total. Applied to a higher figure of 5,500 for the plan period, this would translate into a West Horndon requirement of 125

dwellings. (The figure of 5,500 is taken from the Borough Council's latest local plan publication entitled "Strategic Growth Options Consultation (January 2015)").

3.5 The above assessment of the character and issues provides some strong evidence in respect of the current character and function of the settlement. There are six key factors in arriving at what might be a sustainable level of growth for the village. These are:-

- 1) The existing size of the West Horndon and the Green Belt location.
- 2) The level of community facilities and their capacity to cope with further growth.
- 3) The adequacy of roads and transport links around the village and connections to adjoining towns.
- 4) The relative suitability of the village for new housing, compared with the larger established centres in other parts of the Borough, particularly along the A12 corridor.
- 5) The availability of brownfield land within the village to provide new housing development. These sites are as follows:-

West Horndon Industrial Estate, Childerditch Lane, West Horndon - 6.39 Hectares

Horndon Industrial Estate, Station Road, West Horndon - 9.84 Hectares

- 6) Given the above, the consequent timescale and lead in timescales for any level of new development, having regard for the Borough's obligation to maintain a five year supply of housing.

3.6 Of all the central Essex local authorities, Brentwood's delivery of new homes is the most heavily constrained by national planning policy. This is because almost all land outside the built up area is classified as Green Belt (within the Strategic Growth Options

consultation document, it was noted that brownfield land could only meet c. 1/3 of Brentwood Borough Council's currently assessed housing need to 2030). Green Belt policy remains a very strong consideration in National Planning Policy, and is a major constraint for any new housing target in the Borough.

3.7 These are all critical factors in arriving at a level of housing growth that will be seen by the local community, the County Council and adjoining boroughs, to be sustainable, achievable within the plan period, and equitable when judged against alternative locations for new housing. On the edge of the village are the two industrial estates, together comprising some 16 hectares. If these areas are to be redeveloped it would be an opportunity to improve and centralise services and facilities for the village. It could also provide the opportunity to provide an accessible area of public open space. This will require a certain area of land to be reserved for such purposes. An area for housing then developed at a comparable density to the established urban area of the village, would provide in the region of 400 dwellings. As the plan below shows, this would represent a substantial addition in relation to the size of the existing village, currently comprising some 800 dwellings.



Plan showing the scale of the potential housing site in relation to the village.

3.8 Within the limited boundaries of the Parish, constrained by Green Belt policy, there are few other brownfield sites. There is however the possibility of development at Timmermans Nursery, south of the Arterial Road, which extends to just under 1 hectare, and potentially therefore providing a location for up to 40 dwellings.

3.9 This document assesses the sustainability implications that would result from this level of growth. It also considers other scenarios ranging from no additional growth to expansive growth.

4.0 The West Horndon Neighbourhood Plan

Localism

4.1 The Government has attached great importance to the ability of local communities to influence the future of their local areas. This has led to the introduction of the concept of the Neighbourhood Plans. A lot has been written about how they should be constructed, and by their nature, in dealing with individual local circumstances there have been a diverse range of approaches.

A Neighbourhood Plan for West Horndon

4.2 The Parish Council have declared an intention to produce a Neighbourhood Plan. This will cover the whole of the Parish but the focus will be on the future of the village itself. Essential to this process is a proper assessment of the evidence base and characteristics, and the potential or otherwise to provide the necessary infrastructure and amenities. The process has however stalled with the uncertainty surrounding the progress and likely content of the Local Plan. We have established that a Neighbourhood Plan needs to conform to the strategic objectives of the Local Plan.

4.3 In the case of West Horndon the local plan process so far, in general terms, has suggested that the village is capable of providing a sustainable location for a strategic housing site, unavoidably resulting in the development of a large area of Green Belt land. The Preferred Options referred to West Horndon as follows:-

“Having good road and rail access, local shops, employment and community facilities, West Horndon offers potential for sustainable development over the long term. Developing here provides an opportunity to address conflicts arising from heavy freight passing through the village, strengthen the village centre, and improve service provision. Significant improvements to infrastructure and services would be required to support growth at West Horndon.”

4.4 In putting forward representations to the various stages of the plan the Parish Council has respectfully suggested that a more detailed study of West Horndon is required, before it can be confidently put forward as a strategic location for a large number of new houses. Alongside what has been no more than a suggestion from the Borough Council, there is nothing to prevent a local community looking at its own level of sustainability, and in the light of which, assessing its suitability as a location for even a modest housing allocation. (**Appendix 2** looks at the local plan/neighbourhood plan compatibility issues in more detail.)

A Vision – The Neighbourhood Plan Objectives

4.5 The Borough Council's initial draft Local Plan ("LDP1", published summer 2013) plan set out a long term vision for how the Borough should develop by 2030 and the Brentwood Borough Council's strategy and policies for achieving that vision. In looking at the key characteristics of the Borough LDP1 notes that all of the Borough's countryside lies within Metropolitan Green Belt and that the Borough contains attractive countryside with a variety of landscapes and settlements ranging from the town of Brentwood, the historic village of Ingatestone, to small villages and hamlets.

4.6 Before setting out objectives in more detail an important element of the Neighbourhood Plan will be to set out a vision statement. This is put forward as follows:-

“Maintain and enhance the village character and rural setting whilst permitting sustainable growth that is in line with the needs and wishes of the community”

4.7 Locally the Parish Council have identified the key objectives in forming a picture of how the village will look and function in 2030. These are:-

1) To provide sufficient housing to meet identified needs including affordable housing, and specialist groups.

- 2) To maintain and enhance the quality and character of landscape and townscape. To maintain and enhance the Green Belt setting of the village.
- 3) To maintain and improve infrastructure in line with the scale of new housing development. Focus on shops, schools and community facilities. More frequent and better quality public transport, including the rail service.
- 4) To create a distinct village centre where services and amenities such as shops and a health centre are centralised.
- 5) Reduce traffic levels and encourage walking, cycling and public transport use. The essential requirement is that new homeowners will not be over dependent on the car for journeys to work, school, shops, leisure activities, and other services and amenities.
- 6) To minimise contributions to climate change. Reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, particularly carbon dioxide. Increase energy efficiency. Increase the use of renewable energy. Reduce the risk of flooding.
- 7) To create a sense of belonging and identity.
- 8) To enhance and protect residential amenity.
- 9) Encouraging a thriving and prosperous community, with access to local employment. Provision of broadband to the whole village.
- 10) To protect, enhance and restore biodiversity resources.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1 Before moving on to how objectives and different levels of growth can be appraised and tested, this section of the document sets out the policy context that seeks to ensure that new development is sustainable.

European and National

5.2 The purpose of an SA is to ensure that the principles of sustainable development are considered throughout the plan making process and that a final Neighbourhood Plan for West Horndon has considered all aspects of economic, social and environmental sustainability in its production. Creating a sustainability appraisal is a process that identifies and reports on the likely effects of a plan and the extent to which the plan's implementation will impact upon the environmental, social and economic objectives for an area.

5.3 The UK Government has set out that this means stimulating economic growth and tackling the UK's financial deficit, maximising wellbeing and protecting the environment, without negatively impacting on the ability of future generations to do the same. Any plans for West Horndon, both at the Neighbourhood Plan level and at the Local Development Plan level, must be centered on the concept of sustainable development. This can be achieved through the use of a sustainability appraisal.

5.4 Strategic Environmental Assessment is a requirement of the EC Directive on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (Directive 2001/42/EC) known as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive. This is transposed into UK law through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 which applies to plans with significant environmental effects (SEA Regulations). Throughout this document where sustainability appraisal is referred to the requirements of SEA Directive have been incorporated.

5.5 Whether new development can be proved to be sustainable is central to national planning policy. The National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”) looks for an integrated approach to the provision of housing with accessible local services, or provide a high quality built environment. It also says that planning should be a collective enterprise, and that planning has tended to exclude, rather than to include, people and communities in the past.

5.6 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) defines three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:

- An economic role – Contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;
- A social role – Supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and
- An environmental role – Contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

5.7 The operation of the National Planning Policy Framework has recently be looked at by a Communities and Local Government Committee. The Summary in the document says that:-

“The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has now been in operation for two and a half years. The simplification it has brought to the planning system is welcome and was acknowledged by many witnesses, but it needs more time to bed in, and the Government needs to collect more data, before a full assessment can be made of its strengths and weaknesses. Nevertheless, the evidence to this inquiry has highlighted a number of emerging concerns: that the NPPF is not preventing unsustainable development in some places; that inappropriate housing is being imposed upon some communities as a result of speculative planning applications; and that town centres are being given insufficient protection against the threat of out of town development.”

5.8 It recommends that steps are taken to ensure that the planning system delivers the sustainable development promised in the NPPF. We should ensure that the same weight is given to the environmental and social as to the economic dimension; that permission is only given to development if accompanied by the infrastructure necessary to support it.

5.9 The concept of sustainable development is at the heart of the NPPF, which included as its “golden thread” a new concept of a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which includes provision that development proposals in accordance with the local plan should be approved. We have been told, however, that, far from delivering development that is sustainable, the NPPF is, in fact, leading to unsustainable development. People variously said that sustainable development was ill-defined in the NPPF, that decision makers were giving greater weight to economic over environmental or social considerations, and that sustainable development was not being delivered in respect of infrastructure, renewable energy and the natural environment.

And that:-

“Many of the parish councils, community groups and local residents submitting evidence told us that permissions were being given to housing development without

adequate consideration being given to its impact on local infrastructure such as schools, health care, transport and sewerage.”

Local Planning Policies

5.10 The current plan is The Brentwood Replacement Local Plan as formally adopted by the Council on 25 August 2005. An extract from the proposals map is shown at **Appendix 3**. It shows the development limits drawn tightly around the built-up area beyond which on all sides is Green Belt. The map also indicates that the surrounding area is designated as “Landscape Improvement Area”. The policy for this area reads as follows:-

“C12 Landscape Improvements

THE COUNCIL WILL, IN CONJUNCTION WITH ITS COUNTRYSIDE MANAGEMENT SERVICE, SEEK TO ENCOURAGE LOCAL LAND OWNERS TO IMPLEMENT SCHEMES TO IMPROVE THE ENVIRONMENT THROUGH PLANTING, HABITAT CREATION, IMPROVED PUBLIC ACCESS, MANAGEMENT AGREEMENTS AND OTHER MEASURES, WHILST ALSO IMPLEMENTING ITS OWN PROGRAMME OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES THROUGHOUT BOTH THE URBAN AND RURAL AREAS OF THE BOROUGH.

WITHIN THE LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENT AREA, AS DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, ANY DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WILL BE EXPECTED TO CONTRIBUTE POSITIVELY TOWARDS THE RESTORATION OF ITS ORIGINAL CHARACTER.”

5.11 The plan states that the area has been identified as a “Landscape Improvement Area, primarily because of the impact of urban intrusion into the countryside, coupled with the considerable loss of trees as a result of Dutch Elm disease. For this reason this area has also been included within Thames Chase. Woodland planting has made a positive enhancement to the landscape within this area.”

5.12 The emerging vision, objectives and policies of the emerging new Brentwood Borough Local Plan must be taken into account in this document. The Borough Council has set out a Core Strategy and commissioned consultants to produce an Interim Sustainability Appraisal (ISA). West Horndon Parish Council have read these documents thoroughly and carefully. The ISA says that:-

“At the current stage of plan-making the Council is not consulting on a complete Draft Plan. Rather, the Council is consulting on ‘strategic growth options’. This Interim SA Report is produced with the intention of informing the consultation and subsequent preparation of the Draft (‘Proposed Submission’) Plan.”

5.13 It identifies the indicators as:-

- Air quality
- Biodiversity
- Climate change mitigation
- Community and well-being
- Cultural heritage
- Economy and employment
- Flooding
- Housing
- Landscape
- Soil and contamination
- Waste
- Water quality and water resources

5.14 It refers to the objectives of the local plan which include:-

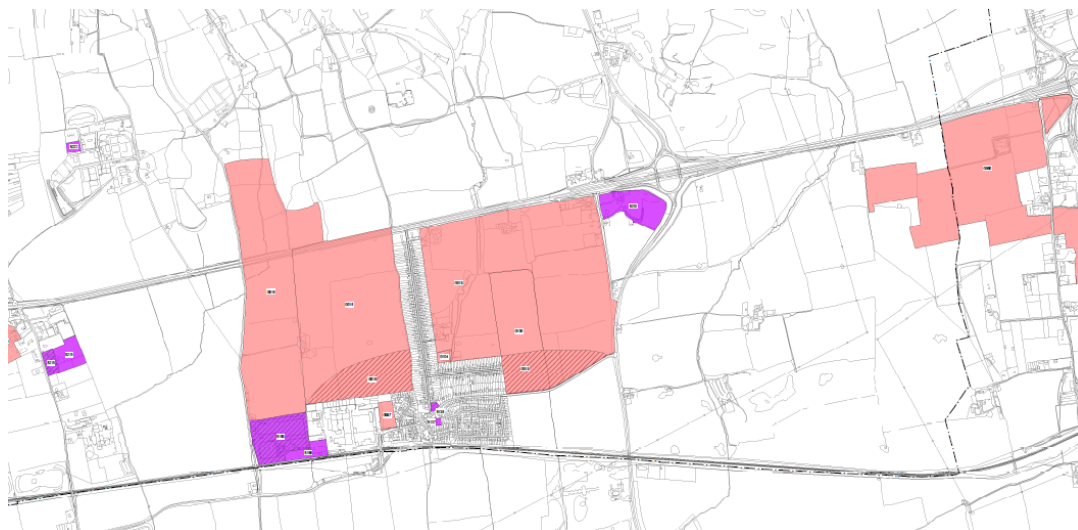
- Direct development growth to the existing urban areas in locations well served by existing and proposed local services and facilities.

- Manage development growth to that capable of being accommodated by existing or proposed infrastructure, services and facilities.
- Safeguard the Green Belt and protect and enhance valuable landscapes and the natural and historic environment.
- Plan for housing that meets the needs of the borough's population and contributes to creating inclusive, balanced, sustainable communities.
- Protect and nurture existing leisure, cultural and recreational assets such as the borough's country parks for residents and visitors to the borough and promote and enhance social inclusion, health and well-being.
- Improve public transport, cycling and walking facilities and encourage sustainable transport choices.
- Secure the delivery of essential infrastructure, including transportation schemes and community facilities in order to support new development growth throughout its delivery.

5.15 It also states that:-

“It is important to emphasise that the plan will be strategic in nature. Even the allocation of sites should be considered a strategic undertaking, i.e. a process that omits consideration of some detailed issues in the knowledge that these can be addressed further down the line (through the development management process). The strategic nature of the Local Plan is reflected in the scope of the SA.”

5.16 West Horndon Parish Council has always respectively put forward that the allocation of a site for up to 4,000 houses is not a matter that should be simply imposed on the village, as a strategic decision, with only “detailed issues” to be addressed further down the line, perhaps in a Neighbourhood Plan.



Some of the development options put forward for West Horndon Parish

5.17 In looking at different development options the ISA scoring so far has been carried out in terms of a discussion, without any detailed analysis of sustainability objectives as that might be applied to West Horndon Parish. The document therefore relies on the professional judgement and subjective remarks of consultants and planning officers.

5.18 Nevertheless the aims, objectives and indicators from these policy documents have been referred to in developing a sustainability framework for West Horndon. It should also be noted that the policy context for the Neighbourhood Plan Sustainability Appraisal is not static. Therefore as further relevant plans or programmes are developed, they will be reviewed and taken into account.

6.0 A Sustainability Appraisal Framework

6.1 The aim of this part of the Sustainability Appraisal is to arrive at a framework that can be applied to the objectives as set out in Section 4 above, and in turn to a range of growth scenarios. It will provide the tools for describing, analysing and comparing the sustainability effects of the various options.

6.2 We are putting forward a framework based on the three dimensions of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF, broken down as follows:-

Economic

- Thriving economically - access to a range of local job opportunities
- Prosperous - maintain/grow workforce

Environmental

- Reducing fossil fuel consumption/adapting to climate change
- Protecting environmental assets - landscape/ecology
- Preventing urban sprawl - Green Belt / greenfield
- Protection of residential amenities

Social

- Provision for education and health care
- Quality of life - decent and affordable homes available for all
- Vibrant centres - reasonable access to services appropriate to that centre
- Access to a range of recreational and social facilities
- Sense of community and belonging

7.0 Sustainability Testing

7.1 At this stage we are testing general scenarios for West Horndon. We have looked at five differing scenarios in respect of the level of growth and investment. They are described as follows:-

Scenario 1 – No Growth. This assumes no growth, no investment in infrastructure or facilities, and a failure also to meet the NP objectives.

Scenario 2 – Controlled Growth. A second scenario would envisage controlled growth in the form of redeveloping the industrial area to provide 400 houses. It would also realise the vision and objectives as set out above in Section 4 above.

Scenario 3 – Proportional Growth. This would be LDP2 housing need scaled to the size of West Horndon. As set out in paragraph 3.4 above, the village would take their share of the housing demand in proportion to the existing number of households. Applied to West Horndon, if there are some 700 households, of the some 30,600 in the Borough, this represents around 2.28% of the total. Applied to the higher figure of 5,500 dwellings for the plan period, this would translate into a West Horndon requirement of 125 dwellings.

Scenario 4 – Controlled Growth along with 1 strategic site. This would be as Scenario 2 above but with the addition of a further site such as could be provided by way of redeveloping the Timmermans Nursery. This could add up to another 40 dwellings to the total to be provided within the Parish.

Scenario 5 – Expansive Growth. This would involve housing growth greater than any of the above scenarios.

7.2 The tables below test each scenario against the ten criterion of the above framework, split between economic, environmental, and social dimensions. The scoring

is based on a “traffic light” system. This is a methodology used in the Building for Life (BfL) document, a government-endorsed industry standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods. Local communities, local authorities and developers have been encouraged to use it to guide discussions about creating good places to live. **Appendix 4** explains the assessment process in more detail, how we have adapted the “traffic light” system to our needs, and how we have sought to be objective in applying scores. The ratings used are:-

Red: The scenario fails to meet the criterion.

Amber: The scenario partially meets the criterion.

Green: The scenario fully meets the criterion.

7.3 A first scenario considers the future of West Horndon should there be no new development or investment in new infrastructure.

Scenario 1 Appraisal - No change (population stable)

<i>Economic</i>	Scoring
Thriving economically - access to a range of local job opportunities	Amber
Prosperous - maintain/grow workforce	Amber
<i>Environmental</i>	
Reducing fossil fuel consumption/adapting to climate change	Red
Protecting environmental assets - landscape/ecology	Green
Preventing urban sprawl - Green Belt / greenfield	Green
Protection of residential amenities	Amber
<i>Social</i>	
Provision for education and health care	Red
Quality of life - decent and affordable homes available for all	Amber
Vibrant centres - reasonable access to services appropriate to that centre	Red
Access to a range of recreational and social facilities	Amber
Sense of community and belonging	Amber

7.4 It is clear that this scenario would be beneficial in terms of protecting the Green Belt and preventing coalescence. It would also maintain the existing village character and its setting. It would not however provide for any real development of community spirit and investment in infrastructure and facilities.

7.5 A second scenario would envisage controlled growth in the form of redeveloping the industrial area to provide 400 houses.

Scenario 2 Appraisal - Controlled growth and Neighbourhood Plan objectives

<i>Economic</i>	Scoring
Thriving economically - access to a range of local job opportunities	
Prosperous - maintain/grow workforce	
<i>Environmental</i>	
Reducing fossil fuel consumption/adapting to climate change	
Protecting environmental assets - landscape/ecology	
Preventing urban sprawl - Green Belt / greenfield	
Protection of residential amenities	
<i>Social</i>	
Provision for education and health care	
Quality of life - decent and affordable homes available for all	
Vibrant centres - reasonable access to services appropriate to that centre	
Access to a range of recreational and social facilities	
Sense of community and belonging	

7.6 This scenario would be dependent on achieving the objectives of a Neighbourhood Plan. The plan would need to look for the benefits that would come from new housing, and seek investment where existing infrastructure and services are currently lacking.

7.7 A third scenario considers more limited growth, as a fair proportion of the total objectively assessed need within the Borough. Compared to scenario 3 above, it would

provide just over 100 dwellings. We would anticipate that it would be on brownfield land rather than Green Belt, allowing a good proportion of employment land to be retained.

Scenario 3 Appraisal – Proportionate growth

<i>Economic</i>	Scoring
Thriving economically - access to a range of local job opportunities	
Prosperous - maintain/grow workforce	
<i>Environmental</i>	
Reducing fossil fuel consumption/adapting to climate change	
Protecting environmental assets - landscape/ecology	
Preventing urban sprawl - Green Belt / greenfield	
Protection of residential amenities	
<i>Social</i>	
Provision for education and health care	
Quality of life - decent and affordable homes available for all	
Vibrant centres - reasonable access to services appropriate to that centre	
Access to a range of recreational and social facilities	
Sense of community and belonging	

7.8 The Parish Council has to realistic if suggesting this way forward. Although being a fair proportion of housing compared to the size of the settlement, it is unlikely that this level of growth would be at a scale sufficient to fund the level of facilities and services required to meet the Neighbourhood plan objectives.

7.9 A fourth scenario considers controlled growth as Scenario 2 above with addition of a further brownfield site. It must be accepted however that apart from the industrial estates there are few opportunities, given the tightly drawn Green Belt boundaries.

Scenario 4 Appraisal - Controlled growth and Strategic Site

<i>Economic</i>	Scoring
Thriving economically - access to a range of local job opportunities	

Prosperous - maintain/grow workforce	
Environmental	
Reducing fossil fuel consumption/adapting to climate change	
Protecting environmental assets - landscape/ecology	
Preventing urban sprawl - Green Belt / greenfield	
Protection of residential amenities	
Social	
Provision for education and health care	
Quality of life - decent and affordable homes available for all	
Vibrant centres - reasonable access to services appropriate to that centre	
Access to a range of recreational and social facilities	
Sense of community and belonging	

7.10 The result from the scoring is that this would not be significantly different from Scenario 2 above. It would of course make further contribution from the Parish towards the Borough's housing target.

7.11 A fifth scenario considers impact of expansive growth, defined as being greater than that anticipated by the first four scenarios.

Scenario 5 Appraisal – Expansive Growth

Economic	Scoring
Thriving economically - access to a range of local job opportunities	
Prosperous - maintain/grow workforce	
Environmental	
Reducing fossil fuel consumption/adapting to climate change	
Protecting environmental assets - landscape/ecology	
Preventing urban sprawl - Green Belt / greenfield	
Protection of residential amenities	
Social	
Provision for education and health care	

Quality of life - decent and affordable homes available for all	
Vibrant centres - reasonable access to services appropriate to that centre	
Access to a range of recreational and social facilities	
Sense of community and belonging	

7.12 The previous scenarios have considered growth of up to some 440 dwellings, effectively expanding the village by some 30%. This would require a commensurate level of investment in infrastructure, such as an expansion of the school and improvements to the railway station. Such a level of growth could be manageable within the local plan period. Suggestions have been put forward by the Borough Council, and developers, that a much larger development on open Green Belt land should be considered, such that the village would double or more in size. Given the location of West Horndon at a distance from larger centres, and the current strain on services and facilities, such a scenario scores poorly in respect of social, environmental, and economic dimensions.

8.0 Monitoring, review and next steps

8.1 The appraisal needs to monitor any changes to Government guidance, the local plan timetable, and other housing proposals within the Borough.

8.2 This is draft report. It will be necessary to move towards a more comprehensive document. More research will be needed and to improve the baseline evidence and identify the level of investment that will be required into infrastructure and facilities. The method of testing sustainability may also need some further research and fine tuning, in order that it is objective and realistic.

9.0 Conclusion

9.1 The NPPF requires an integrated approach to the provision of housing with accessible local services, or provide a high quality built environment. Sustainability appraisals are a tool to help ensure that this is the case. Creating a sustainability appraisal is an iterative process and can be up-dated to respond to new planning documents as they are prepared. The position will therefore be reviewed as other documents are brought forward.

9.2 Essential tests will be in respect of infrastructure, Green Belt, and flooding.

9.3 West Horndon Parish Council fully appreciate that there is a need for housing land over the period 2015-30, and that very difficult and politically sensitive choices have to be made. New housing can be a catalyst to plan responsibly for the future of the village, with a simple objective in mind; to ensure that West Horndon is an attractive and sustainable place to live. This appraisal is part of that process.