**Southbourne Parish Neighbourhood Plan**

**CDC & SPC Joint Statement on the Examiner’s Report and Next Steps**

**13.04.22**

Chichester District Council and Southbourne Parish Council are very disappointed with the outcome of the independent examination of the Southbourne Parish Neighbourhood Plan Review. In summary, the Examiner has recommended that the Southbourne Plan (NP2) should not be progressed to the Referendum Stage “in advance of the adoption of the Local Plan Review”.

The District and Parish Councils had been working together for some years to review both the Local and Neighbourhood Plans in parallel, with the Local Plan Review proposing to allocate some 1250 new dwellings to Southbourne Parish and NP2 providing the detail of how the development should evolve through the Masterplanning process. Unfortunately, the Chichester Local Plan Review has been delayed and this means that NP2 moved ahead of the Local Plan in the planning process. There are a number of Neighbourhood Plans elsewhere in the UK that under certain circumstances have been successful in moving ahead of Local Plans, but the Examiner in this case did not support that approach. He said that he has “reached this conclusion and recommendation with great reluctance. I am acutely aware of the very substantial time and effort that all those involved in NP2 have put in to the Plan”. Having made his recommendation he considered it neither necessary nor appropriate to examine any other parts of the Plan.

The District and Parish Councils are determined that all the hard work invested in the preparation of Southbourne’s extremely detailed Plan should not be wasted, in particular the consultations with local residents. The pandemic made these difficult but the Examiner noted the “extensive lengths” undertaken by the Parish Council to try to engage with the local community.

The Parish Council discussed the situation at its meeting on 12th April and decided that in the circumstances it would withdraw the Neighbourhood Plan from any further consideration by Chichester District Council. There are a number of options that need to be considered to take the work forward, and these require careful investigation over the next few weeks. The Parish Council is committed to finding the best way of protecting the Parish from speculative and inappropriate development during the coming months and looks forward to working with CDC while the Local Plan comes to fruition.