



WEST CHILTINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Business Survey Report - August 2014

Norman Kirby MBA

WEST CHILTINGTON PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Business Survey Analysis and Report 2014.

The Business Survey

Given the limited records of economic and local employment available for rural areas and communities such as West Chiltington the Neighbourhood Plan Council utilised its local knowledge to identify the businesses located in the parish area or based in neighbouring villages but active in the parish area. This research was based on business rates data and advertisers in parish and other magazines distributed in the area. This activity identified 98 businesses to which were added 7 branches of national or regional businesses who were serving the West Chiltington community. 30 of these businesses were located in the parish itself. In addition it was believed that there were a number of businesses run from residences in the parish that would not necessarily advertise their services in the magazines surveyed.

There are two main commercial locations in the village, both very small, each with a post office and general stores. One has a public house nearby, the other has a butchers, hairdressers and garage adjacent. Other businesses are dotted around the area. Residents will make very significant use of businesses in Storrington and Pulborough as well as wider afield but the main interest was for businesses that provide activities within the West Chiltington area either by being located here or coming into the area to provide their services and which will be impacted by issues such as transport and infrastructure and the availability of premises within the area.

A survey questionnaire was included with a Housing Needs Survey that was sent to all 1586 residences in the parish to identify the largely run from home businesses. In total 58 completed questionnaires were received primarily from the run from home businesses. It is impossible to indicate a response rate because of the uncertainty over the size of the potential target population.

The survey questionnaire was also sent to 80 businesses who advertised within the parish but were largely located in neighbouring villages. 17 responses were received.

The main conclusions are:

1. There is a need for some small scale office/light industrial/therapy units in suitable locations. Emphasis is to be placed on **suitable** locations.
2. Improvements in broadband and mobile communications are essential.
3. Where planning permission is required the local planning authority should approve appropriate extensions that facilitate homeworking but so not encourage extra traffic into the village.
4. Some improvement in business support networks is desired but the extent of existing activities needs to be more thoroughly explored first.

Responses

The responses were spread across the following activities;

Sector	Number	% of total
Financial Services	3	4%
Consultancy	17	24%
Home Services	8	11%
Agriculture	5	7%
Construction	9	13%
Retail/Catering	7	9%
Manufacturing/ repair	5	7%
Education	2	2%
Art & Craft	1	1%
Health	1	1%
Community services	3	4%
IT and communications	4	5%
Equipment rental	1	1%
Estate Agent/ Holiday lets	5	7%
Commercial sales	2	2%
Transport	2	2%
Total	75	100%

This is not the whole picture as it is based on a limited selection but the overall distribution of the types of business serving the area is not likely to be very different. The overwhelming business type is understandably home services given the residential nature of the area. There are clearly many more retail and hospitality businesses available to the residents of the area even if not located within the area and there are two major public transport companies serving the area that are not included.

The details of main responses received were as follows;

Response	No.	%
Employer	31	41.3%

Self/employed	43	57.3%
Contractor	1	1.4%
Total Employees - Full Time	203	Ave 6.5 per employer
Total Employees - Part Time	143	Ave. 4.6 per employer
Serving wholly West Chiltington	8	14.3%
Serving mainly West Chiltington	9	10.7%
Serving mainly outside the area	17	14.3%
Based here but serving outside area	35	60.7%
Have Growth Plans	34	39.6%
Have adequate Premises	63	77,8%
Do not have adequate premises	10	
Find Internet adequate	22	12%

Businesses that responded having the highest number of employees were active in the following sectors;

Transport undertaking 1 responder providing 120 FT and 20 PT (not all in village)

Domestic cleaning 1 responder providing 70 PT (not all in village)

Of village businesses the largest number of employees were 14 part time and 12 equally split between full and part time. Both were retail/catering businesses.

Most employers in the responses are small with a handful of employees indicating that local employment in this rural location is not a very significant factor. Employment opportunities are limited and a small number of responders to the questionnaire argued that the required skills do not readily exist in the area. With a very high proportion of residents being in socio-economic groups A and B and most employment being in groups C-E this is perhaps not surprising.

The nature of the area as primarily residential clearly militates against any large scale employment opportunities even for businesses that expect to grow. 35 of the businesses (46.6%) responding were based here but serve customers wholly outside the area. 17 (22.6%) were wholly or mainly serving the area. 4 businesses commented that light industrial/office type premises would be welcome but the cost of premises was seen by many respondents as being very high. The inadequacy of the broadband service was

mentioned as a limiting factor by 88% of respondents and it is likely that any growth in homeworking would be similarly limited until that issue is resolved.

All the comments made by responders are listed in Appendix 1.

Initial Conclusions

The main issues can be summarised as follows:

Transport - poor public transport especially links to rail network and early and late in the day (17 respondents (23%))

Premises - Most respondents thought that premises costs were high. A small number would like light industrial premises not currently available (15 respondents (20%))

Communications - the need for improved mobile communications was identified by 6 respondents (9%).

Business support - there were a variety of suggestions ranging from a business park to improved facilities for advertising and networking (20 respondents (27%))

Infrastructure - Better road maintenance and signage and improved parking at Pulborough Station were the main issues (6 respondents (8%))

Employment - 2 (3%) respondents were content with the quality and availability of people available for employment but 10 respondents (13%) questioned the availability of the required skills.

Matters for further consultation and conclusions

The survey raised some issues for which further evidence was required and questionnaires were distributed at the Village Show to gauge reaction to some of the emerging ideas. Issues relating to broadband and mobile communication and transport and infrastructure were left to be covered in the working group dealing specifically with those issues.

21 responses were received and the detailed results and comments are in Appendix 2.

The character of West Chiltington is fundamentally residential in the minds of most respondents and business considerations are very much secondary and viewed somewhat as a threat. Nevertheless there is a significant number of run from home businesses and their prime need for improved broadband and mobile communications is shared by the general population. There is a need for small business premises and whilst the support as evidenced by the questionnaire responses is not overwhelming the key to delivering an objective in this area is in the suitability of the location. Non-residential sites linked to existing commercial/agricultural locations especially if near to the edges of the parish where the roads are better would probably be seen as suitable.

Working from home was generally seen as helping to reduce traffic but there are risks if some businesses attract clients into the village and add to the traffic problem. Supporting homeworking is therefore a generally good thing and planning (where needed) and enforcing covenants in property deeds is probably sufficient to deal with the risks. Whilst planning permission for most extensions is not needed there was general support for the planning authority to act favourably where homeworking was intended.

Although most of the neighbourhood area is agricultural there is almost no information about the needs of that part of the community so it is difficult to draw any conclusions. There is perhaps a case for more community engagement with the non-built environment in the parish.

Business support networks were generally supported but there is probably more help available through national and Horsham District Council activities already than is generally realised. More work needs to be done to identify the existing support networks and publicise them and then make a further assessment of what more should be done.

These conclusions can be expected to be reflected in the neighbourhood plan objectives and policies.

Norman Kirby
August 2014

APPENDIX 1

Comments from Business Survey

	Comment	Type
75	Remind residents to shop locally	Commercial
	Internet poor at present but FTTC will make it adequate. Need a bonded line	Communications
	PC and HDC should add support to A27 improvement to reduce rat running	Infrastructure
74	Internet could be better but rural location is low priority	Communications
	Staff cannot work effectively without own transport	Transport
	Demand outstrips supply	Recruitment
	Help with recruitment	Recruitment
73	Internet is slow	Communications
71	Transport is poor because of isolated location	Transport
	Internet is poor and makes running a business unviable	Communication
	Specialist recruitment is difficult	Recruitment
68	Local business directory for local people would be useful	Business services
	Would like suitable affordable business premises	Premises
	Premises impossible to buy and expensive to rent	Premises
	Copy Amberley - give price reduction vouchers for using local tradespeople	Commercial
67	Planning regulations on wedding venues with common midnight finishes limit the ability to provide an adequate taxi service	Planning
	Staff recruitment is difficult and HDC make it difficult	Employment
	Internet very slow	Communication
66	Broadband is adequate but would like it faster	Communications
	Move to purpose built office last year	Premises
	Little land available for commercial use	Commercial
	Public transport does not operate in the areas we work or at the appropriate time 6.30am	Transport

	Comment	Type
64	Would like more houses to be built to sell	Commercial
	Premises outside the village	Premises
	Business rates not an issue - need a larger village for premises	Premises
63	Questions not especially relevant to us but would welcome discussing how services could be improved in area	Transport
62	Already has fibre optic cabling	Communication
61	Support us by buying good and service locally	Commercial
	Question whether the business will be in operation in 2031	Technology
	Have been able to expand in Pulborough location	Premises
	Business rates are reasonable	Premises
	Recruitment for a specific role was from outside the area	Employment
	West Chiltington not the right location for our business	Environment
	Really need fibre to demonstrate smart devices and internet	Communication
60	Bus route on B2133 at Broadford Bridge would suit everyone	Transport
59	Planning permission for garage needed	Premises
58	Poor internet affects business	Internet
54	Better mobile phone service	Communication
53	Better mobile phone service	Communication
	If we needed more staff it would be a problem	Employment/Tpt
	Road maintenance is generally good but local flooding is a problem	Infrastructure
51	Local business directory	Business support
	Business Park at Vineyard/Roses Nursery off Southlands Lane	Business support
	Better signage and restrictions on HGVs through narrow lanes	Infrastructure
49	Increase car parking capacity at local stations to improve connectivity	Infrastructure
	Limit housing development to maintain character of village for local entrepreneurs with capital who have potential to create local jobs	Housing
48	Local premises costs unaffordable	Premises
45	Better postal deliveries	Communication
	High property prices and few smaller homes	Premises
	Poor bus services and few taxis	Transport

	Comment	Type
42	Make it easier for local business to quote for local authority contracts	Business support
40	Better access to community through advertising	Business support
39	Expensive area	Premises
	Bus services limited but well used	Transport
	5 access roads and many barely more than farm roads	Infrastructure
38	Expansion limited by poor broadband	Internet
	No local response to available employment	Employment
	No public transport at all in village	Transport
	Broadband on B2133	Internet
37	Encourage B&B in village	Business support
	Maintain roads better - Juggs Lane will become impassable	Infrastructure
36	Help with business rates	Business rates
	Competition from national multiples	Business support
31	Local shop prices high	Economy
30	More early and late buses	Transport
28	Improved parking at Pulborough and Billingshurst	Infrastructure
	Local premises cost would be high	Premises
	Improved train service	Transport
	Public transport is a joke	Transport
27	Improved mobile phone service	Communication
	Premises needed would be small office with power, broadband, phone	Premises
	Specific skills not likely to be available in area	Employment
	No meaningful public transport for community without car	Transport
	Not primarily a suitable area for businesses to locate in	Planning
26	Existing premises could be readily expanded	Premises
24	Encourage 4G communication	Communication
	Communication infrastructure makes area unsuitable and business would be located here rather than elsewhere if communications were better	Internet/Comms
23	More focused approach on keeping local businesses up to date	Business support
	Lack of people who want to work really hard	Employment
22	Suitable business premises not available	Premises

	Comment	Type
	No business benefit in locating construction business in rural community	Environment
	Lack of suitable skilled personnel	Employment
	Public transport hopeless	Transport
	Lack of local business opportunities	Planning
	Need for village to support local businesses who can locate premises discreetly away from residences	Business support
	Improve mobile phone communications	Communication
	Take action to make parish economically viable. Encourage business incubator, exploit local business skills and potential capital. Support development of vineyards as a business.	Economy/ Business support/ planning
	SWOT analysis of local business assets	Business support
21	Encourage use of local shops	Business support
22	Premises costs are high	Premises
	Business rates are high	Business rates
	No staff recruitment problem so far	Employment
	More frequent buses	Transport
16	Improve mobile phone infrastructure	Communications
15	Poor rail service to London - I drive to Horsham	Transport
13	Need 1000 sq ft small industrial unit	Premises
	Local costs too high	Premises
	Do not expect problems with recruitment of administrator	Employment
12	Desirable to use local businesses rather than outside contractors	Employment
	Permission to build on my own land would support business and be an improvement on renting premises	Planning
	Local business rates not appropriate to rural location. Need to encourage local businesses to be used locally	Business rates
	Lack of younger people in local population	Employment
	Improve bus services	Transport
7	Suitable premises not available in village and expensive	Premises
	Public transport very limited - need frequent service to rail links	Transport
	Need small business units	Premises
	Business advertising board	Business support

	Comment	Type
5	Local notice board for free advertising	Business support
	Business breakfast meetings	Business support
	Extend permitted advertising in local library	Business support
4	Need training/therapy room	Premises
	Premises costs high	Premises
	More bus routes to Horsham	Transport
2	Create a business networking hub	Business support

APPENDIX 2

Questionnaire responses

1. *Would you support development of some light industrial, office or therapy type premises in suitable locations?*

Yes - 8 No - 11 Don't know - 1 No response - 1

Comments:

No unless within existing home property

Where would that be?

As long as it contributes to the local economy

At Brinsbury Campus

Therapy yes industrial -no

Must be appropriate to surroundings

This would bring more traffic on to the roads. Depends where it is and how it would develop.

If they can be accommodated in existing buildings and don't put additional strains on roads and infrastructure

2. *Would more working from home reduce traffic?*

Yes - 11 No - 3 Don't know - 5 No response - 2

Comments:

Deliveries would bring more traffic

Better phone links

Need better broadband

Difficult due to nature of job

If cars not parked on public roads all day

Depends on the business

Some services mean more traffic on the roads. People coming in to appointments and often a lot of courier traffic coming in to make deliveries and pick up.

3. Should planners approve extensions for better home working?

Yes - 14 No - 4 Don't know - 3

Comments:

Subject to existing restrictions¹

Dependent on the historic nature of the property

People will work at home if they want to

It is a village not a working town

With careful monitoring to avoid large offices

If in character

So long as not industrial and in character

If within keeping

Small extensions do not need planning permission

The home working does not stop at one room as the office frequently expands beyond the planning

Where appropriate

4. What are the needs of the agricultural/horticultural/equestrian communities in the parish?

Almost all the responders did not know.

Comments:

Don't need any more

Bridle path

Safer routes for horses - more bridleways

Difficult due to WC becoming a less rural village

Need deliveries but should be in reasonable sized vehicles

Agricultural vehicles are now very big and ruin the verges so road maintenance required

5. How could a business support network be developed?

Comments:

Better broadband. More innovation, more pace setting, more contemporary data response to 2014 and beyond

Business parks

Back to planning - Top class broadband

Businesses should support themselves

Ask. FSB, advice from existing businesses

Better, faster internet connection

Local co-op for local produce

Business Link, Round Table etc

Generally WC is a residential area and should remain so

Not appropriate to a rural village. Other networks available in a more appropriate scene

There is government funded support. PC should provide contacts.

6. How else could the Parish Council or Horsham District Council support business?

Additional comments

Improve communications and pace/speed of response to community issues. Improve transport and frequency

Make it better to rent business premises

PC to visit prospective start-ups and get them to a PC meeting to exchange ideas

Where I live in the village we will not get improved broadband due to distance from the green box. More boxes needed to more properties. We are 2500 metres from ours.

I support business that supplements the rural scene. I am sure HDC is doing all it can now. Not a priority for the parish council. Hopefully making sure business interests do not have a negative impact.

7. Any other comments

More interesting shops in the village eg a contemporary coffee shop with Wi-Fi, modern clothes shop, restaurant that isn't just selling pub food, pop-up shop opportunities, small art gallery, a meeting centre for discussion, a yoga centre, alternative health centre.

Faster broadband is needed Camouflage the phone mast. Better digital links for radio and TV.

Often planning granted for agricultural use/storage then seems to change to allow various unrelated businesses bringing more vehicles to the village