

## Question 2

**In view of the previous examiner's conclusions regarding the allocation for The Vineyard - Land off Old London Road, has there been any changes since that time to indicate that it is now a sustainable location for a major development?**

- 2.1 Washington Parish is a predominantly rural parish (1,276 hectares). A significant proportion (66%) of the parish is sited within the South Downs National Park.
- 2.2 There are two main settlement areas within the Parish. The first of these is Washington village, and the second is Heath Common which directly adjoins the settlement form of Storrington and Sullington. Washington village is located wholly within the South Downs National Park, and Heath Common directly adjoins National Park boundary. These designations, together with other constraints have limited the availability of suitable sites for housing growth in the parish.
- 2.3 The Qualifying Body, through the consultation process and wider engagement with their community has recognised there is a need for housing in the parish as initially identified in the AirS 2013 Housing Needs Assessment, and this still remains the case - on 3 September 2018 95 of the 695 households on the Horsham District Council housing register had identified Washington as an area of choice.
- 2.4 Following the remarks made by the previous Examiner, the Qualifying body has undertaken a revised site assessment and sustainability appraisal process. This updated assessment process has demonstrated that Storrington, Sullington and Washington are parishes with significant constraints and there is a lack of other suitable and available sites within Washington parish that would meet the housing needs of residents in this particular part of the plan area.
- 2.5 The Vineyards site, although not directly adjoining Heath Common or Washington village is located within an area of existing development (around Montpelier Gardens) and is relatively close to a number of local services and facilities. It is considered that the site would contribute to the provision of housing within Washington parish that will help to support the long term vitality of its communities who in recent years have seen local services such as the local shop close.
- 2.6 In July 2018, the revised NPPF was published. Although it is recognised that under paragraph 214 the policies of the previous NPPF apply for the purpose of examining plans, the updated document is a material consideration when dealing with planning applications. It is therefore useful to consider this allocation in terms of its consistency with the updated NPPF. Both paragraphs 77 and 78 of the revised NPPF indicate that in rural areas planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances, and that development in one village may support services in a village nearby. It is the view of Horsham District Council that the allocation at Vineyards is consistent with this policy approach.