

Affordable Housing in Dunsford Feedback

In November 2022 Dunsford Parish Council (DPC) distributed a leaflet to every household in the Parish with an update on the affordable housing project. This report summaries the responses.

296 properties were leafleted. 204 properties in the core village and 92 in outlying properties. There were 59 replies (20%). 11 replies were hard copy and 48 were by email. Replies were slightly higher in the core village at 29%. This compares to the 32% return to the 2019 Housing Needs Survey.

	Support the proposed site	Against the proposed site	% against living near the Proposed Site	Neither for nor against
Total replies	25	25	28	9
Nos signatures	39	32	38	12

Thank You for your response

The table below summarises the comments and questions raised. Comments are grouped into topics and are not in any particular order. Where possible more information has been provided by the Housing Working Group on behalf of the Parish Council to explain the process being followed.

This was an invitation to comment on the site location rather than a survey. The project is still in very early stages which means that there is no information on access, layout, design and no technical surveys have been commissioned.

Why only this site?

A recurring question is why this site and why haven't you been consulted on other sites.

This site was one of six sites being actively looked at by the Housing Working Group. The Working Group were following a sequential testing process against key constraints, opportunities of each site, (particularly opportunities for car parking) and the site availability as an exception site, at exception site values. That technical process had not been completed which is why further consultation had not taken place. However, this site had scored highly in the process.

The reason this site has come forward sooner is that a small developer, separately to the work of the Working Group and Hastoe Housing, obtained an option for this site with a view to making a planning application as a rural exception site for affordable housing. The Parish Council's Housing Working Group has asked the site agent to engage with the community and Hastoe with a view to trying to ensure any development on the site meets the community's needs. This is because unless there is evidence of high levels of housing need requiring 2 rural exception sites for affordable housing sites only one site is likely to be supported by Planning Policy. The site agent acts as the landowner as they have an option on the land.

A pre-planning enquiry has been made to Teignbridge planners by the site agent to obtain guidance on the planners' requirements for the site. If a project does come forward then the Parish Council will be asking the site agent for this site for further details to be provided so that further parish wide consultation can take place.

Summary of Comments and Questions

	Subject	Your Responses and questions	Initial Response
1	Site Location	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More information requested on why alternative sites have not been considered with the 5 alternative sites mentioned. 2. Request for the other sites to continue to be explored and for consultation on those sites. 3. Good site as away from flood plain 4. Support as close to the village. 5. Concern that there may be further development in future creating an 'imbalance' in the village. 6. Risk of 'development creep' or expansion of the site 7. 'The parish council and the Park should do what's actually right for our particular village, having fully taken into account all the factors such as the environment, biodiversity, infrastructure, visual impact, traffic, sustainability etc. If there isn't a suitable site then we shouldn't rush into building at this stage'. 8. Will impact what is a 'beautiful approach' to the village .. the lower approach has been spoilt by newer homes 9. Site may be suitable but a key issue will be what the homes look like. 	<p>The Working Group set up by DPC is looking at 6 sites. This process has not been concluded.</p> <p>Separately, a small developer obtained an option for this site with a view to making a planning application which is why the focus is on this site. The DPC Working group has asked them to work with the community, Hastoe Housing and the working group set up by the Parish Council.</p> <p>The DPC Working Group process involved looking at the opportunities and constraints of each site. This is important as planning requires a sequential flood risk assessment which means the site with the lowest flood risk must be considered first.</p>
2	Community Infrastructure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How, and if, the site can make a contribution to any community infrastructure with most focus on parking and suitability of the site for parking. 2. Site not suitable for a village car-park without a pavement to the site. 	<p>The site consulted on is in Teignbridge. The other 5 were in Dartmoor National Park.</p> <p>Teignbridge Local Plan does not allow cross subsidy from open market homes on a rural exception site for community 'infrastructure' only for affordable housing if grant is not available. Dartmoor Local Plan does allow limited cross subsidy.</p> <p>Hastoe Housing (a registered Housing Association)</p>

			specialising in rural affordable housing) can help facilitate community projects but cannot directly fund community assets that are not affordable housing which means separate funding would be needed.
3	Visual Impact of the site	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The location of the site on rising ground and proximity to the conservation area. 2. Design on approach to the village will be important. 3. Site will be visible from the top of Six Mile Hill and from down the valley and will outstanding natural amenity. 4. The field is much higher than the road. 5. Site is on one of the highest points in the village. 6. Dunsford has an above average proportion of listed and thatched properties. 	Any application will need a formal visual impact assessment and Dartmoor National Park Authority's formal comments have been requested by Teignbridge.
4	Loss of agricultural land	'quality farm land should be protected at all costs.'	
5	Drainage 1. Sewerage 2. Surface water/storm water	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ongoing concerns about storm water provision and impact on 'sewerage'/foul water drainage. 2. Surface water run-off has been a problem in the past, particularly down Reedy Hill. 3. 'There would be a prima facie case against the development in terms of compliance with the Water Framework Directive as well as other environmental legislation and decisions inter alia The Dutch Case'. 	Formal flood risk assessments have not been carried out and are required for any planning application.
6	Biodiversity of the site	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Alignment with DPC's Climate Initiative questioned. 2. Loss of hedges and hedge-banks. 3. Bats use both lanes adjacent to the fields to fly along. 4. Cirl Bunting now present in the Teign Valley. 	A Preliminary Ecological Survey will be required if an application is made and ecological mitigation identified including Biodiversity Net Gain requirements which come into force in November 2023
7	Sustainability of the village	No local jobs and travel to work needed	

8	Pedestrian and vehicular access	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Concern about there being a dangerous corner and 'rat-run'. 2. Lack of street lighting. 3. Lack of room for a pavement to the site. 4. Lack of passing places on Reedy Hill for vehicles and increase in lorries. Need for a traffic census. 5. Blind corners, access directly onto lane from cottages. 6. Icy in winter. 	This will require a formal assessment as part of a planning application.
9	Lack of detail provided on the proposal	<p>Further detail asked for regarding:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The number of homes. 2. The tenure of the homes, need for shared ownership, level of open market homes, need for rented homes. 3. Design of the home 4. Examples of other affordable schemes on Dartmoor and concern on design with 'strong dislike of 'boxes' such as those built at Cheriton Bishop'. 	<p>This detail has not yet been worked on. Teignbridge Local Plan does have policy for rural exception sites. Dunsford PC will be asking for further consultation on layout and design detail.</p> <p>The 2019 Housing Needs Survey provided evidence for up to 10 affordable homes. TDC require 70% as affordable rent and 30% as Shared Ownership, subject to financial viability</p>
10	Scale of the Site	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Concern on potential scale of proposals and impact on the village character. 2. Concern about future expansion of the site, creating an adverse visual impact and imbalance in the village. (See also box 1.6). 	
11	The location of the site on the edge of the village rather than the centre.	Could the housing be on an infill site rather than the edge or 'curtiledge' of the village? This might enable smaller groups of homes?	<p>The proposal is for a rural exception site. This is a formal planning policy for affordable homes. The Local Plan sets out where exception sites can be located.</p> <p>Infill sites do not have to provide affordable housing.</p>
12	Risk of future right to buy and homes not being affordable in the future		The only way to avoid any risk of right to buy is if Dunsford set up a community land trust who would own the homes
13	Evidence of housing need.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Several responses highlighting the need for affordable housing for local people and support for the site. 	Exception sites do require evidence of housing need from locally, qualifying people.

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Vital to have affordable homes for local people. 3. it is very hard if not impossible for local families to pay the high prices currently asked for homes in Dunsford. 4. Support for rented homes more than shared ownership. 5. Please to see affordable housing but concerns about this site and too many homes for cross subsidy. 6. Request that a survey of open-market housing need be carried out. Need for a range of house types. 7. Request that a new Housing Needs Survey closer to planning application date in order to ensure the supply fits the demand. 8. A view that there is already adequate affordable housing in the parishes and applicants could access housing nearby. 9. 'you are still not asking the basic question. Do you think the village should have 10 or more affordable houses built in this or any other site in/adjacent to the village'. 10. Two responders interested in self-build. 	<p>The current survey was carried out in 2019. Planning policy will accept a survey of up to 5 years old but often a refresh is carried out after 3 years.</p> <p>DPC can look at existing affordable housing and its turnover.</p> <p>The s106 agreement sets out priorities for the housing. People with a Local Connection to Dunsford have priority for any local houses built in Dunsford but would not be prioritised first for any affordable homes in adjoining Parishes.</p>
14	What is meant by Local People	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Will the homes really go to local people? 2. The definition of this [Local People] needs to be clear. 3. How would they be owned and administered – Housing Association or Council? 4. The site highlighted is obviously outside of the National Park and I would therefore be concerned that it couldn't be offered to people from in the National Park. 	<p>Applicants will need both a Local Connection and to meet the income limits to qualify for affordable housing. To qualify for a rented the applicant must be eligible to register on Devon Home Choice. How to qualify for Shared Ownership is set out in national policy.</p> <p>The proposal is for a Registered Provider also called a Housing Association to own and manage the homes. Hastoe Homes have been working with the Working Group and would need to negotiate with the developer.</p>

15	The process of consultation and engagement with the community.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Request to see the FAQs promised. 2. 'No update on [DPC] website since April 2022'. 3. 'We feel open meetings with the village would have helped... Whether by design or omission we have felt excluded, raising suspicions about why a more open discussion has been avoided'. 4. Democracy – you have not been clear on how people should respond and what inferences will be drawn from the data. You have issued one leaflet per household but you are essentially canvassing the electoral franchise in the village. I have one leaflet but three adults in my household and it really ought to be clear whether responses are joint or collective, 	The Housing Working Group will work with the site agent to request further consultation on this site. Dunsford PC wants to make as much information available as they can when it is available.
16	Housing Working Group membership	One request was that the DPC review membership of the Working Group to ensure it is representative, particularly in relation to Parish Council Members' proximity to the sites considered	The Terms of Reference for the HWG have been reviewed and are available. This includes how potential conflicts of interest are addressed.