

## **COPYTHORNE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

**TUESDAY 28<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2017**

### **ITEM NO 10: – AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

**An update report from the Copythorne Parish Council Affordable Housing Working Group (AHWG) and Hampshire Alliance for Rural Affordable Housing (HARAH)**

**Work undertaken in the last two months plus a recommendation for a ‘re-run’ of the Affordable Housing Public Consultation event and subsequent follow-up activities.**

***NOTE: This is a re-issue of the report presented at the meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2017 and some amendments / additions have been made following further work and comments.***

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#### **Introduction**

This is the scheduled update report on the potential for Affordable Housing development in the Parish. The report is presented by the Parish Council Affordable Housing Working Group (AHWG), working with Hampshire Alliance for Rural Affordable Housing (HARAH), also involving English Rural Housing Association (ERHA) and New Forest Villages Housing Association (NFHA) as partners.

The report outlines the developments to date and the results of the work which has been undertaken over the past 2 months by HARAH to update the situation with regard to the available sites. The report sets out a very brief background to the development work and also a proposed programme of work leading to a recommended re-run of the Public Consultation Event, previously undertaken in January 2016. The Event will be designed to set out the latest position on sites and also to promote further feedback from the community both on the sites and also the potential for Affordable Housing in the Parish.

#### **A Note about the Organisations Involved**

The HARAH Partnership is a Hampshire wide group made up of neighbouring authorities and includes Action Hampshire, New Forest District Council, New Forest National Park Authority, English Rural Housing Association and New Forest Villages Housing Association among others. HARAH has been established since 2005 and provides affordable homes for local people in housing need in rural Hampshire. Since the partnership began, 392 affordable homes have been built in rural Hampshire for local people.

English Rural is a rural specialist housing association providing affordable rented and shared ownership homes in villages for local people. All of their homes are occupied by people with a connection to the village in which they are situated and their tenants do not have a ‘Right to Buy’. Therefore none of their properties have ever been sold on the open market and remain in the community for future generations. English Rural manages the housing stock of New Forest Villages Housing Association and will be acting as its Development Agent for new schemes built under the HARAH project.

### **Previous Work Undertaken in the Parish**

HARAH conducted a housing needs survey in Copythorne Parish in May 2014 identifying local demand and support for a small affordable housing scheme for local people. A site assessment was carried out by members of the Parish Council with HARAH in November 2014 identifying 27 sites. Through consultation, discussion, availability and consideration of factors such as potential planning and environmental issues, the sites have been reduced from 27 to three.

In October 2014, the Parish Council set out and agreed the principles under which any Affordable Housing development could be considered in the Parish, to ensure that if any development were to take place, it would be bound by those principles. Against this backdrop, further development work took place.

A successful 'Drop In' event was organised by the Parish Council and HARAH on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2016 providing information about HARAH, the principles under which Affordable Housing works, the process so far and the potential sites in respect of Copythorne Parish. This included illustration of how the sites were assessed and the resultant rejection of many of them against those criteria. Around 500 residents attended and some limited feedback was undertaken via a feedback pro forma.

However, due to the potential impact of the new Housing Bill, the development work was halted until the outcome of the Bill was known. Work re-started in September 2016.

Within this report and in the light of the work which has now been undertaken, it is recommended that a similar public 'drop in' event is held giving residents the opportunity to comment on the 3 sites as they now stand and the pursuit of any further development. It should be noted that all 3 site owners involved have either been contacted directly or their agents have been contacted. They have all indicated that, in principle, their sites are all still available for potential development of a scheme.

### **An Update Note about Funding for Affordable Housing Projects**

Historically the standard Housing Association funding model comprised a mix of borrowing (secured against the properties) coupled with Government Social Housing Grant (in the early years, this was about £65,000.00 per property) However over the last five years the level of grant has been much reduced following changes in the housing market and reductions in government spending. The model has changed, in that new schemes require a significant injection of 'internal subsidy' – in which Housing Associations use additional funds from their own resources, over and above the amount that could be generated from the rental income of the properties themselves.

However without some form of additional subsidy, there are obvious limits to the long-term sustainability of this financial model. There is currently no longer social housing grant for rented properties only for shared ownership – the Government's drive is for affordable home ownership, but with high property values in rural areas, even households on middling incomes would not be able to afford the mortgage and deposit needed for even a shared ownership home.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) endeavoured to help bridge the funding gap by encouraging the principle of cross-subsidy on what would normally be regarded as Rural Exceptions Sites. Clause 54 states that local authorities should consider allowing "some market housing .....

where it will facilitate the provision of significant additional affordable housing to meet local needs". Although there is a recognition that the starting point for a rural exceptions site will be that a planning application has to demonstrate how and why the proposed inclusion of market housing is required in order to provide financial support for the affordable units.

In reality, for schemes such as that which would meet the Copythorne criteria, it would be necessary to include one or two properties for sale. It is assessed, that, approximately, there would need to be one sale unit per 7 affordable units. English Rural HA works on a principle of creating new small developments where the inclusion of an open market cross subsidy property/ies on rural exception sites, are bungalows aimed at older local people wishing to downsize, therefore meeting another housing need often identified in rural communities.

A number of schemes operated on this basis in communities similar to Copythorne and developed in partnership with Parish Councils are already either in completion or in detailed planning stages by English Rural HA

### **Information on Sites**

Please see [Appendix 1](#) for a table of all sites assessed and reasons why sites have been discounted. [Appendix 1](#) also includes a map of all 27 sites.

### **Available and suitable sites**

The three remaining sites considered as potentially suitable for an affordable housing scheme are:

Site 1B (Uncle Tom's Cabin – site adjacent to Romsey Road),

Site 5 (Site behind the Haywain Pub)

Site 12 (Poultry Farm adjacent to Chinham Road).

[Appendix 1](#) includes a map of these sites.

### **Proposed Next actions**

The Parish Council and all its partners are committed to as full as public consultation as possible, taking into account the logistics of such an exercise. However, at the same time, the Parish Council is keen to move this process on as reasonably speedily as possible to a conclusion, as to whether or not to develop affordable housing in the Parish, and if yes, where. In this way, the Parish Council could remove uncertainty and further delay on any decision. Therefore, we are recommending a slightly swifter process leading to a decision on whether or not to proceed to any development no later than the end of April 2017.

The following process is proposed as a recommended way forward to promote that engagement and facilitate feedback from the community:

- A re-run of the exhibition and consultation 'Drop In' event, previously undertaken on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2016, to set out the current position and invite comments on any potential programme, is undertaken on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2017 in the Parish Hall. This event will be well publicised and held between 4pm and 8pm.

- Feedback forms will be provided at this event, together with sufficient table space at which visitors can sit to complete them. The main objective will be to seek the views of local people on the potential for Affordable Housing in the Parish and for the three remaining sites. HARA and the AHWG will look closely at the mechanisms for community feedback/comment observation to ensure that we receive a good response rate from all settlements in the Parish. Residents will be able to complete comment forms at the event and through the Parish Website – details to follow. We anticipate that the materials and forms will be available prior to the event on the web site. We expect the consultation feedback submission period to be completed by 14<sup>th</sup> April 2017.
- The feedback and comment forms will be analysed independently for incorporation into a report to the Parish Council which we anticipate will be for the meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2017.

Please see [Appendix 2](#) for a template comment form.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

The re-start of the Affordable Housing Work Programme and the investigation into its potential within the Parish is now under way. The re assessment of the data on sites and their availability / suitability for any development has been worked through over the past two months and the re-run of the 'Drop In' information and consultation event is considered essential to move the process forward.

All feedback will be analysed and the outcomes will be reported to the Parish Council in order that Councillors can make a decision as to whether or not to proceed with any detailed development work on a potential scheme, based on both technical information and community feedback.

It is recommended that the Council approve the next steps leading to the Public Event and resultant feedback exercise.

Table detailing the reasons sites have been discounted

**Appendix 1**

Site reference	Location	Discounted	Reason site has been discounted
1A	Site on the crossroads between Romsey Road and Newbridge Road	Yes	Too far from the settlement boundary
1B	Uncle Tom's Cabin – site adjacent to Romsey Road	No	N/A
2	Site adjacent to Pollards Moor Road	Yes	Site has potential in planning terms but it has been withdrawn.
3	Site adjacent to Pollards Moor Road	Yes	The landowners are not interested in selling their site for affordable housing now or in the immediate future.
4	Hampshire County Council owned land opposite Bartley Junior school	Yes	Owned by Hampshire County Council but almost entirely landlocked with very narrow access.
5	Site behind the Haywain Pub	No	N/A
6	Site adjacent to Pollards Moor Road	Yes	Letters have been sent to the landowner but no response has been received.
7	Site on Old Lyndhurst Road – larger site	Yes	HARAH obtained a view at the open day that the site will not be made available as a Rural Exception Site.
8	Site on Old Lyndhurst Road – smaller site	Yes	Site is half an acre - likely to be too small
9	Site adjacent to Newbridge Road	Yes	The landowner informed HARAH that the site is not available at the Jan 16 drop in event.
10	Land at The Yews, Southampton Road	Yes	The Parish Council has received a planning application for an industrial unit on the site which is due for discussion at the meeting on Jan 24 <sup>th</sup> . <a href="#">*Please see below for information about the New Forest National Park Authority's proposed allocation of The Yews</a>
11	Site adjacent to Chinham Road	Yes	Copythorne Parish Council contacted the landowner in April 2015. He has confirmed that he does not wish to make his site available for affordable housing.
12	Poultry Farm adjacent to Chinham Road	No	N/A
13	Site adjacent to Southampton Road	Yes	Planning have said that there are a number of concerns to developing this site and the National Park Authority would be more supportive of some of the other sites proposed in the Cadnam area.

14	Site on the crossroads between Romsey Road and Newbridge Road.	Yes	Outline planning for an affordable housing scheme was submitted but rejected by the Parish Council.
15	Site opposite Hungerford Copse	Yes	The site has been discounted as it is a large wet field crossed by an open footpath allowing open countryside views. The site is also in the local gap between Bartley and Netley Marsh.
16	Site opposite The Brickyard	Yes	The site has been discounted as it relates well to the open countryside.
17	Kent's Farm	Yes	The site has been discounted as it relates well to the open countryside.
18	Site adjacent to Pound Lane	Yes	The site has been discounted as it relates well to the open countryside.
19	Maulands Farm	Yes	The site has been discounted as it relates well to the open countryside.
20	James's Farm	Yes	The site has been discounted as it is too small.
21	Site behind Compass Inn	Yes	The site has been discounted as it relates well to the open countryside.
22	Site behind 'Stowe', Winsor Road	Yes	The site is too far out of the village.
23	Site adjacent to Copythorne Crescent, behind 'The Haven'	Yes	The site has been discounted as it is open countryside, there is poor access, there are no amenities and it is not on bus route.
24	Site adjacent to 'Old Malthouse', Winsor Lane	Yes	The site has been discounted as access is poor.
25	'Hazelmere' adjacent to Southampton Road	Yes	The site is currently unavailable.
26	Site behind 'Five Acres'	Yes	The site has been discounted as it is remote from the village and local amenities and access is poor.
27	Site on Southampton Road	Yes	The landowner emailed HARA in October 2016 and has currently withdrawn his site from the process. It may however be reconsidered in 1-2 years.

#### The proposed allocation at The Yews (Site referenced 10)

Given the site's Brownfield status, main road frontage and proximity to local services in Cadnam, it was proposed for allocation in the Authority's consultation draft Local Plan (October 2016) for a small redevelopment, including around 12 residential units. A planning application was recently received for the redevelopment of the site for B1 (business offices), B2 (general industrial) and B8 (storage and distribution), with no residential use included. This planning application has recently been rejected by the National Park Planning Authority.

Map of all sites considered in Copythorne Parish

