

LONG SUTTON PARISH

Report on Public Exhibition for Affordable Housing

**5th December 2008
and
11th February 2009**

1. Introduction

The Long Sutton community consultation events were organised by Julie Eden, one of three Rural Housing Enablers for Hampshire, based at Community Action Hampshire.

It was organised in close liaison with Long Sutton Parish Council, Hart District Council and HydeMartlet Housing Association.

The purpose of the events was twofold:

- i. to contribute to the selection of a suitable site in Long Sutton for the development of affordable housing for people with a local connection to Long Sutton Parish.
- ii. to provide an opportunity for local people to register their housing need with Hart District Council

2. Background

A Housing Needs Survey was undertaken by the Rural Housing Enabler, on behalf of Hart District Council, in May 2006. This was a 100% survey of the 198 households in the parish and 31% of households completed the questionnaire. Some 80% of these responses indicated support for the idea of new affordable housing. This survey recommended 8 homes for households with a strong local connection to the parish and in need of affordable housing. At the current time there are 12 households residing in Long Sutton who are in priority housing need and on Hart District Council's Housing Register.

The Parish Plan also reported that 77 residents believed Long Sutton could accommodate more housing stating, "preferences are mainly for small houses for young local people, affordable housing and housing association rented property. Sixteen people need alternative accommodation of some sort: 14 would like owner-occupied housing, 13 require Housing Association rented accommodation, 9 require private rented accommodation and 8 require shared ownership. 5 need sheltered accommodation. There is therefore a definite need for additional housing within the community, but the numbers are small."

In 2007 the Rural Housing Enabler and members of Long Sutton Parish Council explored 9 sites around the village, using some of the suggestions from the Parish Plan. Eight sites are exception sites. These are sites adjoining the settlement boundary and are in the countryside, but where residential development is permitted as an exception to planning policy.

3. Site Finding

The criteria that must be met for developing housing on an exception site are set out in Policy RUR 22 of the Hart District Local Plan and are as follows:

- i. The local planning authority must be satisfied that there is a proven need for affordable housing for local people in the immediate vicinity;
- ii. Development should be of an appropriate size so as not to have an overbearing impact on the settlement or the countryside. A maximum of approximately 0.4 hectares (1 acre) should normally be developed on the site;
- iii. The site must normally be immediately adjacent to a defined settlement boundary, or form a logical extension to the existing settlement;
- iv. The development should not have an adverse effect on the surrounding open countryside;
- v. Materials and design are appropriate to the character of the surrounding area.

The planners gave their views on the 9 sites in relation to sustainability (minimising the use of private cars), access, effect on landscape and highways. These were the informal comments of planners and were for guidance only to assist in the final selection of a preferred site and initial design work. This information was displayed at the exhibition. A copy of the site appraisal is supplied as appendix 1 to this report.

4. Exhibition

An exhibition inviting comments on the potential sites was held at Long Sutton Village Hall on 5th December 2008 from 10.00 to 1.00 pm.

The exhibition displayed: maps indicating the location of each of the sites, photographs of the sites, summary notes of the site appraisal and information about housing need and how to register for affordable housing. Copies of the Housing Need Survey were available to view. In addition HydeMartlet Housing Association provided information about their organisation and photographs of other housing schemes they have built in Hampshire.

Comments sheets were provided for visitors to record their views. Application forms were available to register on the Hart Housing Register.

Officers from Hart District Council Housing Department, the Rural Housing Enabler and an officer from HydeMartlet Housing Association were available to answer questions.

Visitors were encouraged to record their comments about the suitable sites. Visitors in need of affordable housing were invited to take away an application form for Hart District Council.

5. Response

Comments were either posted in the comments box or were sent to the Rural Housing Enabler. There were 15 responses in total. The majority gave their name and address. Three people indicated that they are already on Hart District Council's Housing Register.

6. Public meeting and exhibition on 11th February 2009

Following comments that not all residents had been able to attend the exhibition the parish council requested an evening public meeting. This was held on the 11th February at 7.30 pm.

Presentations were given by Fiona Hood, Strategy and Development Manager at Hart District Council, Julie Eden, Rural Housing Enabler, Community Action Hampshire and Chris Buchan-Hepburn, Development Manager, of HydeMartlet. This was followed by a question and answer session and then comment forms could be completed based on the same display from the previous event. Comment sheets could also be sent to the Rural Housing Enabler with a deadline of 25th February.

7. Written comments

The comments from both events have been included.

The first question asked for preferences of sites 8 or 9. Some people gave their preferences for other sites. The responses are shown in the table below. Some people gave more than one preference.

Site 1 - Woodhill Lane	Site 2 – Farm bldgs in Woodhill Lane	Site 3 – Corner site of Woodhill Lane & Hayley Lane	Site 4 – Land at junction of The Street & Copse Lane	Site 5 – South of Chaffers Close
1	0	10	2	1
Site 6 – Corner of The Street & road to L.W. College	Site 7 – Land to rear of The Street & north of school	Site 8 – Land opposite Chaffers Close	Site 9 – North of Leaden Vere in Woodhill Lane	
9	0	5	11	

Comments were made in favour or against a particular site and these are summarized below:

Site based comments:

Site 3

- Good access to main part of the village

Site 6

- Close to primary school and bus stop.
- An unobtrusive site.
- Causes less traffic problems
- Good access to the village

Site 8

- Highway access is unsuitable
- Narrow lane with passing places
- Too remote from the bus stop and primary school
- Too much social housing located in this area
- No footpaths
- Integrates well with the village and the school
- Sufficient road width to allow for 2 cars to pass

Site 9

- Concerns that the site is subject to regular flooding
- Should not be located next to existing social housing
- Too far from the settlement boundary
- Increase in traffic
- Highway access is reasonable compared to other sites
- Would fit in well with existing affordable housing
- Woodhill Lane can cope with an increase in traffic
- No infrastructure e.g. power/drainage
- Impact on landscape

- An assurance that Leaden Vere would be the last development in this lane

Other comments were expressed on affordable housing in general, the impact on the village, the type of housing and the consultation process. The main points are summarized below in order of priority with numbers of respondents:

Affordable housing

- Questioned the level of need (4)
- Previous developments housed some people who did not have a local connection (1)
- Homes should be for Long Sutton residents only (1)
- Lived in the village all their life and cannot afford to buy so a development would be beneficial (1)
- As the homes are for retired College employees the College should sell land near the primary school for the housing (1)
- Questioned the local connection of some of the households on the housing register (1)

Impact on the village

- A new development should not be placed next to existing social housing (5)
- A development of 10 units is too large for the village (3)

Type and mix of housing

- There is concern that once the tenants move on that people outside the area will get the homes (1)

Comment on the consultation

- Insufficient analysis of the sites (1)
- Process is undemocratic (1)
- Did not know that a housing needs survey had been carried out (2)
- Planners comments are inconsistent (1)
- Request for further consultation (1)

8. Conclusions

- At the public meeting on 11th February there was general consensus in favour of providing some affordable housing. This is backed up the support expressed in the Housing Needs Survey of 2006 and the Parish Plan.
- There are mixed views on the best site. Site 9 (north of Leaden Vere) is the most popular site, but also attracted the most criticism with flooding being highlighted. The second most popular site is site 3 (corner site of Woodhill Lane). However, this site has been rejected by planning officers.

Please refer to their comments in the site appraisal. Site 6 (corner of The Street and Lord Wandsworth College) attracted 9 votes. This site is considered to have potential by the planners, but to date Lord Wandsworth College has been unwilling to sell this land. Finally, site 8 (opposite Chaffers Close) attracted 5 votes. The greatest concern was access onto a narrow lane.

- Several respondents requested a new housing needs survey, partly because they were unaware of the existence of the 2006 survey. Although this will be 3 years old in 2009 Hart District Council has an up-to-date record of people with a local connection on their housing register. The register is reviewed annually and all applicants have their local connection checked. The Parish Council will have the opportunity to verify their local connection when a scheme is finally developed. An additional local housing needs survey is therefore not considered appropriate.
- Five people commented that a site should not be located next to existing social housing. Although it is desirable that affordable housing should be distributed through the village, due to the constraints of other locations this may not always be possible. Selection of the site is determined by a range of considerations and is not limited to the tenure of adjacent properties.
- Another concern is the impact on infrastructure, principally the roads and traffic. The lanes are narrow in the village, a characteristic of rural settlements, and it is not feasible or desirable to change this. If a new scheme is built the majority of residents will already be living in the village and therefore unlikely to generate extra traffic.

9. Recommendations

- The Parish Council accepts the evidence of housing need in the parish and that an affordable housing scheme will help to address this need.
- Site 9 attracted the most support; however there is widespread concern over the risk of flooding, therefore it is recommended that this site is discounted. Site 3, although popular with residents, will not receive planners' approval. Since the February consultation a planning officer has re-visited the site, but the view has not changed. It is therefore recommended that the site is excluded.
- Site 6 is considered by planners to have potential. It is recommended that parish council members, Hart District Council and the Rural Housing Enabler seek another meeting with Lord Wandsworth College to see if they will re-consider selling some land on this site.
- If Lord Wandsworth College still refuse to sell site 6, then site 8 (opposite Chaffers Close) should be confirmed as the preferred site.
- The Parish Council considers this report and accepts its findings.

- The Parish Council should continue to keep residents informed of progress via meetings and the newsletter.

Julie Eden
Rural Housing Enabler
March 2009

Hart District Council Development Control – Sites appraisal comments

Site 1

This site is a field behind Wood Hill Cottage in Woodhill Lane

Access – Upgrading the field/farm track may be possible, but at the expense of the rural character of the locality. It is also disconnected from the village centre
Landscape – Development of the field and required landscaping would be very apparent.

Highways – No comments

Site 2

Farm buildings north of Long Sutton Manor, Woodhill Lane

The Dutch barns and breeze block buildings are not suitable for conversion as they need rebuilding. The brick built building may have some potential. However, this building appears to have a direct relationship with Long Sutton Manor and would have an impact on it and the setting. The building's conversion is unlikely to achieve the required number of units and may not be financially viable.

Policy RUR5 will not permit the re-use of farm buildings for residential purposes unless the planning authority is satisfied that every attempt has been made to secure suitable business use for the building.

Access – There are existing accesses off Woodhill Lane into the former farmyard and to the Dutch barns. Both access points appear satisfactory. The lane is banked on the south side too, though not as high as on the opposite side of the lane. Vegetation is overgrown.

Site 3

Corner of field at the junction of Woodhill Lane and Hayley Lane.

Access – Creation of a new access into the site would have significant impact on the rural character. It would require breaking through the banked vegetation off Woodhill Lane. Access off Hayley Lane would require the removal of trees along the boundary and detract from the setting and approach into the village.

Landscape – The site is very prominent being at the brow of the hill.

Development of this site would be very intrusive as it forms the entrance to the village, it is part of an existing field and is a very exposed site.

Site 4

Land at the junction of The Street and Copse Lane

This site lies within the settlement boundary of the village. There is an existing house on the site which is boarded up. Re-development of the existing house could realise a small number of units with a frontage to The Street.

Access – Access could be kept to the rear

Landscape – There are a number of mature trees which may require maintenance.

Highways – No comment

Conclusion: owner of house did not want to sell for affordable housing

Site 5

Land south of Chaffers Close

This field abuts the existing residential development. The properties are a mix of single storey and two storeys backing onto the field.

Access – Field access for farm vehicles. Visibility is good to the right, but poor looking northwards. A bend in the lane and the bank/verge restricts views

Landscape – Field is less open than fields on the north side of the village.

However, it has a prominent position at the brow of the hill and at the entrance to the village. A development would detract from the amenity of the footpath leading into the countryside.

Highways – See access for potential difficulties.

Site 6

Land at the corner of The Street and the private road to Lord Wandsworth College.

Access – Could be achieved from The Street or off the private road.

Landscape – This site is not in an exposed location. It is low lying and well screened from the road side. Breaking through the boundary on The Street or on the private road would have a visual impact, but the ground levels and existing screening mitigate this.

Highways – No comment.

Conclusion: potential for a small development, however landowner does not wish to sell

Site 7**Land to the rear of a pair of semi-detached houses and north of the village school**

This site is within the settlement boundary.

Access – An access might be achieved over school land to the north of the school building

Landscape – This would be a back land development and is not a good site to pursue.

Site 8**Land opposite Chaffers Close**

Access – Visibility onto highway is better from this site rather than from site 5.

There is a footpath next to the site which leads to the playing fields and primary school.

Landscape – Open field which has a tree belt blocking views southwards. There will be some impact on the landscape which will need some mitigation

Highways – No comment.

Conclusion: potential for an exception site. Landowner has indicated a willingness to sell

Site 9**Field off Woodhill Lane, north of Leaden Vere**

Access – No difficulties

Landscape – Large open field which would require some screening. However, a development would relate well to the existing housing in Leaden Vere

Highways – No comment.

Conclusion: potential for an exception site. Landowner has indicated a willingness to sell