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Briefing Note: Brent Knoll Parish Council – 6<sup>th</sup> April 2016

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECT – 2016**

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**Reminder of Housing Need in Brent Knoll**

In December 2013 a full housing need survey (HNS) was carried out which found there were eight (8) households requiring affordable housing in Brent Knoll, the breakdown of the results of the survey are listed below;

1 x 2 bed bungalow, 3 x 2 bed house, 1 x 2 bed flat, 3 x 3 bed house all required rented accommodation.

**The purpose of this session**

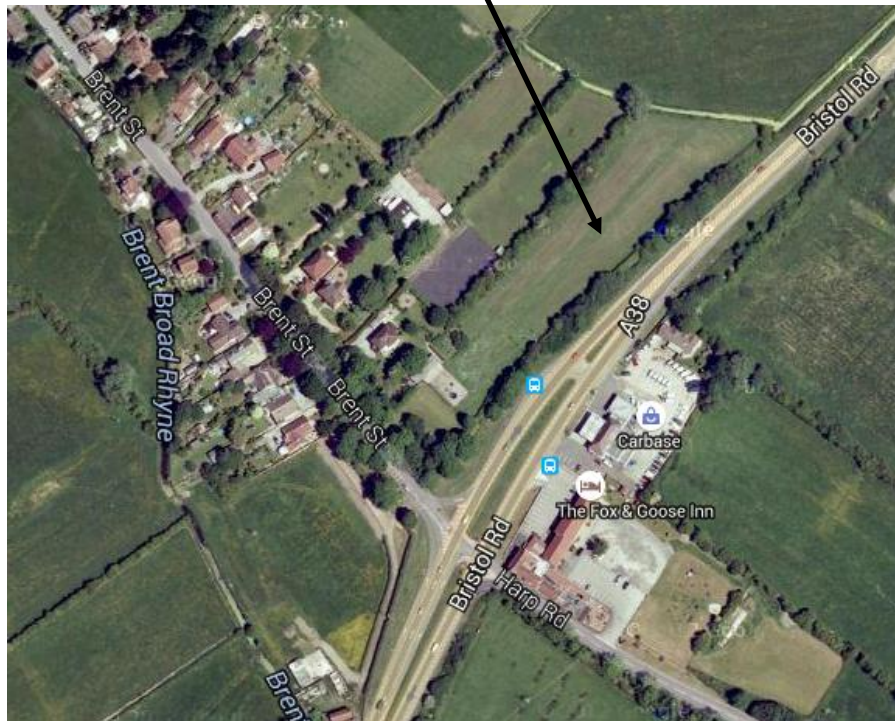
Following the meeting held with the PC and Housing Enablers on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2016, the PC agreed that all three (3) of the sites brought forward should be assessed for **availability**, **suitability** and **achievability** for housing. This session will inform the PC of the findings.

**Site Identification**

Sedgemoor District Council's preference would have been to identify a parcel of land within the settlement boundary. Unfortunately, there does not appear to be any suitable sites (capable of supporting affordable-housing development) within the current settlement boundary. Given this position, Sedgemoor District Council's current planning rules (as set out in the adopted core-strategy) does allow for housing development outside the development boundary where affordable-housing is needed and supported by the local community. Parcels of land outside the development boundary are known as 'exception-sites'. The search for sites outside the development boundary highlighted three (3) sites all of which were discussed at the PC meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2016. The PC decided that instead of just looking at one of the sites in isolation it would be better to look at all three (3) sites together. This would then help to identify the advantages and disadvantages of each site.

The three (3) sites were discussed with Sedgemoor District Council Officers at the fortnightly Internal Development Group Meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2016. The Internal Development Group meeting comprises of Planning Officers, Planning Policy team, Landscape Officer and Conservation Officer. Each Officer provides without prejudice advice on each parcel of land as to the suitability of development. Feedback from the Internal Development Group meeting is included in breakdown of sites below. All sites are in Flood zone 3 and should be treated equally.

## Site 1 – Land to the North East of 2 Brent Street Brent Knoll



### Availability

This parcel of land is currently subject to an option agreement, the site ownership would have already been ascertained therefore no availability issues.

### Suitability

This is a flat site, with small watercourses flowing within each boundary hedgerow. There are a number of hedgerows and marginal trees around the site. Access into the site will be from Brent Street close to the junction of the A38. The site is not in keeping with the building line of the village.

### Achievability

The site is approx. 2.6 acres which could deliver 20 homes; Policy P4 requires 40% affordable housing this equates to 8 homes. The Vendor has offered as a community benefit a bus shelter on Brent Street.

### Internal Development group comments

Internal Development Group felt the disadvantages for this site are the highways issues as the site is very close to the junction of the A38, special attention should be given to the layout as the site is long and linear and the site is situated on the edge of the village away from local amenities.

## Site 7 – Land to the south west of Laurel Farm Brent Street Brent Knoll



### Availability

This Parcel of land is owned by two parties, I have received confirmation that the site is available subject to giving grass keep tenancy notice.

### Suitability

This is a flat site, with a couple of medium watercourses flowing through the site. There is a small amount of boundary hedgerow. Access to the site would be between two properties easily accessed from Brent Street.

### Achievability

The total area of the site is in excess of 20 acres, using part of the acreage would ensure good quality design and layout the site could deliver the current housing need in Brent Knoll. The community benefit is some land being offered to the school for amenity space.

### Internal Development group comments

Internal Development Group felt this was the best of the three sites; the only issue that needs to be looked at is the access issues onto the site i.e. narrow access road. SDC are currently looking at who owns the access.

## Site 8 – Land to the south of Station Road and west of Brent Street



### Availability

This parcel of land is jointly owned by a husband and wife who have confirmed that there are no legal ownership constraints, no ransom strips or tenancy issues and no access rights or footpaths on the site.

### Suitability

This is a fairly flat site. The site is situated on the edge of the village away from local amenities. There are hedgerows and trees around the perimeter of the site. There are overhead cables which would need to be moved.

### Achievability

This site is approx. 1.7 acres which could deliver 15 homes; P4 Policy requires 40% which equates to 6 affordable homes. This is short of what the affordable housing requirement is in Brent Knoll. However there is a parcel of land to the east of the site which is in separate ownership however we are not sure that it is available. If this additional land was available there may a possibility that works to the highway could be incorporated into the build. Any community benefit would need to be negotiated.

### Internal Development group comments

Internal Development Group felt the disadvantages on this site were the possibility that it would not deliver the affordable housing need in Brent Knoll. If the highway was to be improved the cost would impact on the viability of the site.

## **Delivery Model: Funding and Resourcing New Affordable Housing**

Sedgemoor District Council's adopted Core Strategy identifies Brent Knoll as Key Rural Settlement (KRS). This classification offers a limited range of development options for delivering an affordable housing project in Brent Knoll.

Site investigation has concluded that there are no sites available within the settlement boundary. The core-strategy does allow exceptional development outside the village boundary to facilitate affordable housing to meet identified local need. The two policies that could be used for exception sites are as follows;

**Policy D7** – allows development by exception outside the settlement boundary. This policy only facilitates the delivery of affordable housing. This policy requires gap funding from the public sector (central or local government). The government has closed all grant bids to the 2015 – 2020 affordable housing programme and it is impossible to say when (or if) another programme will be opened. Therefore this policy is not considered appropriate at this time.

**Policy P4** – also allows development by exception outside the settlement boundary. This policy would see the development of both affordable housing and market homes. There will be the requirement of some form of subsidy support but not usually from the public sector (central or local government). Delivering the market homes would provide the necessary gap funding to deliver the affordable homes. The profit from the market sale homes would be recycled directly into the provision of the new affordable homes, with the developer being allowed to take a reasonable profit from the project. Sedgemoor District Council would typically expect to see 40% of the new homes to be affordable, with the remaining 60% being for market sale.

### **The Next Steps**

Renewing the Housing Need survey in Brent Knoll (November 2016)

Negotiating an “option agreement” on the site chosen by the PC (November-December 2016)

Designing a detailed housing project and indicative layout (January 2017)

Community Consultation re proposed development of land chosen (Spring 2017)