

**Parish Council****Brent Knoll Parish Council****Date:****Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2016****Subject:****Brent Knoll Affordable Housing Project****Briefing Note Author**

Duncan Harvey – Affordable Housing Policy and Development Manager  
 Strategy and Development Services  
 Direct: +44 (0)1278 436440  
 Email: duncan.harvey@sedgemoor.gov.uk

**Primary Sedgemoor DC Contact**

Esther Carter – Affordable Housing Project Officer  
 Strategy and Development Services  
 Direct: +44 (0)1278 435599  
 Email: esther.carter@sedgemoor.gov.uk

**Previous PC Briefing**Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2016See SDC website [www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=17599&p=0](http://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=17599&p=0)**The Affordable Housing Project Plan**

Stage 1: Understanding local housing need for affordable housing

Stage 2: Finding and securing a suitable site for the new affordable housing

COMPLETE (see note below)

Stage 3: Designing and agreeing a housing project.

Stage 4: Identify development partners

Stage 5: Agree funding options, followed by securing funding and planning permission

Stage 6: Construction phase

Stage 7: Occupation stage

**Stage 1****Brent Knoll 2013 HNA****Understanding Local Housing Need in Brent Knoll**

The Brent Knoll 2013 Housing Need Assessment (“HNA”) was published in December 2013. It is important to note that the Brent Knoll HNA offers a snap shot of the housing situation in the parish at the time of the survey. These will alter with increasing/decreasing values of housing, policies of lenders, the economic climate, and demographic changes in the community and as individual’s situations change.

Brent Knoll 2016 HNA

Affordable Need	2bedB (rent)	2bedH (rent)	2bedF (SO)	3bedH (rent)	TOTAL
TOTAL	1	3	1	3	8

There is no specific length of time associated with the relevance and robustness of a HNA. However, it is advisable that any HNA older than 3-years should be updated to capture the scale and nature of current local housing need. The Brent Knoll 2013 HNA is therefore reaching the end of its natural shelf life and requires updating.

**Brent Knoll 2016 HNA**

Since speaking with the Parish Council the Affordable Housing Development Team has carried a Brent Knoll HNA refresher exercise. The Brent Knoll 2016 HNA has been circulated separately to this briefing paper.

Affordable Need	1 Bed Rent	2 Bed Rent	2 Bed SO	3 Bed Rent	3 Bed Rent	TOTAL
TOTAL	3	3	3	1	3	14

**Stage 2****Previously Reported to Parish Council****Finding a Site**

Finding and securing a suitable parcel of land on which new affordable homes could be built continues to be a major challenge. The SDC Affordable Housing Development Team (“AFHDT”) has carried out a detailed and sequential investigation into potential development opportunities.

Exercise Complete

**Sequential Site Search: Stage 1**

Sedgemoor District Council Planning Policy first requires that any sites inside the Brent

Knoll settlement boundary are explored for their potential to deliver affordable housing. It soon became apparent that there were no available, suitable and achievable parcels of land fitting this description.

#### Sequential Site Search: Stage 2

Given the apparent absence of any suitable, available and achievable parcels of land within the settlement boundary, the site search exercise expanded its search to include parcels of land outside the settlement boundary. Sedgemoor District Council Planning Policies (D7 & P4) allows for sites outside the settlement boundary to be delivered for affordable housing if there is a demonstrable local need and support from the community.

An initial desk top assessment looked at each parcel of possible land against three criteria: Is the land available? Is the site potentially achievable? Is the site potentially suitable?

#### **Site Option Update December 2016**

**Land at Station Road** in Brent Knoll appears to be capable of satisfying criteria all three of three of the above criteria.

This parcel of land was presented to the people of Brent Knoll at the community drop in session on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2016. The feedback from this event has previously been reported to the Parish Council. It was agreed that further investigations should take place to see what could be achieved on this parcel of land.

Armed with the feedback from the June consultation event, a modified development proposition has emerged.

The delivery of affordable housing ("AH") in Station Road would use cross-subsidy investment model which would see a mix of affordable and market homes built.

Initial exploratory discussions with SDC planners have confirmed that despite sitting outside the Brent Knoll VDB, TCPA planning permission would be permissible under SDC Local Plan policy P4. It is important to stress that the planners have simply commented on the principle of using P4.

Responding to the feedback from the June event and the outcome from the 2016 HNA exercise, the scale of proposed development has been reduced from an original proposal for 18 new homes to 15 new homes. A minimum of 40% the 15 homes would be affordable housing.

The original 18 unit proposal included 6 x 2 bed, 11 x 3 bed and 1 x 4 bed units.

The revised (current) 15 unit proposal would see 3 x 4 bed houses, 3 x 3 bed houses 5 x 2 bed houses, 2 x 2 bed flats , 2 x 1 bed flats

An initial draft layout associated with the above property mix is undoubtedly more rural in appearance and offer a broader mix of housing. A detailed AH mx has yet to be agreed.

There is a willing land owner who will sell the land to help deliver new AH.

There is a committed contractor (EG Carter) willing to invest significant time and money working up a more detailed proposition for the Station Road land.

An established and respected AH provider has confirmed a genuine interest in helping to being housing forward at Station Road.

In order to move this site forward the contractor, AH provider and the current landowner need to know that the principle of development on the land is acceptable to the members of Brent Knoll Parish Council.

**Land Adjacent the A38.** We believe that there are separate discussions taking place between Brent Knoll PC and the would-be developer. We further believe that PC does not expect to see any AH come forward from this parcel of land.

**Land at Musk Farm.** It has been brought to our attention that this parcel of land may be available again. We have contacted the multiple land owners to clarify the current availability of this land. We have received a response from the current owners. They tell us the land is not available.

**Other Alternative Land Parcels.** We have not been contacted by other land owners offering their land for possible residential development.

At the time of drafting this paper, we must assume that the Station Road land is the only site in Brent Knoll which can be said to be available, potentially suitable and achievable.

## **Planning Delivering AH at Station Road**

### Policy D7

This would see affordable homes only built by exception outside the village development boundary ("VDB"). This policy is designed to tackle an evidenced based shortage of affordable housing at the local level. The starting point for any project seeking to use this policy would typically be evidence from a local Housing Need Assessment ("HNA").

This approach is possible in Brent Knoll. However, this policy is not considered appropriate or helpful in bringing forward new affordable housing at this time. See comments immediately below.

By its very nature, the building of affordable housing requires some form of subsidy support in order to make the homes affordable. Gap funding has in the past almost always been provided by the public sector (central or local government). Securing sufficient levels of public funds in support of new affordable housing has become increasingly more difficult due to reductions in government expenditure. Since winning the May 2015 election, government has embarked on a radical alternative affordable housing policy focussed on home ownership.

Possible option under existing and emerging local plan policy

### Policy P4

In some ways, a similar approach as described in D7. This would see new affordable homes built alongside open market homes for sale by exception outside the village development boundary ("VDB"). Again, this policy is designed to tackle an evidenced based shortage of affordable housing at the local level. The starting point for any project seeking to use this policy would typically be evidenced by a local Housing Need Assessment ("HNA").

This approach is possible in Brent Knoll and should be considered appropriate and genuinely helpful in bringing forward new affordable housing.

Unlike policy D7, the delivery of the affordable homes is not reliant on the provision of public sector funds (central or local government). The funding required for the affordable homes would come from the sale of the open market homes. Projects using this policy would typically be required to provide a minimum 40% of the new homes to be affordable. This approach has been successfully used at Crockers Hill in Woolavington to deliver 18 new affordable homes.

Possible option under existing and emerging local plan policy

Policy P4 is the preferred way forward for Station Road.

## **The Next Steps**

Parish Council support for a second public consultation with the people of Brent Knoll on the modified plans for the Station Road (February 2017)

Possible TCPA submission May – June 2017?