

## Odiham Parish Council

### Summary of responses received to consultation on long term planning in Odiham

Firstly the parish council would like to thank all respondents who took the time and trouble to give us their views:

#### Responses received

The free form of the questions asked has given us a very wide range of replies, mostly from individuals. The Odiham Society responded to the questions as asked. Some members of its committee have stated that the committee's response should be taken as their own, and others have submitted additional individual views. On the afternoon of the public meeting, the parish council received a copy of a letter from Odiham Interactive, giving their views to Daryl Philips, Hart's Head of Planning on long term planning for Odiham, which we have included in our consideration.

#### Summary of responses

Below we summarise the responses, make some initial commentary on the responses, and include the resulting initial response we have made to Hart District Council.

#### Question 1

**What development, if any, do you believe is appropriate for Odiham parish (including North Warnborough) to take over the next 20 years? Please try to be as specific as you can, and please give the reasons for your response.**

The total spectrum of answers ranged from "none necessary" to "20 – 25 houses per annum with close and easy access to the High Street", with just 2 answers at each end of this spectrum. Odiham Interactive, on behalf of its members, was one of the respondents advocating 20-25 houses per annum. The majority of responses accepted the need for some development, generally on a small scale and organically - bit by bit - to preserve village character and feel. The largest single focus in these answers was that development is needed to provide "affordable housing" – for young families, for local needs, for key workers. This was expressed in many ways and in some cases clearly refers to subsidised housing, and in others to smaller, lower cost market housing. A significant number refers to the need for suitable houses for down-sizing to release larger family homes. A smaller number of residents wants to see more shops and/or more "daily use" shops.

#### Question 2

**What, if any, facilities do you believe Odiham needs which might be (wholly or partly) paid for from developer contributions. Please give the reasons for your response.**

The largest single response in the entire survey was on the need to improve car parking in the High St. There was also a clear core wanting recreational facilities – for children or young people, but also for everyone. However there was much less agreement about the extent and nature of such facilities, ranging from a combined community hall and theatre, a swimming pool, sports fields with changing accommodation through allotments to making better use of Odiham Common.

### **Question 3**

**If you believe some development is necessary, please say where you would be prepared to see it go and why.**

Apart from the Woods site, which is already inside the settlement boundary, there was proportionally little appetite for other development. It is interesting that the sites most mentioned as possibly suitable **for** development are also those most named for **no** development. Close Meadow and the several sites at Dunleys Hill were both mentioned in the context of providing parking and recreational space, but the in answer to Question 4 the number of respondents wanting to keep the Gap from housing was greater, and there were was a substantial number not wanting development at Close Meadow. Land at Hatchwood Farm was also mentioned as a possibility, though it was also the SHLAA site most named for **no** development in the answer to Question 4.

The Odiham Society calculated that if building carries on at the present rate (6 houses per annum over the last 5 years) some 125 houses could be built in the next 20 years and no additional sites would need to be found outside the settlement boundary.

A significant number of respondents said that sites near to the centre of Odiham would be desirable to allow residents to walk to schools, shops, buses, work.

Odiham Interactive has not currently considered the SHLAA sites in its response, apart from Woods, but does propose use of the Deer Park “where closer interaction could support our recreational facilities, parking availability and housing availability”.

### **Question 4**

**Please indicate any particular places you would NOT want to see any development and why.**

As mentioned above, the same sites featured as most named against potential development (“The Gap”, Hatchwood Farm and Close Meadow) as well as for it. The Deer Park was the site mentioned most frequently as where development is not wanted.

Several respondents reminded us of the consultations and work that had gone into the recently completed Village Design Statement and of chapter 3 “Valued features of the parish”. Reasons given for wanting sites not to be developed included the setting of the parish; effect on the various Conservation Areas; potential flooding problems.

### **Numbers responding:**

Just under 100 residents attended the public meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> November (not including members of the parish council).

Direct responses to the parish council (including the two organisations mentioned, each counted as one<sup>1</sup>) were 56 at the time of writing.

### **Initial commentary made by the parish council's planning committee**

There appear to be several imbalances in the responses:

- the appetite for facilities versus the willingness to develop;
- the appetite for facilities versus the wish to retain a village atmosphere;
- the ability of a village the size of Odiham to sustain some of the facilities proposed;
- the wish for more smaller houses, though these are never welcomed in practice when a specific planning application is made;
- the wish for new housing close to the High St versus the need to preserve its character.

The very wide range of housing numbers proposed, and particularly the higher end, is somewhat surprising. There are 979 houses within the main Odiham settlement; 485 within the main North Warnborough settlement; 396 at RAF Odiham.<sup>2</sup> A 10% increase in houses within walking distance of Odiham High Street would therefore be just under 100 houses. But 20-25 houses per annum for 20 years with similar access would mean a total increase by the end of the plan period of 40 – 50%. The individual responses received in this consultation (with one exception), while recognising the need for varying degrees of growth, do not suggest support for that scale of development, and this will certainly be one area where we will be undertaking further consultation.

Parking in the High Street is unsurprisingly a hot topic for residents across the parish and must be one of the parish council's key priorities, particularly given the under-utilisation of the Deer Park car park. Other issues for consideration include traffic issues at Robert May's, and the desirability of the school expanding; the use of the Recreation Ground and other existing open spaces and potential recreational facilities in the parish.

The planning committee is likely to invite the two organisations who wrote to us to discuss their views and would be pleased to hear further from any individual residents, on reading this resume.

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<sup>1</sup> The reason for not quoting specific numbers is partly the relatively small sample size and partly the stated decision not to respond individually on the part of many members of the Odiham Society committee. We have simply taken paper returns at face value to give us an indication.

<sup>2</sup> There are an additional 135 "outlying" houses in Odiham (Broad Oak, Hillside, Potbridge, Poland Lane, etc); and 52 "outlying" houses in North Warnborough (including the Derbyfields settlement and the Green and Tunnel Lane).

## **Conclusion**

We feel confident that in our initial response to Hart, following your feedback, we are being both realistic and cautious, and that we have given Hart an indication from the parish to help them arrive at a broad distribution of housing numbers for the District, which Hart is likely to publish late next spring.

Given the potential which remains for some growth within the settlement boundaries; the relatively small proportion of residents answering; and the consequences to the character of the village in deciding on any one of the SHLAA or other potential sites, we do not feel that it would be right at this stage to name any additional site for development.

We clearly will need further to understand residents' views about a potentially very substantial amount of development, and it makes sense to do this before trying to name any specific sites. We have therefore not at this stage tried to reach any conclusions on sites ourselves.

We have identified some research that we wish to carry out, and envisage publishing further information during the course of next spring. We may propose (at least one) further public meeting, though the timing may be influenced by the content of Hart's "Core Strategy" document, expected for consultation late next Spring.

Meanwhile, we thank you for your responses so far and recognise that this is the beginning of a dialogue across the parish. Members of the planning committee will be pleased to hear your views at any time.

## **Odiham Parish Council initial response to Hart District Council:**

The following response to Hart was agreed by the planning committee on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> December.

### **LDF Core Strategy, as it applies to Odiham parish**

As you will be aware, following the meeting with Hart planning policy officers on October 20<sup>th</sup>, Odiham Parish Council has undertaken an initial consultation with our residents on potential long term development in the parish.

We would particularly like to thank Rachel Scott for her very timely assistance with the preparation of maps for the consultation, which were of great help.

### **The consultation**

The initial consultation had to be carried out rapidly, so took the form of an invitation of all residents to a public meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2010 via the Odiham Parish Council newsletter distributed to every household recorded in the electoral roll and via the OPC website. District Councillor Ken Crookes presented Hart's current position on the LDF, and a member of the parish council posed questions that arise for Odiham. This was followed by questions, suggestions and comments from residents. The current SHLAA sites for Odiham parish were shown to the meeting. Just fewer than 100 residents attended the meeting. They were asked to give us their views in response to 4 open questions within 10 days of the meeting. Notes were sent to parents through the schools, and information and the feedback form were also posted on our web site.

Rather over half the residents attending the meeting, plus some others, responded to the questions. Some residents who participated in the Odiham Society's response to us did not submit their own individual responses. A further input was received from another village organisation, Odiham Interactive, just before the public meeting was held. OPC councillors did not submit their individual views.

### **The response**

The response to this initial consultation was very varied. The majority of respondents recognise the need for some housing growth in the village to accommodate the village's needs. This is particularly in support of local young families' needs for housing. Some also flagged the need for houses into which residents could down-size, thus releasing larger family properties.

In general no great appetite was expressed for large scale development, nor for large individual sites, there was little indication that these are considered necessary for the success of the village. Several requests were made to take note of the Village Design Statement, recently adopted by Hart in October 2008, which was itself the subject of consultation and which includes a particularly relevant section entitled "Valued Features of the Parish".

Three reactions stood out particularly clearly from the variety of responses: there should be no housing development in the gap between Odiham and North Warnborough, though possibly some leisure use if this could be funded; the need to tackle parking issues, particularly in the High Street; and a desire for improved leisure facilities.

**Odiham Parish Council conclusion**

The parish council concludes that at this stage, given the current rate of development within the existing settlement boundaries (some 6 houses per annum over the last 5 years) and given the remaining existence of space within the settlement boundaries to continue to develop at this rate, there is no immediate need to expand the settlement boundaries.

The consultation has raised a number of interesting issues and a need for further information. It has been conducted rapidly in order to give you an initial response for the development of the Core Strategy. Given the variety of responses, the parish council will continue the exercise with the aim of gathering and disseminating further information on some of the issues raised, and then seeking further views.

For your information, we are attaching the questions asked of residents.