

FUTURE HOUSING SITES

The planning committee of Odiham Parish Council considered the results from the recent “Future Housing Sites” survey of residents at a meeting on 18th March.

It was stressed at the meeting that the recommendation made by the committee is an initial one for Hart to feed into its planning considerations.

Analysis of responses

There are 2,087 dwellings in the parish – 1,141(54.7%) in Odiham; 543 (26%) in North Warnborough and 403 (19.3%) at the RAF station. 440 responses were received, of which 61 (14%) ignored the instruction to score every site in order of preference. Of the remainder, 263 (60%) were from Odiham, 101 (23%) from North Warnborough, 4 from the RAF, and 11 did not provide their postcodes

It was agreed to include those who scored every site in order of preference but who did not provide a full postcode, as it was not stated that it was a requirement that they did so.

Voting results

Based simply on the total votes awarded, the most favoured sites in descending order were:

- Rough’s Cottage by the Newlyn’s roundabout (site C);
- rear of the Chilli Pad (site D);
- opposite ‘The Cat’, next to the petrol station and Swan Mews (site A);
- Albion Yard and rear field behind ‘The Cat’ (Site K).

However, given that overwhelmingly Odiham residents voted for sites in North Warnborough and North Warnborough residents for sites in Odiham, the fairness of this result is open to question.

Taking an alternative approach (see below), the top sites using a second method were:

- Rough’s Cottage (Site C);
- rear garden of 4 Western Lane near the fire station (Site F);
- rear of Longwood in West Street next to Robert Mays school (Site L);
- land adjacent to Crumplin’s Yard at the bottom of Dunleys Hill(Site M).

This second approach separated the results into responses from Odiham, North Warnborough, the RAF and those few who had not provided postcodes; it then looked for common ground between them in the sites which scored better than average, resulting in these 4 sites.

The site with the **fewest** votes for development from both North Warnborough and Odiham residents was the field to the west of Dunleys Hill (Site E), the so-called “gap”.

Commentary on top sites

The parish council had, in confidence, looked at the Rough’s Cottage site some 18 months ago as a possible affordable housing Rural Exception Scheme site and concluded that it was an unsuitable

place for anyone to live, so much of the site being so close to the main road. This view has not changed and so the site is not being put forward as part of the parish council's recommended sites.

To develop all three of the other sites based simply on the number of votes cast would mean allowing the superior numbers of Odiham residents to dominate the outcome, in outright contradiction of the responses from North Warnborough residents. It would also concentrate development onto 3 sites very close together in the North Warnborough and Basingstoke Canal Conservation areas. It would seem to make sense however to treat A and D as potentially one site since they abut each other.

Trying therefore to strike a balance between the two approaches, and recognising that Odiham is already taking a large green field development of up to 89 houses at Hatchwood Farm, the parish council is recommending for consideration Sites A and D in North Warnborough (rear of Chilli Pad and opposite the Cat next to Swan Mews). We wish however to see the combined site very carefully treated taking into account the following: the Basingstoke Canal Conservation Area, the North Warnborough Conservation Area¹, nearby listed buildings, and the last inspector's report on the site². If this site is finally selected, we will want to work with Hart and any developer to deliver an appropriate scheme for this sensitive location. These 2 sites are down for 34 houses in total but this may be too many, given both the foregoing and the need to build something much more in keeping with the area than Swan Mews.

Following the second approach, and the overall preference shown by the responses for small sites, we are recommending the rear garden of 4 Western Lane near the fire station (Site F), land to the rear of Longwood by Robert Mays (Site L) and the bottom of Dunleys Hill, adjacent to Crumplins Yard (Site M). These are all small sites surrounding "the gap" at Dunleys Hill but which we believe can be developed without damaging the gap. We will be seeking Hart's confirmation that if we select these sites it will be possible to protect the gap (Site E) in line with residents' expressed views. This leaves the land to the west of the gap for the planned use by Robert Mays for playing fields or parking. Sites F and L are currently shielded from the gap by significant hedges and trees to the north of both sites which would have to be maintained. Site M would need some screening from the gap to the south. We wish to explore also whether a southern strip of site M should be considered as a better

¹ North Warnborough Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Proposals 4.2 says (largely about site A): "The open space to the south of Nevills in Hook Road is very visible due to its location on a bend in the road. At present, it looks untidy and is unused. Open spaces interspersed with houses are a significant part of the loosely developed character of this part of North Warnborough. Views across the village to and from the canal and across the surrounding fields are an important characteristic of the conservation area". And 9.1 says: "New development should not result in a general increase in the urbanisation of the conservation area, and the rural qualities of the area should be preserved".

² HART (REPLACEMENT) LOCAL PLAN INQUIRY INSPECTOR'S REPORT, 1998 says about Site A: "The determinant of whether the site should be developed or not appeared to me to turn principally on the conservation considerations. This northern part of North Warnborough, in particular, had a strong character and much charm. The eastern side of Bridge Road was closely developed with a narrow verge providing a separation between the road and the cottages. The site provided a substantial window, accentuated by the turn to the south that occurred in the road at that point..... While the 16-20 dwellings the Objectors proposed could be too much, it did appear to me that the site offered some potential for development and that this would justify its inclusion in the settlement boundary. The form of development would need careful consideration, perhaps to maintain glimpses out of the village and to provide a break between the older cottages to the north and the more modern development to the south."

access route for the school from the main road, given the very significant traffic problems the school already generates in West Street and at its junction with Dunleys Hill, before it expands as planned. The numbers proposed suggest that these 3 sites could deliver between 20 and 30 houses.

The total recommendation of Odiham Parish Council is thus between 54 and 64 houses. This is sufficiently in excess of our target of 40 to enable schemes for these sites to come forward without the need maximize densities at the expense of local character. This approach to densities will require Hart's support.

Next steps

These recommendations from Odiham Parish Council will be presented to Hart for their assessment of these sites. The process is therefore definitively not complete.

We reiterate that these are our first stage recommendations taking into account the guidance offered by our residents. They need to be considered by Hart before any firm decisions can be taken.

Then Hart and the parish council will work together, using the input from the residents survey, and advice from Hart planners, to decide which are to be the preferred sites.

Any queries

All enquiries are requested to be in writing please and replies will also be in writing. Wherever possible please email planning.consultation@odiham.org.uk