

# Housing in Brentor (1)

## What is this event about?

In 2011 a Housing Needs Assessment was carried out, which identified a need in Brentor for 10 affordable homes for local people.

A landowner in the village has a potential site and is willing to bring it forward for affordable housing. There may, however, be other sites in the village which could be preferable.

In order to establish this we carried out a 'call for sites' to draw out available land; 9 areas of land were submitted. Planning Officers at the National Park Authority have given a professional view on the merits of these sites, and recommend that some are unlikely to be feasible. The Parish Council has supported an approach of consulting the community on a 'shortlist' of sites. Whilst you may wish to comment on the other sites it is important to recognise that we have notable reservations around the ability to deliver these other sites – that is why we are trying to focus this consultation on those we feel are achievable.

## Questions you might have...

### Who is involved in the process and why?

Dartmoor National Park Authority is the local planning authority for the area, we will make a decision on any planning application. West Devon Borough Council is the housing authority and will support and advise the planning process, and would lead on allocating housing (deciding who lives there). We are also supported by the Rural Housing Enabler from the Community Council of Devon, who supports both organisations on assessing housing need and helping to bring small rural sites forward.

It is important the community is involved in this process, it is people within Brentor with a housing need, that have led us to look at delivering some affordable housing. As your locally elected representatives the Parish Council will be informing this process as it moves forward, you can also talk directly with any of the Authorities involved.

### What are the housing policies in the National Park?

Housing policy in the National Park focusses on the delivery of affordable housing for local needs. We have two documents (the Core Strategy, and the Development Management DPD) which together are the 'local plan' for Dartmoor. These are the basis for making planning decisions in the National Park. The Affordable Housing SPD (supplementary planning document) will also be adopted soon, this is not policy, but adds some more detail around how we work, and how we interpret policy.

In our local plan Brentor is a 'Rural Settlement' – this means it is an appropriate area for "small scale development essentially serving identified needs arising from within the settlement and its parish". In Rural Settlements there is a focus on affordable housing only, however the Affordable Housing SPD will bring in a provision for a small amount of open market housing if this is necessary to make the whole scheme financially viable. We have had to look at this because funding has changed for affordable housing and we may not be able to deliver without this 'cross subsidy'; also in order to be consistent with national policy.

### How/why have we discounted certain sites?

There are a range of reasons a site may or may not be appropriate. Experienced planning officers, supported by specialist advice (such as the Highways Officer, or Conservation Officer) are suggesting several sites would be either very difficult to bring forward, or may not be acceptable in respect of other planning policies. We have therefore recommended a shortlist, in order to avoid the community choosing a site which may not be deliverable.

### Who are the landowners?

The planning process relates to land, and not to individual landowners. Whilst within a community you may know or be interested in who the landowner is, planning officers must consider only what is a 'material consideration' in a planning decision.

# Housing in Brentor (2)

## How do we assess housing need?

Assessing housing need is not an exact science. A Housing Needs Assessment was carried out in 2011, this was a local paper survey of each household. This helps to establish whether a scheme is justified (i.e. is there a need) as well as informing the nature of a scheme when it comes forward (for example what size of housing, rented, shared ownership etc). Depending on how long it takes for a scheme to come forward we will often need to 'refresh' the survey to ensure it is up to date.

## How many houses will be built?

It will depend on the level of need. The plan shows the total extent of land put forward by each landowner. It is important to bear in mind that the housing need in Brentor at the last survey was ten, and a scheme in the village may not even be that big, so in most cases only part of a site would be needed.

## What will those houses look like?

We would not look at detail such as this until such a time where there is some confidence that a scheme will happen, and a housing association might look at some initial drawings. A look at the National Park Authority's Design Guide might give you an idea of the sort of affordable housing which has been built elsewhere in the National Park.

## Who would live in these houses?

In the National Park in order to qualify for affordable housing you must meet 3 criteria; you must be:

- I. In housing need
- II. Unable to afford open market prices
- III. A household including a 'local' person

This is defined in the local plan as:

- (i) those people currently living in the parish of provision, or a rural parish adjacent to the parish of provision, and having done so for a period of at least five years; or
- (ii) those people who have lived in the parish of provision or a rural parish adjacent to the parish of provision for a period of five years but have moved away in the past three years; or
- (iii) those people who have a strong local connection with the parish of provision or a rural parish adjacent to the parish of provision by virtue of, for example, upbringing or current employment.

We will apply the above approach flexibly, responding to local circumstances and the particular aims of Parish Councils or Community Land Trusts where possible. This may include using Local Lettings or Allocations Plans to add further interpretation to the above, for example reflecting a 'parish first' priority.

## What we would like from you...

It is essential the local community has input to this process. We need your views on how we should move forward. Whilst 'do nothing' is an option, you should bear in mind if we do not see this process through land owners may choose to submit an application anyway, on which the Authority would need make a decision.

There is a feedback form you can complete, which enables you to leave your comments.

## Next steps

It is recognised there is a wish to hold a community meeting around this, and we are currently discussing with the Parish Council a suitable time for this.

Once we have had your feedback we will report this to the Parish Council. At the next stage we may involve a housing association to help us move to the next level of detail.

We will continue to work with the Parish Council to take this forward, and would look to the Parish Council to advise and support engagement with the community at the next steps.