AFFORDABLE HOUSING INFORMATION SESSION

NOTES

Wednesday 16th January 2019

Hosted by Hale Parish Council

From NFDC: Tim Davis – Housing Development & Strategy Manager

Sarah Lee – Housing Development Officer

**Aim**

The aim of the meeting is to give Parishes information on what tools and resources are available to help through the processes of an Affordable Housing Project.

TD and SL are not experts in every area of the process but they understand the process and know where to go and who to ask for expert help through the stages.

TIM DAVIS

**Background**

Currently NFDC have about 5,500 social housing units of various sizes and locations.

NFDC is also the planning authority alongside the National Park as relevant.

They are also responsible for maintaining rental standards in relation to private renters and landlords.

TD and SL work for the NFDC’s Housing Development and Housing Strategy department and develop strategy including how to implement these strategies.

They are not planners – but do work closely with the NFDC planning department and will work with the National Park planning department as required. In this they work as the link between providers and the planners. This is especially important when the development is a market development with some affordable units.

**Housing Needs**

The pressures on housing in the NFDC area and especially the Park are high because prices are significantly higher than national averages and the stock range is limited with the majority of properties being 4+ bedrooms and detached.

Homelessness is increasing from < 50 households in 2016 to 115 households in 2017. Currently there are c. 3,300 people on the register as needing social housing.

The NFDC Housing Strategy ( <http://www.newforest.gov.uk/article/17996/Housing-Strategy> ) outlines NFDC’s priorities including the provision of Affordable Housing.

Target for NFDC is 600 properties over next 8 years (duration of housing plan) – this covers market houses as well as social and includes rental, subsidised purchase, and part ownership.

Two main routes for Rural /Affordable Housing:

HARAH or other Housing Association partners

Community led housing such as Community Land Trusts

In Rural areas it is expected majority of sites will be Rural Exception Sites.

What are they? Small developments built as ‘exceptions’ to usual planning rules

NFNP definitions for exception sites are bit different to NFDC - see NFNPA Core Strategy – CP11 (page 41)

<https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/planning/policies-in-detail/> - scroll down to Core Strategy tab and download Pdf document.

Planning policy ensures that a Rural Exception Site can be preserved ‘in perpetuity’ for that community. At the present time rented affordable homes on exception sites are outside the Right to Buy legislation.

**Process**

Establish Need – locally devised survey or independent survey through HARAH (Hampshire Alliance for Rural Affordable Housing) – their website has a Pdf pamphlet setting out the 10 stage guide to developing an affordable housing scheme in rural communities - <https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/planning/policies-in-detail/>

The HARAH housing need survey has been used for 15+ years and is widely viewed as independent, fair, robust, rigorous and focused.

Also key is any development is the support of the Parish Council and the wider community.

SARAH LEE

**Community Led Developments**

Follows same process but is built by the community for the community –

Lots of different models:-

CLTs – Community Land Trust – will retain legal hold on property and also manage going forward – though can also be done in a Partnership.

Co-housing – like a mini-self-contained community with private spaces and community facilities

Co-operatives – owned by community but often managed with/by the tenants/shared owners

Community Self-builds – stages through planning done by community and then properties built by intended occupants with community support and then on-going management.

**What do NFDC Offer?**

Case studies for comparison/ideas/information - description of case studies showing routes through housing projects

Link with planners

Links with Registered Partners

Knowledge of where to find information/get help/find funding

NFDC also has a Community Housing Fund to help communities work through the various stages of the process of a community led housing project.

Tier 1 – Initial Investigation around the process and training for those involved – up to £5k per project

Tier 2 – Pre- Feasibility studies– up to £10k per project

Tier 3 – Up to £150k per project for project support

**Perpetuity Issue**

Planning policy sets out to ensure that homes built on a Rural Exception Site remain affordable in perpetuity. Although the ‘perpetuity’ issue is protected in current legislation, there is no guarantee this might not change under other governments. Also some risks surround shared-ownership given the involvement of private mortgages and lenders.

Usually a local connection cascade in the legal agreement and this will be the criteria for finding replacement residents as appropriate.

**NFDC Housing Targets**

If a community builds their own Affordable units they do not form part of the NFDC’s 600 housing target.

TD and SL recommend that any Hale residents or their relatives that would want to be considered for any newly built affordable units should add their names to the Council Housing and Help To Buy South registers.