

Item 7 – Forder Farm

CLERKS NOTE: This paper was issued in February; the recommendations were agreed by full council.

Background

Local residents have approached me to see if the Parish Council (PC) is able to help them obtain affordable housing in Moretonhampstead. At present they are registered with Devon Home Choice but only qualify for Band E as they are 'adequately housed' in private housing. Cllr Hodges, Cllr Warner and I met with Mary Ridgway, TDC Housing Enabling Officer, to discuss the Local Lettings Plan and the Community Contribution Policy on 19/01/22.

Local Lettings Plan

Mary Ridgway explained the Moretonhampstead Local Lettings Plan was last reviewed in 2017. I have included it in the meeting papers.

Most Local Lettings Plans apply to new housing developments linked to the planning approval for the development. Unusually, in Moretonhampstead the Local Lettings Plan applies to existing housing stock. Teignbridge Housing Authority agreed with the PC, and the existing housing providers (Teign Housing and Hastoe) to do a retrospective Lettings Plan that applied to existing stock. Teign Housing and Hastoe signed up voluntarily to the Lettings Plan as there is no legal authority for Teignbridge to enforce the plan.

The existing plan is still in operation despite not being reviewed. In order to review the Local Lettings Plan, Teignbridge and the PC need to reopen discussions with Teign Housing and Hastoe:

1. Are they both happy to continue?
2. Are they happy to continue on the same basis?

The Local Lettings Plan does not include a community contribution clause for those in Band E. As part of the review, the PC could negotiate including the community contribution.

Community Contribution Policy

Back in 2014, Teignbridge District Council (TDC) members agreed to drop Band E from Devon Home Choice. Band E means the applicant has no housing need; applicants have very little chance of ever being housed. Typically the applicant is in the private rented sector. The rent is expensive but the house is considered to be adequate for their need. Affordability is not a criterion that is assessed in the Devon Home Choice eligibility assessment.

Following consultation with TDC's rural community's it was decided to establish a policy called Community Contribution. This meant that those people who would have been in Band E but have a strong local connection with Moretonhampstead (criteria can be found at page 64 of [Dartmoor Local Plan 2018-2036](#)) and who also make a contribution to the community for a minimum of 2 years for an average of 2hrs/week can apply to be put into Band D. The community contribution is specific to the applicant's town and cannot be used anywhere else. TDC have never used community

contribution for existing stock. Mary will check with her colleagues in allocations if the policy can be applied to Moretonhampstead, if their partners will agree to it and if it could, how it could.

Housing Needs Survey

The last Housing Needs Survey in Moretonhampstead was designed by the PC and Lemon Gazelle. The problem with the Lemon Gazelle survey was that the methodology didn't meet the planners requirements so wasn't considered to be sufficiently robust. The survey was very broad in what it was asking.

In order for a Housing Needs Survey to be accepted by the planners, TDC would manage the survey in partnership with the PC to get the methodology agreed and carry out the survey to minimise the risks of it not being accepted.

The new Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA) Local Plan strongly emphasizes evidence of housing need. The PC will need evidence of housing need should they want to meet any of the affordable need in Moretonhampstead. TDC will set aside an amount of money to support the PC in this process. Moretonhampstead is one of TDC's top two priorities to carry out a housing needs survey because there isn't currently an objective basis for understanding the affordable need in Moretonhampstead.

Currently TDC does not have a company to procure the survey from. TDC will work with DNPA and meet the costs of the survey; they would expect the PC to work with them in delivering the survey.

A Housing Needs Survey does not open Moretonhampstead up to development. The survey informs the PC and helps any negotiation in ensuring the affordability element is met. A survey will help to ensure the council get the best out of the Forder Farm development for local people.

There is a low turnover of existing housing stock in Moretonhampstead which leads to a demand for affordable homes. Mary Ridgeway hopes to work with Devon Communities Together to conduct a Housing Needs Survey.

Mary advised reading the new DNPA Local Plan, in particular the Housing Chapter on page 53, and sections 3.1.8 – 3.1.10 on page 56. This sets out DNPA's strategy for delivering the development required to meet the needs of the National Park and its communities.

The adopted Dartmoor Local Plan indicates the sites DNPA expect to see in Moretonhampstead (pages 142/3 of [Dartmoor Local Plan 2018-2036](#))

Summary

- There is an existing lettings scheme for Moretonhampstead
- Unusually it applies to the whole affordable housing stock in Moretonhampstead.
- The lettings scheme doesn't currently include a community contribution
- If the PC want the lettings plan reviewed TDC will need to go through a consultation process with the housing providers and internally with allocations colleagues as to if and how it will work
- Understanding the affordable need and reviewing the housing need survey are two complimentary pieces of work and should be carried out together

- Early 2022 would be the target date to carry out the housing needs survey

Recommendations

Mary Ridgeway would like to work with the council to conduct a new Housing Needs Assessment and to review the Local Lettings Plan. I recommend the council resolve:

1. To agree to support a new Housing Needs Assessment for the Parish of Moretonhampstead in 2022/23
2. To agree to support a review of the current Local Lettings Plan led by Teignbridge District Council, this will include consultation with partner Registered providers and Dartmoor National Park Authority and the introduction of the Community Contribution policy within the Plan

Samantha Parkin
Parish Clerk

June 2022 update on the Devon Home Choice Register need for Moretonhampstead

Housing Need by Band and Bedroom

| | 1 Bed | 2 Bed | 3 Bed | 4 Bed | Total |
|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Band B | 1 | 3 | | | 4 |
| Band C | | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 |
| Band D | 2 | | | | 2 |
| Total | 3 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 10 |

Housing Need by Band and Accessibility

| | General Needs | Maximum of 3 Steps | Total |
|--------|---------------|--------------------|-------|
| Band B | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| Band C | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| Band D | 2 | | 2 |
| Total | 6 | 4 | 10 |

Housing Need by Bedroom and Accessibility

| | General Needs | Maximum of 3 Steps | Total |
|-------|---------------|--------------------|-------|
| 1 Bed | 3 | | 3 |
| 2 Bed | 1 | 4 | 5 |
| 3 Bed | 1 | | 1 |
| 4 Bed | 1 | | 1 |
| Total | 6 | 4 | 10 |