

## **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP REPORT – March 2019**

Members of the Steering Group and their consultant visited all of the 23 sites that have been submitted on March 5<sup>th</sup>. This was immediately followed by a wash-up meeting with the consultant, and then a further meeting of the Group in the evening without the consultant.

The consultant, Lee Bray, will now assess each site against a set of objective criteria including: environmental impact, sustainability, suitability, viability and heritage. He will report back to the group in the next 2-3 weeks in time for this to be taken forward at the next monthly meeting to which Lee will be invited to attend.

The group are very happy with his methodology and approach and, as the retired head of Strategic and Community Planning at SHDC who is now working with a number of NP Groups in the area, he has an excellent understanding of the parish and how to develop the Plan.

The number of submitted sites has grown in recent days and Lee did warn that this may lead to his charges for his site assessment work coming in over his original estimate, but the Group has sufficient headroom in its finances to cope with this.

Lee has asked the Group to let him know its thinking on where development should be permitted in relation to existing housing. At a meeting held in the evening after the site visits the Group agreed that the priorities should be: Brownfield sites (there is only one – next to Staverton Mill). Sites adjacent to the two main villages of Staverton and Wolston Green. Small scale and proportional development in or adjacent to some small settlements.

Lee pointed out that the parish is not typical of Devon parishes in that it has two main villages and a number of outlying small settlements or hamlets, as opposed to the more typical one main village surrounded by little else other than farmsteads. He therefore felt it could be acceptable to include proportionate development in the smaller settlements.

There was considerable discussion at the evening meeting about how to deliver affordable housing – something the Group is unanimous in trying to achieve. Normally, planning law provides for a proportion of affordable

housing in developments of 11 or more houses, but this size of development is not in line with the findings of the household survey that showed parishioners are in favour of developments of 1-5 houses, neutral on 5-10 and against anything larger. Some information was brought to the meeting suggesting it may be possible to require a proportion of affordable housing in developments of less than 10 houses – the Group will investigate this further.

For the next meeting the group will revisit the survey results to ensure our policies are compliant with the majority of parishioner's wishes, and obtain further information on the criteria for allocating affordable housing.

The next NPSG meeting will be on April 2<sup>nd</sup> – venue t.b.a.

Bruce Thorogood  
March 6<sup>th</sup> 2019