



# What do we do about Affordable Housing?

## What is 'affordable housing' and why is it important?

Affordable Housing is housing that is available to rent or buy for people who cannot meet their needs on the open market. The Government has defined affordable housing in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Typically, it is housing that is available to rent or buy at between 60% and 80% of the open market value.

Affordable housing is important in this Parish because Staverton has very high house prices relative to local wages. This can make it difficult for local people and particularly younger local people to find suitable homes in the area. The longer-term effect of this imbalance is a less diverse and aging population where people who grow up in the Parish tend move outside of it to find suitable housing.

The draft Neighbourhood Plan includes the following objective:

- ***Housing*** – to deliver a varied and balanced mix of high quality homes that meet the needs of current and future residents in a manner that complements the character and identity of this rural parish.

Providing homes for future generation of local residents is clearly a key objective of this Neighbourhood Plan and affordable housing is one way of achieving this.

## Eligibility for Affordable Housing

Only people who meet specific criteria can buy or rent affordable homes. Typically, this is earning below a certain amount (e.g. a combined income of less than £60,000 per year) and/or having savings or owning assets below a certain threshold.

## Local Connection

In rural areas, affordable homes usually have a **Local Connection** requirement which gives preference to people who have an established connection to the Parish. The strength of local connection is a factor in prioritising who is allocated a home. For example:

- (i) The person has lived in the primary parish of Staverton, or adjoining secondary parishes for 3 out of the 5 years preceding the allocation.*
- (ii) The person has lived in the primary parish of Staverton, or adjoining secondary parishes for 6 out of 12 months preceding the allocation*
- (iii) Immediate family have lived in the primary parish of Staverton, or adjoining secondary parishes themselves for 5 years preceding the allocation: immediate family in this case meaning parents, siblings and non-dependent children.*
- (iv) The person has permanent employment or is self-employed in the primary parish of Staverton, or adjoining secondary parishes normally working there at least 16 hours per week which has continued for the 6 months preceding the allocation without a break in employment of more than 3 months. This should not include employment of a casual nature.*

## Types of Affordable Homes

Affordable homes can take different forms and the following are the main types:

1. **Discount Open Market Sale:** properties sold at between 60 and 80% of their open market value. The purchasers own the freehold but the discount will be maintained in perpetuity and the property can only be sold at the same discount to another person who meets the eligibility criteria.
2. **Shared Ownership:** where the occupant buys part of their home and rents the remainder from another organisation (such as a Registered Provider (Housing Association) or Community Land Trust). Resale is also at a fixed discount as above.
3. **Affordable Rent:** the property is owed by an organisation such as a Registered Provider or Community Land Trust (CLT) and rented at a reduced amount.

## What is the problem?

The adopted Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan (JLP) sets out a need for the Parish of Staverton to accommodate **40 new homes**.

In 2019 the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan group carried out a Housing Needs Survey which identified **19 households in need of affordable homes** in the Parish. A previous survey carried out in 2009 identified 17 households which highlights a consistent level of affordable housing need.

Since the very first public consultation on the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan there has been a strong indication of the community's preference for smaller development sites, with the greatest preference for sites of 5 homes or less

The adopted Joint Local Plan sets thresholds over which developers need to provide affordable homes on a site however this begins at sites of **11 or more**.

Affordable homes are less profitable than open market homes and there can be viability issues with delivering affordable homes on smaller sites unless the land owner or developer are willing to accept lower land values and/or development profits.

There is a direct conflict between the desire for smaller sites and the provision of affordable homes through traditional site allocations. This approach would require three (or less) sites of over 11 homes to deliver the 40 dwellings required, yielding a maximum of 12 affordable homes.

An alternative approach is to seek landowners who are interested in 'affordable-led' schemes with a higher percentage of affordable housing (typically 60% or 100% for single or double plot sites). These sites could be sites that would not usually be considered suitable for open market development.

There are different models for 'affordable-led' housing schemes which range from individual plots to community group schemes or developer led sites.

- **Exception sites**

Sites that would not typically be considered acceptable for 'open market' homes can be developed under the JLP Policy TTV27 which requires them to be 60% affordable. These could be led by a developer or Registered Provider or, as below, led by the local community.

- **Community led sites**

Community led sites are usually developed by a Community Land Trust such as the Easterways site in Broadhempston or the Transition Homes project in Dartington. A CLT project will usually be an exception site in planning terms but it is led by a community group and will often be more than 60% affordable. The key difference with a CLT is that the community take the lead in developing the scheme to meet local requirements and have much greater control over what is built. External funding may be accessed (from the Government for example) to help deliver the scheme.

- **Single plot self-build**

In parts of the country (Shropshire for example) people in affordable housing need are able to self-build in locations that would otherwise be considered acceptable for 'open market' housing. This is typically on the edge of settlements or hamlets in the countryside. A single plot would be 100% affordable.

The definition of self-build includes home that are built by a builder or custom build company. They do not need to be physically built by the owner but only commissioned by the owner/occupier.

The Staverton neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is considering a series of options for how to allocate housing in the Parish:

## Option 1: Traditional open market sites allocations

The plan identifies the most suitable sites for homes and the affordable homes are delivered by developers according to the rules set out in the JLP.

This is **an example** of how this scenario could look if it were taken forward:

Site #	Description	No. of houses recommended by group	No. of affordable homes	Running Total No. of houses	Running Total No. of affordable houses
8	Land East of Southford Lane, Staverton	2	0	2	0
15	Land Next to Staverton Mill, Staverton	8	0	10	0
5	Land next Penhurst, Sparkwell	1	0	11	0
1	Field between Landscope church and	6	0	17	0
26	Land at the Stables Between Village	1	0	18	0
13	Land beside Dodbrook Cottages, Staverton	4	0	22	0
28	Land at Beara Farm Wolston Green	14	5	36	5
27	Land at wash behind Wash House	1	0	37	5
3	Land at Memory Cross	2	0	39	5
4	Land next to Beara house, Wolston Green	1	0	40	5
29	Land at Hillcroft	0	0	40	5

Estimated number of affordable homes: **5**

## Option 2: Traditional open market sites allocations plus a CLT site

The plan identifies the most suitable sites for homes and the affordable homes are delivered by developers according to the rules set out in the JLP. One site is allocated for a Community Land Trust to deliver an affordable led scheme.

This is **an example** of how this scenario could look if it were taken forward:

Site #	Description	No. of houses recommended by group	No. of affordable homes	Running Total No. of houses	Running Total No. of affordable houses
8	Land East of Southford Lane, Staverton	2	0	2	0
15	Land Next to Staverton Mill, Staverton	8	0	10	0
5	Land next Penhurst, Sparkwell	1	0	11	0
1	Field between Landscope church and	6	0	17	0
26	Land at the Stables Between Village	1	0	18	0
13	Land beside Dodbrook Cottages, Staverton	4	0	22	0
28	Land at Beara Farm Wolston Green	14	5	36	5
27	Land at wash behind Wash House	1	0	37	5
3	Land at Memory Cross	2	0	39	5
4	Land next to Beara house, Wolston Green	1	0	40	5
29	Land at Hillcroft	5	4	45	9

Estimated number of affordable homes: **9**

## Option 3: Affordable led site allocations

### 1. Traditional allocations – on sites within or adjoining the settlement boundaries of the sustainable villages

These would be subject to the JLP requirement of 30% affordable housing on sites of 11 or more and a financial contribution for sites of 6 to 11. Up to 6 there is no affordable housing.

### 2. Affordable led ‘exception site’ allocations - sites beyond the settlement boundaries of the sustainable villages

Sites beyond the settlements would be required to deliver 60% affordable housing as the per the JLP requirements for Policy TTV 27.

### 3. Single plot affordable ‘exception site’ allocations – all single plots sites beyond the settlement boundaries of the sustainable villages

This policy would enable single plots to be built in Hamlets (identified in the Neighbourhood Plan) and subject to certain criteria. It would be similar to the [Shropshire Single Plot Policy](#). Please note this also includes provision for ‘downsizers’ to access these plots or create a plot on their own land if they meet certain criteria.

This is **an example** of how this scenario could look if it were taken forward:

Site #	Description	No. of houses recommended by group	No. of affordable homes	Running Total No. of houses	Running Total No. of affordable houses
8	Land East of Southford Lane, Staverton	2	0	2	0
15	Land Next to Staverton Mill, Staverton	8	5	10	5
5	Land next Penhurst, Sparkwell	1	1	11	6
1	Field between Landscope church and	6	0	17	6
26	Land at the Stables Between Village	1	0	18	6
13	Land beside Dodbrook Cottages, Staverton	4	3	22	9
28	Land at Beara Farm Wolston Green	14	5	36	14
27	Land at wash behind Wash House	1	1	37	15
3	Land at Memory Cross	2	2	39	17
4	Land next to Beara house, Wolston Green	1	0	40	17
29	Land at Hillcroft	5	4	45	21

Estimated number of affordable homes: **21**