

Housing WG 8th April: initial draft housing report for discussion

FORMATIVE LISKEARD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN HOUSING STRATEGY

1. INTRODUCTION

This report sets out the findings of the Liskeard Neighbourhood Plan Housing Working Group, along with recommendations to the NP Steering groups as to appropriate objectives and outline policies that would make up a deliverable and well supported strategy for the creation of new housing for the town.

The Working Group membership is as follows:

Name	Status
Steve Besford-Foster	Community volunteer (Chair of Group)
Malcolm Holloway	Community volunteer and Liskeard Matters
Alan Groves	Community volunteer
Stuart Johnson	Community volunteer
Lorna Shrubsole	Town Councillor
James Shrubsole	Town Councillor (Chair of NP Team)
Jeff Butel	Community volunteer
Allison Livingstone	Community volunteer and Liskeard Matters

2. PROCESS

Creation of this report involved a period of evidence gathering and a range of issues that might influence the housing strategy of the NP. The evidence includes..... (summary). Following that a series of meetings were held to process the evidence and define the outline of a strategy, using various basic strategy building techniques. A stakeholder session with local builders was also held, aimed at discovering the views of the businesses that might deliver the strategy. Site tours were also made to identify the physical constraints affecting the town and the potential sites for further development.

3. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

Sections on existing housing mix, tenure, spatial distribution, 'neighbourhoods', prices, demographics, delivery strategies, affordable and social housing needs, interaction with local and national economy etc etc

4. KEY POINTS FROM COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FEEDBACK

'Whilst acknowledging housing must be part of the Plan, there was considerable agreement that every effort should be made to use brownfield sites, not good agricultural land and that better use should be made of empty housing and commercial property. It was also strongly argued that if houses were required, and many needed convincing of the real demand, it should be built in smaller developments with mixed properties, larger houses, bungalows for older people, starter homes for young singles and families. The term 'affordable' was used by many respondents but this should be treated with some caution as no-one would ever ask for unaffordable housing. However, when accompanied by other terms such as 'social housing', 'starter properties' it is clear that the respondents meant low cost. There were other respondents who argued that the houses should be of a higher build quality than recent new housing in town, and others that homes for professionals and quality homes for an aging population would attract people to the town.

A substantial number of respondents questioned the need for housing. Several respondents pointing out that there are many empty and unsold properties and that house prices were not rising. Concern was also frequently expressed that the social infrastructure (schools, hospital, surgeries,) and physical infrastructure (roads, drains, parks and green spaces) would not be able to support a sizable increase in population. Most significant of all was the point made very frequently by respondents, that without employment Liskeard would become more of a dormitory town for Plymouth, St Austell and beyond or draw in the unwaged from elsewhere. Many suggested that

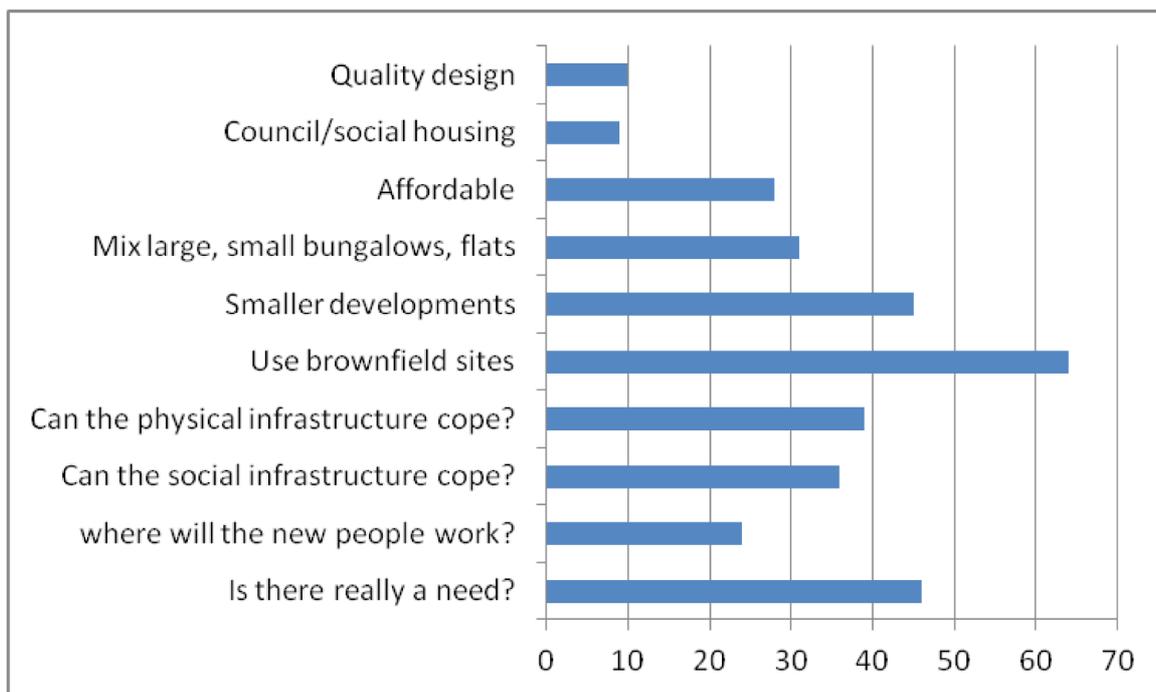
'The point was made repeatedly, 'jobs first, then houses'. 'The respondents were generally in favour of including renewable energy schemes, solar, and wind, in the town plan either as community schemes or individually on all new developments of housing and industrial units.

'...a very strong belief that Liskeard still has a role to play beyond being a dormitory town. Therefore it is important that the key strengths of the town are identified and secured for the future..... Respondents to the questionnaire are saying, quite consistently, housing if we must, but not at the expense of all Liskeard currently

offers. New buildings should be of a high quality, similar to the better properties in town, infrastructure and greens spaces should be included in the plans. Respondents are very concerned about employment but do not know how to attract jobs and, most significantly, they see Liskeard as a social and leisure hub for the old market town and its hinterland, but would like the facilities to be a lot better.

Most popular Comments on Housing Needs and Priorities

Number of comments made



SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main line railway and A38 • Superfast Broadband • Attractive setting • Attractive town centre • Distinct urban boundary • Strong heritage presence (many Listed Buildings) • Heritage links to Bodmin Moor • Community Hospital (modern) with MIU • Lux Park Leisure Centre • Good and well distributed range of smaller opportunity sites for development • High level of social housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy commute to Plymouth brings housing pressure • Topography restricts walking catchment and connectivity • Most vehicle movements through town centre • Imbalance in housing type, size and tenure – favours lower end of market • Social mix and skills base unbalanced • Some housing environmental decay/lack of care • Some sites land-locked or held in long term reserve • Relatively weak jobs market and low employment land supply • Lack of further education

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak retail offer • Poor evening economy • Services dispersed around edge of town
<p style="text-align: center;">OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main line railway offers opportunity for sustainable developments • Environment & heritage strengths may attract skilled people, inward investment, higher value/skill firms • Residual hsg numbers offer chance to rebalance hsg market (social targets nearly met) • Surplus CC office sites coming on to market – opportunity for upmarket hsg or small flats to meet priority needs • Place additional hsg to support town centre use, vitality, viability – eg flats over shops • 20 – 30 empty properties with potential for reuse • Dispersed housing siting better able to limit use of green fields, support existing neighbourhoods, support local building trade. 	<p style="text-align: center;">THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excessive growth pressure from commuting beyond planned supply • Attractive location to major house builders • Housing growth outstrips employment growth and service capacity • Continuing decline in public sector jobs • Continuing growth in level of social housing extends imbalance of social mix and skills base • Buy to let pressures • Poor housing environment extends • Weak retail offer, evening economy, absence of FE, discourages attraction of skilled people, inward investment, higher value/skill firms • Dispersed housing less able to support planning gains • Lack of co-operation from local builders, landowners etc

PESTLE ANALYSIS

<p style="text-align: center;">POLITICAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New CO2 Building Regulations • NPPF likely to change after election • Emphasis on NPs could change after election • More initiatives to encourage FTBs • Further reductions in grant support • Cornwall Council focus on mid and west Cornwall continues/increases as budgets tighten • Pressure from CPRE, RAs, not to release sites. 	<p style="text-align: center;">ECONOMIC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hsg market depends on local economic conditions • Impact of long term deflation on house prices – risk of ‘crash’ • Interest rates steady, but may change in longer term • Reducing money for infrastructure restricts growth or leads to overloads • Local economic growth needs support from housing growth and mix • Pension fund relaxation results in more buy to let properties - is this negative or positive for Liskeard? • Economic instability resulting from EU ‘stagflation’ • General housing market trends influence Liskeard • Economic mobility of people and firms increasing • Increasing self-employment and working from home
<p style="text-align: center;">SOCIAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing numbers of one-person HHs • Ageing population – need for more ‘lifetime homes’ 	<p style="text-align: center;">TECHNICAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As technology in building increase, more regulation and costs emerge • Need for all new housing to accommodate IT and

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social mobility increasing • Growing interest in renting rather than ownership • Perceptions of social housing not positive 	<p>SFBB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing self-employment and working from home suggests need for new homes to include office or workshop space • Self-builders generally better able/more willing to be innovative • Expected lifetime of buildings reducing
<p style="text-align: center;">LEGAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing regulation may add to costs • Increasing propensity to litigate may impact on allocations, planning conditions (eg affordable housing criteria) • Developer challenges to NP 	<p style="text-align: center;">ENVIRONMENTAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land contamination issue around Liskeard (Arsenic) – tests adding to costs. • Radon • Sustainable Urban Drainage always required • Increasing incidence of flash flooding as result of climate change • Potential impacts of climate change and new development may be felt some distance from Town

5. CONCLUSIONS FROM THE EVIDENCE

The evidence we have collected suggests to us that there is a need to identify housing sites which will meet the requirements of the Cornwall Local Plan, and which:

- are well integrated with existing development and neighbourhoods;
- redress the imbalance in housing tenure, size and mix whilst meeting essential social needs;
- support the local building industry and release the energy of self-build initiative;
- are of high quality in terms of appearance and sustainability;
- encourage inward investment in local business and employment and support the viability of the town centre; and
- do not add unacceptably to pressure on infrastructure, service and road traffic conditions.

Our over-riding purpose must be to deliver sustainable development. Sustainable development means making sure we grow and develop in a way that's safe and fair for future generations. To get the best long-term outcome our housing strategy must follow the guiding principles of sustainable development , which are:

- Living within the planet's environmental limits – protect and enhance our natural and man-made environment, and respond to climate change.
- Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society – meet present and future needs for the housing, work and services that support the wellbeing of all our community.

- Achieving a sustainable economy – support actions that build prosperity for all and use resources wisely.
- Promoting good governance – make sure that all are involved in creating the Neighbourhood Plan

6. STRATEGIC OVERVIEW – VISION/AIMS – OBJECTIVES.

Our proposals are as follows:

That the NP adopts a strategy for housing to meet the housing requirements set out in the emerging Cornwall Local Plan up to 2030 that enhances the sustainability of Liskeard and its neighbourhoods whilst protecting the interests of future generations.

That new housing opportunities are dispersed around the town and maximise use of brownfield land (including outworn employment sites), conversions and redevelopment.

That new housing should be located where it strengthens existing neighbourhoods and is where it is accessible to the town centre by pedestrian and cycling routes that are reasonably direct, level, and safe.

That a mix of dwelling types is provided, including particularly 1 and 2 bedroom flats for single people and couples, and better quality housing that meet the needs of businesses moving to or expanding in the area.

That land be released for housing above the CLP requirement if it is guaranteed to be delivered through a community land trust and incorporates self-build units of XXXXXXXX standard sustainable design and sourcing.

Table: Linking Vision/Aims, objectives and policies.

Vision/Aims Statement:	
Objectives	Policy suggestions

7. ISSUES REQUIRING RESOLUTION