

Affordable Housing in Hanley Swan

Email sent to Peter Newman, MHDC Housing Enabler. 19/5/09

Peter,

Can I thank you for the frank interchange at our meeting yesterday: we are grateful for the open manner in which you discussed the situation regarding affordable housing in our Parish, despite the fact that this saga would test the patience of a Saint!

As agreed, I am mailing you to set out our understanding of some important points which will form part of the debate at our Council meeting on Thursday evening next. Perhaps you would be so good as to confirm or contest our beliefs:

1. Dennis Wade proffered the following scenario: 11 units are built and there are 11 applicants which fit the occupation criteria, both physical (no. of beds) and S106. 10, say have higher 'housing need' points than the remaining one who is a single person, with a job, living at home with parents. All are parish residents or have S106-compliant connections with the parish. Can you confirm that all such 11 applicants would be allocated a unit? If the mix was such that there were 3 single people as described above and 8 with more points, would all 11 still acquire a unit?
2. We discussed our Councils' desire to 'champion' the cause of applicants within our Parish. To this end, you agreed that you would communicate with those locally-connected persons/families who are currently registered on the housing list AND those whose responses to the Housing Need Survey have been used to formulate the requirement for housing, even if the latter are not currently on the housing register. You will advise them that our Council is keen to further their aims and to ensure that the consideration of their application is continuous, our intent being to monitor the process and to avoid them accidentally dropping out of the register system. To this end, you will tell them that if they want our Council's active help in this way, they should contact us (contact point to be decided) and you will assure them on our behalf that their interest will remain confidential.
3. We note that you will be asking the Rural Housing Enabler to re-format his report in such a way that its data tables are a little easier to understand. We trust that no changes will be made to the body text of the report without this being announced to us.
4. You made the point - in response to my question - that in the event that our Council feels that it cannot support the scheme as presented, the Housing Association is within its rights to continue with the process anyway. It then becomes a planning matter which will be determined on the merits of the case, albeit with consideration by the planners of local objections. We understand that if we are to apply any kind of influence as to the outcome of the project (mix/qty of units, etc.) that we are likely to have more of an effect if we make our points from a position of 'scheme approval' rather than an objector.

I think that this covers all the points we discussed, distilled down into an important few. Please forgive me if I add something during the day!

I look forward to your response. Without wishing to apply pressure, it would serve all our interests better if I am able to report your comments at our meeting this Thursday evening.

Many thanks in advance,

Ian Thompson

Vice Chairman, Hanley Castle Parish Council

Ian

In response to your numbered points:

1. I can see no reason why all 11 would not be allocated a unit in either scenario, provided the unit mix (size and tenure) matched the housing need of the various applicants.

For any given unit, if there is more than one eligible applicant with a local connection then the applicant with the highest points takes precedence. An applicant without a local connection cannot be considered unless there is no applicant with a local connection who is eligible for that particular unit.

2. Agreed. Clearly it will be up to the individuals whether they contact the PC or not.

3. Agreed.

4. Agreed.

I hope this is helpful, please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Peter Newman
Housing Enabling Officer
19/5/09