

**Affordable Housing in Hanley Swan  
Public Meeting Wednesday March 19<sup>th</sup> 2008**

**Held at Hanley Swan Village Hall**

**Time 7.30pm**

Ian Thompson introduced the evening and explained that this was not a **Parish Council (PC)** meeting but a public meeting where notes would be taken but not formal minutes.

**IT** welcomed Tom Wells (County Councillor) to the chair and explained that he was chosen for his independence and his knowledge of the Parish. It was reinforced that he has no direct involvement in planning matters for this area.

Other members in attendance

District Councillors Sydney Harrison and Mike Morgan **SH MM**

Kevin Davies DJD Architects **KD**

John Williams EG Carter Contractor Partner of West Mercia Housing **JW**

Lisa Mason Area Manager for Development West Mercia Housing **LM**

Katherine Bickby Assistant Director Nexus Housing assoc **KB**

Peter Newman MHDC Housing Enabling Officer **PN**

Keith Parry Rural Housing Enabler (deputising for Mr Potter) **KP**

It was noted there was no-one present from MHDC Planning Department.

Disappointment from **TW** was noted as the **PC** and he had asked for their input. **TW** read an email from the department.

The representatives were then invited to set out their involvement in the proposal for additional affordable housing the village

**IT** from **PC**

See sheet as attached

**PN** their policy is to enable the provision of affordable housing

When the housing need is established a scheme is then brought forward

The local survey was held in 2006 a need for a mix of properties was established and then the applicants need to be established on the housing register and the criteria must be that they have strong local connection. It was established there was a need for both rented and shared ownership.

**LM West Mercia Housing** she has had dealings with the PC since 2005 and has had some 4 meetings with them. The mix, tenure, site chosen and layout have all been discussed

RHE & MHDC look at the need for affordable housing this is then passed for comment to PC-- then they have to show support—the architect has to reflect the Mix, the comments and the collated information. Adjacent to the school was considered the best site---heads of terms for the land has been agreed----during this

stage drainage, highway, ecology and planning issues are all taken into account---- the planning application is then made and await recommendation.

**KD** Architect the plans on show are the ones that have been put forward for the application. The design has undergone lots of discussions. The access has been agreed with the Highways Dept. The density is in agreement with the local plan.

**KB** West Mercia are an umbrella group based in Bromsgrove and they oversee  
Kemble Housing based in Herefordshire  
Harden Housing based in Birmingham  
Nexus Housing based in Worcester

They are a Registered Social Landlord

They are granted a Housing Corporation Grant non profit making and any surplus funds go back into business for future development and repairs

They already manage Coverfields and The Walnuts

The introductions complete the meeting was then opened to the floor for an orderly question and answer session

**Jenny McGowran** Retired CE Housing Corporation

What is the current grant allocation?  
Who will have nomination rights?

The Housing Association explained that no grant had been allocated yet.

**Becky Badger**, Westmere

Not against affordable housing but what if a tenant wishes to move from The Walnuts which then frees up a Walnuts house to someone from outside the village

What is the perceived local need?

**PN** The letting of the properties...perhaps there should be a local letting plan....he does recognise the need for flexibility.  
The strongest connection is for people living here already  
Section 106 some people with less points will automatically jump the queue if they have the "stronger" points

What is the right village connection?

- a) living with parents
- b) rural lettings policy
- c) living in the parish or surrounding areas for at least 5 years
- d) working in the parish for at least 6 months before applying. or in formal receipt of work

- e) returning to live in the parish
- f) needing to return to the parish in order to care for or in receipt of care

**Mike Bolton**, Coverfields

what are the designated surrounding areas / parishes?

Reply they are Hanley Swan or Hanley Castle only

**Tony Marris**, Marrisco

only preferences or priorities ....does it not go further than this?

**Alison Bolton**, Coverfields, also a Hanley Swan Primary School Governor speaking tonight as a resident not Gov.

She has tried to obtain a copy of the survey report without any success. She requires evidence of the housing needs.

Reply: 550 households received the survey and there were 170 replies  
19 were in a state of housing need....no names and addresses are allowed

3 criteria required

1. will be only let to locals
2. this will be in perpetuity for the community therefore there is no right to buy
3. they will be affordable in terms of rent and shared ownership price

Alison then asks again the question that some of the questions and answers have been omitted and why are the results not available even though the PC have been trying to get more accurate results This is a public survey and should not be confidential.

IT informed the floor that no one in the PC has seen the results of the survey. The only numbers seen are the ones that match the applications

KB is sure that there is a definite housing need.

It was asked from the floor that should there not be anyone matching the criteria needing a house does the property become mothballed. ...Where or to whom does it go?

Reply ....it is then passed on to other parishes.

PN had a copy of the survey but the results were not clarified correctly and require further work.

Karen Marris wanted it noted that the development was outside the parish as the parish boundary was the edge of her garden.

It was then clarified to her that her garden was in fact the edge of the settlement boundary, which is different, and that this was outside the

settlement boundary but that if a housing need could be justified then this area can be developed as a site of exception.

Alison Bolton remarked that the questions on the housing survey had not been made clear enough and that the form of question did not address the actual housing need if there was one.

LM Felt that the only question was that are the people in Hanley Swan in housing need?

Paula Travis Spring Cottage was concerned about the lack of information and the way the questions had been asked and that they could be interpreted in different ways

**Ian Green, Roberts End**

Section 106 was a concern to him. There were 19 people in need, 14 units to be built, therefore 5 people would still remain in housing need.

**Kirsty Wedgbury, Gilberts End**

is at present living with her husband and daughter in the house of her mother. She would have answered yes to the housing need but having listened so far to the debate felt that she had not been asked the right questions by the survey and that if she would not be eligible as she would not accumulate the right amount of points and would not have priority.

**KD** felt the survey asked

Were you in housing need?

Would you support affordable housing?

The identification is therefore not that sound

**TW** was very cautious about the interpretation of the housing survey

**Sue Holloway, Malvern.**

She was born here and would like to come back to Hanley Swan to help look after her parents who are both seriously ill. She explained the situation she is in and asked if she had the right criteria. The panel then asked if she had lived in the village within the last 5 years which is a major priority she had not which it was agreed would reduce her chances of being considered for any housing in this development.

PN said that she would be low down in the category list

**Sue Adeney, Parish Councillor**

felt that the panel was falling into the trap of referring to the village need instead of the parish need which is what it is and that the parish is very much larger than the village.

What is wrong with people moving into the village...most of us have moved in...the problem is that the Housing Assoc have moved people in who do not live by the HA rules, The tenants need to be more responsible.

KB Nexus can address her concerns and says that there will be robust tenancy agreements in place and that Nexus have the power to address any problems. Local vandalism already reported is being addressed with local police.

**Dave Read, Roberts End:**

What Parish Council involvement will there be in selecting the tenants?

KP MHDC agreed that the PC could have a representative and a ward member also to sit in and observe the process and ensure the criteria is followed.

**Sara Lawrence, Roberts End :**

the focus seems to be on Hanley Swan. Are other villages being earmarked for developments such as these?

KP: MHDC are looking at all villages and they may well approach other villages in the future.

**TW** asked the question re cost of shared ownership

The houses had been valued at £215,00

LM said she had dropped the value “in the light of the recession” to £180,00

TW had spoken to the planning officer who was the case officer for this application and her valuation had been £230,00

**Mike Morgan, District Councillor**

Reported that the majority of parishioners chose this site and not the other choice, which was Picken End. If the development was earmarked for an area outside the settlement boundary would the price be prohibitive? The answer from the panel was that yes the price would be prohibitive.

**David Yeates**

asked the question that at what point does the village stop growing, which will take it beyond its character and does this need lead to more need.

PN The council has a policy called the “Exception Policy” where they have to go to great lengths to prove a need and this policy does give strict boundaries.

**Karen Marris**

asked the question as to why an access road had been left in the field and was there going to be further development at a later date in the rest of the field?

The reply was that the landowner required access to the rest of the paddock

Karen Marris was not satisfied with the reply saying that it was likely there would be another housing need and the development would then be extended.

There was then a rather aggressive contribution from Paul Farney where he accused the Housing Associations of being deceitful. His arguments did not really follow a pattern and Tom Wells asked that he wait until he is called to speak which he eventually agreed to

**Kirsty Wedgbury, Gilberts End**

Her concern was the impact on St Gabriel's School and would this affect the "nearest to school" places

TW then read a letter received from the chair of governors on March 17<sup>th</sup>2008  
The content of which stated the govs concern about the fact they had not been consulted and that the school numbers were already at the limit and any new children of school age would not be able to attend the school.. The govs also had concerns regarding the traffic past the school

Becky Badger she reiterated the fact that there would be a danger of walking to school

That the school hazard warnings do not slow down the traffic:

When Upton upon Severn was closed

When the 3 Counties Showground had a function the traffic was always diverted along the Welland Rd by the school.

The sewerage in the village was already a problem

There was already flooding in the school playing field

No one was addressing the issues.

**Mike Bolton**

Felt the planning application was misleading and had reservations about the housing survey.

Answers to some of the questions had not been published and there was no demonstrated need only desire for the housing. He too felt the impact on the school would be too great. He generally felt a distrust of the process and that things were being hidden.

PN reported that the survey had not really been analysed properly and then the audience asked randomly that further information should be given  
The survey was carried out 2 years ago and then those who expressed a need were contacted again in November 2007???

A question from the floor was asked is the village view important and the reply was that the planning process gives the residents the opportunity to register their feelings  
Mike Morgan reported that it could be seen on MHDC website that there were 60 letters of objection and none supporting.

The details of the local District councillors was then recorded for any of the parishioners to contact should they so wish

Mike Morgan 01684593300

Syd Harrisson 01684310527

A question from the floor was that why had the school not been taken into consideration

Alison Bolton: The school had not been consulted at all and the govs had held an extraordinary meeting to look at the impact upon the school that this development might have.

**Don Cairns, Montrose**

The development was being placed on the front part of the land what would happen to the rear in future years.

KD the policy is clear that further development will only take place if there is a proven need

**Andy ??, Thistle Close**

The general feelings are that the survey had been fixed what could be done to remedy the obvious miscarriage of process.

**TW** requested a straw poll of people present asking the question

“Do you think the survey should be redone?” The majority of those present felt it should be redone

KB commented that there was no justification in “fixing” the survey

**TW** asked if those present were in favour of the principal of affordable housing? Of those who voted a small majority were in favour of the principle of affordable housing in the village. However many people abstained from voting

**Karen Marris**

asked the question that if planning permission was not granted what would happen to the land.

The reply was that no purchase had been made only heads of terms were agreed and that purchase was conditional on planning being granted.

Further questions asked were

Q) Could Section 106 be put on to Walnuts and Winnington Gds

A) No but local lettings plan could be implemented

Q) There was a need for 4 bed development could these be built on shared ownership

A) No it was not a viable proposition

**Barrie Breeze Stringfellow**

This was the wrong place for a development with the recurring traffic speeding

The school needed space and this would encroach on school space

**Carole Thorpe**

Was interested in single accommodation and that seems to be 2 bedroom flat is that still affordable for single occupancy

**David Thomas, Westmere**

Asked about the tenancy rules, which did not seem to be enforced in the  
Walnuts ie commercial vehicles should not be allowed in the Walnuts and yet  
it was present

He questioned the management of the tenancies and had severe reservations in  
the management skills, as they do not seem very effective.

How is the existing social housing managed at present? ie 1 person in 3  
bedroom house....not a good management process.

PN reminded everyone that tenants had security of tenure and may have  
started in that house with a family and would be entitled to stay whether alone  
or not for the existence of their tenancy.

David Thomas reminded everyone that on April 16<sup>th</sup> the application would be  
determined and most agreed the data was flawed.

He felt that we were being steamrollered and that there were 2 weeks to assess  
the data again and then 2 weeks after that the decision would be made.

IT reminded everyone that the PC had been publishing information regarding  
affordable housing and the potential sites to be used since Feb 2006

**Sue Adeney** asked if there was any scope in Section 106 for provision of safety  
measures and traffic calming.

**Becky Badger**

would the building start in Sept what would the impact of the heavy vehicles  
be with any wet weather and school safety?

Not sure but the contractor said they would be willing to meet with the school,  
Parish council etc

TW suggested that the planning meeting with MHDC could be held in the village as  
the room in Malvern is not big enough and it would give everyone chance to get  
together to have the most productive 30 minute public comment time which is  
permissible in this meeting

The meeting closed with a vote of thanks from David Thomas for the excellent  
chairing of the meeting by Tom Wells

The meeting closed at 9.40 pm