

Minutes of MPC Affordable Housing Steering group 02.02.26

	In attendance	Apologies	Absent
Cllr Sam Hooper	v		
Cllr Eileen Horley - minutes	v		
Mary Holmes - Chairperson	v		
Donna Crouter	v		
John Butler	v		
Matt Owen	v		
<u>Attendance via Teams link</u>			
Laura Simpkins - NFDC	v		
Nat King Smith – MH Architects	v		
Catherine Bonnett - NFDC	v		
Vicky Gibbs - NFDC	v		
Georgina Corcoran - NFDC	v		
Martyn Hildreth	v (part meeting)		
25.30	Apologies for absence – None		
25.31	Declaration of interests -. <i>Members were invited to declare disclosable pecuniary interests and other interests in items on the agenda as required by the Code of Conduct for Members and by the Localism Act 2011. No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were received.</i>		
25.32	Minutes of previous meeting. There were no matters arising, minutes were accepted and signed by the Chairperson.		
25.33	Matters arising - ref 25.26 update on surveys carried out. Nat agreed to investigate the BT connections, because it was mentioned that Wessex Internet have been taking over a lot of the internet connections in this area. Nat explained that all utility items are still to be sorted out. The pre application is being done first. He will report back at the next meeting. Action:- Nat to give an update on the BT and Wessex Internet connections.		
25.34	Nat to report on - Design update. Proposed site plan and pre app documents including design and materials. Nat put up on screen the proposed site plan and layout of houses. The layout allows for an increased buffer space to hit the biodiversity gain. The idea of a courtyard layout has been kept, and the aim is to give a farmstead style to the site. There are some elements that have changed since the last meeting. *At the front there is provision of off-site parking on Downview Road. *The maisonette flats are depicted as a house. * Maisonette flats are on the left of the plan as before. *The 2 bed and 3 bed units will each be a 2-storey house		

* The front elevations face onto the site, but there are windows that look out over the playing field and gardens.

* The carports have been maintained between the units and there is other parking with designated car spaces for the units and visitor spaces, this all complies with the planning policy.

* The green buffer on the west and east sides of the site have been increased. On the east side the buffer area gives more separation from the footpath route. On the west side the increased buffer area allows more room between the units and the house that is already in Downview Road.

* The windows and design of windows have not been decided upon as yet.

* The pedestrian route is maintained going out onto the wider footpath network outside of the site.

Q. Who will be responsible for the upkeep of the garden spaces and non-garden spaces? Also, which are the existing trees and those that will be planted?

A. On the plan the larger trees are the existing trees. The trees survey is still to be carried out. The vivid trees are the proposed trees to be planted.

The maintenance for the areas in front of the properties will be within the remit of the people living there. The buffer areas/public areas will be as low maintenance as possible, and this will be carried out by the council.

Q. Given that we may struggle to find more land for future housing need, why, given that the site could provide for more houses has this not been allowed for future development.

A. Things must be established in terms of the current need on the housing register, which may go up after the public consultation when more people could go onto the register. The biggest issue is that this is a rural exception site which means ideally looking for local people. Where Martin is on the edge of the NFDC area if there were not enough local people then offers would be made to those outside. If a property cannot be allocated this becomes a big financial issue, we need to be sure that the houses will be occupied for the long term, hence the risk aversion.

Q. We understand the risk aversion, but why can we not design the site to leave a space on site to build a few more houses at a later date.

A. Nat explained that, in reality, where the access comes into the site, it would not be easy to leave a space more houses. The cost, biodiversity and drainage would all need consideration and it would be trickier to do this.

Catherine Noted that it depends on the site, some are more suited than others. Working with the planning policy there are several considerations e.g. biodiversity net gain and possible mitigation which we wouldn't have had to deal with in the past. Also bear in mind that if you do get another piece of land in the future that there will be a whole raft of different planning policies that you will be working to. We have to work with each site, as it is, with the planning policy at that time.

Q. Do all the flats have a garden.

A. Yes, they do. The plan shows the gardens as one over all the space, but it is likely that they will be split. Any property garden usually goes on the party wall line. What might be

an issue is that the site is no longer a grazing field, so we must offset for that. It is likely that some of the gardens will get smaller as the buffer area is drawn further into the site.

Building Materials

The illustration of the buildings showed that the majority will be brick, flint block on key frontages of the flats and cladding either tile hung or timber effect boarding. The boarding would be lighter rather than the dark grey. The flint block is likely to be on the lower levels on some of the units, as it does add to the cost and complexity of the build.

Most front doors look onto the public space within the site, with the one bed units looking out over Downview road.

Type of windows are still to be decided upon.

Solar panels will be positioned for optimum benefit, so depiction is not necessarily the end position.

The rear of the units are likely to have patio doors with a couple of windows.

A few of the units will have a recessed entrance with a pillar between the front doors.

Q. Will people want to have this shared entrance?

A. This is often seen on semi-detached properties. By having kitchens at the front beside front doors, this reduces noise transference. The shared porch also reduces the need for an extra porch or canopy.

Q. What about Storage? no garden sheds in the gardens.

A. This is usually a contentious issue on rural sites. This will need to be discussed at the pre-app meeting. The view is that bespoke garden sheds are expensive. DIY sheds need a slab and hard pathway to them which reduces the garden green space. It may be possible to tuck some storage under the car port areas for bikes etc.

Judith noted that the planning officer will have a comment on the issue of storage, taking into account on how the site fits into the landscape, they often try to avoid what looks like clutter.

It was noted that in a rural area there is a lot of clutter, lots of farm outbuildings, in reality rural areas are not neat and tidy and maybe this needs to be challenged.

Q. What about bin storage?

A. This is likely to be in the garden space with hard standing. The bins would be put out on collection day and put back afterwards.

Q. The roof slope at the end of the end of 2 units does not look like it is in keeping with the farm building theme.

A. This is over the staircase to the flat above. The idea is not to exactly design the buildings like a farmstead, but give some reference such as the brick, flint and wood type cladding.

25.35 Nat to report on – Survey update.

We can now finalize the pre- app for the homes and get it in soon, hoping for feedback as soon as possible.

The Heritage report – no concerns. This had to be done for archaeology reasons.

The ecology report – no concerns

The utilities report – Ground investigation. Regarding ground water, this is being monitored on the site. There is further work to do re the drainage of the site. This is all programmed in and will be done as soon as the pre app document is sent in.

Landscape vision – Impact assessment, no significant issues.

25.36 Laura to report on – Proposed tenure mix and client decision process, next steps.

Decision process- last time we looked at various site plans. We considered the comments sent in from the steering group and have absorbed some into the design.

Regarding the tenure mix we went back to Action Hampshire, Mags Wylie, and had a discussion with the NFDC allocations team. The survey was carried out 1.5 years ago. We looked at who is on the housing register now. We have re done the financial modelling and gone to the internal stakeholders. Being quite risk averse the tenure mix and number of units was decided upon as per the recommendation in the survey.

As a rural exception site we must ensure under occupancy does not occur. We must answer for all the reasons why decisions have been taken. All units will be for social rent.

The next step is taking the plans forward to the pre-app. It is hoped that a response will be in 6 to 8 weeks' time. When the pre-app response is agreed and when we have a date for the public consultation, then the plans will go forward to Planning.

After discussion it was agreed that a public consultation would take place on a Tuesday or Thursday afternoon/evening, 15.00 hrs to 19.00 hrs. Dates when the village hall are free are 21st April and 23rd April or 28th April and 30th April 2026, John has pencilled these into the booking calendar. Parishioners will be informed via the Martin community website and posters on the noticeboards once the date has been confirmed, preferably with 2 to 3 weeks' notice.

25.37 Housing option Managers from NFDC allocations team -to explain the NFDC allocations policy and answer any questions.

The NFDC operate a housing register. Anyone seeking social housing within the Council's district must make an application to join the register.

To join the applicant uses the online application. Help can be given if needed to complete the application. Applicants must provide proof to join the register, i.e. who they are, their situation and their eligibility.

Applicants will qualify to join the register if they satisfy all 4 criteria: -

- They are over 16 years of age.

- They need housing, in that the applicant's housing circumstances fall within one of the scheme's bands
- That they have been assessed as lacking financial means to enable them to resolve their housing need and
- That they have a local connection to the Council's district.

The scheme bands: - These are 1 – 4.

- **Band 1** – emergency need for housing
- **Band 2** – serious need for housing
- **Band 3** – need for housing
- **Band 4** - lower need for housing

Applicants who wish to be considered for an allocation of a property in a Rural Parish will need to satisfy one of the Rural Connection Band criteria:

- **Band A** – Applicants who live or are in employment in the rural parish for longer than 10 years. As a designated keyworker performing essential service to the rural parish community and where there is an established need for the applicant to be rehoused to maintain the service.
- **Band B** – Applicants who live or are in employment in the rural parish for longer than 5 years or who have lived in the rural parish for more than 5 years within the last 15 years or whose parents, siblings or adult children live in the rural parish and have done so for 10 years or longer.
- **Band C** – Applicants who live or are in employment in the rural parish and have done so for longer than 2 years, or who have lived in the rural parish for more than 2 years within the last 15 years or whose parents, siblings or adult children live in the rural parish and have done so for 5 years or more.

The reason to categorise makes the task easier to allocate. We look at those who have applied and then organise the applications into the bandings. We look for the rural connections first. The team do not have the up-to-date information at the moment so are unable to comment on the current list. Nearer the time fact sheets will be available for people to look at. Then they need to contact the team direct.

25.38 Catherine Bonnett- housing initiatives manager – to answer any questions relating to the project.

There were no questions at the moment. If after the meeting anyone has a question, then they can contact Catherine by email.

25,39 Any other business. None to note.

25.40 Date of next meeting; Monday 16th March at 19.00hrs.

Steering Group to meet in the Blandford Hall and NFDC attendees and Nat King Smith from MH Architects to join by 'Teams'.