



Options Appraisal Report Dunsford

Aims and Purpose of Report

This Options Appraisal has been prepared for the consideration of Dunsford Parish Council and is to be read in conjunction with the recent Housing Needs Survey Report which was produced by Devon Rural Housing Partnership on behalf of Dunsford Parish Council in April 2019.

This appraisal aims to provide the Parish Council with information and advice on options for future action as a result of the housing needs survey and to explain the next steps in the affordable housing process.

Affordable Housing Need

The housing need survey identified the need for 10 affordable homes in Dunsford parish over the next 5 years. All of the households in need would require affordable rented homes.

This is a good level of need and would be sufficient to attract a housing association to develop affordable housing in the village.

Next Step

The next step is for the Parish Council to decide if it is supportive of a rural housing development in the parish to meet the housing need. If the Parish Council decides to support a development then we would need to identify a suitable site for a housing scheme in the parish. We understand from Teignbridge District Council and DNPA that there may already be some sites identified by the Parish Council and would be happy to work with them to assess these sites further.

There may be suitable sites in the parish that have not been considered. The RHEs could work with the Parish Council and the Local Authority to explore if there are any other suitable sites that would be suitable for a small affordable housing scheme. Any site would be an exception site, located on the edge of the built up area boundary and would have to meet current **DNPA** planning policy. The most suitable sites will have good access and visibility and be fairly flat with no contamination or clearance required.

Development Options

- a. The Parish Council could choose to work with a Housing Association (otherwise known as a Registered Provider) on an exception site of their choosing. A Housing Association is a not-for-profit organisation which exists to develop and manage affordable housing. There are a number of Housing Associations that operate in the Teignbridge area. As previously mentioned, the number of homes that have

been identified as being needed will be sufficient to interest most Housing Associations.

The advantages of this option are that the Parish Council doesn't have to oversee the inception of a Community Land Trust which can take a lot of time and energy. It is also a traditional, tried and tested way of deliver rural affordable housing and there are a number of housing associations who deliver rural affordable housing who the Parish Council can work with. The RHEs and Teignbridge Housing Enablers would still be available to support the Parish Council the whole way through the process.

The disadvantages are that the Parish Council will have far less influence over design and the number, size and tenure of homes provided. This type of scheme also does not attract funding from the Community Led Housing fund which could have an effect on the financial viability of a scheme.

b. The Parish Council could consider the formation of a Community Land Trust (CLT) or housing group in the parish with the aim of providing affordable housing on an exception site of their choosing. A CLT is a form of community led housing, where affordable homes are developed and owned by local people for the benefit of their community into the long term.

There are two main types of CLT.

- The CLT works in partnership with a Housing Association. The Housing Association takes the responsibility for funding, for the development process and for the long term maintenance and management of the homes, while the CLT works to inform the wider community about the issues and has input into site selection, design and the allocations process. The level of community involvement required for this option is significant but technical and professional help is provided by the Housing Association. There are a number of local examples which can be visited.
- The CLT takes overall control of the whole of the process. This would include raising funds, managing the predevelopment and development process and undertaking the long term management and maintenance of the homes. The level of community involvement in this option is extremely high and individuals with experience in this field who are prepared to work on the CLT would be a huge advantage. An example of this model is Beer CLT in East Devon.

The advantage of the CLT option is that the community can be fully involved from the start of the process and can have more control over the preferred site, the number, size and tenure of homes as well as the design of the scheme. The freehold of the homes would also be owned by the CLT which makes them a community asset in perpetuity. Experience shows that this approach tends to make the wider community more accepting of the process and far less likely to object to a development. There is also the possibility of attracting funding from Teignbridge District Council which has some funds available for community led housing as well as national funding. This money can be used to pay for feasibility studies, consultants, architects and other professionals, it can also be used towards the building of the homes themselves if there are issues with viability.

The disadvantages of this option are that it involves a high level of input initially from the Parish Council and then by the CLT to get a scheme up and running and as the process has not yet started, it would take some time to go through this process. The success of any CLT scheme depends on the commitment of the people involved and a strong, enthusiastic leader or members is necessary to take the scheme forward.

c. A third option would be for the Parish Council to work with Teignbridge District Council, DNPA and the RHEs to bring forward a community led scheme without forming a CLT. This would be an amalgamation of the above 2 options with a community led focus without the legal structure of a CLT.

The advantages of this option are that no separate entity would need to be set up to undertake the development which would be quicker and easier with far less work for the Parish Council. It would still attract Community Led Housing funding from Teignbridge District Council and the Parish Council would have the expertise of the Teignbridge Enabler as well as the Rural Housing Enablers from Devon Communities Together to draw on.

The disadvantages would be that the community would not own the freehold so the homes would not be a community asset.

Other considerations

Cross-subsidy - some open market homes may be required to assist with the financial viability of the project. The level of cross subsidy permitted must be compliant with DNPA's affordable housing policy. Cross subsidy may not be required on a CLT scheme or a housing association led exception site as there are grants available for community led schemes and for housing association led schemes which would help to fund the development. The Parish Council may want to consider whether they would support the inclusion of open market homes in any potential housing scheme.

Conclusion

There are a number of options to be considered if Dunsford Parish Council wants to support a development of affordable homes for local people. All have their advantages and disadvantages and it is recommended that the Parish Council considers these options closely. The skills and experience of local people, local enthusiasm for affordable housing and the level of control over a housing development that is desired are all factors that will influence the final decision.