

## **BARDSEY CUM RIGTON HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY**

### **STEERING COMMITTEE REVIEW 7<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2013**

#### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY GUIDELINES FOR THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

##### **1) Objective**

To review the final Housing Needs Survey report together with the interim conclusions and recommendations of the Steering Committee sub group, and draw policy conclusions to guide the completion of the Neighbourhood Plan.

##### **2) Key Findings of the HNS Report**

- a) Firstly, it is important to record that thanks to the residents of Bardsey cum Rigton the Housing Needs Survey achieved an outstanding response rate of approximately 43.5%. This is much higher than average, and provides a solid platform on which to draw valid and reliable conclusions.
- b) There is a clear imbalance in the housing stock within the Parish, with current stock heavily weighted towards larger family houses whereas future demand is focussed on smaller homes with 1 or (predominantly) 2 bedrooms.
- c) Demand for these smaller units comes from two demographics: older people needing to downsize and younger people wanting to establish independent households of their own. The older group constitute the large majority.
- d) There is evidently little demand from within the Parish for larger family homes. If those who express the wish to downsize are able to do so, this would release more than enough larger homes to satisfy demand.
- e) There is thus no sense in encouraging the building of many more larger houses, and no rational for going down the 'affordable housing quota' route with developers – i.e. accepting the opening up of larger sites and allowing the development of 15 extra 'executive mansions' to oblige the provision of every one manageable home that the community actually wants.
- f) Some residents wanting to move would prefer bungalows, but bungalows tend to be unattractive to developers because of the low site density which can be achieved. So much so that the Steering Committee believes it unlikely most developers could be persuaded to build them.
- g) The requirement for social and/or shared ownership housing within the village would appear to be minimal, BUT:
- h) The Steering Committee is concerned this could be due in some degree to a misconception, especially in respect of the term 'shared ownership'. It is important to understand this for what it is: i.e. a form of assisted owner occupation rather than a form of social housing. Specifically, it could be particularly helpful to young local people who might otherwise struggle to buy their first home within the Parish. It should therefore remain a possible option.

- i) The very large majority of Bardsey residents wish to purchase their homes on the open market – even when downsizing or aiming to reduce their outgoings.
- j) From the comments section it is once again evident that residents greatly value the character and qualities of the village, and are generally very keen to preserve them. The nature and quality of any developments therefore needs to be carefully controlled.
- k) Careful strategy is required to maintain, and indeed improve, the crucial fabric and vitality of the village in the longer term, and to avoid the danger of it ‘atrophying’. In particular it is important to encourage younger people to remain in the Parish.

### 3) **Key HNS Statistical Data**

Numbers of particular significance in the HNS report (which also incorporates some relevant data from the 2011 census) include:

- a) The existing dwellings stock in Bardsey is heavily skewed towards houses, the majority of which are larger homes designed for families: amongst survey respondents, 81% occupy houses, 87% of which have 3 bedrooms or more and 51% have 4 bedrooms or more.
- b) Most homes in Bardsey are owner occupied (85%), with a comparatively high proportion mortgage free (50%).
- c) Most homes in Bardsey are ‘under-occupied’: defined as having more bedrooms than essential for their occupants (91%).
- d) Recent development has been limited, with the result that the housing stock is generally mature. What has been built has been developer led and has only added to the stock of exclusive larger, high value homes.
- e) The population of the Parish has an older age profile than average, defined as 45+ (50% approx).
- f) 123 households responded to Pt 2 of the HNS, i.e. stated that they are seeking to move within the Parish over the next five years. They have very clear requirements, but in key respects starkly different to the present housing stock:
  - Out of a total of approximately 177 reasons given for wanting to move (many respondents cited more than one reason) 124 reasons (70%) were to achieve downsizing, easier management, reduced cost, coping with health and mobility issues, proximity to family or carer etc.
  - A further 23 reasons (13%) cited the wish to establish an independent household.
  - Only 11 reasons (6%) cited wanting a larger home.
  - The large majority of respondents would be seeking to buy on the open market (89%)

- None opted for shared ownership (but see earlier note concerning interpretation of this result).
- Only 8% would prefer to rent, of which 4% would prefer to rent privately and 4% would seek council or Housing Association property.
- Given free availability, of the 123 that want to move 50% would choose a house, 33% a bungalow and 17% a flat.
- Of the 123 prospective movers, 55 are looking for smaller homes (44.7%). 7 of these are young adults looking for their first independent home (5.7%). The remainder are established villagers looking to downsize.
- Of the 55 wishing to down size, 29 (53%) said they would need adapted homes to meet their health and mobility needs, and 11 anticipated needing extra care accommodation (though only one would opt for a place in a residential home!).
- Demand is heavily weighted towards smaller homes, with 10% requiring only 1 bedroom and 39% requiring 2 (total 49%). A further 30% would want no more than 3 bedrooms, and only 16% are actually looking for 4 or more.

#### 4) **Key Policy Guidelines for the Neighbourhood Plan**

- a) Whatever the eventual outcome on the questions of sites and numbers etc, the neighbourhood Plan should contain general provisions covering acceptable style, aesthetics and quality of any future developments in Bardsey.
- b) The Neighbourhood Plan should favour smaller sites (such as the Catholic Church site), and encourage small scale development of well designed, high quality, aesthetically pleasing homes.
- c) Given that bungalows are unlikely to form the basis of a successful proposal, the Steering Committee concludes that a mixture of low rise quality apartments (similar concept to Russell Court) and mews style town houses with small but centrally serviced communal amenities are likely to be the way forward, at least within the 5 year horizon. It is also recognised that such development might not be driven by conventional developers.
- d) The needs of young adults who expressed a wish to establish their own homes in the village must be given full consideration in the Neighbourhood Plan, implying either mixed or dedicated development which is not focused solely on older residents.
- e) The Neighbourhood Plan must aim to maintain and improve the vitality of the village, and to add to and support its social infrastructure. It therefore needs to consider appropriate commercial and business opportunities together with housing needs, especially those which could contribute additional social amenities:
  - The 'commercial' and 'social' centres of the village need to be clearly defined in the Neighbourhood Plan.

- The siting of businesses needs to be carefully determined according to these definitions and to the nature of the business.
- Clearly the Steering Committee would not propose to encourage the extension of purely commercial businesses into residential and social centres. On the other hand, however, some extension of community friendly retail activity could contribute to the overall social objectives and would have to be easily accessible close to the centre of the village.
- The Steering Committee would not seek to prescribe the precise nature of such activities, but would support appropriate uses and scale in keeping with the village.
- Such potential additions could be so close to the fabric of the community that they might actually form an appropriate and integral part of the kind of small residential development defined by the Housing Needs Survey.

#### 5) **Indicative Numbers for the Neighbourhood Plan**

- a) The initial maximum requirement would be based on the assumption that all 123 households who have expressed a desire to move actually will, and that it will be necessary to provide new homes for all of those who expressed the desire for smaller ones. This would imply a maximum of approximately 55 suitable units over 5 years.
- b) Those wishing to up-size would generally be catered for either by existing homes being vacated by downsizers, or possibly by some limited developer led speculative or windfall developments. The focus of the Neighbourhood Plan should thus be on meeting the needs of the 55 wishing to stay in the village but move into smaller homes – demand not currently catered for by developer led new-build.
- c) Of these the survey suggests about half would be required in years 1 and 2, and half in years 3 to 5, i.e. an approximate rate of development of:

Year 1	14
Year 2	14
Year 3	9
Year 4	9
Year 5	9

- d) It should also be noted that approximately half of the would-be downsizers say they require adapted accommodation, with just under half of them needing extra care facilities. Such developments tend to be driven by financial and social policy pressures towards locations which are sustainable in terms of local amenities, local health care, good public transport links etc. Bardsey would score poorly based on these criteria, and thus might not be able to deliver this type of development at all. If so, the number of units required within the Parish would tend to be reduced.
- e) It could further be argued that when faced with the prospect of actually upping sticks, a number of these 55 might quite understandably change their minds, especially some of the older residents. Younger ones might well be influenced by career demands etc. resulting in a

higher turnover (both into and out of the Parish), but the Steering Committee is convinced that looking to the future it remains a priority to encourage younger residents.

f) Equally, however, these indicative numbers take no account of other potentially significant external factors, which could either increase or reduce the requirement, such as:

- Additional demand arising over time from residents facing unanticipated changes in circumstances, or those not responding to the HNS and thus invisible to the process at this point.
- Natural migration into and out of the Parish over time (leavers and incomers): inevitable for a multitude of reasons but virtually impossible to predict with any accuracy.
- As yet unforeseen provision of suitable properties elsewhere in the locality, as part of Leeds City Council's core strategy.

***g) The Steering Committee therefore considers the indicative numbers in (b) above to represent a balanced conclusion in the light of the Housing Needs Survey, and a valid input to the Neighbourhood Plan.***