



NEW HOMES IN BARDSEY

The Housing Needs Survey, completed in July 2013, clearly identified the new homes which the village needs in the medium term: specifically approximately 55 smaller, high quality, one or two bedroom homes over a 5 years period.

The challenge now is to deliver them in ways acceptable to the village, and if at all possible without risking compromising equally vital goals: especially the preservation of Green Belt and the Village Conservation Area (VCA).

There are two ways we can choose to approach HNS housing provision in the Neighbourhood Plan:

- a) Attempt to nominate specific potential sites for the required homes.
- b) Specify just the generic attributes which would make a site suitable, and rely on the natural emergence of acceptable sites over time.

There are pros and cons for both approaches. Nominating specific sites is not a guaranteed solution, because the Neighbourhood Plan can only facilitate the planning process, not actually deliver development. It may serve to create specific opportunities and thereby accelerate delivery, however. The generic approach introduces greater flexibility and leaves the door open for new (and possibly better) opportunities which will inevitably emerge over time, but carries a degree of risk: the less specific the provisions in the Neighbourhood Plan, the greater the possibility of individual developers bringing forward unsuitable proposals.

Whichever format the plan follows, the objective will be to find sites for small developments of up to 10 one and two bedroom dwellings, within the village but avoiding both green belt and garden infill within the VCA (which is not acceptable to Leeds City Council under the VCA Management Plan). It's not an easy task! In summary, the key issues we face are these:

1. An earlier consultation (albeit not specifically related to HNS homes) indicated some preference for locating new homes as near as reasonably possible to the core of the village, i.e. where the Pub, Church, Village Hall and Callister Hall are located.
2. There is little remaining space within the residential core that is suitable for new housing, however, and most of the core also lies within the VCA.
3. LCC *may* permit demolition or conversion of existing properties (even possibly within the VCA), and/or infill of large gardens which are clear of both the green belt and the VCA.

4. The Steering Committee has adopted a policy of preserving the green belt within and around the village, and there is a very important reason for this: it is our best available defence against large scale, unwanted development.
5. This policy is consistent with that of Leeds City Council, whose published policy makes clear that its first preference would be development of brown field sites. At our meeting LCC emphatically reaffirmed that in principle it would not accept any development within the green belt.
6. If we are unable to find any other way of meeting our Housing Needs Survey objectives inside our existing residential boundary, however, it *might* just be possible, if called for by a Neighbourhood Plan, to grant Green Belt Exception status and planning consent for sites which are:
 - a. Less than 0.4 Hectares in area, equivalent to 1 acre or 4000 square meters (which would accommodate approximately 8 to 10 one and two bedroom dwellings).
 - b. Immediately adjacent to the Green Belt boundary, **but:**
7. LCC also cautioned that release of such small green belt exception sites could in certain circumstances create a real risk of developers successfully forcing the release of large adjacent green belt sites, by having them re-categorised as 'infill' through the appeals process. The message was crystal clear – we need to be *very* careful what we wish for!

In summary, if we as a community can find suitable locations for our modest 55 one and two bedroom homes, without needing to resort to green belt exception sites, problem solved! Otherwise we face conflicting priorities, potential risks, and a much more difficult dilemma.

We therefore need your input. How would you prefer us to address these issues in the Neighbourhood Plan? What should be the order of priorities? Do you have an idea for a possible location for one of these HNS style developments?

The attached questionnaire is designed to tell us your preferences and priorities. If you believe we should take the 'site specific' approach in the Neighbourhood Plan, and you have a suggestion for a site or sites which you believe could be suitable for HNS homes, please also indicate it/them on the enclosed maps. If any suggestion you wish to make lies beyond the village core, and therefore falls on the extended map, please also briefly describe its location in the comments box.

All views and suggestions will be considered by the Steering Committee when completing the draft Neighbourhood Plan, and further public consultation will then follow.