

Thanks to Mr Dixon and Mr Smith for accepting our invitation to meet at Strete. Following receipt of your email dated 19/06/2017 SG members suggested a meeting with you to clarify and respond to the points raised in your email was more appropriate than responding in an email.

Before going through the points, it might be helpful to provide an outline of the process SG members have gone through over the last two years in preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for Strete Parish.

The parish experiences all the social, economic and environmental pressures and challenges associated with an attractive and popular coastal location. The local economy rests primarily on tourism and agriculture. The majority age of the population in the village is 65+, job opportunities are few and house prices are high which can make it hard for local people, especially the young, to afford to stay in the parish.

At the end of 2014 Strete PC arranged for a HNS to be carried out.

This was undertaken by SHDC and was finalised in May 2015.

The HNS confirmed a need for 4 homes.

In July 2015 Strete PC decided to proceed with a NP in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 which amended the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This introduced new procedures that allow local communities to shape new development in their community by preparing a Neighbourhood Plan.

In principle this can establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in the neighbourhood.

The consultation process started with members of the community being invited to attend open meetings over two days in August and September 2015.

Members of the community were invited to set out their views on various issues including new housing development. The turn-out was almost 40%.

An application to register the Neighbourhood Plan for Strete together with Terms of Reference was submitted to South Hams District Council in October and was subsequently approved in November 2015.

The views of the community were categorised into subjects and subsequently processed into a Household Questionnaire that was delivered to each registered member of the community together with a guidance booklet in March 2016.

47% of the community returned the questionnaire and, from this, key issues were identified that would form the basis of the NP.

These included a 5 to 10 housing development, parking facilities, footpaths and

protection of open space.

For the remainder of 2016 SG members gathered and collated evidence that would shape the policies of the draft NP plan.

In December a 'Call for Sites' advert was placed in the Dartmouth Chronicle to which you responded on behalf of your clients in the Parish.

In your reply you offered two sites for development one south of the A379 and the other being Cox's Field as outlined by you on a map of the village.

In your recent email you ask if we can confirm if there are any other sites in Strete that we are going to carry out a site assessment on.

In accordance with NP requirements both sites offered for development will need to be assessed to ensure alternatives have been considered.

As we intend to include a site for development in the plan SHDC have instructed, in addition, that a Sustainable Environmental Assessment will need to take place as the village is within the South Devon AONB. This is underway and a scoping report has already been received. This is expected to take 6 to 8 weeks to complete.

You advise that you are not happy with the area requested for a site assessment as it is too large for 10 homes and that the area should include the field within the conservation area.

The JLP recently submitted for examination by SHDC advises that Strete, as a sustainable village, can accommodate around 10 new homes over the plan period 2014 to 2034.

Much discussion has taken place on this issue and SG members wish to make it known that, with agreement on the location for an initial development, it is acknowledged that further development in Cox's Field is likely to take place at some time in the future.

Members believe that until access to carry out a site assessment has been granted, evidence supporting which part of Cox's Field the group would wish to include in the NP, cannot be accurately provided. However, as a guide for the size and layout of a new development in part of Cox's Field a sketch has been prepared. This follows the character of low density properties when compared to the layout of existing properties in the area on a map of the village.

The field within the conservation area referred to in your email has been included and that the number of new homes has increased to 12.

SG members also wish to incorporate a 2nd home policy in the plan where new homes are restricted to occupancy as a principal residence.

As part of the development of the draft plan, Cox's Field has also been identified as being able to provide a potential opportunity to include a village car park which, SG members believe, is essential for increased tourism and business in the village as well as being of benefit to the whole community.

One of the reasons for a site assessment is to determine where access is best located for a new development.

Your letter dated 13th January 2017 states that you have had correspondence with Devon County Council who confirm that access could be made available from the field access near the pub car park.

To access village facilities and services for new home owners together with a justification for the inclusion of a village car park within the development, access onto the A379 could be a consideration.

From dialogue with you, Devon Highways Department and local residents there is an opportunity to create access and sight line benefits onto the A379 from this entrance whilst retaining the character of the area.

However, some members believe access would be better placed from the Plat. It is believed that evidence to determine the most appropriate location can only be provided from a professional site assessment of the whole site.

In addition, SG members have identified an opportunity to improve safety for members of the community by introducing a footpath, from The Plat to the A379 and the bus stop, through Cox's Field. This is also shown on the sketch. At different times of the day residents walk from the higher end of the village down the narrow, and often busy, Totnes Road in conjunction with parked vehicles and moving traffic to the village shop and coastal footpath. This added facility would remove the risk from a potential hazard.

Your final question expresses concern as to how much and what part of Cox's Field is proposed to be retained as Local Green Space.

As mentioned previously, it is acknowledged that further development in Cox's Field is likely to take place at some time in the future.

Where at present is undecided. However, with new development in the centre of the village it is reasonable to suggest that some open space should be made available for potential future recreation. Future generations would consult with the community to determine what and where open space is preferred, as it will be the last green space in the centre of the village.

Therefore, it is suggested that the area not included for initial development should be protected as open space until future housing need is known and a NP review has been carried out.

It is hoped that discussions with you can lead to a resolution on the issue of development on Cox's Field together with consideration of the aspirations of the community.

Should your client be willing to allow a development proposal to proceed on Cox's Field we will be required to arrange significant consultation with the community at that later stage as that will be the point where key representations on any proposed development will first come forward. This has to take place before the draft plan can be submitted for examination. This will require a presentation with maps , photographs, evidence gathered to support development on the site as well as the opportunity to comment on the draft plan overall.

Our current target is to have this ready for submission by November 2017. Following acceptance by SHDC and any amendments that may be required and after the 6 week consultation period, SHDC will arrange for the plan to be submitted to an examiner. Assuming the examiner approves the plan it will then be presented to the community to vote on in a referendum.