

SMNP REVIEW 2022

Review of housing policies

Background

The SMNP policies and allocation of land for development of up to 18 houses were designed to control development in the parish. A third of the houses in the allocated development site are to be rented to local people with the remainder to be sole or principal residences. Since the SMNP was adopted in 2019, the opportunities and pressures for working from home and the desire for more living/garden space has led to migration out of urban areas. This has significantly increased demand for property in the West Country, particularly in parishes like South Milton.

Based on comments to Parish Councillors, the general sentiment in the parish is that building additional second homes and/or holiday lets will adversely affect the economic and social wellbeing of the community. There is a fear that South Milton could become a “ghost” village in the winter if the proportion of second homes increased in the main village from around 17% (2015). If the converted hotels at Links Court and Holiday Fellowship are included the proportion is 31% - only one of the 34 units in the converted hotels is occupied permanently. The latest estimate of the number of second homes is 51 excluding the converted hotels, up from 43 in 2015, an increase of 20%. These figures exclude the recent Wakeham Farm sales as their status is unknown.

Another consideration is the large gap between earnings and house prices in the parish, largely driven by the demand for second homes.

The imposition of a principal residence requirement is undoubtedly a necessary and proportionate response to this issue, and has been recognised at national, district and local level. For example, a principal residence policy has already been adopted in the adjacent parish of Thurlestone and similar policies are in process for Salcombe, Malborough and South Huish.

Additional Policy

It is proposed that the following additional policy is adopted to confirm the principal residence requirements for open market housing in South Milton Parish. This policy has been copied from the Thurlestone Neighbourhood Plan which was adopted in 2018.

POLICY H5 – PRINCIPAL RESIDENCE REQUIREMENT

1. Proposals for open market housing (excluding one for one replacement dwellings) will be supported where there is a Section 106 agreement to ensure occupancy as a principal residence. A principal residence is defined as a dwelling occupied as the resident’s sole or main residence, where the resident spends the majority of their time when not working away from home. Proof of principal residence includes, but is not limited to, being registered on the local electoral roll, at the local school or for local healthcare.

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2. Proposals for open market housing (excluding one for one replacement dwellings) without a requirement to ensure occupancy as a principal residence will not be supported.

3. Where proposals for the replacement or conversion of existing dwellings by more than the number of existing dwellings is approved, the additional properties will be subject to a Section 106 agreement to ensure occupancy as a principal residence.

Justification for Additional Policy

Justification:

- To help meet the housing needs of local people and prevent the further migration of young working people out of the parish in search of cheaper housing
- To contribute to a more active, vibrant year-round community
- To support local schools, shops, services and facilities
- To enhance and maintain the vitality of the parish as a whole.

Amendment of Existing Policies H1 and H4

The following amendments will be required to Policies H1 and H4 to make them consistent with the additional Policy H5

Policy H4: Land allocation policy for housing

The following will be added to Clause 2, bullet 3 after 'sole or principal residences':

"as set out in Policy H5"

Policy H4: General Housing Policy

The following bullet will be added at the end of the first list:

- It complies with Policy H5

The following sentence shall be deleted from first bullet in the second list:

"For open market housing.... as a sole or principal residence"

Next Steps

If the Parish Council endorses these changes, the next steps will be:

1. A consultation statement on the proposed modifications to the SMNP will be drafted as well as an explanatory note setting out the consultation process.
2. SHDC planning section will be consulted and any necessary modifications made to these documents.
3. Parishioners, statutory consultees, and groups that commented on the SMNP will be consulted for a period of six weeks, as required by Regulation 14.
4. The documents will be submitted to an independent examiner for a decision.