**Affordable Homes for Little Horkesley**

By the time you read this every home in the parish should have received the leaflet “Call for Sites”, delivered by the Parish Councillors. If you have not received the leaflet, or would like another copy, please let the PC Clerk know. The leaflet is also available on the parish council website at [www.littlehorkesleypc.com/affordable-homes](http://www.littlehorkesleypc.com/affordable-homes) .

Most parishioners will be aware that a survey undertaken a few years back made it clear that the limited number of homes in the village - and their cost – meant that not everyone who wanted to stay in the village could afford to. Over the years many homes were enlarged and became unaffordable for many parishioners. Following that survey Hastoe Housing Association undertook to try to develop affordable homes for those who need them; this requires a small site to be bought. The search for a suitable site continues, hence the “Call for Sites”.

So what is a ‘suitable site’? The Planning Authority has advised that affordable homes (as is national policy) can be built on what are called *Exception Sites*. These sites are, preferably, close to the centre of the village – but the Planning Authority will assess all proposed sites on their merits. The size of a site to build two dwellings (or up to four if the site is sufficient) is not large; the Housing Association’s guidance is that just ¼ to ½ an acre would suffice.

These homes would never be sold and would always remain available to those qualifying to occupy them. Whether currently living in the parish but wanting to set up their own home, or keen to return to Little Horkesley after a few years away, or finding their current home too costly or challenging to maintain, the occupants of the affordable homes would ideally all need to have a strong Little Horkesley connection. One essential requirement is that those occupying the homes must be on the housing register (in Colchester Borough this is called the *Gateway to Homechoice* register; see <https://cbhomes.org.uk/find-a-home/apply-for-housing/>).

What happens if a site is found? The Housing Association would discuss the site with the Planning Authority to get their support. They would try to agree with the owner a fair price to purchase the land. If successful, then affordable homes can be developed.

Many will wonder why a housing developer wouldn’t be able to buy such land. The answer lies in the description of it as an ‘Exception Site’; it will probably be a site outside the ‘settlement boundary’ - that is the line drawn by the Planning Authority outside which land is (in Planning terms) in ‘open countryside’. Planning Policy is very strongly against housing development in the countryside – unless it is for affordable homes.

How can you help? The key to getting affordable homes built for our parishioners is to find a site. So if you have a site or know someone who does (and they confirm they are interested in the idea), then please make contact and the Parish Council will pass all ideas or offers to the Housing Association.

The Clerk’s email address is; [clerk@littlehorkesleypc.com](mailto:clerk@littlehorkesleypc.com)