

Response 1

Dear Councillor Bastone

I am writing to you in connection with the South Hams Housing Strategy Consultation

Having read the strategy I found that the survey did not allow me to give the feedback from the notes I had made when I read the survey (I started it but didn't complete it). As I am not on social media I have decided to contact you direct with my feedback. I hope that you will be able to pass this on to the relevant officers.

It is positive that the District Council seeks to find out the views of local people through consultation. However I always think that asking people to read a document and feed back over Christmas and the New Year isn't necessarily the best time to do this. The results this year may be better as people have been in lock down and may have had more time to read and feedback.

Policy and context.

This strategy was developed against back drop of COVID 19. The significant and long term impact of COVID 19, on housing and communities, needs to be fully addressed in this strategy for the next 5 years e.g. loss of shops in towns, villages, urban to rural migration, etc . How will the strategy be part of/contribute to the recovery plans for towns, villages and communities across the South Hams?

Place Priorities

Priority 1 In delivering houses to places well served with services and amenities the impact of wider national policies needs to be taken into consideration. e.g. permanent loss of community resources (playing fields and other land providing community amenities) in favour of building new houses to meet government requirements for the local authority e.g. the local authority having to have a 5 year land supply.

Protection of the South Devon AONB needs to be paramount and protection of environmental assets e.g. reduction of pollution and improvement of water quality of our rivers.

Need for local new housing to be located close to regular reliable public transport.

2 points are made about the importance of supporting and developing Neighbourhood Plans with town and parish councils and community groups ... these 2 points need to be together and condensed into one sentence with an additional point about working with the community to deliver what is in the adopted Neighbourhood Plan. (This whole section would have benefitted from having subheadings ... Neighbourhood Plans being one of them).

Priority 2 Needs a statement that all new housing developments will ensure that all surface water drainage is contained on site and does not contribute to the risk of spillage of raw sewage into rivers in times of high rain fall at local sewage works. The Sewage Inland Water Bill - second reading scheduled for 22nd January 2021 but delayed due to COVID 19 led by Phillip Dunne MP will start the process to end sewage pollution of rivers. This Bill is gaining momentum nationally. The collection of rainwater on site will be required in future.

Energy - How will existing homes be managed to improve energy efficiency?

Priority 3 Needs to emphasise the importance of a mixed age community to support sustainability of rural schools and local services and for residents health and well being

Needs to have a statement about the COVID-19 pandemic

How will future health care plans be planned for and how will they know what those health care needs will be?

Need housing for young people who want to stay local in affordable homes ... some housing needs to be available in perpetuity for local people

Importance of green space

People Priorities

Priority 1 Homes need to be built close to easily accessible public transport services

Ensure that Registered Providers support those people/tenants experiencing hardship, deprivation, ill health and inequalities to reduce impact of isolation and loneliness by linking the RPs and this strategy to local COVID 19 recovery plans and our uncertain futures... there will be a new 'normal' and there may be more pandemics.

Priority 2 No comment

Priority 3 Bullet point 3 access to which services- how will policy makers find out what residents need and want?

How will this policy/strategy ensure that residents are fully integrated into their community with other housing types and not become blocks of 'sheltered accommodation/ social housing' exacerbating isolation and loneliness even in small village and communities ?

Good to see people living with dementia listed but could include all people with hidden disabilities e.g. dementia, autism, visual and hearing impairments etc

Response 2

Dear Councillor Bastone

Ref: South Hams & West Devon Better Homes, Better Lives Housing Strategy 2021-2026

Firstly, thank you for telephoning me back so promptly.

The points I wish to raise in no particular order, to coin a phrase.

1 The word sustainable is used 15 times with reference to housing and communities/towns/villages. However there is no definition of sustainable, so its use has no real meaning.

2 The on-line survey has very small boxes to fill in content and are difficult to complete, as you cannot view all that is written to check it. At the end of the survey there is no way for the participant to have a record of what has been said, so no check can be made on whether their views have been taken into account.

3 Dartmoor National Park is singled out on Page 10, "To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area", but the South Hams is not included in this. If it is OK for DNP, why not for South Hams?

4 No mention of Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty apart from introduction, if the AONB is important to mention, what about Undeveloped Coast etc.

5 I am aware that this is part of the structure, with the JLP at the top and Neighbourhood Plans at the bottom, so this needs to be as coherent as these documents have to be. I feel that there are a lot of words, but little real detail. I am not sure how this whole document can be interpreted.

6 There seems to be no way of measuring progress as there are very few specifically measurable targets.

I hope this helps

I have not highlighted that the timing of releasing this at this time, when Parish Councils and others will have little chance of discussions, before the closing date, seems to be suspect.

Response 3

Dear Judy,

Sorry to bother you again but your web link for a survey response was not working well!

I also just wanted to share direct with you a major concern please. The strategy approach does not seem to consider the 2030 shift to electric cars and it is highly likely to start a Housing impact well before that year. It will also impact on all residents in the council areas of the survey etc. So many lower paid / normally paid residents (and retirees) here will not be able to afford electric cars and even now many have two older petrol cars as they need personal travel as public transport is not really available! The shift to electric cars will hence, I fear, encourage many of our residents to move away and change their working locations combined with home locations... I would strongly feel that this should be considered now please in the current survey as otherwise the changes planned now will be wrecked as electric car rules start to come in. They will I feel impact well before 2030.

It is also true that many don't seem aware of how expensive electric car maintenance will be compared to petrol cars. The c 5 year replacement of batteries in the cars will cost well over £5,000! Totally unaffordable for many / the majority I fear. The whole electric car shift will also I believe seriously change the level of travel, impact retailers, down stream holiday visitors and broader serious aspects.

On top of that any use of electric cars here will require major new electric supply and accessibility for our smaller homes, flats etc as well. The planning / finance / installation for that will need to be done early I fear.

Response 4

South Hams & West Devon Housing Strategy 2021-2026

Meetings held:

- SHDC & KTC 20 January. Cllr Hilary Bastone (SHDC lead member), Steve Mullineaux (Deputy Chief Executive) and Isabel Blake (Head of Housing) with Cllrs Bex, Cole, Edmonds, Jennings and Town Clerk.
- KTC working group 26 January. Cllrs Bex, Cole, Edmonds, Jennings and Town Clerk.
- KTC Planning Committee 2 February. Agreed working group's draft feedback as KTC's response to the Strategy.

Front cover.

- **Draft** Housing Strategy...
- Rather than stock photo – suggest an actual photo of a South Hams family in a local/identifiable setting.

Page 3. Foreward.

- First paragraph. Spell out that **this is a draft consultation document**.
- Key priorities to include: **access to housing i.e. affordability/local connection** and **affordable housing**
- Last paragraph. Spell out that **a delivery plan will be produced** in tandem with the Strategy itself.

Page 5. Introduction.

- First paragraph. ...home ownership **is currently** an unrealistic...
- Third paragraph. ...having *transferred* their housing stock... Change *transferred* for **sold**.
- Last sentence. ...the implications of this *are less well known*... Change to spell out that they are **very well known i.e. disparate communities** and make it explicit that there are recognised housing issues in the South Hams and West Devon.

Page 6. People.

- Second paragraph. ...indeed the social impact of market failures to provide sufficient housing options for lower income groups will only get worse unless there is a direct policy intervention to deliver a broader range of housing types and tenures (...) or through the creation of specific local housing policies in neighbourhood plans.

Question: does the Strategy offer a policy to overcome this acknowledged issue? Or does this refer to the need for a central government policy in which case this paragraph needs to be explicit that this is the case? Moreover, neighbourhood plans have to dovetail with, and cannot contradict, the overarching Joint Local Plan therefore KTC is struggling to consider what policies it could introduce within its own emerging neighbourhood plan.

Page 7. Place.

- First sentence. ...higher **than** average...
- Fourth paragraph. ...pocket of poor quality housing... There are lots of facts and exact figures throughout the Strategy therefore, where are these locations?
- Fourth paragraph. ...more likely **to** be stressed...
- Fourth paragraph. Reference; The Health Foundation 2017. Name the actual report.
- Bullet points. Driving the delivery of new homes that people can afford... If you have the money you can afford any home you want! Suggest this should therefore read ...that **local** people can afford...
- Figures. 27% 4 & 5 bed homes SH & WD compared to 19% ditto homes in the rest of England. KTC identified this unsatisfactory situation in its feedback to recent major developments in town at K5 off West Alvington Hill and Applegate Park off Belle Hill.

Page 8. Policy & Context.

- Last paragraph. ...has secured Investment Partner status with Homes England in order to directly draw down grant funding... This reads as though funding is a 'done deal' when it actually requires consideration and approval by Homes England (e.g. Kingsway Park/Ropewalk development in Kingsbridge) therefore the wording should be changed.

Page 9. Local Priorities – adopted local plans.

- First mention of the Joint Local Plan with acronym used later in the document; suggest JLP placed in the brackets in order to signpost. Indeed, probably wise to provide a fuller layman's explanation of the planning blueprint until 2034.

Page 11. Local Priorities – climate emergency.

- Ditto page 9. above. **Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA)**...

Page 13. The Evidence Base.

- Figures. Waiting list need by property. Only 12% 3 bed and 4% 4+ bed are needed in the South Hams yet SHDC continues to grant permission for larger numbers of 3 and 4+ bed houses in Kingsbridge.

Page 14. The Evidence Base.

- Figures. Downsizing over past 2 years i.e. supported 16 households in SH and 5 households in WD. These figures do not really mean anything without the total of households included i.e. what are the percentages?

Page 15. The Evidence Base.

- Second bullet point. ...67 properties... it would be helpful if this figure could be broken down i.e. private or rental.
- Third bullet point. **homelessness** rather than homeless.

Page 16. Better Homes, Better Live - Our Themes.

- Housing for Place heading. Although introduced in the Foreward, "housing for place" still sounds and reads unwieldy!

Page 17. Theme 1 – Housing for Place.

- Priorities, sustainable used twice. A buzzword which potentially means everything and nothing!

Page 18. Place Priority 1.

- Encourage opportunities (...) for custom build/self build. Is this realistic? Suggest it is deleted.
- Joint Venture partners? Explanation required.
- Work creatively with RPs? Explanation required.
- Homes England. Ditto explanation required; who or what are they?
- Explore the concepts of the Council as a developer and landlord of new housing. Potentially a good policy; more information required. However, rather than *Explore* suggest replace with **Commit to** i.e. stronger language.

Page 19. Place Priority 2.

- Change **Gypsies** for Gypsy.

Page 21. People Priority 2.

- Introductions: **The Councils are committed to** rather than singular.
- Target all F & G rated properties. F & G?
- ...to deliver low cost **disability** aids...

Page 22. People Priority 2.

- ...Homeless**ness** Strategy and Rough...
- Support Tenants and stand firm... Unsure what *stand firm* means? Suggest 'support' is all that is needed.

Page 22. People Priority 2.

- Ensure that people who need to use our service... Further explanation required.
- Regularly communicate... How? What is the format?

Page 23. Resources.

- The Councils **have had their...**
- Fourth paragraph. ...for biodiversity. (full stop)
- Sixth paragraph. ...**sold**... rather than *transferred* and **Whilst** for *Whist*

Page 24. Monitoring of this housing strategy.

- Producing... etc. Exhausting sentence; suggest breaking up.

Page 24. Annual Delivery Plan.

- SMART. Missing a very important word! either Realistic or Relevant.

Page 26. Glossary.

- Empty Home and Fuel poverty. Has this been mixed up?

Coda: Further to the meeting held with SHDC Lead Member/Senior Officers on 20 January, Kingsbridge Town Council confirms its offer to assist SHDC in monitoring the Strategy and reviewing the Delivery Plan.

Response 5

Good morning Darryl, I hope you are well?

I'm not sure if you are the correct person to send this e-mail to, if not, could I please ask that you forward it to the appropriate person on my behalf? I am just aware that you were in the e-mail correspondence with Councillor Graham Parker, with regard this matter.

Tavistock Town Council decided it wanted to respond to the above Consultation as a Council, rather than on an individual basis. Therefore I'm afraid it's not possible to answer the survey via the link previously provided, I am therefore responding via e-mail, I hope that is acceptable?

The Town Council's Development Management & Licensing Committee considered the Consultation at its Meetings on 5th January and 25th January 2021, and made the following RECOMMENDATION to full Council;

The Committee considered the South Hams and West Devon Housing Strategy 2021-26 which sought to deliver 'better homes, better lives' - including an oral update from a Member including reference, in particular, to:

- Document configuration (comprising two themes and three associated priorities per theme);
- 'Housing for Place' - incorporating ensuring sustainable housing growth, promoting balanced and sustainable communities and ensuring homes supported the health and wellbeing of the area;
- 'Housing for People' - incorporating homes that supported the health and wellbeing of residents, making the best use and improving quality of existing housing and ensuring access to support and advice needed to make the best use of data.

It further referenced, amongst others, factors such as;

- Affordability/house prices, affordable housing, housing need, ownership options, rental levels, fuel poverty population displacement and related matters
- Demographic profiling, occupation levels and related matters
- Affordable housing targets, self-build opportunities, Council role and standardized modelling, environmental standards, biodiversity/carbon standards and planning policies;

- Health planning, co-ordination with providers, need planning, energy efficiency and disabled housing, independent living, fuel poverty, lettings, empty homes, occupancy levels and other housing matters;
- Addressing antisocial behaviour, data, communications etc.

The emphasis on compliance with climate change policy considerations and affordability were also noted together with review arrangements.

The Member involved was thanked for the in-depth update he had provided, and his analysis of the emerging Strategy.

RECOMMENDED THAT the Housing Strategy 2021-26 be welcomed and that West Devon Borough Council be invited to further develop the means by which it will be implemented.

I can confirm that this RECOMMENDATION was endorsed, in full, at the Town Council Meeting last evening, 26th January 2021. This is therefore the decision of Tavistock Town Council, at this point of the Consultation.