



'Your Future, Your Say, Your Neighbourhood Plan'

BLISLAND NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN STEERING GROUP

HOUSING POLICY RATIONALE

(Version Six 8th October 2022)

AIM OF THIS PAPER

1. The aim of this paper is to set out the methodology by which the Blisland Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group arrived at the recommendation made to the Parish Council that the site to the East of the Village Hall should be used to meet the limited additional housing that has been identified as being necessary to ensure the sustainability of the Parish to 2035.
2. The documents that support the derivation of the NDP Housing Policy can be found on the [NDP's Evidence Base page here](#).

THE WIDER CONTEXT OF THE PROVISION OF HOUSING IN CORNWALL OUTSIDE OF THE PARISH OF BLISLAND

3. Cornwall Council has a derived target to build 52530 new homes throughout the County between 2017 and 2030; a Secondary Target is that the Council is required to demonstrate that at any given point in this period it has a deliverable 'Five Year Supply' of housing sites; as at 31st March 2022 both of these targets are being met.
4. Between 2017 and 2030 the conurbation of Bodmin is required to build 3100 of the total County requirement of 52530 housing units; in addition to these 3100 units the Bodmin Community Network Area (which comprises the Parishes of Blisland, Bodmin, Cardinham, Helland, Lanhydrock, Lanivet and Withiel) is required to build a further 100 new homes; this target is also being met.

THE HOUSING NEED IN THE PARISH OF BLISLAND

5. There is thus no derived or statutory need for any 'open market' homes to be built in the Parish before 2030.
6. The July 2019 Blisland NDP Survey indicated that the Community believed that the Parish should have the capability to provide for some small scale, low density, 'mixed housing' to be built to 2035 to provide for organic growth within the Settlement of Blisland itself; the 2015 Parish wide Public Consultation provided an indication of where within the settlement the Community would prefer any additional housing to be built. The concept is that this 'mixed housing' would encompass some 'open market' homes, some 'affordable housing' and possibly some 'specialist' units such as sheltered housing and adaptable living.
7. The full evidence for the Community's view of this is [contained in the Blisland NDP Survey Results here](#).
8. The following is an abstract of the [four key relevant pieces of data from the July 2019 Parish Survey outturn](#) that provide the evidence for this limited future housing provision:
- a. A copy of the Survey was hand delivered to every household and business within the Parish, 309 in total; 166 of these returned a completed questionnaire in response, 53.7% of the total households in the Parish.
 - b. In response to being asked whether the Parish should make provision for:
 - 1) Affordable Homes; 16% of the responders stated 'none', 74% that up to 15 affordable units should be provided.
 - 2) Specialist Housing (ie sheltered or adapted living); 18% stated 'none' and 82% that up to 15 units should be provided.
 - 3) Open Market Homes; 48% stated 'none' and 52% up to 15 units should be provided.
 - c. Whilst it does not detract from the overall effect of the evidence per se it should be noted that in each three categories Parishioners had three options of up to 5, up to 10 and up to 15 units and the percentages above reflect an amalgam of the three set against the 'none' figure; it is envisaged that the total number of units to be built within the new development boundary will be of the order of eight; and that this will represent the approximate median of the three options.

AIM OF THE BLISLAND NDP HOUSING POLICY

9. The Aim of the Blisland NDP Housing Policy is to have a mechanism to meet the Housing Need in the Parish to 2035; witness:

- a. The small scale, low density, mixed housing that the Parish identified in the 2019 Survey and articulated at paragraph 8 above.
- b. The capability to meet the requirement for Affordable Homes that are shown on the Homechoice register as being required in the Parish; it should be noted that the figures on the Homechoice Register fluctuates both up and down over time; as at 31st March 2022 there were 14 families registered on the Homechoice Register as having links to the Parish. [The breakdown of these registrations is shown this link.](#)
- c. The definition, and priority of the 'need' and 'reason' [for these registrations, is contained here](#). The mechanism for the allocation of Affordable Homes in Blisland, which is always considered at Parish level and is based on a registered '*local connection*' specific to Blisland [is articulated at paragraph 56 and 57 of Cornwall Council's Housing SPD, here](#).

MECHANISM TO ACHIEVE THIS AIM

10. The Blisland NDP Steering Group's recommendation is that the Aim of the Blisland NDP Housing Policy should be achieved through:

- a. The use of a newly defined Development Boundary (DB)
- b. The use of Rural Exception Sites in compliance with Policy 9 of the Cornwall Local Plan.

11. Using a Development Boundary will ensure that any future development

- a. Does not expand the Settlement of Blisland out into the open countryside
- b. Ensures that any future development is built in the most appropriate places in terms of access, infrastructure, the designated landscapes and the heritage assets.
- c. Is built where the community would prefer it to be built; and to indicate their preferred location for any affordable homes.
- d. Enables the development that the community wants to 2035 and beyond.

12. The core methodology used in deriving the precise position of the new DB was essentially threefold:

a. To use the historic DB (aside from its proposed expansion to the East of the Village Hall) which was derived at least as far back as 1997 for the settlement of Blisland that was integral to the North Cornwall District Council Local Plan. This was made redundant by the adoption of the Cornwall Local Plan in November 2016; this historic DB, which is shown in paragraph 14, was tight to the existing built settlement and successfully:

1) Prevented the expansion of the settlement out into the Open Countryside

2) Protected the integrity of the Designated Landscapes; and in particular

A) The Bodmin Moor AONB itself

B) The approach to the Blisland Conservation Area through the AONB and the AGLV.

b. To ensure that the 'expansion' of the historic DB necessary to facilitate the additional development envisaged by the Plan would have the least adverse effect on the AONB and the Heritage Assets.

c. That the expansion of the historic DB into the site to the East of the Village Hall was of commensurate and correct size to achieve the sustainability of the settlement to 2035 and beyond.

THE 2015 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

13. The 2015 Community Consultation asked Parishioners to consider where, within the environs of the settlement of Blisland, they would like any new homes to be built; the Community identified the following through this process:

a. Site Five – To the South of the Green and to the West of the Church.

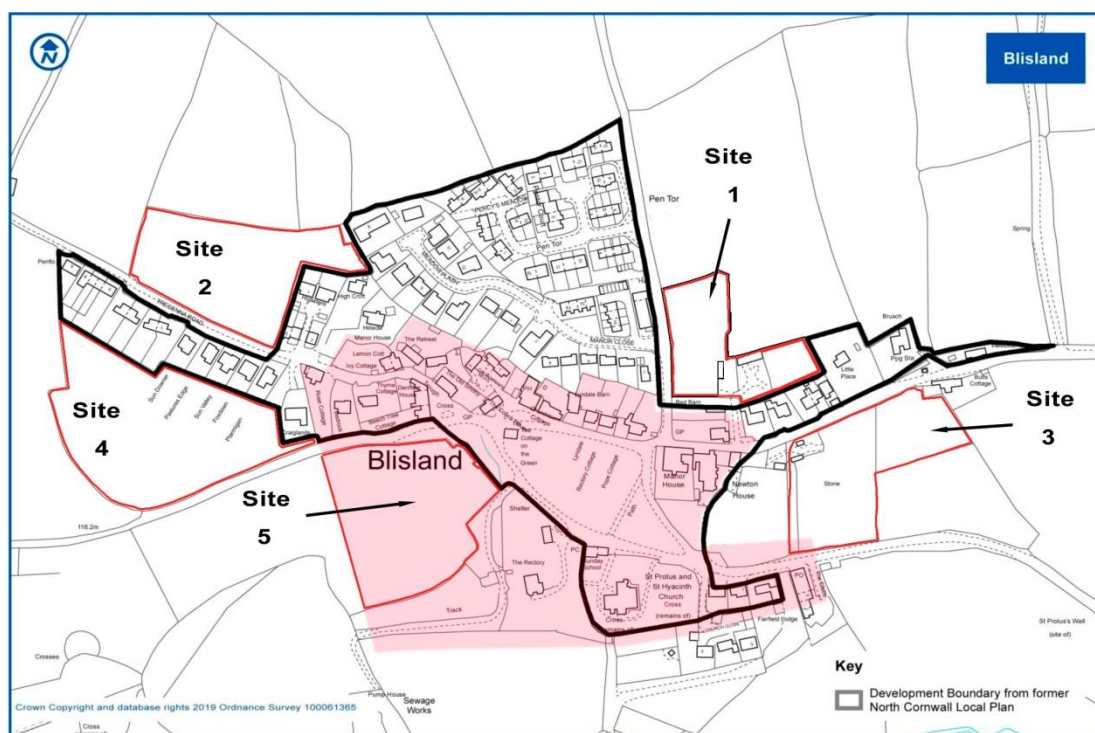
b. Site Four – To the South of Tregenna Road

c. Site Three – To the East of Newton House

d. Site Two – To the North of Tregenna Road

e. Site One – To the East of the Village Hall

14. All five of these Sites are located in Elevated Undulating Land delineated in the Blisland Landscape Character Assessment; the location of these sites in relation to the Settlement of Blisland is shown here against the historic 1997 Development Boundary with the Conservation Area overlaid in pink:



15. An Earth view of the [settlement with the five sites overlaid is on this link](#). [This link has an Earth image](#) of the Settlement overlaid with just the New Development Boundary.

INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATION OF EACH SITE

16. [An assessment of the overarching effect of the Sites on the AONB and its setting is on this link](#). This assessment was used by the NDP Steering Group in arriving at their recommendation to both the Parish Council and to the wider Parish as to where the new DB should be drawn.

Site Five -To the South of the Green and to the West of the Church

17. This was the site least favoured by the Community.

18. There was literally just one resident at the 2015 Community Consultation who believed that it would be appropriate to develop this site.

19. Development here would significantly and adversely impact on the Heritage Assets and, particularly, on the Grade One Listed Church and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, their settings and the visual relationship between them.

20. It is clear that development on this Site would not command the support of the Parish; nor would it be appropriate in terms of conserving the historic integrity of the Settlement; nor would it meet the environmental role in sustainable development.

Site Four - To the South of Tregenna Road

21. This was the fourth most favoured site of the Five.

22. This site has a long history of applications for development being refused; in 1988 and, de facto, in 2017; notwithstanding the Owners of the Land's repeated statements over many years that it is their intention to develop this meadow.

23. The 1988 Application to develop circa one third of the Meadow was refused by the then Local Planning Authority; [the Refusal Notice is uploaded here](#) (on the tab headed '3rd May 2021').

The core grounds for refusal were:

- a. That the site did not represent either 'Infill' or 'Rounding Off' of the settlement of Blisland.
- b. That the proposal would be harmful to the AONB and to the ancient meadow designated as being an Area of Great Landscape Value
- c. That the proposal would result in harm to the westerly approach to the Village of Blisland through the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- d. Highway issues, limited access and an absence of pedestrian footpaths.
- e. It would set a precedent for further development in the Area of Great Landscape Value and in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty that would be hard to resist.

24. An application for Pre-application Planning Advice in respect of some ten dwellings in this Meadow was submitted to the Local Planning Authority in June 2017; [the outturn of this Advice can be read here](#).

25. This outturn de facto repeated the 1988 Decision in that it found that development in this meadow, medieval agricultural land within an Area of Great Landscape Value and directly adjacent to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, was not suitable for Open Market Dwellings; the core findings of the 2017 Pre-application Advice was that development in this meadow was:

- a. Not Infill or Rounding Off of the settlement of Blisland and that development in the meadow would have the effect of expanding the settlement out into the open countryside.
- b. That the Highways Development Officer stated that demonstrating a suitable and safe access into the Site from Tregenna Road was 'going to be difficult' and that safe access into and out of the site would be 'a significant challenge'; and, in June 2021, [refused to support any further increase in access into the site from Tregenna Road](#).
- c. That development in the Meadow would directly impact on the Designated Landscapes; and in particular to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty that is immediately to the South of the site.
- d. And that it would affect the approach to the settlement of Blisland through the Designated Landscapes.

26. A full reading of the 1988 Planning Application, the 2017 Pre-application Advice and the opinion of the Highways Development Officer expressed in June 2021 would make utilising this site for open market housing unsustainably difficult.

Site Three - Land Adjacent Newton House

27. This was the third most favoured site of the Five.

28. An application for a new open market dwelling in the grounds of Newton House was refused in the Autumn of 2006.

29. This site was the subject of two applications, in 2016, for twelve dwellings; six open market and six affordable units; both of these applications were refused by the Local Planning Authority and the [Officer's Report articulating the reasons for the second of these refusals is here](#).

30. This refusal was subsequently the subject of an Appeal determined in January 2018; this Appeal was dismissed by the Planning Inspectorate and costs against the Appellant were awarded to Cornwall Council; [the full Appeal decision is here](#).

31. The core grounds for the Refusal were:

- a. The conflict of the Proposal with Cornwall Local Plan Policy 9.
- b. The great weight that is needed to be given to conserving the landscape and the scenic beauty of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; and the harm that the development would cause to the Designated Landscapes.

- c. That the development would fail to meet the environmental role of sustainable development.

32. A full reading of both the LPA's Officer Report of the Decision to refuse and of the Inspector's Report of the subsequent Appeal would make utilising this site for housing difficult even if it were higher up the ranking of the Community's expressed choice for the location of future development in the settlement.

Site Two – Land to the North of Tregenna Road

33. This was the second most favoured site in the 2015 Public Consultation.

34. In terms of pure 'rounding off' the settlement of Blisland this site has advantages over Site One to the East of the Village Hall, as the map of the Village at paragraph 14 above demonstrates. It is a natural fit, both topographically and from a visual appreciation of the Settlement from the higher ground to the North and the South; it is also the 'right' size for the projected low-density, small-scale housing of circa eight units that was previously identified as meeting the Parish's Housing Need to 2035.

35. The disadvantages in relation to Site One primarily revolve around the significantly greater impact that it has on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in relation to the preferred site to the East of the Village Hall coupled with the location of the site in relation to the historic development of the settlement:

- a. The narrow Parish Lane, with a very limited passing infrastructure, that leads from the settlement to Tregenna and to Key Bridge originally evolved for horse drawn traffic and, whilst modern drivers make this road function, it is not a modern highway and it has a limited, narrow, capacity, and no passing places.
- b. This is compounded by the pinch point and the associated tortuous bend as Tregenna Road leaves the settlement and Conservation Area on its way to the West and the hamlet of Tregenna. Associated with this is that the additional traffic that utilising this Site would create will increase traffic throughput along the 'long' side of the Green through the Conservation Area and directly by the Grade One Listed Church.
- c. Cornwall Council's Highways Development Officer has been consulted about the relationship between the existing highway infrastructure and the feasibility of creating a safe access into the Site; his view is:

"The site frontage itself is heavily vegetated with substantial hedgerow, including a number of established trees. This combined with a narrow road across the same frontage, and an unfavourable road alignment (site is on inside of bend rather than outside means visibility sight lines run through hedge, so more has to be removed) will mean that creating a standard compliant access, will be invasive, and result in the substantial removal/loss of the majority of this hedgerow.

The site would appear to sit above the road. This would also (adversely) effect how a safe and suitable access can be formed."

d. The significantly greater effect within the new DB that utilising this site would have on the AONB compared to utilising the land to the East of the Village Hall [is shown on this link](#).

Site One – Land to the East of the Village Hall and Opposite Manor Close

36. This was the most favoured site in the 2015 Public Consultation.

37. The core factors in the Decision to recommend the incorporation of Site One into the new Development Boundary are:

- a. The Site has, by a fair margin, the least impact on the AONB, the Designated Landscapes, the Heritage Assets and the Existing Built Settlement. This is evidenced by three sets of photographs, [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#) that show the sight lines of the two sites within the AONB; these sight lines are the only place within the AONB where it is possible to visualise the expanded element of the proposed new Development Boundary from within the AONB other than at close quarters.
- b. The land to the East of the Village Hall encompasses what is in effect an agricultural yard which has an adverse effect on both the AONB and the setting of the immediately adjacent Conservation Area; [a photograph of this Yard can be accessed here](#); appropriate development constructed to the principles of the Blisland Design Guide will mitigate this and will create an Environmental Gain in conformity with NPPF 170.
- c. This site has the geographic scope and potential (because it is so proximate to the Village Green but outside of the Conservation Area) to provide the settlement with community infrastructure; a small village car park and/or a dedicated children's play area. This scope and potential is not practicably available at Sites Five, Four, Three and Two and this was a relevant consideration in the recommendation to use the Site.

d. Cornwall Council's Highways Development Officer has been consulted and his view is:

Roads between the site and the village green are marginally better (than Site Two), with some footway provided. There would appear to be scope to provide some footway improvements as well, over hatched areas for example.

Whilst the site frontage is also vegetated, it is not as dense as that on the Tregenna Road site, and involves much less invasive works to achieve an access and footway provision, as the hedge bank itself is smaller, but also the road alignment is in favour, (site is on outside of bend, access visibility sight lines can run over road) which means much less of the hedgerow would need to be removed/relocated/realigned for a standard compliant access to be formed. The site would appear to be broadly level or within a suitable degree of tolerance for it not to affect how an access is formed.

and this, in relation to the Highways Development Officer's opinion of the highway infrastructure surrounding Site Two, provides the justification for the highway element of the recommendation between Sites One and Two; that is that incorporating the land to the East of the Village Hall into the new Development Boundary is clearly the more sustainable development option.

e. Whilst not significant some weight was attributed to the fact that development of the land to the East of the Village Hall would both fit in, and be relevant to, the modern development that has taken place to the East of the settlement over the last two decades.

JUDGEMENT BALANCE OF THE RECOMMENDATION

38. Although both the land to the North of Tregenna Road and that to the East of the Village Hall would lend themselves to 'rounding off' of the existing Settlement of Blisland used together they provide considerably more capacity than the established Parish need warrants; and could result in unwanted development. Using both sites would be disproportionate to the scale of the existing settlement.

39. The choice between the two sites is multifaceted but on clear balance the Site to the East of the Village Hall has more advantages, fewer constraints and is the more sustainable option.

40. It has the least effect on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; it will require significantly less excavation & engineering work [and further evidence of this is shown here](#); it was the choice of the Community in the 2015 consultation as to where any future development might take place and it provides the most accessible site in terms of the existing highways infrastructure. Utilising the Site to mitigate the Agricultural Yard will enhance the AONB and the Setting of the Conservation Area; and it will provide the potential to enhance the community's infrastructure through the possible provision of a dedicated settlement Car Park and possibly a Children's Play Area. The continually increasing pressure on the Conservation Area as modern living evolves, is one of the most significant physical issues that face the Community going forward and such use of the land to the East of the Village Hall, shown as Site One on the drawings, represent a significant step towards mitigating and balancing this.

41. All of this will achieve an Environmental Gain in conformity with NPPF 170.

42. A Planning Matrix that shows the [weighting of the various elements and material considerations inherent in this judgement is here](#).

43. A separate paper, [which can be accessed on this link](#), gives a detailed and evidenced assessment of the effect of implementing the Blisland Neighbourhood Development Plan on the Bodmin Moor AONB and its setting.

Written by the NDP Steering Group and updated 8th October 2022