**CALBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL**

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**Response by Calbourne Parish Council to the consultation on the Draft Island Plan 2018-19**

**Dated: - 24th February 2019**

**Housing**

Calbourne Parish Council congratulates the authors of the existing plan who used successfully the concept of open countryside rather than development boundaries in the parish. Nothing in the new plan must weaken or replace this concept.

Calbourne Parish Council agrees where there is a need social housing should be provided.

For this reason, our predecessors gave as exceptions permission for 12 houses in Calbourne, 8 in Porchfield and 2 in Newtown. A total of 22 units. In addition, through the formation of Island Cottages a further number were available in Winkle Street Calbourne which were for local people to rent.

The survey which is used as the basis for justifying need may be based on HMG rules but is fundamentally wrong and out of date. You cannot use a Census to determine second homes nor ignore the holiday homes which are not shown in the report. As the housing minister acknowledges there is no physical UK housing shortage total houses/no of households.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Ward | Total | Holiday | Second not let out | Empty |
| Calbourne | 145 | 10 |  | 2 |
| Chessel | 10 | 4 | 2 | 0 |
| Porchfield | 157 | 13 | 1 | 4 |
| Newtown | 20 | 4 | 6 | 1 |
| Marks Corner | 16 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Totals | 348 | 32 | 9 | 8 |

Calbourne Parish Council has undertaken an on the ground survey and the results are shown above.

Calbourne Parish Council has consistently complained to the IWC that it fails to charge the maximum Council Tax as allowed by law on second homes and at the same time the Council is pleading poverty.

The so-called need is based on an arbitrary allocation not proof. There is no justification to change the maximum amount by law. This is not the basis for making a plan against the policy of open countryside, a policy this Council supports and wishes to see retained in the new Island Plan.

Calbourne Parish Council considers the number of social houses provided historically is sufficient for local need but if this was to be proven not to be the case under the Housing Acts the Social housing needs should first be satisfied by being purchased.

Calbourne Parish Council notes that Island Cottages far from retaining the inherited local housing has been selling them off at market prices to the aforesaid second home and holiday market. This is hardly the actions of a responsible housing provider if as alleged there is a local housing shortage.

There is no evidence provided for why Calbourne Parish Council should have any additional housing by exception. As such we totally reject the allocation of open countryside as is shown in the appendices for housing in Calbourne. It is implied that as a Council, we had already commented and approved these allocations. Nothing could be further from the truth. We have not made any comment as this has not come formally to the Counci. What Calbourne Parish Council will say again is that appendices naming Calbourne goes against the open countryside policy which we as a Council support. We would not like to see this policy sabotaged hence the application should fail. These sites must be deleted from the appendix as not being justified or supported by this democratic body.

There are better plots within the village not considered by the so-called Agents’ Forum. These listed in the appendices for Calbourne must be **deleted** as not being justified or supported by this democratic body of Calbourne Parish Council.

Our research suggests that there is only a shortage of open market housing in the one/two-bedroom size. This has not been helped by the IWC planners. Firstly, because when open market housing priced above local affordability was proposed in the past and it was suggested they were smaller houses it got rebuffed and secondly because certain older and smaller properties have been allowed large extensions to change the cottages to one large house as seen in Newtown.

Except for new one and two-bedroom properties or conversions no new open market housing can be justified. Certainly not when piggy- backed on the alleged need for affordable housing.

There is one other exception we would allow and that is very high-quality self-build projects by local people. This would allow our residents who are on an average Island wage to build their own house and get onto the housing ladder.

We have looked at the mechanism of allocating housing to local people and we have produced a document dealing with housing allocation within the village of Calbourne. The present Isle of Wight Council housing policy and criteria have been examined by Calbourne Parish Council and are totally unacceptable as it is essentially open for anybody who claims to be homeless to have the right to live in social housing within Calbourne Parish Council without having any ties to our village. We will not get public support for any housing if those are the criteria. We have drafted what we believe is an acceptable agreement and any affordable housing must comply with that procedure or it will be rejected.

**Mobile Homes**

Calbourne Parish Council has a issue with these dwellings. Our Parish includes Thorness Bay Holiday Park. We have three specific issues with this park:

1. They import a large number of new holiday mobile homes onto the Island. In the past a return trip took the old ones away but in recent years a combination of selling off site and local demand has meant a lot come onto the market at cheap prices. We have counted at least two dozen that have appeared in open countryside since the previous plan was dispensed with.
2. They have never implemented the planting plan that was agreed as part of the early permissions and due to an admin error by the planning department has now apparently become defunct.
3. The time people can let them has increased over the years from 30 weeks to 52. However, the rules about this being only in short periods as befits a holiday home still remain. The Isle of Wight Council has failed to enforce the requirements to keep records and people now stay for much longer. The Isle of Wight Council has allowed, despite it being raised via our local Isle of Wight Councillor, a practice of housing people from the housing register on site of those doing work in the construction industry. This is against the planning policies and the permissions but the Isle of Wight Council choose to turn a blind eye to the issue. These temporary residents also do not pay any rates to either the Isle of Wight Council or Calbourne Parish Council.

The above gives rise to the following observations which we wish the IWC to take note of and incorporate into the Planning policy:

1. The owners of the holiday park should be required to dispose of the Caravans by exporting them back to the mainland or dismantling them on site.
2. The use of dubious permitted development excuses such as tending trees and looking after livestock should be challenged by the Isle of Wight Council and if possible, the Permitted Development deleted.
3. Enforcement of planning permissions/lack of should be equally funded. We have had in the last few years an example of someone now able to build a house in open countryside because the Isle of Wight Council did not take enforcement action despite being fully aware.
4. All existing mobile homes within Calbourne Parish Council should be asked for a Lawful Development Certificate
5. Any more development at Thorness Bay must include for electronically recording occupancy kept on site.

Any more development must include the full Centre Parks Style tree planting as a pre-commencement condition

1. People temporarily housed in Thorness Bay must be acknowledged as having not been able to acquire any rights to consider themselves from the Parish.
2. We require all mobile homes to pay rates the same as a Holiday homes.

**Employment**

Calbourne Parish Council believes employment as a factor has been under- represented within current applications.

We consider the provision of local employment as more important than more housing and one that could be complementary.

Over the years a consensus has built up within Calbourne Parish Council that when considering employment, the quality of the jobs must be taken into account. Any full-time job has more worth than part-time and particularly seasonal work. The last we have evidence of being of little interest to local people and yet the Tourists want to meet local people to add interest and value to their holiday.

We consider the policy in the current plan favouring conversion of redundant farm buildings into a variety of employment uses ahead of holiday homes and homes must continue particularly within settlements.

We wish to see any figures brought forward to challenge this order of proceeding independently verified by persons outside the developers’ clique. We believe there is a demand for starter units.

We do not support the idea that existing tourist attractions which are being sold must maintain a tourist focus. In fact, we would prefer they provided long-term quality jobs. That is not to say we support their change of use to residential.

We have supported our local pubs during very difficult times. We consider they are all community assets and will resist any change of use applications.

We would like to see a return of a retail outlet either as a community or extension to another operation.

There is an increase in non-native animals on farmland. Particularly from South America. This is against basic bio diversity and is often associated with unwanted and illegal development. Other introduced species include rabbits and foxes which are all equally destructive. We believe the policy should aim to eliminate all non-native species and any application so associated should be refused.

**Transport**

Calbourne Parish Council notes the plan says access via public transport is a key part of sustainability. In particular Calbourne Parish Council fought to get a temporary reprieve for the number 7 through Calbourne. It is galling that the Island Plan Agents’ Forum used this to make a case for housing in open countryside. Any such development must allow for the developer providing funds for the bus service in perpetuity.

We believe Southern Vectis must not only run a bus service but one that allows people to work regular shifts (i.e. starting early enough/finishing late enough and consistent on a 7 day per week basis on times). Although not a planning matters the IWC must take note that the Plan will fail if this does not happen.

Proposals for increased social housing in Calbourne Parish will need to take account of public transport links with this area as well as other parts of the Parish that face no public transport system.

Residents with the use of a car are already faced with a diminishing amount of free parking and ever-increasing charges in the main towns. Here, of course, is where a large proportion of the Island’s employment opportunities, medical and dental facilities, shops and schools are situated.

Families without their own transport re-settling in rural areas would be wholly reliant on buses. In their interests, a frequent and dependable service would therefore be essential. It might also help to reduce congestion and pollution by encouraging those with cars to leave them at home.

Any new developments being considered would have to be within easy and safe walking distance of the existing bus routes but not adding more footpaths.

New housing set away from the existing routes might necessitate a diversion or even an additional service. Southern Vectis, however, has recently axed a number of services in rural areas, and has shown a reluctance to consider alternative proposals.

We are concerned that the West Wight ferry link appears to be under threat from poor investment, environmentalists and poor management. It is vital this route is kept open and run at a minimum service level to allow trade.

The increase in recreational cycling is causing conflict with local people. The extent this is increased in the future must be offset by providing separation between vehicles and bikes. However, bikes must respect other users such as walkers and horse riders. The use of local roads for races needs controlling in the same way pop festivals have been. The IWC should support moves that bike riders have insurance.

Even though it is not in our Parish, Calbourne Parish Council supports moves to try and retain the back of Wight road network especially the Military Road because any closure of existing roads will be detrimental causing increased traffic to use the Middle Road which will lead to an increase of accidents.

**Infrastructure**

Calbourne Parish Council has the following observations which appear underplayed or ignored within the Plan:

1. Potable water is in short supply on the Isle of Wight such that we rely on importing water from Southern Hampshire. It is well documented they have their own development pressures and we understand will pump less water over to the Isle of Wight in coming years. While reopening some moribund boreholes may help off -set this, the idea of the house numbers planned without provision of major new supplies is not acceptable or feasible.

The development proposed at Shalfleet will have a knock-on effect not counting any proposals for Calbourne.

1. Why is the Island not looking at a desalination plant like the Channel Islands have?
2. There is a problem in West Wight with foul sewerage and more houses will need a clearer service plan that can be delivered. Newtown Nature Reserve is already having problems with discharges that are high in nutrients.
3. The plan implies we have superfast broadband. This is a poor joke in Calbourne Parish Council. We not only still wait for Openreach to get here we understand Wightfibre is starting with houses who already have a good service and we are not even on the radar yet. The suggestion new houses will be sustainable using superfast broadband requires the broadband to be there first and not just for the new houses but all existing houses/businesses. Calbourne Parish Council would like to see it a requirement for Wightfibre to start in West Wight and work East not going over old ground where improvements have already been made.
4. Electricity use reflects similar issues to water and there is nothing in the plan about capacity across the Solent.
5. Use of farmland for solar panels is an abuse of the Government scheme and the Isle of Wight Council should insist that any such development or replacement must include for the developer paying to provide free power to local community assets such as shops, pubs, schools and churches
6. We do not believe that Calbourne Parish residents, have sufficient medical provision in the area and any increase in housing would only continue to exacerbate the problems.
7. There is already a shortage of local schools for Calbourne Parish Council children so any new development will only make that worse as Shalfleet School is oversubscribed.

**Agriculture.**

Agriculture is in many ways just industry in the countryside. It is clear that the industry needs new people and new ideas to flourish.

Calbourne Parish Council believes West Wight should be a national park with a dark skies policy over the whole area and a target to replant hedgerows and allow woodlands to develop naturally.

For the Island to function sustainably it needs an abattoir on the Island. The IWC should fund this and make exporting live animals very expensive. The IW could then be a mark of quality for meat production.

Calbourne Parish Council has received a huge number of complaints regarding tractor movements feeding biodigester plants. It is our view these movements are not agriculture so should be in lorries paying DERV rates for gas. The bio gas developments are not sustainable as they cause shortage of animal feed and bedding and the power generated is not clean.

**Tourism.**

Calbourne Parish Council objects to the implied favouritism to this industry and consider the current plan and its emphasis to be a complete failure and inhibitor to the Island’s prosperity.

We believe the IW is at saturation point for this type of development and any future development should be as replacement for existing facilities which must be demolished prior to development.

Specifically, Calbourne Parish Council gets representations contrary to certain Isle of Wight Council ideas. People living in Calbourne Parish Council especially in Porchfield and Newtown do so because it is not like east Wight. They don’t want to see more cyclists, bear hunts in Newtown Nature Reserve, fun runs or similar activities. Newtown in particular is a place to be discovered (according to Natural England) not a place for exploitation as an adventure park. There is an over-riding of local democracy between those who live here and those who want to foster an Island -wide experience with no local knowledge. We will object not just in Planning but in all other avenues to the imposition of more inappropriate activities in our Nature Reserve.

Any new development should have to provide a bond of 10% as surety to show they have backing. It must be a year- round attraction and self-contained.

Calbourne Parish Council believes all holiday homes must have a fire certificate from the Fire Brigade and not be self-certifying.

Calbourne Parish Council believes the only sustainable future for West Wight will be as a national park with a dark skies policy so proving a unique attraction with suitable protections.

**Heritage**Calbourne Parish Council understands that regeneration and development of an area can be inspired and has a part to play in securing the future of this beautiful island and should be a beacon for subsequent generations and at the same time protect our history.

As a Council we recognise West Wight is an area remarkable in its attractions and heritage and maintaining these attributes should be at the forefront of any regeneration or development plan.

Where there are designated Conservation Areas and areas of AONB these must be respected, and their character protected. This should not necessarily preclude projects which are sympathetic to the areas or which clearly enhance what already exists. In turn listed buildings should be nurtured where possible so that they can remain firmly rooted in the unique appeal of the West Wight.

Any proposals or planning applications within Calbourne Parish Council area, should be considered on their merit in relation to the specific needs of the resident population as well as the annual visitors and should enhance the existing natural beauty without imposing on it or dominating it.

**Environment**

**Calbourne Parish Council is concerned that not enough emphasises has been put in the Draft Document introduction on the impact of climate change will have on the Island’s Environment, Social and Economic Systems or what steps the Isle of Wight Council has taken to address its concerns.**

**We suggest that the following be inserted so that it is acknowledged as the thread running through the draft document.**

“The Isle of Wight Council is deeply concerned about the impact that climate change will have on the Island's environmental, social and economic systems. In November 2007 the Isle of Wight Council formally recognised the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change and since then has tried to develop policies that recognise the importance of targeted action, building on the well-received Agenda 21 program and more recently the Eco Island strategy.

Evidence from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change during 2018 and more recently the initial report from the Institute for Public Policy Research emphasise that time is running out for adaptation strategies and urgent action is required now to keep the world below the predicted levels of atmospheric CO2. that are considered dangerous.As an Island we must play our part.

The Isle of Wight Council will require all policies relating to the environmental, social and economic development of the Island to be viewed through the prism of climate change as an over-arching requirement in assessing the impact of developments on Island life.

There must be a thorough examination of strategies to move the Island community towards a carbon neutral economy. Throughout the Island Strategic Plan there are many references to climate change and its impact on the development of policies. All these references hold good, but careful consideration must be given, as plans developed now will affect not only the future of our children but our Island.