

## **Housing: What are the Issues?**

On June 30<sup>th</sup> 2014 over 60 Kington Residents came together to discuss Neighbourhood Plan housing policies.

Housing provision; its type and location will be a major policy concern in the Plan, as the Hereford Core Strategy commits us to allocating sites for 200 houses within Kington Town during the Plan period. There is no provision for additional housing in the Huntington and Kington Rural Parishes though exception policies would allow residential development if agricultural, forestry or farm diversification needs could be proved. In addition the legislation that has established Neighbourhood Planning provides a “Community Right to Build Order” which would allow additional development if a majority of residents supported this.

A detailed note of housing issues raised in the discussion appears below. The meeting was given focus by and largely reflected the community views that were expressed in the Kington Local Action Plan Survey of 2013.

A number of issues can be highlighted

### **Is the Housing Allocation for Kington Town appropriate?**

There is concern about this especially if development is not linked to present or future employment provision or policies. (In the survey 75% thought no more than half this provision would be appropriate)

A policy that strongly promotes an even distribution of new housing planning permissions during the Core Strategy plan period related to employment opportunities might ameliorate this problem.

### **Housing Quality and Design**

The historic core of Kington is of high architectural value with many listed buildings and a townscape with great visual integrity. The meeting urged that future development should be in sympathy with the town’s existing character (in terms of both design and grouping). This approach was strongly supported in the KLAP survey with 64 % favouring high quality design reflecting the town character and with the use of local materials and traditions.

The meeting also strongly supported use of brown field sites and development of small clusters of houses. Large estates were not favoured. There was strong support for sustainable design, high energy efficiency “beyond current requirements”

### **Provision appropriate for Community Needs**

Participants also wanted a diversity of provision to reflect community demography including provision for senior citizens, those with affordable housing needs and starter housing. Provision should also be made for adequate gardens for family housing.

### **Should there be additional housing allocations in Huntington and Kington Rural?**

Residents in either parish could consider a “[Community Right to Build Order](#)” which could allow some additional development. The decision would rest with residents in the parish and could be linked to specific sites, possibly held by a community land trust, and specific types such as affordable housing

### **Should we seek special Policies for affordable Housing?**

The Hereford Core Strategy aims to have one third of new provision affordable. This can be achieved on large estate developments but small sites desired in Kington will produce very few affordable houses. A solution would be to treat Kington as a rural area to allow lower threshold in small clusters.

### **Next stages**

The Plan Steering Group is now starting the process of identifying possible sites for housing development and also sites that would not be appropriate for housing or other development. Some of the latter might benefit from designation as “Local Green Space” (For more detail see the [Environment Section](#))

### **We Need Your views on the policy issues and on possible sites**

## **Report on the Community Policy meeting on HOUSING June 30th**

### **Policy Background**

In introduction Cllr Widdowson highlighted the context for the Plan

1. **Restrictions.** KANP cannot promote less development than specified in Herefordshire Council’s Local Plan (Core Strategy) which is:
  - 200 new homes in Kington Town
  - This amount of extra housing would provide for a population increase of 7.9%, approximately 265 people.
  - 35% must be ‘affordable’. Result will be 130 market homes, 70 affordable homes

It is clear that we need to consider WHO will require and occupy/buy/rent any new homes i.e. the future community demography.

**Housing Need**, based on predictions for Plan period

There will be increase in households of 13.3%

Age distribution will be 23% 30-44 year olds

40% 60 yrs and over

% households unable to buy/rent without subsidy 55%

Average house price in 2012 was £198,000

35% households in area with income of less than £15,000 pa.

Size of workforce during Plan period predicted to grow by 161 persons (11%)

Strongest demand is for 3 bedroom homes, low demand for 1 bedroom.

## **Matters discussed in the meeting.**

KLAP survey in Kington in 2013 showed that people favoured :

- Housing to be in small clusters rather than large estates  
Low density i.e.space on site, gardens/allotments and allocated parking for each house,
- Fuel- efficient/eco-friendly buildings/passivhaus standards that reduce living costs
- Specify High Level code eg 6 (zero carbon)
- Concerns raised over building costs of high standards; talk from ArchiHaus showed examples of high standards built at reasonable cost .. needs to be explored further; price of land affects costs of building
- Development should be phased i.e. numbers of houses pa controlled.
- Some work-space /live-work/flexible accommodation
- Consider self-build, self-sustaining sites/land-based sites
- Super-fast broadband essential to attract home/office working
- Housing for older people should be accessible to town centre and transport.
- Should any housing be 'reserved' for local people?
- Flood plan areas and landscape values pose constraints on choice of sites.
- Is there a limit to amount of in-fill sites in town? Possible to restrict further infill.
- Employment opportunities to retain/increase younger population; should employment follow housing or vice versa?
- Other infrastructure issues .. school places, health facilities etc. needs to be considered
- Building materials; use local materials in keeping with locality. Avoid style and materials of recent new build estates in Kington. Need to enhance local area.
- Conservation principles in town centre; enlarge conservation area.
- Protect green spaces.
- Ensure sufficient playground/recreation space on site where more than 'x' dwellings.
- Recognise light pollution impacts on dark skies, noise.