

Boughton and Dunkirk Neighbourhood Plan

Background document BD5 - Housing.

Overview

The neighbourhood plan is a development led plan that must seek to improve and enhance both parishes. It is important that any future development takes into account the wishes and aspirations of parishioners whilst ensuring a vibrant, robust and outstanding community for the future - immediately until 2031.

There are many facets to bringing together a Plan that will be acceptable to all in our community. It is important that all the issues noted in responses to the questionnaire, where possible, are addressed. The Plan must include policies that encourages growth, history, health and wellbeing - in fact all village life.

This BD seeks to address the issues of Housing. We will look specifically at housing need (BD6) but the villages will only prosper if all types of housing requirements are given equal weight. Having said this, there is little point in providing any type of housing if the villages become little more than dormitories for Faversham, Sittingbourne and London.

It is also important that many businesses thrive in the parishes and the future for our children will be based on local provision of housing, jobs, health care and leisure facilities. Other issues will be discussed later in the Plan.

Whilst it is unrealistic to suggest the Plan can cater for every need there is an appetite to push the boundaries. They are our villages and everyone is proud to be included in their future.

Balanced future development.

The main issues from the questionnaire (see BD1) and Housing Survey (BD6) were:

1. No ribbon development i.e. keeping Parishes individual and separated.
2. Preference for brownfield development.
3. Need more conversions of farm buildings and redundant stock revitalised.
4. More retirement housing, both bungalows and single storey living (Exceptions being if there were to be lifts to any upper floors).
5. Sufficient gypsy and traveller pitches (there are currently 48¹ pitches in Dunkirk and, whilst there are no Gypsy Pitches in Boughton under Blean, there are [in that Parish] 10 declarations as Gypsies in the 2011 census) and no necessity for separate planning policies ².
6. There were more No's than Yes's for 'social housing' but overwhelming support for low cost affordable starter homes.

¹ 40 pitches [+7 transit pitches not included] at Brotherhood Wood, 2 pitches One Oak Canterbury Road and 6 pitches Scoggers Hill.

² This is now reflected in Government policy agendas.

The Main Preferences from the questionnaire and Housing Survey were for owner occupier homes.

Other main issues were:

Parking and traffic (The Street). Extra yellow lines on dangerous junctions (Parish Councils to address) (BD4).

Keep employment and commercial development, particularly of a light or office based nature, but not manufacturing.

The questionnaire showed there was a requirement for different types of development in the Parishes:

- 1). Properties suitable for older people either looking to downsize or make life easier with single floor living arrangements (bungalows or flats where upper floors are accessed with a lift); some smaller gardens, and properties with fewer maintenance issues. These would be mainly privately owned but again some rented properties would supply a need.
- 2). Affordable Homes. There is overwhelming support for low cost, affordable starter homes. This would be for older people to downsize to and for younger people starting out on the property ladder.
- 3). Shared ownership.
- 4). Private and Housing Association rented properties would be welcomed.
- 5). Social Housing was deemed inappropriate.

Affordable Homes.

Much of the background is shown in BD6. The questionnaire (BD1) also shows the Parishes would like to see housing for downsizing and homes on a single level (bungalows) or, if flats, with a lift.

The Housing needs survey also showed there was a need for affordable homes, but less support for social housing. From the analysis of the results this translates into:

| | |
|---|----|
| There is a direct need for market value houses: | 15 |
| + Shared ownership properties: | 8 |
| + Privately rented properties: | 6 |
| + Unknown tenure: | 2 |
| This give a total of affordable homes | 31 |

(These are in addition to the Exception Sites shown in the conclusion summary of the Housing Needs Report (BD6). It is felt that, as far as exception sites, this work has determined a need and will require both Parish Councils to work with Swale and Housing Associations to provide a roadmap for the future).

There is a desire to ensure that affordable homes are available to people with local connections, and we would like to (as far as is as possible) restrict future sales with similar criteria.

Swale has recently given consent for 6 park homes. These will be with conditions allowing Parish involvement in the transfer by sale or letting, of the properties to people with a local connection.

This will be conditional through a section 106 agreement drawn up by the Local Planning Authority (Swale Borough Council).

The affordable housing will have the following conditions, and occupants will need to comply with condition 1 and condition 2, meeting 2 or more with at least one from each condition.

Condition 3 will apply when it has been proven to the satisfaction of the Parish Councils that every opportunity to keep the properties in local tenure has been taken.

Once an owner has decided to sell their home they must advise the Clerk to Dunkirk Parish Council of their decision. This then allows the Council to ensure that the Section 106 conditions are fulfilled.

Condition 1. A Local Connection.

For the purpose of applying the policies in the Plan 'local connection' refers to people who are aged 16 years or above and:

- a). A person who was born in either Boughton under Blean or Dunkirk or lived in the Parish as a child, at some stage, up to the age of 16.
- b). A person who normally resides in either Boughton under Blean or Dunkirk and has done so for a continuous period of at least 3 years.
- c). A person who has immediate family who are currently resident in either Boughton under Blean or Dunkirk and have been so for at least 5 years.
- d). Boughton under Blean or Dunkirk is, and has been, the person's permanent place of work for at least 3 years.

Condition 2. Local Need.

For the purposes of applying the policies in the Plan, 'local need' means people who meet at least one of the 'local connections' criteria as well at least one condition from this section.

- a). An existing resident or family who have lived in Boughton under Blean or Dunkirk for a continuous period of at least the last five years and is seeking to establish a separate household.
- b). People who have an essential need, through age or disability, to live in a smaller property within Boughton under Blean or Dunkirk.

- c). People who have an essential need, through age or disability, to live close to those who have lived in Boughton under Blean or Dunkirk for at least three years.
- d). People or households who have, for whatever reason, the written support of Boughton under Blean and Dunkirk Parish Council.

Condition 3. Eligibility and Occupancy Cascade Arrangements.

For the purposes of applying the policies in the Plan, and in preparing controls over future sales, lettings and occupancy arrangements for these developments, a cascade arrangement will be set out in association with the grant of planning permission.

This will ensure a clear hierarchy on eligibility to occupy the dwelling is made known as a condition of the original consent by Swale Borough Council.

- a). Properties will be sold (or let) first to people, in Boughton under Blean or Dunkirk who are eligible by reason of meeting conditions 1 and 2 above. This will be for a period of 3 months active marketing*.
- b). If, after a reasonable period of active marketing, there are no applicants who meet the eligibility criteria, then applications will be invited from residents in the parishes adjacent to Boughton under Blean or Dunkirk.
People from adjoining parishes with residency of the previous 3 consecutive years and those who meet the local occupancy criteria (five years) in contiguous parishes.
This will also be actively marketed for a further period of 3 months*.
- c). If, following this further reasonable period**, no occupier has been found the property may be occupied via the open market.

It should be noted that operation of the 'cascade' (and in particular extending the search outside Boughton under Blean or Dunkirk) should be regarded as a temporary measure and that upon resale or re-letting of the property the cascade would begin at Parish level again.

It is not easy to specify exceptions, but a very strong case will have to be made where it is felt necessary to circumvent this procedure.

* This must be clearly demonstrated as active marketing to the satisfaction of Boughton under Blean Parish, Dunkirk Parish and Swale Borough Councils.

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