

# Affordable Housing

Winchester City Council (WCC) have recently conducted a call for sites for commercial housing development as part of their Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) process. A number of sites in Micheldever and East Stratton were submitted to WCC by landowners and developers, in addition to the proposal for a new town at Micheldever Station. These sites, along with hundreds of other sites across Winchester, are currently being considered by WCC.

WCC will then publish a revised Local Plan, setting out which sites across Winchester they consider suitable for new commercial housing development (SHELAA). This is due to be published for public consultation early next year. Our local WCC Councillors, Micheldever Parish Council, the Dever Society and many residents have already made clear to WCC our strong opposition to the inclusion of any of the proposed SHELAA sites in our parish and that none of them should be included in the new WCC Local Plan.

The parish council remains opposed to more commercial housing under the SHELAA process but, due to the high cost of housing in this area, Micheldever Parish Council has traditionally been supportive of identifying opportunities for additional affordable housing in the parish. This is so that local residents who cannot afford to buy or rent locally will not be forced to move away. The process is separate to that for commercial housing (SHELAA) and does not form part of the Local Plan process. It allows sites not



Barron Close in Micheldever

included in the Local Plan – known as exception sites – to be identified where only affordable housing can be built. A few small affordable housing developments, most notably at Barron Close in Micheldever, have been taken forward in recent years.

Providing new affordable homes (via exception sites) helps local people of all ages stay within, or return to, their parish and so contribute to village life and support local businesses and services. People with a genuine local connection to the parish are given priority for these homes. Where a need for affordable housing is identified, WCC work directly with local communities to develop schemes to address that need.

The last affordable Housing Needs Survey for Micheldever Parish was conducted several years ago. The parish council have therefore decided to work with WCC to conduct a new survey to assess the current need for affordable housing, gauge community support for more affordable homes and ask landowners to identify any potential exception sites. We hope to be able to distribute the Housing Needs Survey along with the

December 2019 copy of *The Dever*.

We should stress that at this stage no decisions have been made about taking schemes forward. That will depend on the outcomes of the survey and, crucially, the ability to identify suitable sites. Once the outcome of the survey is known, the results will be shared with residents and there will be further discussions and consultation on next steps. Until information on the amount and type of any housing needed is available, it would also be premature to undertake any further assessment of individual sites.

The parish council is committed to undertaking this process in an open and transparent way and to working with WCC to ensure full public consultation at all stages. If residents have any questions or concerns, or wish to register their interest in being considered for affordable housing, including those looking to downsize or leave tied accommodation, please contact the parish council clerk, Jocelyn Jenkins, at [micheldeverpc@hotmail.com](mailto:micheldeverpc@hotmail.com) or on 01794 368951.

*Micheldever Parish Council*