



## Candidate Questionnaire

Please complete by typing your responses in to the appropriate boxes or by typing an 'X' in the relevant tick-box where appropriate, then save the file as 'Your\_Name.pdf' and email it back to southhamsociety@gmail.com.

Your name:

Denise O'Callaghan

Political allegiance:

Liberal Democrat

Ward in which standing:

Kingsbridge

### Housing

According to the *Plymouth & South West Devon Joint Local Plan: The Housing Market Area and Updating the Objectively Assessed Need*, in the 20 years between 2014 and 2034 a further 3,924 homes would have to be built to meet the objectively assessed housing requirement, or an average of 196 new dwellings each year.

However, in the seven years between 2014 and 2021, no fewer than 2,957\* of those dwellings were actually delivered, at an average of more than 420 a year. Then, in 2021/22, an additional 454 were added to the total.

Nor are we due to stop building any time soon. The Council's Draft Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals for 2023/24 is assuming that the number of properties is to increase by 500 per annum from 2023/24 onwards, while the Authorities Monitoring Report 2020-21 tells us there are 6,869 homes secured by planning permission that have yet to start construction.

In other words, we are building many more houses than were required.

Do you believe that we should continue building at the rate 500 new homes each year for the foreseeable future?

Yes:

No:

Other:

I think we should be focusing on building genuinely affordable/social housing for the needs of our young and old with a sense of urgency, reflecting the declaration of an affordable housing crisis in the South Hams.

Building more market-value homes is not desirable except where the need is established, and there is community support.

Details of the Liberal Democrats' plan of action on housing are set out in our Election Manifesto at [www.southhamslibdems.org.uk/local-manifesto](http://www.southhamslibdems.org.uk/local-manifesto).

\* Plymouth, South Hams & West Devon Local Planning Authorities' 2021, 5 Year Housing Land Supply Position Statement November 2021



### Housing/continued

Taking the number of dwellings that have already been built and the number of homes secured by planning permission that have yet to start construction, we are going to be able to construct 2.5 times more homes than the JLP said were required.

Other than in exceptional circumstances, do you believe we should give consent for any more, other than possibly homes for social rent, before the next Joint Local Plan is approved?

Yes:       No:       Other:

*(If you wish to give an explanation or your reasoning please type in the box below)*

Planning applications for housing have to comply with the provisions of the Joint Local Plan, which South Hams District Council has signed up to along with its partners, Plymouth and West Devon.

There will be a review of the JLP in 2024 so the situation can be looked at then.

At a density of just over eight dwellings per acre, using the Bloor Homes land At Sx 651 560 development at Filham as an example, accommodating 500 new homes each year will require a further 60 acres of land to be found. That will be the equivalent of imposing another settlement the size of Marlborough on the landscape every year.

Where do you suggest that land can be found?

As mentioned the Liberal Democrats are focused on addressing the shortage of affordable housing, and identifying land is part of this task. SHDC itself owns more than 640 plots of land which could be reviewed in the search for accommodation.



## Social Housing

Figures from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities suggest that in the ten years until March 2022 no more than 24 social homes were built in the South Hams. Over the same period 107 social homes were sold. In other words 83 social homes have been lost while, in March 2022, there were no fewer than 1,795 people in the South Hams on the local authority waiting list for social housing.

Do you believe South Hams District Council should build homes for social rent?

Yes:  No:  Other:

Please add any further thoughts you might have below and say what other steps you think the District Council could take to resolve this problem.

This is a priority and the Liberal Democrats would like to see the council rebuild its stock of social housing. In my ward Kingsbridge I would like to see the council-owned Ropewalk site used for 100% truly affordable/social housing, a flagship of development without market-value houses.

SHDC should set up a local housing company or similar vehicle to avoid being affected by Right to Buy legislation.

it should also review all the land which it owns to help in the provision of accommodation, and acquire suitable properties as they become available.

(Full details of our approach in our manifesto.



## Wind Turbines

The Government is proposing changes to the existing National Planning Policy Framework to enable many more wind turbines to be installed through Local Development Orders, Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders, 'providing it can be demonstrated that the planning impacts identified by the affected local community have been appropriately addressed and the proposal has community support.'

Do you believe that the 'affected local community' should be defined as

- a) those living in the South Hams?
- b) those living within audible distance and/or one mile of the proposed turbines?
- c) Other

Do you believe the decision to grant approval should be taken by officers and members:

- a) after the application has been advertised?
- b) only after the 'affected local community' has voted in a referendum?
- c) Other

If you select 'Other' to either of the above, please explain why below.

Q1 A slightly wider area, say parishes/towns within four or five miles.

Q2 Each case needs to be carefully considered before determination and community support demonstrated - whether by referendum or other means.



## Solar Farms

Do you believe the climate emergency requires us to give up more of our agricultural land in order to accommodate solar panels?

Yes:  No:  Other:

If **Yes**, do you believe that should apply as much to land inside the AONB as without? If **Other**, please explain why below.

Yes:  No:  Other:

If **No**, please say where else can solar panels be accommodated other than on agricultural land? If **Other**, please explain why

Solar should as far as possible be community-based, with possibilities in village halls, homes, supermarkets, leisure centres and over car parks.

## Planning Enforcement

To quote Ian Tant, President, Royal Town Planning Institute 2019: 'Successful planning relies on three essential areas of work by our local authorities: visionary plan-making which sets out the policies and proposals for the area; efficient and effective development management, which applies those local and national policies in the determination of planning applications; and well-resourced and effective enforcement. These three aspects go hand-in-hand.'

Unfortunately effective enforcement costs money, and there are many who believe that the LPA has been less than proactive in ensuring that developers and others comply with the conditions imposed by their consents.

Do you believe that the LPA has been sufficiently proactive in ensuring that developers and others comply with the conditions imposed by their consents?

Yes:  No:

If **No**, please answer the first question on the next page.



### Planning Enforcement/continued

If you have answered **No** to the last question on the previous page, what would you suggest?

Planning enforcement at SHDC is under resourced and not working well enough, with cases not being prioritised effectively. A review of the service is necessary (more details in our manifesto).

### Environmental Impacts

Do you believe pollution is adversely impacting our rivers or rias or beaches?

Yes:

No:

If **Yes**, how can the problem(s) best be addressed?

It is a problem across the country and requires national action at Government level. Local councils like SHDC can lobby the Government to take action. The council could lead by example in say discouraging the use of plastics, and engage with local businesses to do the same.



**Environmental Impacts/continued**

Do you believe there are air quality problems that need addressing in the South Hams?

Yes:

No:

If Yes, how can the problem(s) best be addressed?

This is largely due to the volume of traffic on our roads. Planting more trees will help as will in the longer run more electric vehicles. Reducing the level of traffic is also key through improved public transport and car sharing for example.

**Trees**

The loss of many of our mature trees as a consequence of unauthorised felling, often as a precursor to a planning application being submitted, has long been a problem in the South Hams. Yet we have only the one tree officer, who we also have to share with West Devon. Consequently the combined area for which he is responsible totals 2,047.6 square kilometres. By comparison, East Devon has three tree officers to cover 814.3 square kilometres, or a far more manageable individual average of 271.4 square kilometres.

Would you be in favour of resourcing the tree protection function on a similar basis to East Devon?

Yes:

No:



## Other Issues

There may also be other issues affecting the natural and built environment of the South Hams that you think the District Council, in addition to those identified above, can and should be addressing.

Please detail those here:

The council should ideally be working more in partnership with its communities to tap into knowledge and enthusiasm and develop action plans to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss .Where it can it should support a green local economy.

Date completed:

April 17 2023