



## 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:

Georgina Allen

Political allegiance:

Green Party

Ward in which standing:

Totnes

### 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:

\* 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)*

We need to take stock of what has already been built, how the infrastructure and communities have coped with the new development and what type of housing is actually needed and where. The CPRE did a very useful housing needs analysis of the area and that is the system I would push to be looked at for the South Hams area. We clearly need more social housing, but leaving our housing needs to the market has clearly not worked, despite thousands of new houses in and around Totnes for example, our housing list has increased.

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?

I would argue against arbitrary top-down, imposed figures from government. Housing should be a local and community issue, building in unsuitable areas, which will have a negative impact on the environment, biodiversity, pollution and infrastructure, just because government has imposed housing targets on us, only benefits the developers and not local people. The system needs challenging and a better one created.



## 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.

The problem for district councils is the Right to Buy policy, which means that they can no longer afford to build social housing, as the tenants can buy and sell houses, leaving the council to build more, it's proved unsustainable. This public to private sell-off means that the only option for councils is to create companies to manage social housing themselves. SHDC is in the process of doing this and as long as it is monitored carefully and proven to be successful, I would support this.



## 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.



## 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

I think we need to be imaginative and intelligent about the use of solar panels and wind farms. I would like to see deep source heat pumps being looked at, wind turbines being used selectively, solar panels on car parks etc. I think the blanketing of land in intensive solar panels, is not the way forward.

## 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?

There was unfortunately a series of mistakes made by the previous administration at SHDC, which resulted in a large number of planning and enforcement officers leaving the council. Due to austerity and the continued underfunding of local councils, SHDC have not recruited a sufficient number of planning and enforcement officers to be able to deal with rogue developers. I would make recruitment and accountability a priority if I were elected.

### 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?

This issue is all about accountability, the government recently relaxed many of the regulations that used to ensure that water companies could not pollute our waterways and beaches, which has resulted in the high levels of pollution we are currently experiencing. I would want to ensure that all the various groups in the South Hams were working to hold the water companies to account and to come up with ways to improve the condition of our waterways, so would look to empower local volunteer groups and meet with interested stakeholders and try to facilitate a way forward.



### 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 a particular issue for me and one which I have long been campaigning about in Totnes. The last administration has minimised the danger of air pollution and downplayed its significance in the South Hams. Totnes for example, has one of the most polluted roads in the South West, which has had an Air Quality Management Area designatin for over 12 years. This means that local councils have a statutory obligation to improve the road and reduce air pollution along it. Nothing whatsoever has been done, instead several of the air monitors have ben taken down and ribbon development along the road between Totnes and Torbay has made the situation worse. I would vigorously challenge the head in the sand approach to air pollution and I would see it as a priority.

### 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:

Date completed: