

GRADE RUAN PARISH COUNCIL

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Meeting with Coastline Housing – 6 March 2023, 14:00

Notes of the meeting as above held at the Sunday School Room, Methodist Chapel, Ruan Minor.

Persons Present/Apologies

Parish Council: Cllrs Preston (Chair), P Collins, Trewin, Lee, Cox. L Dunkley (Clerk).
Coastline Housing: Christian Blackbeard (Head of Housing Services).
Cornwall Council: Cllr Soady.

Apologies: Cllr Green.

Context from Coastline Housing

CB Presented information to the meeting which outlined the following.

Strategic approach to Health & Safety and compliance – Coastline Housing are required to ensure that houses that are new, or old houses that become vacant, meet high targets for Health & Safety and for energy efficiency. Coastline strive to surpass the “Decent Home Standard” and meet the “Housing Health & Safety Rating System” assessment. They are required to have all homes at a minimum efficiency rating of D by 2025, C by 2028, and B by 2040. A key challenge to meeting these targets is property type – whereby many older homes are hard to heat and run on oil, for example. This leads to the following:

Strategic approach to asset management –

Coastline must assess the cost of bringing old housing stock up to the required standard versus selling said stock and using the funds to borrow and purchase/acquire new build homes. It is expected that over a 40 year period bringing old “unviable” housing up to new standards would cost £125m. By not selling stock, Coastline project that they would not be in a position to build new social homes, that the overall quality of social homes will be lower, and high costs will lead to cuts elsewhere, such as in customer service. Coastline instead are embarking on a disposal programme which it projects will see the selling off of approx. 1% of its stock (50 houses) per year. Disposal is based on whether the property can meet energy efficiency required rating, how much it costs to get up to standard etc. Rural housing is less likely to meet energy efficiency rating (no mains gas – therefore heating oil) so more likely to be disposed of. Towns are also higher up on demand list for social housing than rural areas. Coastline projects that each home sold will fund 4-5 new homes and there will be an overall raising in quality of social homes.

Community concern

Cllrs expressed that they receive concerns from residents about the reduction in local social housing stock. The likelihood of the selling of social houses in rural areas, coupled with the unlikelihood that Coastline will build houses in those same areas, means an overall reduction of available social housing for local (often young) people to live in the village that they were raised in. Coastline use raw numbers to identify where there is demand for social housing, and do not take into account the relative need (i.e. percentage of town/parish population in need of social housing) thus the larger towns will remain the priority unless there is a direct policy/strategy change from government. There are no policies or protocols on ensuring there is no net loss of social housing in any given parish. There is no policy to replace homes sold within same parish.

CB outlined that typically Coastline have double the amount of applicants for a vacancy in a town than for a vacancy in a rural location. Though there is demand for social housing in Grade Ruan it does mean there is much greater demand for properties where support, schools, medical facilities are easier to access. Therefore building in towns is Coastline's priority though they will always consider opportunities in rural locations.

Glebe Place potential for new social housing

Cllrs raised the potential of using land at Glebe Place for additional social housing. CB outlined that the issue is that this is a small scale site where there may only be space to build 5 houses. On-costs are as large there as for a development of 30 houses, and therefore the economic viability of such small scale sites is questionable.

It was noted that Coastline can and do work with Community Land Trusts and that this is perhaps a route that could see additional social housing being created on a small scale in rural areas.

Housing allocation for non-Cornish connections

There was a brief discussion about people from other parts of the Country moving to Cornwall and being rehoused ahead of local. CB outlined that there is a publicly available dataset called "CORE" which allows you to see where people lived prior to being rehoused: <https://core.communities.gov.uk/public/AnalyseCOREData.html>

Of the approx. 350 Coastline lettings to properties built since 2010, only 4 of the properties went to people who had only just moved to Cornwall and had no prior connection to Cornwall.