

The Dorset Ecovillage

PIONEERING DEVELOPMENTS FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVING



Presentation Outline

Introduction

The Project Ingredients

- Cohousing
- Education
- Green and Health Tourism
- Workspace

The Benefits

The Delivery Mechanism

Background and History



- The concept has developed from 4 years of groundwork
- It addresses linked needs which are pressing for many communities
 - Integrated sustainability eg transport, shared resources
 - Affordable housing
 - Local economic renewal
 - Health and social issues, for example the ageing population
 - Stronger communities

Big Issues 1: Sustainability



Most eco-developments reduce in-home energy use, but do little about travel and food which are 58 % of the domestic total.

DEVA will achieve major reductions in all three categories: it pioneers the next phase of sustainable development

Big Issues 2: Social

How do we address:

- The widespread desire for stronger communities, supportive neighbourhoods
- The specific needs of older people
- Rising health issues, e.g. obesity

DEVA will be a live example and teaching centre for new answers to these and other social issues

Big Issues 3: Economic

How can Dorset seize the lead in growth sectors which build on its strengths?

- Sustainable Tourism

Major demand potential in green and health tourism: DEVA will secure a prime position in this emerging sector

- Green Employment

DEVA will create a focus and support for the area to address growth sectors such as:

- Complementary health care
- Services for creative ageing
- Education in sustainable living

- There are now numerous established cohousing projects in the UK, and a thriving UK Cohousing Network. There are already two cohousing projects in Dorset: the Threshold Centre, Gillingham, started 2004, and Bridport Cohousing, where construction is completing in 2022-2023. ⁶

Project Summary

- DEVA will be both a living community and demonstration centre for all aspects of sustainable living – the first full ecovillage in England
- Housing, visitor facilities, social enterprises, sustainable energy and transport provision
- A unique feature is providing visitor education – learning by doing, day and residential programmes, exhibition and information centre
- It will embody and teach sustainability in the full sense: personal, social, economic and ecological
- It will provide models of sustainable living for mainstream use



The Ecovillage Ingredients

3 clusters linked by shared amenities:

- Education and Tourism:
 - An education centre promoting sustainable living
 - An ecohotel with restaurant and spa
- Workspaces
 - Flexibly sized units for social and green enterprises
- Residential:
 - A co-housing community of around 100 housing units
 - A common house for residents/locality
- Shared Amenities:
 - Sustainable transport
 - Market garden
 - Open space
 - Sustainable utility supplies
 - Community facilities

About Cohousing

- Cohousing is the combination of four essential elements:
 - Self-contained homes
 - Shared facilities
 - Intentional neighbourhood design promoting a sense of community
 - Resident participation in development and management
- Major benefits:
 - Affordability: shared facilities mean individual units can be smaller and more affordable
 - Sustainability: through high density living, car pooling, sustainable energy systems and shared resources
 - Community: creating a traditional neighbourhood, safe environment and common ownership and values



About Cohousing:

Shared Facilities

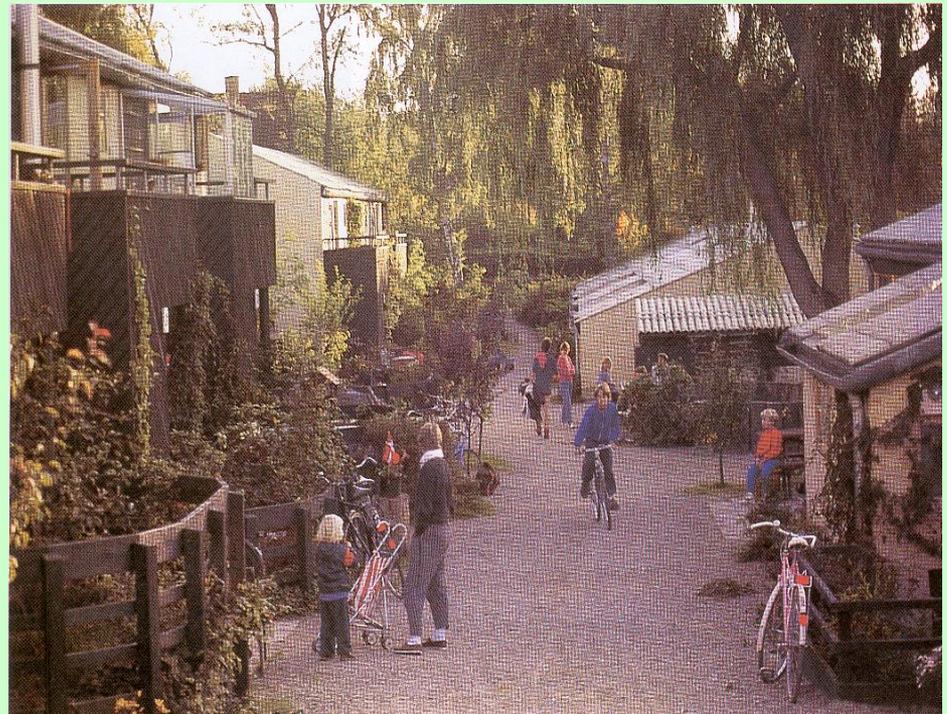
These are usually found in and around a 'common house' and may include:

- Kitchen and dining space
- Lounge & meeting rooms
- Children's play areas
- Guest rooms
- Laundry
- Workshop
- Art studio
- Amenity garden
- Market garden

About Cohousing:

Intentional Neighbourhood Design

- Reduce car use by including pedestrian areas and/or home zones and keeping car parking on the perimeter
- Housing developed in 'clusters' of 10–30 households
- Shared open spaces
- Layout promotes informal contact and a sense of safety e.g. courtyards, pedestrian streets



About Cohousing:

Resident Participation in Development and Management

- Potential residents involved from the early stages of design so a sense of community is developed
- Site freehold owned by residents with housing association partner
- Site managed by residents, so collaboration is sustained
- Each resident donates time to shared facilities

About Cohousing:

How is Cohousing Affordable?

- Lower Capital Costs
 - Smaller size homes due to shared facilities
 - Pre-sold units: lower marketing and finance costs
 - Lower developer margin
 - Lower infrastructure costs, e.g. roads and parking
- Lower Living Costs
 - Able to share transport, food growing etc.
 - Common services e.g. heating
 - Mutual support e.g. childcare

About Cohousing:

How is Cohousing Sustainable?

- Extensive resource sharing, e.g. ride sharing, car club, laundry, guest rooms
- Reduced travel needs through on site social and work facilities
- Residents expect sustainable design
- On site food production
- Shared energy systems e.g. Biomass

About Cohousing:

Social Housing Provision

- Clear evidence of demand, e.g. from Cohousing Network research
- More affordable living costs
- Mutual support suits 'medium need' households more than maximum need
- Scope to address specific needs, e.g.:
 - Active older people
 - Impaired ability (visual, hearing)
 - Springboard support for homeless
- Policy support for cohousing from Housing Corporation, DCLG, UCL research and others

The Precedents

- Cohousing developed in the mid-1960's in Denmark; 5% of all Danish households are cohousing. This is helped by government policy support, recognising its social and environmental benefits
- Cohousing developments can be found elsewhere in Scandinavia and increasingly in the UK, Netherlands and North America

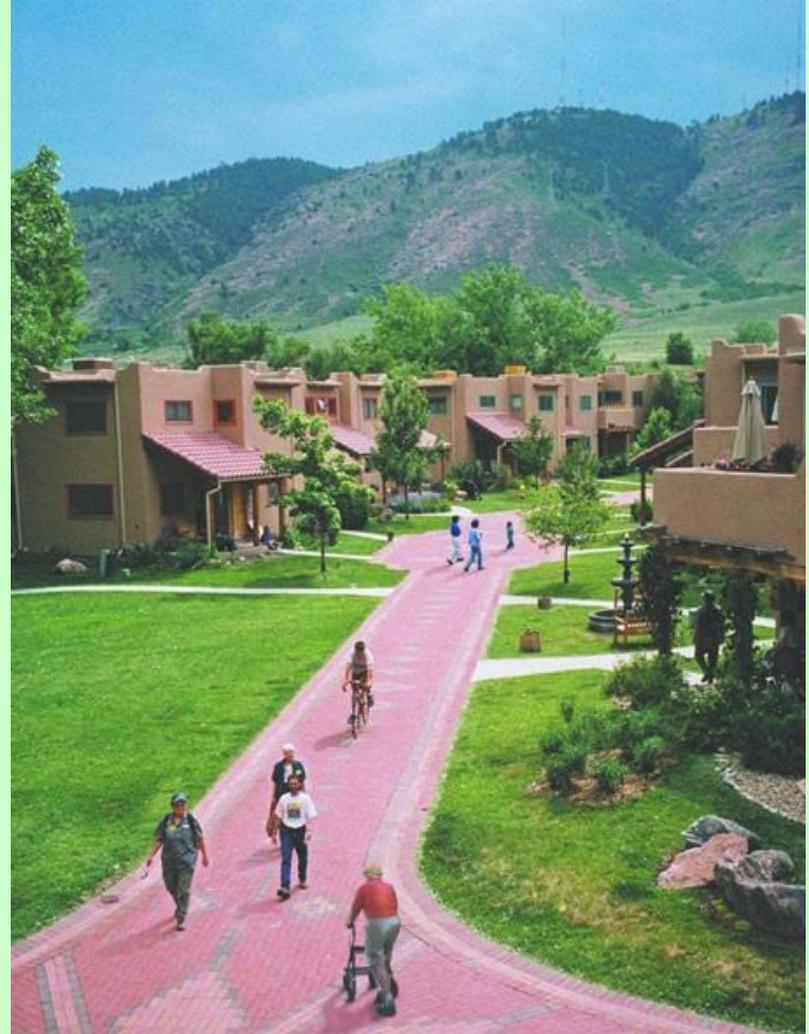


Image source: <http://www.harmonyvillage.org/>

Visitor Education Centre

- Courses and exhibitions in all aspects of sustainable living, such as sustainable housing, energy systems, transport, food production, renewing local communities, social/green enterprises, personal lifestyle, healthy eating and stress management
- Courses for 100 people per day: ½ day to 1 week, plus drop-in visitors
- Will link in with the facilities of the ecovillage and use them as practical showcases
- Facilities can be used by the local community
- Accreditation through partner organisations



**Visitor Education Centre
Main Entrance**

The Ecohotel

- The first purpose-built ecohotel in the UK
- 60 rooms with restaurant, meeting rooms and spa
- A mix of accommodation in lodges and main building
- Ecolodges to be designed as show homes, examples of sustainable building techniques and technology eg straw bale, passive solar, etc
- Target markets will be green and health visitors, education and business clients



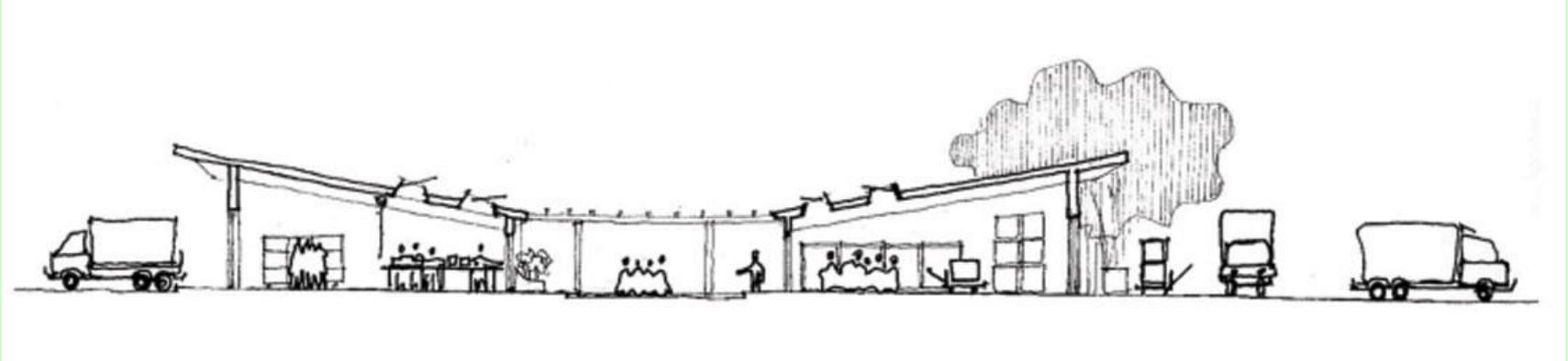
- 1 – Ecohotel**
- 2 – Lodges**
- 3 – Restaurant**
- 4 – Visitor Education Centre**

A Catalyst for Sustainable Green and Health Tourism

The ecohotel and visitor centre can provide the catalyst for a Green Tourism Network for the wider area

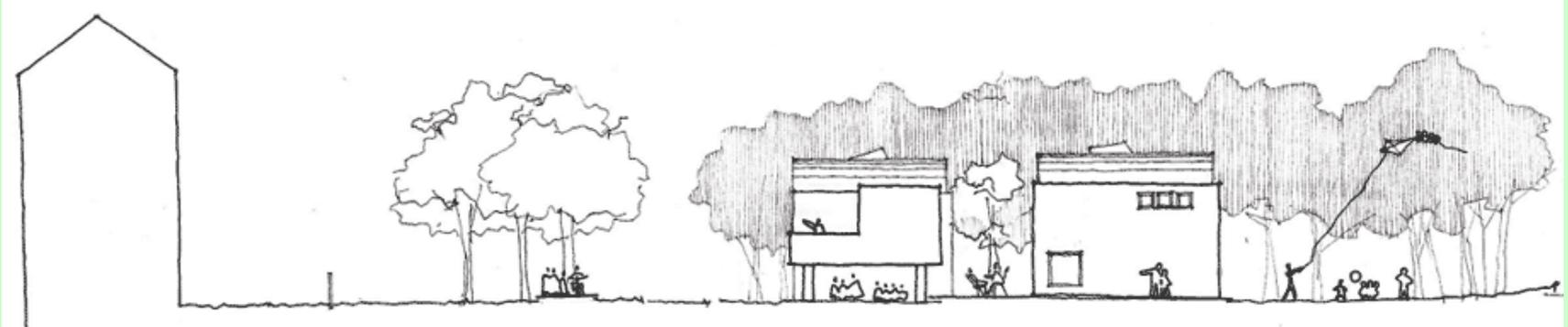
- High interest in green tourism, but minimal product in UK
- Initiate local Green Tourism Business Scheme
- Travel by public transport will be promoted and made easy
- Stays of 2 days – 2 weeks will be encouraged, with local travel by foot, rental bike, public bus and eco shuttles
- The high media profile will support other local green enterprises/accommodation
- Many of the activities promoted will be in the locality not on-site, ensuring economic benefits are shared
- Embracing 'Future Footprints' philosophy of visitor behaviour modification

Green Enterprise Park



- Workspaces for local 'green' and community enterprises:
 - Community services/healthcare
 - Local food and crafts
 - Centre for Creative Ageing
 - Natural Health Practice
- An intrinsic part of visitor experience
- Office accommodation for cohousing residents
- Flexible spaces to support growing enterprises
- Support to social enterprises in the area
- Sized to fit community needs

Community Facilities



- The Ecovillage will be a catalyst to strengthen the local host community
- Actual facilities to be provided will be determined by local needs
- The possible facilities which may be included are:
 - Community meeting space
 - Shared Market Garden and allotments
 - Open space, play area, woodland
 - Sustainable local transport service
 - Support for special needs groups, eg older people, single parents
 - Training in sustainable living and work skills

Site Selection Criteria

- Brown or green field site: brown field preferred
- A location where DEVA can make a significant contribution to the social, economic and environmental needs of the host community
- Significant support from the local authority and from potential stakeholders
- Scope for low impact public transport provision for residents and visitors
- Access capacity for the anticipated visitor numbers
- Full feature ecovillage: 10-18 acres
- Compact urban village: 4-10 acres
- Cohousing community: 1.5-4 acres

Environmental Strategies

Overall aim:

a carbon neutral development exemplar of One Planet Living

Development:

- Main energy systems: biomass CHP for hot water and electricity
- Buildings to use super insulation levels, and materials with low embodied energy (timber, stone, earth)
- High levels of water conservation (e.g. grey water systems, rainwater harvesting)

Living:

- Low carbon footprint
- Shared resources
- Community market garden and local sourcing to cut food miles
- Green Travel Plan for low car use by residents and visitors: community transport and car club used by whole locality

DEVA Key Benefits:

- Sustainable living: resource sharing
- Sustainable tourism and education
- Innovation in affordable housing
- Housing, work and education for the ageing population
- Facilities and services for the host community

Core Skills

KEY AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Cohousing
 - The formation of the cohousing residents' group
 - Evolve their facilities brief
 - Achieve presales to agreed site plans
 - Establish the social cohousing provision with suitable RSL
- Education
 - Define the programmes for day visits and residential courses
 - Specify the facilities
 - Form the partnerships for accreditation and delivery
- Green Tourism
 - Undertake the feasibility appraisal and prepare the business plan
 - Specify the ecohotel and lodge
 - Catalyse local green tourism network
- Social Enterprise: using private sector skills and funding to achieve social and environmental aims.
 - Specify workspaces and services to support social enterprises
 - Help set up specific operations, e.g. Natural Health Centre

The Delivery Mechanism:

- Site appraisal
- Feasibility studies
 - Residential
 - Education
 - Visitor facilities
 - Workspace
- Residents Group and Developer Partners
- Detailed Design and Financial Appraisal

The Dorset Ecovillage

PIONEERING DEVELOPMENTS FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVING

