

Counter offer on homes

AS COUNCIL planners met yesterday (Thursday) to discuss Thorncombe's most controversial development application for years, news was given of an offer which could result in a low-cost starter homes scheme for the village.

Controversial proposals to build 25 homes as well as craft workshops and holiday units on the land of district councillor Mr Jim Atyeo were due to come before West Dorset western area plans sub-committee yesterday.

Residents, angered by the scale of the application on the south west edge of the village at Higher Farm, has protested and resurrected the Thorncombe village trust as a result.

But with area planning officer Mr Derek Price recommending the sub-committee defer a decision until it has visited the site, this was the likely outcome.

Low-cost homes

In the meantime, Mr Brian Maber, a member of the village trust's new committee, has offered 12 acres of his land near Gribb View and Thorncombe village hall to the district council for use as a possible site for low-cost starter homes.

"That is the type of housing our residents want to see — something which will encourage youngsters to stay in the area instead of driving them away," said trust chairman Mr Ron Hawkes.

Mr Maber stressed: "If the council was interested in my land, I would be willing to sell them what they need at a price at which they could be able to build."

Meanwhile a housing appraisal carried out in Thorncombe by the parish council in conjunction with rural development area officials is currently being assessed.

"We had over 80 per cent of the 270 forms returned, which is remarkable," said Mr Hawkes.

The recent interest in potential development of the village stems from the Dorset structure plan which identifies Thorncombe as a priority area where 50-150 dwellings could be built over the next 10 years.