Dunkerton and Tunley – GP, Dental and Healthcare Services Response

This response is submitted on behalf of parishioners in the Dunkerton and Tunley area. The principal concern is the potential effect of substantial housing growth in neighbouring settlements on local residents' access to GP, dental and primary healthcare services, including appointment availability, travel times and pressure on existing services.

The Local Plan should demonstrate that residents of Dunkerton and Tunley will continue to have reasonable access to GP and dental services without longer waiting times, longer journeys or additional pressure on families and older residents.

The Local Plan identifies limited GP provision in Timsbury and states that solutions to GP capacity issues will need to be explored as part of future growth. This is relevant to nearby rural communities including Dunkerton and Tunley which depend on services outside their own settlements.

The concern is that housing growth in Timsbury, Peasedown, Radstock, Midsomer Norton and other nearby areas could increase demand on the same GP and dental services used by Dunkerton and Tunley residents, making appointments harder to obtain and potentially requiring longer journeys.

The Parish Council asks B&NES to show clearly:

- which GP and dental services are expected to serve Dunkerton and Tunley;
- whether those services have sufficient capacity;
- what additional GP, dental or healthcare provision will be required;
- how any necessary expansion will be funded and delivered;
- whether increased demand could force residents to travel further;
- how people without access to a car, particularly older or vulnerable residents, will reach healthcare services.

The Parish Council considers that major housing growth should not proceed ahead of confirmed healthcare capacity. Where additional GP, dental or other healthcare provision is required, it should be secured before the resulting demand arises.