

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

LDF TASK & FINISH GROUP

**Held on Thursday, 28 January 2010 at 2.00 pm in
The Village Hall, Old School Hall, School Lane, East Harling**

PRESENT

Mr D.S. Myers (Chairman)	Mr K. Martin
Mrs M.P. Chapman-Allen	Mr B. Rose
Mr P.J. Duigan	Mr F.J. Sharpe (Vice-Chairman)
Mr A.P. Joel	Mr A.C. Stasiak

Also Present

Mr S. Askew	Mr J.W. Nunn
Mr R. Kemp	

In Attendance

Mark Broughton	-	Scrutiny Officer
Phil Daines	-	Development Services Manager (Capita Symonds for Breckland Council)
Phil Mileham	-	Senior Planning Policy Officer (Capita Symonds for Breckland Council)
Sarah Robertson	-	Planning Policy Officer (Capita Symonds for Breckland Council)
Jamie Smith	-	Environmental Planning Officer (Capita Symonds for Breckland Council)
David Spencer	-	Principal Planning Policy Officer (Capita Symonds for Breckland)
Elaine Wilkes	-	Senior Committee Officer

8/10 INTRODUCTION

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that this was a scrutiny meeting of Breckland Council being held in public but that it was not a public meeting.

Persons entitled to speak were the elected members, the relevant District Ward Members and elected members of the relevant Parish or Town Councils or their Clerks.

This meeting formed part of the LDF consultation process which had been ongoing for some time, with approximately another 18 months to run.

No decisions would be made at this meeting. Ultimately, the proposals would be submitted to the Council's Cabinet in April for approval to go out to public consultation for a six week period. There would be a further consultation period beyond that.

The Chairman outlined the procedures for the meeting, under which the Task and Finish Group would receive the proposals recommended by the officers and would comment thereon and either accept, amend or put forward alternative recommendations.

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9/10 MINUTES

In view of the short time between meetings, the minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2010 were not yet available and therefore would be submitted to the next meeting.

10/10 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. I.A.C. Monson, Mrs. P. Quadling, Mrs. A. Steward and Mrs. L. Turner.

11/10 URGENT BUSINESS

None.

12/10 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

The following declarations were made:

- Mr. A.P. Joel – Personal interest as a member of Old Buckenham Parish Council.
- Mr. A.P. Joel – Personal and prejudicial as a friend of an owner of land currently outside the settlement boundary for Old Buckenham. (Mr. Joel stated he would leave the room if this site came under discussion.)

13/10 NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING

The following Ward Members were in attendance:

- Mr. S. Askew (East Guiltcross Ward)
- Mr. J.W. Nunn (West Guiltcross Ward)

The following Parish Council members were in attendance to make representations:

- Mrs. M. Feakes (Garboldisham)
- Mrs. E. Mould (Harling)
- Mr. P. Edge (Roudham & Larling)
- Mr. E. Wood (Kenninghall)
- Mr. B. Frith (North Lopham)
- Mr. Lotarius (Quidenham)
- Mr. P. Smith (Rocklands)

(Some 50 members of the public also attended during the course of the meeting as observers.)

14/10 SITE SPECIFIC POLICIES & PROPOSALS DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT 2011-2026 REVIEW OF RURAL SETTLEMENT BOUNDARIES - SOUTH EAST PARISHES

The Principal Planning Policy Officer presented the report, which was the last in a series of four, and explained the background to the process dealing with the review of rural settlement boundaries in Breckland as part of the Site Specific Policies and Proposals document under the Local Development Framework.

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The report presented preferred options for a new set of rural settlement boundaries and the views of the Task and Finish Group were being sought on whether there were other reasonable options that Cabinet should consider as part of agreeing a Preferred Options document for public consultation in the Spring.

Settlement boundaries were essentially a policy tool that delineates in plan form coherent and established built-up areas. The purpose of the settlement boundaries was to define and delineate built up areas of villages with some form of service provision. The review would allow for:

- a) removal of settlement boundaries for small rural communities;
- b) retention of settlement boundaries as they are; and
- c) amendment of settlement boundaries to address anomalies and inconsistencies, removal of backland and other inappropriate development opportunities and the inclusion of small scale sites (up to five units) on brownfield and other small sites adjacent to settlement boundaries.

The meeting today was also looking at the residential site allocations for Harling following on from the Group's initial discussions at its meeting held on 22 September 2009 (previous minute 15/09 refers).

The projected timescale for the process was as follows:

The views of the Task and Finish Group would inform the final content of the Preferred Options document to be agreed by the Council's Cabinet. The document would then be subject to a six week public consultation period starting in April 2010.

The results of that public consultation process would be reported back to this Group and Cabinet, leading to a final version of the Preferred Options document being published in October for a further six week period of public consultation. Any unresolved objections at that point would be determined by the Planning Inspector at a Public Examination of the document, when there would be further opportunities for representations to be made in person. It was expected that the final document would be approved towards the end of 2011.

(a) **RESIDENTIAL ALLOCATIONS IN HARLING (APPENDIX A)**

The site allocations for Harling were previously considered by the Group on 22 September 2009, details of which were contained in previous minute reference 15/09. Views were requested on the sites to go forward as preferred and reasonable alternative allocations.

By way of background, it was explained that Harling has been identified as one of four larger villages in the District for modest estate scale growth. The adopted Breckland Core Strategy provides for an allocation of 50 new homes. Allowing for an existing permission for 10 units outside the existing settlement boundary, the remainder left to accommodate was 40 units.

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The approximate land requirement to accommodate 40 houses was 1.3 hectares, with a proposed average density for development of 30 units per hectare.

Corrected plans had been circulated as a supplement to the agenda prior to the meeting.

The details of each site are as contained in Appendix A to the report.

Preferred Allocation

Site H1 – Land to the north of Kenninghall Road, adjacent East Harling Primary School

Since the meeting on 22 September 2009, confirmation had been received from the Education Authority that the adjoining Primary School had sufficient capacity to meet the educational requirements of the village and the new development and that additional land would not be required for the school.

Mrs. E. Mould for the Parish Council confirmed that site H1 was their preferred option.

Reasonable Alternative Options

Site H2 – Residential allocation of land at junction of Garboldisham Road and Lopham Road

The main issue affecting this site was the relationship of any development on the Listed Buildings to the north of the site. In the view of the Council's Historic Buildings Officer, development would be detrimental to the setting and special interest of The Crescent, which was the more significant of the two remaining Grade 2 Listed social housing developments by George Skipper.

A large number of representations in support of this site had been received outside the formal consultation process.

A proposal was made that site H2 be removed as an option on the grounds of the detrimental impact that development would have on the setting of the adjoining Listed Buildings, which were of national importance and should be protected.

Site H3 – Residential allocation of land adjacent to Lopham Road, on the eastern boundary of Harling

No comments made.

Site H4 – Residential allocation of land west of the Glebe

A member was concerned at the impact that additional vehicles from a substantial development of the site could have on Hill Harling Barn Road.

The Principal Planning Policy advised that the Highway Authority had indicated that, given the reduced development area of the site since

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the previous consultation, Hill Harling Barn Road was constructed to a sufficient standard to accommodate the additional traffic.

Site H5 – Residential allocation of land west of The Glebe

No comments made.

Conclusions

- (1) Site H1 be endorsed as the Preferred Allocation for Harling.
- (2) Site H2 be removed as an option on the grounds of the detrimental impact that development would have on the setting of the adjoining Listed Buildings, which were of national importance and should be protected.
- (3) Sites H3, H4 and H5 be endorsed as reasonable alternative options.

(b) **HARLING AND HEATHLANDS WARD (APPENDIX B)**

Brettenham

No representations were made.

Bridgham

A member of the Parish Council enquired what removal of the settlement boundary meant for extensions and outbuildings. Following confirmation that the settlement boundary did not affect such proposals, the Parish Council representative confirmed they had no objection.

No other representations were made.

Gasthorpe (Riddlesworth)

No representations were made.

Garboldisham

Mrs. M. Feakes for the Parish Council stated that the Parish wished to see some small scale development. The amended boundary as proposed was, she felt, cosmetic and offered no real opportunity for the village to expand. She was concerned that the majority of the sites put forward by the Parish Council had not been included. Mrs. Feakes also raised the issue of social housing development in the village and the density of housing on a particular exception site.

The Development Services Manager advised that exception sites fell outside the scope of the matter being considered by the Task and Finish Group. Exception sites were, as the name implied, exceptions to the settlement boundary and had to meet a proven need.

The Development Services Manager stated he was not aware of a formal proposal for the exception site indicated by Mrs. Feakes but

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was happy to investigate the position with the Housing Department and provide the information to the Parish Clerk.

Members asked about village facilities and were informed that there was a primary school and a shop. The village pub was presently vacant but there was a consortium interested in its purchase. The Parish Council would wish to see the pub retained as such in the village.

A member felt the pub facility was something that should be protected and asked whether it was possible to achieve this by excluding it from the settlement boundary.

The Senior Planning Policy Officer replied that while it was not an issue previously raised, the exclusion of the pub was an option as it would not be inconsistent with the landscape character of that part of the village.

A point was also made that the village hall was also a significant facility in the village.

So far as the question of the sites previously put forward by the Parish Council was concerned, the Senior Planning Policy Officer advised that these were considered to conflict with policies in the approved Core Strategy. A number of them would be harmful to the form and character of the village. Hence they had been excluded.

It was proposed that a way forward would be for the officers to consult further with the Parish Council with a view to identifying a site or sites for development (up to 5 dwellings), bearing in mind that there would be a periodic review of the LDF in four to five years' time.

The proposed amendments GA1 and GA2 were supported.

Harling

The Parish Council representatives put forward a case for the inclusion of site HAR.2 on the West Harling Road.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer advised that planning permission for 5 houses on this site had recently been refused on the grounds that it was outside the settlement boundary. The site had not been included in the present review on the basis of concerns that it showed evidence of being a former pit/excavation area and for its wildlife/biodiversity value. The site was also located on the edge of the river valley flood plain.

(Mrs. M. Chapman-Allen declared a personal interest at this point as a family member lived in the area.)

It was noted from the Parish Council representatives that their Council had always supported this site for development. In reply to a question, they stated that they had assumed that the site would not be included in the overall housing allocation for Harling but would fall into the social housing category.

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The Principal Planning Policy Officer advised that the site was one of a number of sites in this location previously identified as unreasonable sites. The site in question could deliver up to five houses and, if included, would be a windfall allocation in addition to the overall allocation. There were no issues with the site from an infrastructure point of view. The objections to development of the site related to issues of landscape and loss of biodiversity value.

The Parish representative stated that from a recent survey of the site, no evidence had been found to support the objections on wildlife grounds.

In support of the Parish Council, a proposition to include HAR.2 as an additional amendment to the settlement boundary was agreed.

Harling Road (Roudham and Larling Parish)

With regard to the General Employment Area, it was explained that there was no evidence of current need for expansion of the site but that the approved Core Strategy contained policies which would enable the expansion of employment in the countryside.

The Chairman of the Parish Council gave his personal view that the removal of the settlement boundary as proposed meant that it would prevent any expansion and the area could stagnate as a result.

It was noted that no formal representations had been received from the Parish Council.

The Chairman of the Parish Council was advised that there would be opportunity for the Parish Council to challenge the proposals during the public consultation period.

Larling

No representations were made.

Roudham

No representations were made.

Rushford

No representations were made.

Conclusion

- (a) Garboldisham – Proposed amendments GA.1 and GA.2 be endorsed. In addition, further consultation take place with the Parish Council to identify other site options to accommodate up to five dwellings, and to agree an amendment to exclude the public house from the settlement boundary.
- (b) Harling – Proposed amendment HAR.1 be endorsed and site HAR.2 be included as an additional amendment.

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- (c) Subject to (a) and (b) above, the remaining recommendations as set out in Appendix B be endorsed as follows:

Brettenham – No settlement boundary (no change)

Bridgham – Delete existing settlement boundary

Gasthorpe (Riddlesworth) – No settlement boundary (no change)

Harling Road – Delete existing settlement boundary

Larling – No settlement boundary (no change)

Roudham – No settlement boundary (no change)

Rushford – No settlement boundary (no change)

(c) **ALL SAINTS WARD (APPENDIX C)**

Great Ellingham

No representations were made.

Little Ellingham

No representations were made.

Rocklands

Mr. P. Smith, Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council, put forward the case for provision of some small housing growth and asked how this might be achieved.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer explained that some of the submitted sites could accommodate more than the limit for up to 5 dwellings and it was difficult to see at first glance an opportunity for that scale of development in an area of open landscape. However, there appeared to be one possible site to the southern end of the village.

Mr. Smith stated that the village had a linear character and he thought it would be a logical step for development along The Street to link the two parts of the village.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer said there would be concerns about developing along such a large area and there were existing concerns about the local water network in the area.

Mr. Smith indicated that the site to the south of the village could be an acceptable option.

It was noted that sites ROC.1 and ROC.4 were presently the subject of appeals against refusal of planning permission. Any further changes to these sites would be subject to the Inspector's decisions on the appeals.

Members supported the proposal for further discussions to take place with the Parish Council on the option to include the site to the south of the village as an additional amendment ROC.5.

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Scoulton

No representations were made.

Conclusion

- (a) Rocklands – Proposed amendments ROC.1 to ROC.4 be endorsed and further discussions take place with the Parish Council regarding an additional amendment to include the site to the south of the village as ROC.5.
- (b) Subject to (a) above, the remaining recommendations contained in Appendix C be endorsed as follows:

Great Ellingham – Amend the settlement boundary as proposed under GE.1 – GE.7

Little Ellingham – Delete existing settlement boundary.

Scoulton – Delete existing settlement boundary.

(d) **BUCKENHAM WARD (APPENDIX D)**

New Buckenham

It was noted that the Parish Council had submitted written comments and was content with the proposed single amendment at NB.1.

No further representations were made.

Old Buckenham

Mr. A.P. Joel reiterated his declaration of a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to a site Old Buckenham and that, if it came under discussion, he would leave the room.

Mr. S. Askew declared a personal and prejudicial in this item and left the room.

A representative for the Parish Council confirmed that his Council was happy to endorse the recommended amendments.

Mr. A.P. Joel, as Ward Member, added that he had some concern that there was no planned growth for Old Buckenham and, bearing in mind the potential impact on the village from future planned growth in nearby Attleborough, he proposed that the position should be reviewed in three years' time with a view to considering some small development sites of 5 dwellings or less to aid the sustainability of the village.

This view was supported by another member, who felt there would need to be some expansion of the village in the future if it was to remain sustainable.

Conclusion

Endorse the recommendations contained in Appendix D as follows:

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New Buckenham – Amend settlement boundary as per NB.1
Old Buckenham – Amend settlement boundary as per OB.1 – OB.8.

(e) **EAST GUILTCROSS WARD (APPENDIX E)**

Banham

In answer to a question, it was confirmed that no written representations had been received from the Parish Council.

Quidenham (Eccles Road)

Mr. Lotarius made representations on behalf of the Parish Council. While the Parish Council was happy with the existing policy of no settlement boundary for Wilby, Hargham and Quidenham, the case was put forward for the inclusion of a site to provide for some natural growth to the existing cluster of housing supporting the school at Eccles Road.

Other factors supporting the need for some provision for growth included the neighbouring employment area at Snetterton, the railway stop, three schools, village hall and proximity to the A11 trunk road.

Mr. Lotarius felt that a further review of the boundary should be made to take account of the special nature and location of the area as outlined above.

A member asked how key workers for the planned housing and employment growth at Attleborough and Snetterton respectively would be met.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer explained that the proposals for Attleborough and Snetterton would be dealt with under the Attleborough and Snetterton Area Action Plan.

So far as the former Council houses at Wilby Road were concerned, there was only limited scope for further development in that location. There was only one developable site and that could accommodate more than the limit of five houses which would not be in line with the approved Core Strategy.

There was some scope for growth to the south of the main village area for the future.

Views were expressed in support of the Parish Council's desire for some limited growth and attention was drawn to a site at Station Farm which was the subject of an existing planning application for nine dwellings.

Mr. Lotarius was asked if the Parish Council supported that application for nine dwellings and replied that it was felt that the village could sustain more than nine. The absence of a settlement boundary meant there was no possibility of development.

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The Chairman suggested the position could be reviewed in three years' time by when the results of the Snetterton expansion would be known.

The Development Services Manager said that he would inform the Development Control team about the Parish Council's views in support of the application for nine dwellings at the Station Farm site.

The Senior Planning Policy Officer advised that policies in the Core Strategy made provision to enable affordable housing to come forward without the need to expand commercial housing allocations.

Snetterton (North End)

Mr. S. Askew, Ward Member, expressed concerns that deletion of the settlement boundary removed any scope for development.

Notwithstanding the reasons for the recommendation to remove the boundary, members supported an alternative option of no change to the existing.

Conclusion

- (a) **Banham** – Endorse recommended amendments to the existing settlement boundary as per BAN.1 and BAN.2
- (b) **Quidenham (Eccles Road)** – Endorse recommendation of no change to existing boundary but note the Parish Council's support for development of nine dwellings at Station Farm and the position be reviewed again in three years' time.
- (c) **Snetterton (North End)** - Proposed deletion of boundary not supported and alternatively recommend that no change is made to the existing settlement boundary.

(f) WEST GUILTCROSS WARD (APPENDIX F)

Blo Norton

No representations were made.

Kenninghall

Mr. E. Wood, Parish Councillor, advised that the Parish Council supported the proposed amendments.

North Lopham

Mr. B. Frith, Chairman of the Parish Council, advised that at the time of the 2008 consultation, the parish view was not to change the boundary and there was no desire for other than small scale developments to support affordable housing needs.

Mr. Frith said he was surprised, therefore, to see so many proposed amendments to the boundary that he felt would affect some 30 to 40 properties in the village and that they would be concerned if they were

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prevented from making any domestic extension or alterations to their property.

The Development Services Manager explained that the proposals did not adversely affect people's rights regarding domestic alterations, e.g. garages or small extensions, etc. This point would need to be made clear in the consultation document.

Mr. Frith commented that the reasoning for some of the boundary changes would not be apparent to people and he felt some of the changes appeared to be inconsistent.

Mr. Frith also stated that the Parish Council had not had the opportunity to consider the proposed changes.

The Chairman felt that the proposed amendments were not out of keeping with what the Parish Council was seeking to achieve. However, there was a need to ensure a defensible settlement boundary to limit the potential for infill and backland development that would harm the form and character of the village.

The Development Services Manager added that the public consultation would give people the opportunity to comment further and that their views would be taken into account carefully.

South Lopham

No representations were made.

Conclusion

The recommendations contained in Appendix F be endorsed as follows:

Blo Norton – Delete existing settlement boundary

Kenninghall – Amend boundary as per KEN.1 – KEN.5.

North Lopham – Amend boundary as per NL.1 – NL.12

South Lopham – Delete existing settlement boundary

15/10 FUTURE MEETINGS

It was agreed that the next meeting be arranged to follow the meeting of the Council on Thursday, 25 February 2010 at a time to be fixed.

The meeting closed at 4.45 pm

CHAIRMAN