

**BRECKLAND COUNCIL**

**At a Meeting of the**

**LDF TASK & FINISH GROUP**

**Held on Tuesday, 3 November 2009 at 9.30 am in  
Memorial Hall, Norwich Street, Dereham**

**PRESENT**

Mr M.A. Kiddle-Morris (Chairman)	Mr D.S. Myers
Mr P.J. Duigan	Mr B. Rose
Mr A.P. Joel	Mr F.J. Sharpe (Vice-Chairman)
Mr K. Martin	Mr A.C. Stasiak
Mr I.A.C. Monson	

**Also Present**

Mr W.P. Borrett	Mrs K. Millbank
Mrs T. Hewett	Mrs A.L. Steward

**In Attendance**

Mark Broughton	- Member Development and Scrutiny Officer
Phil Daines	- Development Services Manager
Phil Mileham	- Senior Planning Policy Officer
Sarah Robertson	- Planning Graduate
Darryl Smith	- Principal Housing Officer (Strategy and Enabling)
David Spencer	- Principal Planning Policy Officer
Elaine Wilkes	- Senior Member Services Officer

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**23/09 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2009 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**24/09 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs. M. Chapman-Allen, Mr. M. Fanthorpe, Mr. R. Goreham and Mrs. L. Turner.

**25/09 URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

**26/09 DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Mr. P. Daines, Development Services Manager, declared a personal interest in item 5 as a resident of Shipdham.

**27/09 BRECKLAND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: SITE SPECIFICS POLICIES AND PROPOSALS - PROPOSED PREFERRED SITES FOR DEREHAM, SHIPDHAM AND SWANTON MORLEY (AGENDA ITEM 5)**

The Principal Planning Policy Officer introduced the report, which sought Members' views on the proposed preferred sites for Dereham,

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Shipdham and Swanton Morley, together with the reasonable alternative sites, both of which would be the subject of further public consultation when the Council publishes its Site Specific Policies and Proposals Preferred Sites Document in 2010.

Members were also asked to consider and confirm those sites identified as unreasonable (i.e. incapable of delivery due to reasons of flood risk, unsafe highway access, environmental considerations, etc.) and therefore not to be further tested in the preparation of the Site Specifics policy document.

The Task and Finish Group then proceeded with an examination of the proposed allocations for preferred, reasonable alternative sites, and list of unreasonable sites as follows (site references in brackets are those used in the Issues and Options and Additional Sites Consultation documents). Details of each site are as contained in the appendices to the report:

(a) **Dereham**

In summary, Dereham had a total housing requirement of 1,971 new homes to meet the levels of growth over the life of the Plan to 2026, together with a requirement for 5-10 hectares of employment land and additional retail floor space. Of the 1,971 new homes requirement, 1,371 had already either been completed or had the benefit of planning permission. Therefore, land for the balance of 600 homes would need to be allocated up to 2026.

The main issues affecting sites in the town were:

- Sewerage capacity
- Employment sites with good access to the A47 trunk road
- Environmental constraints – protected habitat sites etc.
- Highways requirements
- Sensitive landscapes
- High grade agricultural land

Mr. Tony Needham, Clerk to the Dereham Town Council, was in attendance for this item to put the views of the Town Council.

**Preferred Allocations in Dereham (Appendix B)**

**Site D1 [025-15/28/30/32] – Land at the Old Maltings, Norwich Road**

A correction was noted to the amount of open space requirement to read 0.35 hectare.

In answer to a question, it was noted that large scale windfall developments were unlikely to come forward quickly due to the constraints in treating and discharging waste water that affect the town.

Mr. Needham advised that the Town Council wished to see a comprehensive master plan for this site and that it was felt that there should be a larger open space requirement, having regard to the deficit in open space in the town generally.

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The Senior Planning Policy Officer explained that the size of the site was below that which would require a larger on-site open space provision but there would need to be developer contributions towards off-site open space provision.

Mr. Needham confirmed that the Town Council supported the inclusion of Site D1 as a preferred option, subject to satisfactory negotiation of developer contributions for off-site open space provision.

**Site D2 [025-004] – Land off Greenfields Road**

A question was asked about whether Greenfields Road could accommodate traffic from sites D1 and D2 or if it would need to be widened. It was replied that there was an issue with the junctions onto the Norwich Road but that this would need to be looked at as a whole package with the Highways Authority.

A member expressed his concern at the issues associated with residential developments situated very close to major roads and the attenuation measures that would be needed to address problems of noise, fumes and pollution. He felt there should be a buffer zone of at least 50m between major roads and residential developments. Another member referred to similar issues at Swaffham and that proposals for Attleborough showed a buffer zone along the A11.

It was explained that noise would be an issue with any site. However, the policy made provision for attenuation measures, which would need to be worked out when any development on this site came forward, as had been done on similar developments along the A47.

The Development Services Manager pointed out that this site had been allocated for residential development in the previous local plan. Roads had been designed to take account of the potential for development on adjoining land. The need for a 50m buffer zone was questionable but it was accepted that noise was an issue that would need to be taken into account in any development proposals.

A member commented that the surface of the A47 road had been improved in part to reduce noise levels alongside residential development close to the bypass at Toftwood. Where there was no new surface, it would be very important to ensure that attenuation measures were introduced.

For the Town Council, Mr. Needham said his Council supported this site for residential development. It was also an important link in the eastern green corridor with lanes running through the site. Norfolk County Council had previously planned to include these as footpaths in the Definitive Map and this would therefore need to be concluded. The Town Council also supported the creation of a cycleway to provide an important north-south link needed in Dereham.

The importance for the provision of footpaths and cycleways was acknowledged, as was the need for a footbridge over the A47.

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Site D3 [025-022] – Land to the east of Windmill Avenue

The Chairman made the point that attenuation measures would be needed to address issues of noise and light spillage from the floodlights on the nearby Football Club ground.

Another member highlighted the need to protect Shillings Lane and the open space to the north of the site. As development approached this area, he felt landscaping should be required to enhance the biodiversity of the area and to create a community open space.

The Senior Planning Policy Officer responded that such details could be considered at the detailed planning stage.

A question was also asked about whether there was any risk that the required strategic sewer upgrades in the town would not be achieved. The Principal Planning Policy Officer acknowledged there were issues concerning the Dereham sewerage network through the town centre. Developers would have to approach Anglian Water to connect developments to the network and information was available to them and to the Environment Agency to show the level of and where upgrades to the system were required.

The Chairman noted that site D1 provided for delivery after 2014, but no specific timescales were given in policies D2 and D3. He asked whether there was any limit on their coming forward together or separately.

It was replied that sites could come forward sooner rather than later. Given that the preferred option sites were all in the same area, officers considered that development would need to be phased, in order to ensure a stable dwelling supply and allow time for necessary upgrades and other on-site measures to take place.

It was noted that the Town Council supported site D3, subject to the protection of Shillings Lane. Mr. Needham also expressed support for the development of a community area and open space to the north of the site as referred to above.

It was confirmed these issues were provided for in the policy on site D3.

Site D4 [025-008] – Land at Rash's Green Industrial Estate

A member commented that ideally he would have wanted to see this land allocated for recreation use but assumed that was not a viable option. However, even with its allocation for industrial use, he asked whether there would still be developer contributions for open space provision in the area to address the current lack in such provision.

It was explained that the policies did not allow for on-site open space provision in industrial development. It was also unlikely that contributions for off-site open space provision could be achieved.

A member questioned the impact of industrial development on the surrounding residential area and it was explained that any scheme

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would need to be suitably designed, with attenuation measures incorporated. Further controls could also be sought through planning conditions, including controlling use and hours of operation etc.

For the Town Council, Mr. Needham explained that this site had been looked at for residential, rather than employment use. It was located in an area of Toftwood where there was a lack of open space. He also asked whether, under PPG17, it would be appropriate to put allotments near to industrial land to create a buffer to residential areas.

The Senior Planning Policy Officer emphasised that this land was not formally identified for open space. Although the area was informally used by people for recreational purposes, there was no official right of access and the owners of the land had not put forward the site for such delivery. The site was not considered reasonable for residential use for the reasons as given in the report.

**Site D5 – Land to the south of Dereham Business Park**

It was noted the Town Council supported this site for commercial use.

**Conclusion**

- (a) In relation to site D2, the importance for the provision of footpaths, cycleways and a footbridge crossing over the A47 is acknowledged.
- (b) With regard to site D3, the need to ensure the protection of Shillings Lane, together with the enhancement of biodiversity and development of a community area and open space to the north of the site, be noted.
- (c) Subject to (a) and (b) above, the preferred sites allocations for Dereham are endorsed.

**Reasonable Alternative Options in Dereham**

**Site D6 [025-012] – Land at Garden Centre, Shipdham Road, Toftwood**

A member commented that development of this site would add to the existing congestion on Shipdham Road. However, it was explained that the Highways Authority had raised no concerns in that respect.

Mr. Needham stated that the Town Council supported some limited development on this site but notes the constraints relating to the impact on the Tud valley and other sensitive landscape issues.

**Site D7 [025-001 & 013] – Land at Dumpling Green**

Concerns were raised by members about the over-capacity of this site, well in excess of the overall housing requirement for the town, and in regard to existing traffic congestion problems which would be exacerbated by development of the site.

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The Town Council had objected to development of the site for reasons of diversity, infrastructure, poor traffic access and poor access for services.

**Site D8 [025-001, 012 & 013] – Land west of Drayton Hall Lane, Scarning**

The Town Council objected to this site on grounds of its distance from the town's services.

It was noted that no representations had been received from Scarning Parish Council, who had also been invited to this meeting.

**Site D9 [025-014] – Lane at Hoe Road (Northall Green)**

Mr. Needham reported that the Town Council objected to this site on grounds of poor vehicular access to the site and the A47, as well as increasing traffic congestion in the town.

**Site D10 [025-002, 006 & 007] – Land at Swanton Road**

The Town Council objected to this site on highway grounds and that there was no pedestrian access.

**Site D11 [025-018] – Land east of Dereham Business Park**

A member suggested this site might be more useful for accommodating commercial/industrial use that would otherwise not be suitable for site D5.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer confirmed that site D11 was being looked at as a strategic reserve site for light industrial, storage use if required but that there was another out of town site identified for more 'un-neighbourly' uses.

The Town Council supported the site as proposed but, as in the case of site D2, the site also formed an important part of the town's eastern green corridor which would need to be accommodated in any design for the site, as well as the need for a bridge crossing to create a north-south footpath link across the A47.

**Conclusion**

- (a) In the case of sites D7 and D8, members were agreed that the sites were too large and given the constraints on each site and the Town Council's objections, that they were unreasonable as presently proposed. However, it was felt that consideration could be given to reduced residential development on the sites of, say, 200 – 250 homes and that the area of the two sites should be reduced accordingly and re-assessed. It was accepted that the Cabinet would be the arbiter on the sites as proposed and as re-assessed.
- (b) Support is given to site D11 as a strategic reserve site for light industrial or storage use.

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- (c) Subject to the exception of sites D7 and D8 as in (a) above, the remaining sites identified as reasonable alternative options for Dereham are endorsed.

**List of Unreasonable Sites – Dereham (Appendix A)**

The sites in question were those with the numbered prefix 025 or 083.

In answer to a question, it was confirmed that the list of unreasonable sites would be included in the final submission documents.

**Conclusion**

The list of unreasonable sites in Dereham as contained in Appendix A is endorsed.

In concluding this section, the Chairman informed the meeting of representations received from Dereham Ward Members Michael Fanthorpe and Robin Goreham as follows:

1. "We would draw your attention to our initial representations (in a letter to Andrea Long dated 5 June 2008).
2. As in our earlier representation, our preferred option for sizeable residential development remains the area of land behind Nursery Buildings and the old CMC Warehouse (off Norwich Road). An access road, alongside the Mid Norfolk Railway, already exists and lends itself readily to upgrading.
3. We believe that the area of land adjacent to the Breckland Council offices, on the Dumpling Green/Yaxham Road side, should be given over to light industrial usage only.
4. We continue to highlight the lack (surfeit) of green open spaces, particularly in Toftwood and south Dereham. We hope that, as part of any future developments, land can be set aside as green open space and/or plan and recreation areas to redress this situation.
5. We would have grave concerns about any future major developments off Scarning Road/Draytonhall Lane. The current access to the A47, via Draytonhall Lane, borders on the dangerous now – any further development here would serve to exacerbate already existing problems.
6. As in our earlier representation, we categorically oppose any residential development of the Dereham Hospital site. We firmly believe that any development here should be with the aim of enhancing the medical and clinical facilities of the hospital."

(b) **Shipdham**

Mrs. Sylvia Tuck, together with Mr. Michael Shelly, was in attendance to represent the views of Shipdham Parish Council.

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**List of Unreasonable Sites in Shipdham (Appendix A)**

The sites in question were those with the numbered prefix 085.

It was noted that site 085-033 had been formally withdrawn by the applicant.

In regard to site 085-024 – Land at Bradenham Road, the Ward Member had questioned the site's classification as unreasonable and it was explained that it was included as an unreasonable site on grounds of unsafe highway access, backland development and amenities issues.

For the Parish Council, Mrs. Tuck reported her Council's views as follows:

- Small developments on sites 024 and 050 had merits as small sites for immediate development.
- Sites 048 and 024 would maintain the linear nature of the village.
- Site 005 offered a logical site and members disagreed with its rejection on grounds of access.

In reply, it was explained that site 024, located to the rear of Bradenham Road, lay outside the settlement boundary.

Site 005 was a former gravel/sand working located on Mill Road and was still a pit but now extensively wooded, with vegetation giving it a biodiversity value. There was a highways constraint affecting access at the junction of Mill Road and the A1075, plus issues of visibility.

For these reasons, sites 005 and 024 were considered to be unreasonable.

**Conclusion**

The list of unreasonable sites for Shipdham as contained in Appendix A is endorsed.

**Preferred Sites in Shipdham (Appendix C)**

**Site SH1 – Coal Yard and associated buildings, north of Chapel Street**

In answer to questions, the following details were noted:

- Relocation of businesses would be required but there were alternative sites available to enable the businesses to be retained within the village.
- The site was understood to be in a single ownership but that it had been presented for inclusion by two separate agents. In this connection, the wider alternative SH8 site, which included SH1, was in two separate ownerships.

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- The wooded area included in the original submission had been excluded on grounds of landscape and amenity value.

The Parish Council's views on this site were that it was fronted by buildings which fell within the Conservation Area of the village and that much more information was required on the question of access onto the A1075. It was also felt that the proposal raised the question of the extension of the village outside the existing boundaries, contrary to the existing linear character.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer advised that the Ward Member had also raised issues regarding access to the site. Advice from the Highways Authority was that the proposal offered the opportunity to provide a strategy to service sites SH1 and SH2 but that this would involve a partial realignment of the road and the loss of some frontage buildings.

So far as the Conservation Area was concerned, it was felt the proposal offered the opportunity to enhance the character of this part of the village, where currently there was a mix of building styles and uses.

Regarding the linear form of the village was concerned, the existing business site already extended beyond this.

Mrs. Tuck responded that there was an inconsistency in the approach to this site as compared to others that had been excluded.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer replied that while it was recognised that this site went beyond the existing linear form, the opportunities that would be afforded by the re-development of the site outweighed the linear issue.

In answer to a final question, it was explained that the inclusion of the field to the top of the site offered greater flexibility to accommodate 50 houses, together with 960 sq. metres of children's play area provision. If that plot was to be deleted, it would impact on the development opportunities for the remainder of the site.

Site SH2 – Land to the south of Chapel Street, formerly Thomas Bullock School Playing Field

Mrs. Tuck advised that the Parish Council raised the following concerns:

- Direct access from this site onto the A1075, together with site SH1, would result in some 80 homes adding a possible 160 vehicles onto the road at peak times, on what was an existing very busy road.
- Clarification was also sought as to the type of housing proposed for the site – there was a covenant on the site requiring publicly-owned social housing
- The site was known to have drainage problems and there were questions about other infrastructure issues.

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- The Parish Council questioned why the site was excluded from the preliminary consultation process but was now included as a preferred site. It was noted that the Abel development was also excluded from the current document, raising questions of inconsistency of approach.

In reply to the latter point, the Principal Planning Policy Officer explained that SH2 was a late application to the process. At the time of the previous consultation, the site was not formally tested by the Council as it was already situated within the settlement boundary, although there was no existing planning permission. The housing allocation for this site would come off the overall housing requirement for the village, i.e. it would contribute to the overall requirement for 100 dwellings in the village. It was considered the village could accommodate 100 new homes in addition to existing permissions.

So far as the covenant on the site was concerned, the Principal Housing Officer explained that this referred to the development of the site by the Council and was for affordable housing, rather than just 'social'. The current affordable housing policy sought 40% affordable housing provision on development sites but this was open to negotiation with the Trustees of the site.

It was also explained that there was an alternative access option for the site through adjoining land controlled by a partner organisation, which would improve the options for development of the site. It was hoped this option could be confirmed in time for it to be included when the proposals went forward to Cabinet.

A member asked about the demand for social housing in the village. The Principal Housing Officer explained that there were currently 2700 applicants on the housing register for the whole district. Applicants could seek to be housed in any area. To assess specific demand in the parish, the Council would require a needs survey to be carried out. Information from the housing register showed that some 90 applicants had expressed a desire to live in the village.

Mrs. Tuck also raised the need to look further at the question of public transport provision. The existing bus service was infrequent and did not go direct to Norwich.

It was explained that transport needs were included as part of the consideration of the village as a Local Service Centre. The village's status as a Local Service Centre put an onus on public transport providers to improve provision.

A member wondered whether, with the loss of shops, the village should still qualify as a service centre. He also felt the site offered a valuable green space that he felt would be a loss of amenity if the site were developed for housing.

The Principal Housing Officer advised that the covenant ran with the land, although the covenant could be open to challenge or negotiation with the Trustees for alternative options.

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Mrs. Tuck stated that there was a view within the village to see the site retained as green space.

A member asked if the site was not considered, would it remain as informal open space.

It was replied that the site was effectively white land with no protection in the Local Plan at present. It was currently used informally.

All options for use of Council-owned land were considered in the first instance through the Council's Capital and Asset Management Working Group. The Council's current view was that the site was capable of development.

Alternative options would need to be looked at and reported back to the Cabinet for consideration in the New Year.

If site SH2 was removed, it would be necessary to look at the alternative sites to replace the 30 dwellings allocated under SH2.

**Site SH3 – Land to the south of Park Estate**

The Parish Council supported this proposal but noted that many school pupils would take the walking route which was probably less than the 1.5km distance stated in the report. The walking route was a designated safer route to school under Norfolk County Council provisions.

**Conclusion**

- (a) Having regard to the objections noted on site SH2, the Tash & Finish Group was of the view that alternative options, including the designation of the site as open space, should be considered and the results reported to Cabinet.
- (b) With the exception regarding site SH2 in (a) above, the proposed preferred options SH1 and SH3 are endorsed.

**Reasonable Alternative Options for Shipdham**

**Site SH4 – Residential allocation of land to the west of Old Post Office Street**

The Parish Council did not consider this site to be remote from the village, being approximately the same distance as site SH3. The Parish Council therefore felt the approach to these sites was not consistent. SH4 was currently detrimental to the visual amenity of the area and it was felt development of the site would enhance the area. There was a planned pedestrian crossing near this point as part of the safer route to school at Threeways, which the Parish Council felt further supported the suitability of the site for development.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer advised that the arguments on distance of sites SH3 and SH4 were finely balanced. It was felt SH4 was a reasonable alternative to consult on.

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Site SH5 – Residential allocation of land to the west of Old Post Office Street and land to the east of Little Hale Road

No comments were made.

Site SH6 – Residential allocation of land south of A1075

No comments were made.

Site SH7 – Residential allocation of land south of A1075 and to the rear of Walnut Meadow

No comments were made.

Site SH8 – Residential allocation of land to the north of Chapel Street

No comments were made.

Site SH9 – Residential allocation of land to the rear of 68-74 Market Street

The Parish Council's view was that this site offered only limited potential for development.

It was noted that there would be further consultation on this site as a reasonable alternative development option.

Site SH10 – Residential allocation of land to the south of Larwood Way

The Parish Council considered this to be a sensible alternative option. The site had two access points. So far as sustainability issues were concerned, these were felt to be the same as for site SH2.

Site SH11 – Residential allocation of land to the west of Swan Lane

A member expressed the view that this site offered potential for executive-type dwellings along its frontage.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer confirmed that the site would indicate its suitability for low density development that would point towards that type of development.

Mrs. Tuck advised that the Parish Council considered there was no barrier to development of this site and that it was reasonably accessible.

Site SH12 – Residential allocation of land to the north of the A1075

A view was put against such sites that would take up the whole required allocation.

No other comments were made.

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Site SH13 – Residential allocation of land to the north of the A1075

No comments were made.

Conclusion

Subject to the conclusions above regarding the preferred option site SH2, the sites identified as reasonable alternative options for Shipdham be endorsed.

In closing this section, the Chairman drew attention to the representations received from the Ward Member, Mr. Paul Hewett, which had been circulated to members of the Group prior to the meeting and are set out below:

“Overall, I believe the process of identifying the preferred sites and alternative sites to be sound subject to the following:

1. The report in general is not written in a balanced style, which is unfortunate. Preferred sites are promoted strongly as such, with weaknesses and outstanding issues simply glossed over. At the same time, “alternative sites” stress significant weaknesses even though they carry many of the identified characteristics and strengths of the “preferred sites”. Given the importance of the report for future consultation it is important to avoid the charge of “style bias”.
2. There are also some frustrating inconsistencies in the approach of the report. Where “needs must”, sites are rejected or criticised because they are too far from the village centre. At other times, though, sites are criticised as adversely impacting on the “linear” character of the village. Of necessity, these two determinants are in conflict. I believe the report and methodology requires a more consistent approach to avoid subsequent confusion or challenge.
3. I do not understand the reference to “housing permitted outside the existing settlement boundary – 0” in para 3.3.1. Following much consultation and discussion, Shipdham is designated a key service centre capable of supporting moderate growth, which includes (as the village and I understood the case to be) some modification to the existing boundaries. Perhaps this could be clarified on Tuesday.
4. I do not understand why development within Shipdham is expected to come forward in the period to 2014 per para 3.3.10. This is the first mention of this date. It also would seem to preclude more detailed examination of suitable sites (eg SH10) due to time constraints. Why the sudden urgency, and when has this been mentioned in the past as a part of the assessment process?
5. The butchers referred to in 3.3.11 closed over a decade ago, and bakery shut a number of years ago.
6. Appendix A refers to a number of unacceptable sites, some of which sit well within the description of the “linear” nature of the village (eg, (085)024 which matches SH3 in size and position, and (085)048. As mentioned in 2. above, I believe there needs to be a more consistent approach to site identification and refusal.

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7. Appendix C – approved sites. These seem sensible. However, the impact of traffic onto the A1075 from both SH1 and SH2 combined needs to be thoroughly addressed. In the past, NCC highways have advised me that access to the A1075 from the Old School Playing Field (SH2) was unsafe and would be objected to. Other comments:
  - a. SH1 – I am perplexed about the final shape of the plot
  - b. SH2 – this is a very contentious site for development for the village and I would be keen to see all alternative options considered before it was submitted as a “quick fix” to housing needs on the grounds that the LPA owned the land. This site will trigger off a great deal of emotive discussion.
  - c. SH3 – sensible but distances in the report are out. There is a NCC designated “safer highways to school” route which avoids the main A1075. I am surprised that a nearby site (085)024 was so quickly dismissed given that it is of a similar size and location.
8. Appendix C – alternative sites. Some of these would be more sensible than they first appear, but the style of the report is too dismissive. In particular:
  - a. SH4 is a sensible site, utilising brown field land over Greenfield (unlike SH3) and is less than 100m from SH3 (but is described as being too “remote” to be preferred). Incidentally, NCC are exploring a crossing in this area as a part of the “safer route to school” plans and general highways plans, reflecting the numbers of children in the area who attend the local school.
  - b. SH10 seems a sensible extension to the existing road structure in the area. The reference to insufficient time for development is spurious, as that would be the developer’s prerogative (not BDC’s), and BDC have (apparently) arbitrarily imposed a new deadline of 2014.
  - c. SH11 seems a sensible extension to the existing properties on that side of Swan Lane. The small scale of any development (which surely would be supported by Highways) should not preclude a more balanced consideration.
  - d. SH6, SH7, SH12, SH13. I am surprised to see these on a preferred list as they appear far too far from the centre of the village, break all the apparent rules of “linearity”, are not in keeping with the rest of the site proposals, nor with the express wishes of the village in its submissions both on the site specifics and more general comments on the development of the village as a Key Service Centre submitted previously.”

(c) **Swanton Morley**

Mr. Atterwill was in attendance to represent the views of Swanton Morley Parish Council.

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**List of Unreasonable Sites (Appendix A)**

The sites in question were those with the numbered prefix 098.

Mr. Atterwill advised that the Parish Council was in agreement with the list of unreasonable sites.

**Conclusion**

The list of unreasonable sites for Swanton Morley as contained in Appendix A is endorsed.

**Preferred Sites in Swanton Morley (Appendix D)**

**Site SM1 – Land at Gooseberry Hill**

It was emphasised that this site would require careful development which was reflected in the wording of the policy.

A member asked the officers to explain how they had differentiated between the preferred option sites and reasonable alternatives in relation to the distance of the sites from village services and facilities.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer referred to the plan, which showed that the village had a dispersed character, with key facilities and services similarly dispersed. It was felt that sites SM1 and SM2 were located centrally to these dispersed key facilities and services.

Mr. Atterwill stated that the Parish Council disagreed with that view and that the village survey had identified site SM4 as the preferred site for housing.

Furthermore, the Parish Council felt there would be a considerable visual impact on the green open space in the centre of the village. Access would have to be south of the village rather than from Town Street, which would put it very close to the playing field and would pose an accident risk.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer replied that the Highways Authority had visited the site and agreed that access would have to be from the southern end of Gooseberry Hill, which would put it close to the play area. However, precise details would be subject to negotiation.

Mrs. K. Millbank pointed out that the Historic Houses Association had raised concerns regarding the impact of overlooking on the adjoining Grade 2 Listed Building, as well as other issues of the impact on the building from the proximity of development on this site.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer advised that the Association's concerns had been received and had been taken into account. Advice had been taken from the Council's Historic Buildings Officer, who confirmed that development of site SM1 was not ruled out provided the development reflected the setting of the property. Development of this site need not extend to the hard edge of

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Gooseberry Hill. A balanced development would be required to take account of the various needs of the area.

In answer to question, it was noted that the policy provided for an average density of 22 dwellings on the site but that was not to say that it would not be higher. However, anything with a density in excess of 35 across the whole site would be contrary to Development Plan Policies. Breckland's local planning policies reflected local circumstances and the policy in SM1 was in line with that.

Mr. Atterwill reiterated that his Parish Council was opposed to development of this site.

**Site SM2 – Land to the west of Manns Lane**

Mr. Atterwill explained that the Parish Council had strong concerns about road access to this site. The road was narrow, with no passing areas and would require significant upgrading. Development of the site would increase traffic movements, especially at school peak times. For these reasons, the site was considered unsuitable for additional housing.

The Chairman commented that the viability of the site for development would depend on the developer being able to make the necessary road improvements.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer accepted the points made but it was felt that development of the site afforded opportunities to improve footpath and road links.

Mr. Atterwill stated that the Parish Council considered site SM4 to be a better alternative. Site SM2 was felt to be detrimental to the village on road safety grounds. It was felt that any developer would be constrained by the costs of road improvements.

**Reasonable Alternative Options**

**Site SM3 – Residential allocation of land to the east of Manns Lane**

The Parish Council did not support this option on traffic grounds, which it was felt made the site unviable. It was also felt that there would be too many houses in that location.

The Chairman queried whether, if sites SM1 and SM3 were combined, the total number of dwellings could be reduced.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer explained that the sites together were too large. The preferred option was site SM1, with SM3 as a reasonable alternative.

Members were asked if they wished to look at splitting the sites even further to give two points of access. However, this had not been put forward for landscape reasons. In view of the Parish Council's objections to this site, the Chairman felt such an option could not be supported.

**Action By**

**Site SM4 – Residential allocation of land to the south of Rectory Road**

This site would require highway improvements on Rectory Road and footpath links into Town Street.

Environmental Health officers were presently being consulted for their views on the proximity of the site to the adjoining industrial site.

Mr. Atterwill confirmed that this was the Parish Council's preferred site and that a survey of all residents resulted in a 79% majority of respondents in favour of this site to accommodate the whole 50 dwellings allocation for the village. The site was felt to be the most appropriate location with the least visual impact.

In answer to a question, it was confirmed that the policy could be revised to provide for phased development.

Mr. Atterwill added that there were a number of other very positive points to support SM4 as a preferred option. These included:

- Harkers Lane gave access to the heart of the village and the school and to the village hall and could be promoted as a pedestrian and cycle route to the school
- Development of housing on this site would minimise traffic problems that would occur from site SM1.
- The village bus service was well used by residents to travel to the doctors' surgery

In addition, Mr. Atterwill said he understood that Norfolk County Council were to commence a scheme this year to widen Town Street and the Rectory Road footpath to join Town Street, which made the site more favourable.

As Breckland officers were not aware of the latter point, Norfolk County Council would be consulted on how this impacted on the assessment of the site.

In answer to a question about the current level of business use on the adjoining site, it was noted that use had reduced since the closure of the Mill Bakery and that there was currently minimal noise impact from the site.

**Site SM5 – Residential allocation of land to the south-east of Dereham Road**

The Parish Council did not support this site on grounds of its distance from village facilities and services.

No other comments were made.

**Site SM6 – Residential allocation of land to the north-west of Greengate**

The Parish Council concurred with the view that this formed back land development and therefore it was not supported. It would be

necessary to cross the A47 to gain access to village facilities from this site.

No other comments were made.

Site SM7 – Residential allocation of land between Primary School and Village Hall

The Parish Council objected to this site on grounds of access.

No other comments were made.

Conclusion

Having noted all views as given above in regard to both preferred and reasonable alternative options, the Task and Finish Group takes the view that site SM4 should replace sites SM1 and SM2 as the single preferred option and that sites SM1 and SM2 should be recommended as reasonable alternative options.

**28/09 NEXT MEETING**

The arrangements for the next meeting on 25 November 2009 were noted.

The meeting closed at 1.05 pm

**Action By**

CHAIRMAN