

Necton Parish Council

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Report of: The Parish Council

To: Local Plan Working Group – 03 February 2017

Author: Gabrielle Joyce, Parish Clerk

Subject: Selection of preferred development sites in Necton

Purpose: To assist the working group in their deliberations on changes to the housing distribution and proposed allocations in respect of Necton.

Recommendation:

That the preferred and alternative site listing be amended to incorporate the considered views of the Parish Council and the residents of Necton as identified in this report.

That the Working Group considers the impact of the inadequate A47 junction infrastructure when deciding on future housing distribution within Necton.

Background

Following the LPWG meeting of 14 December 2016, where it was agreed to invite an informal meeting with some Parish Councils to discuss potential allocation changes to reflect consultation responses, delegates from our Council, Chairman, Cllr. Matthews and Clerk, Gabrielle Joyce, attended a meeting with Sarah Robertson, Senior Planning Policy Officer (Capita) and a colleague on 4 January 2017. The following points represent the content of this meeting:

- Historic England has stated a case for conservation of heritage assets on preferred site LP[067]010 (Erne Farm farmhouse and barns). This is a matter also being considered within the planning process on the current application (3PL/2016/0983/O) for development.
- Environment Agency has stated a case for removal of preferred site LP[067]007 on Hale Road on the grounds of significant flood risk (surface water & alluvial risk).
- The Chairman and Clerk acknowledged these new findings and suggested that should there be a need to find alternative sites within the village, that site LP[067]008, adjacent to old garden centre be considered.
- They acknowledged that protection of an historic asset would be beneficial for the village, but the risk of the site becoming derelict should be minimised. They suggested

that this site be retained in the local plan but with conditions incorporated for preserving the heritage assets.

- The Chairman reiterated that inclusion of sites LP[067]005 and LP[067]003 (sites behind Brackenwoods) would not be acceptable to the parish or residents.
- The allocation shortfall may already be covered in part by windfall development since the last site count and as the local plan is a district wide plan, it was suggested by the officer that shortfall may be accommodated in another area.
- The outcomes of this meeting will be incorporated into the officer's report to Breckland Council for the next working group meeting (3 February 2017).

The reader is also referred to Necton Parish Council's report of 12 July 2016 to this group.

Current status

Capita's Senior Planning Policy Officer's report to the LPWG makes comment and recommendation on a revised site selection and housing allocation for Necton, which does not fully accord with the Parish Council's understanding of the informal discussions of 4 January 2017.

Site Selection

LP[067]005 & LP[067]003 Ramm's Lane: Both of these sites have restricted access with routes only through existing estates or a single track road. Ramm's Lane is a single track, primarily used as an amenity route for walkers. The Parish Council have recently invested in the installation of a trod along Hale Road to provide a circular walk encompassing Ramm's Lane, supporting the Council's aim to promote healthy lifestyle choices. They have also committed to further infrastructure improvements, promoting the lane as a 'quiet lane', within the NCC Parish Partnership Scheme. This area forms part of a rural outlook for a significant number of existing properties. It is also an area of outdoor green space for the village. Recent findings of a Breckland Council commissioned report identified that Necton has insufficient open space provision for its current capacity. Removal of these two sites would reduce the quality of life for neighbouring residents.

Site LP[067]005 was previously identified as NC08 in the SHLAA 2014, where it was recognised that there was only "*one point of access from Brackenwoods, which may not be suitable for a site of this size.*"

See Appendix 1 of our previous report for further detail.

- **Recommendation:** That these two sites be removed entirely from the Local Plan Site Allocations.

LP[067]010 North Pickenham Road: Historic England has identified significant and as yet unprotected historic assets on this site. The Parish Council would wish to see these assets protected, whilst also ensuring that the site does not remain derelict and become another beacon of neglect similar to the one that currently sits at the entrance to the village (Old Diner Site).

- **Recommendation:** that this site be maintained a ‘preferred’ site but with the inclusion of conditions to protect and preserve the historical assets.

LP[067]007 Hale Road: Environment agency recommends the removal of this site on the grounds of surface water risk. Necton has significant history of flooding as a direct consequence of inadequate surface water management planning in developments and understand the cautious approach to future site allocations, however, risk can be effectively managed through technology with the only restricting factor being the economic cost and benefit to a future developer, which is not a considering factor for the Local Plan.

Within the Local Plan preferred site options consultation of September 2016, Sustainability Appraisal Objectives, the flood risk of this site was identified and the appraisal states *“this would have to be managed through the planning process”* indicating that it need not be considered a reason for removal from site allocation.

- **Recommendation:** That this site be maintained as an alternate site.

LP[067]011 North Pickenham Road: This site has direct access to a main road and close proximity to village services. It is situated on the eastern side of the village and development on this side would balance the village on either side of its main road.

- **Recommendation:** that this site remain a preferred site.

LP[067]008 adjacent to A47: This site is adjacent to a recently agreed new development. There may be potential to introduce a slip road from the A47 west-bound carriageway and a larger scale development may qualify for some s278 contribution to this.

This site was previously identified as NC10 in the SHLAA 2014, where it was stated that *“taking into account a buffer from the A47.....and areas needed for road improvements it is viable that this site could provide enough area for 19 houses.”*

- **Recommendation:** That this be upgraded to a ‘preferred’ should there be a requirement to include more housing allocation with Necton.

Housing Distribution

The above site selection provides the following new allocation potential:

LP[067]010 North Pickenham Road	20 dwellings
LP[067]007 Hale Road	30 dwellings
LP[067]011 North Pickenham Road	25 dwellings
LP[067]008 adjacent to A47	19 dwellings

This provides 94 dwellings, significantly more than the new allocations figure (75) as detailed in Table 2 Housing Distribution contained within the Officer’s report to LPWG 3

February 2017. This buffer would easily accommodate a reduction on LP[067]010 to consider historic assets.

Looking at the housing distribution for Necton in relation to that of the other Local Service Centres (LSC), the following points are noted:

- The village has the highest development requirement figure at 301 and now being moved by Officers to increase to 306 during 2011 – 2036. By comparison, Shipdham has a revised figure of 271, although it is better facilitated for growth with existing services, public transport and infrastructure links.
- With 74 completions since 2011, the remaining commitments for delivery by 2036 is 157 – the highest number of new dwellings still to be built in a LSC. Add to this a proposed further 75 new dwellings, ensures that Necton will remain in a state of development for the remainder of the plan as it builds 232 dwellings.

The Parish Council has always recognised the need for some development within the village and has worked with Breckland Council during the entire consultation process on the Local Plan, commencing back in November 2014.

However, there appears to be no consideration of the impact this development will have on the existing infrastructure – primarily the A47 junction, which serves not just Necton, but is a public transport route between Watton and Swaffham.

The Parish Council continues to discuss with Norfolk County Council and Highways England, initiatives and opportunities to upgrade and improve this junction. Assistance from Breckland Council in the form of reflective decisions on the housing allocation for Necton in the emerging Local Plan would go some way to mitigating the problem in the short-term for our residents and the wider community.