

Bungay NDPSG response to Waveney draft Local Plan, 2017

This response is based in part on the public responses we have been receiving over three consultation periods: December 2016, February 2017 and September 2017. We have used questionnaires in the last two and will be in a position to analyze the full response after the end of October. Some of the topics people brought up in face-to-face discussions on the consultation days. The present NDP consultation phase is spread over two months, after which time a more considered report will be available. All the points raised in what follows come under the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012). It is independent and separate from the response of Bungay Town Council.

The main concern with the plan, as it stands, is that very little beyond statements of intent is written in regarding the upgrading of the infrastructure of the town. It also appears that there is a lack of background knowledge of the situation in Bungay: for instance, there seems to be no recognition that Maltings Meadow sports fields (the Pavilion) are situated in South Norfolk, not Waveney. The directors of the sports fields have not been consulted about this development and indeed there is no physical space to put in such a pitch. There is also no indication what impact this will have on Bungay over the next 30 years. Equally, the contradiction of an expanding surgery and a community centre on the adjacent site does not seem to have been spotted (WLP5.2 infrastructure requirements). These infrastructure issues must be addressed with greater vigour, even if the numbers of new houses to be built to the south of the town are only partially fulfilled. There seems to be a particular lack of concern about the future developments in Ditchingham and Earsham, both in South Norfolk, but both of which will have a significant impact on Bungay's infrastructure.

We are becoming conscious in our survey of local people's views that the following are also great areas of concern:

- **Housing:** the design quality of any new housing should be made the central focus. In addition, a mix of housing types is necessary, specifically small houses, starter homes, social housing, easy access housing and sheltered housing. Larger homes are also required to maintain a balance of accommodation and of income spread. We feel that plot 209 on an earlier version of the plan (see the current Appendix for Bungay) should be reconsidered for development. This would have access through the other allocated sites, WLP5.2 and that already allocated for development round the swimming pool. All access would then be onto St John's Road from the west. A supermarket could be incorporated into the site. Remove WLP5.1 as a development site because of water drainage difficulties of the sloping terrain to the Tin River. Appropriate land should be made available for green space, as Bungay has below the level of recommended land available for green space.

Some clarification of the situation regarding new industrial units on the plot surrounding the swimming pool is necessary, especially in the light of the recent development of such units in Ditchingham near Falcon Meadow. Refurbishment

of the already existing units in Southend Road and better design of the layout to incorporate more units should be considered.

- Provision of appropriate facilities for the elderly and infirm need to be considered carefully. If the current demographic forecasts are correct, there will be an increase in the population of the over 75 group in Bungay, as everywhere else in the United Kingdom. Such provision must include appropriate housing, care facilities, respite for carers and further day care centres. Access to and from the town must be considered as well.
- The surgery: the practice is already overloaded with some 11,000 patients, many of whom come from beyond the town's boundaries. A statement to the effect that the surgery will expand (§5.3) has no meaning given the current situation. The physical needs are overstretched even now, e.g. doctors' and other staff parking, so the question has to be answered as to where the physical expansion would take place. Understaffing is a current issue, too, so consultation with the appropriate CCGs and the surgery itself is absolutely necessary.
- The schools: the numbers in the schools may be satisfactory at the moment, but any expansion would put a strain on the current resources, especially as regards early school provision and at the primary schools. For example, there is insufficient outdoor space at the present location of the latter, so extra pupils would create real problems. As far as the high school is concerned, there will be increases in pupil numbers, if the building developments in Southwold (Reydon) and Halesworth, for example, go ahead. The future of the old middle school site should be brought into the planning mix. This site, which presumably belongs to Suffolk County Council, could be refurbished as the site of the primary school at present in Wingfield Street, and community-related buildings provided on the same site, giving a social hub for the town. We have already met with the two heads concerned, who are enthusiastically pursuing this idea. The old middle school site also contains some important green spaces and land available for future houses.
- The road system of the proposed sites needs to be carefully considered. Any new outlet onto St John's Road needs the installation of roundabouts. This would have the added benefit of slowing down traffic coming into the town from the direction of Halesworth. The present junction with Kings Road could be treated in the same way. As far as access to the old town centre is concerned, there is insufficient parking at the moment, so any increase in road traffic would exacerbate the situation. Alternative forms of access are equally poor. There is no safe pedestrian access to town: the junction with Hillside Road West is busy and particularly dangerous for pedestrians. There are no foot crossings in place, even going across St John's Road into Hillside Road East, the current access to the Co-op. Cycle paths are no better in this respect. Add to this the extreme difficulties of disabled access from the designated sites and the overall picture is far from satisfactory.

- Shopping: for those who are to live on the southern approach to Bungay there is only one convenient option for shopping, the Co-op on Hillside Road East. A way of creating more of a community in the area to be developed would be to designate an area for shops, including one further supermarket.

- Sewers: the Bungay sewers are inadequate now and are operated on an antiquated system of combining foul and surface water. Ever since the 1950s this is not a system that is encouraged. Over time, the clean sewers in many areas have become polluted by misconnected wastewater. With more development, 'urban creep' and the trend for house alterations and DIY improvements over the last twenty years these misconnections have become more common. Pollution comes from surface water sewers because run-off from our urban areas is not always clean. Atmospheric fallout from traffic, spillages and road accidents, illegal discharges, vehicle washing and foul sewer failures all end up discharging into our rivers and coastal waters. As well as wastewater getting into clean surface water drains there is a problem caused by 'clean' misconnections. These occur when roof drains and clean surface areas are connected to foul sewers. This excessive rainfall causes foul sewers to overflow often into rivers but sometimes even into properties, as is the case in Bungay. It also means that more diluted wastewater has to be pumped to sewage works and then treated. This adds to treatment costs and energy use. So a very careful upgrading of the sewerage system in Bungay is necessary.

- Employment and tourism: businesses in Bungay, whether home-based or otherwise, should be encouraged and maintained. Prospects of employment in the town are few, so any increase in the population will have to bear transportation of employees in mind. Tourism needs more attention than it gets at the moment. The town has no hotel and yet there is a prime town-centre site for one. The centre of the town generally around the Butter Cross and central square needs refurbishment and upgrading, keeping in mind the historical nature and aspect of the town. Apart from employment in small shops, Bungay has two major employers: Clays (book printers) and four care homes. Owing to the natural boundaries of Bungay it is difficult to foresee the development of large-scale employment. Start-up businesses should be encouraged, with suitable grants, and building upon the focus of Lowestoft on the development of energy. Tourism should provide much needed revenue and development of the river system surrounding Bungay should be encouraged. Communication systems need upgrading and land should be made available for mobile telephone masts.